



MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

595 San Ysidro Rd * Santa Barbara, California 93108 * (805) 969-7762 * FAX (805) 969-3598

MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT FIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Section 2

Vegetation Management

The purpose of this section is to establish minimum standards for protection of life and property by reducing fuel loading and increasing the ability of a building located in any Fire Hazard Severity Zone within the District to resist the intrusion of flames or burning embers projected by a vegetation fire and contribute to a systematic reduction of conflagration losses through the use of performance and prescriptive requirements.

Code Standard References:

- California Resource Code Section 4291
- California Government Code Sections 51175 through 51189
- California Fire Code 2013 Edition Section Chapter 49
- California Building Code 2013 Edition Section 705A

I Hazard Abatement for Vacant Parcels

Annual grasses/ readily combustible fuels (less than ¼ inch shaft diameter). This standard applies to all parcels, regardless of proximity to structures.

1. Parcels less than one acre in size: All grasses shall be mowed or disked to less than 3 inches in height.
2. Parcels one acre or larger in size: Create 30-foot wide fuel breaks around and across the property dividing it into approximately one acre sections. Grasses shall be mowed or disked to less than 3 inches in height.
3. The use of mechanized equipment such as discs and plows, which tend to disturb soils, shall be avoided in all environmentally sensitive habitat areas.
4. All dead trees, plants and other vegetative materials shall be removed from “fuel treatment areas” as designated by the Fire District.

II Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Montecito

Moderate Fire Severity Zone

- *The area of the Fire District south of Highway 101*

High Fire Severity Zone



MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

595 San Ysidro Rd * Santa Barbara, California 93108 * (805) 969-7762 * FAX (805) 969-3598

- *The area of the Fire District north of Highway 101, east of lower Hot Springs and Sycamore Canyon Roads, south of Hwy 192 and west of Sheffield Drive. Refer to Figure 2-1.*

Very High Fire Severity Zone

- *The area of the Fire District east of the District boundary with Santa Barbara City from intersection with lower Hot Springs road, west of Sycamore Canyon road, north of Hwy 192, east of east of Sheffield Drive and west of District boundary with Carpinteria-Summerland Fire District. Refer to figure 2-1.*

III Vegetation Clearance from Structures

Defensible Space: The term defensible space refers to an area around a structure that is free from flammable vegetation and objects. Defensible space creates a zone around the structure that provides a key area of defense from an approaching wildfire while allowing firefighters to operate safely in protecting structures. Research results clearly demonstrate that defensible space improves the probability of house survival during wildfire.

1. Property Owners shall maintain defensible space of 100 feet from all sides of any structure but not beyond the property line except when adverse conditions exist as referenced in paragraphs 2 and 3 below.

The level to which the Fire District will require fuel modification will depend on the flammability of the structure pursuant to building materials used, building standards in place at the time, location, and type of surrounding vegetation.

Defensible space shall be maintained so a wildfire burning under average weather conditions would be unlikely to ignite the structure. Further, a working structure fire would be less likely to ignite adjacent vegetation if adequate defensible space is provided.

Specimen trees or other ornamental vegetation needs to be pruned and maintained so as to prevent transmission of fire to a structure.

The level to which fuels are required to be managed will vary within the 100-foot perimeter of the structure. The most aggressive clearing of vegetation occurs within the first 30 feet around the structure. Consistent with fuels management objectives, steps should be taken to minimize erosion. For the purposes of this section, “fuel”, means any combustible material including petroleum-based products and wildland vegetation.



MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

595 San Ysidro Rd * Santa Barbara, California 93108 * (805) 969-7762 * FAX (805) 969-3598

- a. All mature trees shall be trimmed up off the ground 6 feet above grade level. For young/immature trees ensure limbs are trimmed well above ground level. The objective is to prevent a ground fire from spreading into the tree canopy.
 - b. All native brush and shrubs within the required 100-foot defensible space should be thinned and stripped of dead and/or decadent fuels.
 - c. Provide and maintain adequate spacing between the plants in order to minimize fire spread.
 - d. Remove that portion of a tree that extends to within 10 feet of the outlet to a chimney or stovepipe.
 - e. Maintain any tree, shrub, or other plant that is adjacent to or overhanging a building free of dead or dying wood.
 - f. Maintain the roof of a structure free of leaves, needles, or other vegetative materials.
 - g. Remove all dead trees, plants and other vegetative materials.
 - h. If it is necessary or desirable to re-vegetate, refer to the plant list located on the Fire District website for guidelines.
“Creating Firewise Landscapes” montecitofire.com
2. A greater distance than that required under paragraph 1 may be required by special order from the Fire Chief or designee if additional distance is necessary due to extreme risks. Such risks could include, but not limited to, slopes greater than 40%, heavy decadent fuels, and there is no other feasible mitigation measure possible to reduce the risk of ignition or spread of wildfire to the structure.
 3. Clearance on adjacent properties may be required if it is determined that additional clearing is necessary to significantly reduce the risk of transmission of flame, heat, or embers sufficient to ignite the structure and there is no other feasible mitigation measure to reduce that risk. Additionally, the property owner must have done everything reasonable for good defensible space and fire hardened structure on their property. Clearance on adjacent properties shall only be conducted following written consent by the adjacent landowner. It is the responsibility of the property owner to obtain such consent, not the Fire District.



MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

595 San Ysidro Rd * Santa Barbara, California 93108 * (805) 969-7762 * FAX (805) 969-3598

4. The Fire Chief may authorize the removal of any vegetation on a given property that is not maintained consistent with the standards of this section. Following written notice, the Fire Chief may prescribe a procedure for the removal of such vegetation and seek reimbursement from the property owner for work that was done consistent with the procedures prescribed in the Code.

IV Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESH)

When performing mitigation work in ESH areas, it must be determined that fuel management activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, nor shall archeological resources be disturbed in the course of such activities.

Selective fuel management shall be practiced to minimize the removal or clearance of dead and/or decadent native riparian vegetation to the extent feasible. Maintain native vegetation to the maximum extent possible, consistent with fuel modification requirements.

Avoid clearing vegetation during the bird breeding and nesting season (typically March 1 to August 15) in key habitat areas known to support sensitive nesting bird species. Leave live native riparian vegetation and maintain native vegetation adjacent to creeks as much as possible.

Plant materials in excess of 6 inch diameter generally are not required to be removed. It is important to minimize any disturbance of soil. Removal of non-native invasive plants is encouraged.

For clarification or advice on clearing in sensitive areas, please notify the Fire District or County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development (805) 568-2000.

V Roadway / Driveway Vegetation Clearance

1. Property owners are responsible for vegetation maintenance along private roadway / driveways and in most cases along public roads which front their property.
2. A minimum 13 ½ foot vertical clearance shall be maintained above full width of the required roadways and driveways to allow for effective response of emergency vehicles at all times.
3. Horizontal clearance of vegetation shall be maintained, at minimum, to the road right-of-way or the edge of the pavement depending on individual easements to maintain maximum traffic circulation in the event of emergency evacuation.
4. Flammable vegetation such as dead materials, annual grasses, and readily combustible fuels shall be removed for 10 feet on each side of every roadway to prevent wildfire from spreading as a result of vehicular



MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

595 San Ysidro Rd * Santa Barbara, California 93108 * (805) 969-7762 * FAX (805) 969-3598

causation (catalytic converters, sparking due to metallic/asphalt abrasion, discarded cigarettes, vehicle fires, etc.).

5. All dead trees, plants and other vegetative materials that could potentially impede emergency response access and evacuation egress shall be removed.
6. Excessive accumulation of solid waste, trash, rubbish and other belongings which prevent fire fighters from accessing the full perimeter of the structure or from gaining access to the structure shall be mitigated.