

RANCHO SANTA FE
PO Box 410 / 16936 El Fuego



FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Rancho Santa Fe, California 92067-0410

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 4, 2010

CONTACT: Julie Taber
Public Information Officer
Office: (858) 756-6008
Mobile: (858) 775-7608

WILDFIRE: ARE YOU PREPARED?

RANCHO SANTA FE – Wildfires are a constant threat for those of us living in Southern California, especially within wildland-urban interface areas like Rancho Santa Fe and its surrounding communities. The Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD) employs a full-time hazard abatement inspector. This inspector surveys properties for fire hazards and mails violation notices to property owners not in compliance with District Ordinance 2008-01, which can be found on our website at www.rsf-fire.org.

Within the next few weeks, residents within the RSFFPD service area should receive a letter reminding them of the local hazard abatement requirements. Here are some ways you can safeguard not only your home, but your entire community. These requirements can also be found in their entirety on our web site at www.rsf-fire.org.

Create and Maintain Defensible Space

Defensible space is a term used to describe a 100-foot “buffer zone” around all structures on your property and 30-foot zone along either side of roadways and driveways in which dead and dying vegetation is removed and excess growth is thinned. Defensible space will not only give firefighters a safe place to make a stand against threatening flames, but it has been proven to save homes and minimize property damage.

Defensible space can be created by removing combustible vegetation and flammable materials and replanting with drought-tolerant, fire resistive trees, shrubs and plants. Keep vegetation well-maintained and remove any dead foliage throughout the year. Weeds and grasses must be cut below six-inches in height. Trees and native vegetation should not come into direct contact with structures or parts thereof. Foliage must be trimmed 10 feet from rooftops, chimneys, and outdoor barbecues. Mature trees must be pruned back at least four to six feet from structures and branches trimmed six feet off the ground.

Roofs and Rooftops

Most homes with wood-shake roofs *do not* survive wildfires. During a fire storm, these homes burn from the outside-in. If you own a wood roof, there is no more time to delay; retro-fit your home with a roof made of non-combustible materials. Many such roofing materials are now made to look like wood-shake so homeowners can experience the aesthetic qualities they desire while making their home a defensible one.

For all homeowners, a non-combustible roof can become a combustible roof quite easily if leaf litter and debris accumulate on your roof. To safeguard your roof, regularly maintain your roof and rain gutters free from any debris.

Roadways and Driveways

Keep roadways and driveways clear from overhanging vegetation, which may hinder both evacuation efforts and access of incoming fire engines. From the edge of driveways and roadways, measure 13-feet, 6-inches straight up from the ground. Any overhanging bushes or branches in this area must be pruned back or removed to create vertical tree clearance.

Other Important Items

- Trim combustible vegetation 10-feet away from propane (LPG) tanks, and keep wood piles at least 30-feet away from any structure on your property.
- Stack and store firewood 30 feet from all structures. All flammable vegetation and combustible materials must be cleared or removed within 30 feet of firewood stacks.
- Maintain a visible address. Whether it's a wildfire or an every-day emergency, firefighters need to be able to read your address. Your numerical address should be visible from the street, with numerals at least 4-inches in height, mounted on a contrasting background.
- If you own a private gate, it must be equipped with an approved fire district gate access switch and/or strobe sensor to allow firefighters to access your property during emergencies. Additionally, during wildfires, many firefighters arrive from out of the area and won't be able to access your gated property. During a wildfire, disconnect the manual override motor on your electric gate, or if you have a manual gate, leave the gate open. Otherwise, firefighters may have to use blunt force on your gate, causing significant damage.

If you have questions regarding vegetation management, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at 858-756-5971. More wildfire prevention tips are available on our web site at www.rsf-fire.org.

The mission of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District is "To protect life, property, and environment through prevention, preparedness, education and emergency response." Formed in 1946, the Fire District now spans approximately 42-square miles and protects over 29,000 citizens. The Fire District currently operates out of four full-time fire stations and serves the communities within and surrounding Rancho Santa Fe and 4S-Ranch.

###