

**MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
FIRE PROTECTION PLAN**

**Section 2**

**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT**

**I HAZARD ABATEMENT FOR VACANT PARCELS**

This standard is intended to clarify the Fire District’s intent to remediate fire hazards to life and property that are posed by the accumulation of dead and/or decadent vegetation. The Fire District Board of Directors has adopted this Standard to augment relevant requirements contained in the Code and the California Public Resources Code. The Board further recognizes that these minimum measures are necessary because of adverse climatic and topographic conditions that typically exist throughout the Fire District.

- A. Annual Grasses/Light Fuels (less than ¼” shaft diameter). This standard applies to all parcels, regardless of proximity to structures.
1. Parcels less than one acre in size: All grasses mowed or disced to less than 4 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 disced to less than 4 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.

**II VEGETATION CLEARANCE FROM STRUCTURES  
(Defensible/Survivable Space)**

A. **FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES**

***Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone***

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

***High Fire Hazard Severity Zone***

- *The area of the Fire District north of Highway 101 and south of West /East Mountain Drive and Bella Vista*

***Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone***

- *The area of the Fire District north of West /East Mountain Drive and Bella Vista.*

B. VEGETATION CLEARANCE FROM STRUCTURES

1. Property Owners shall maintain defensible/survivable space of 100 feet from each side and from the front and rear of the structure, but not beyond the property line except as provided in paragraphs 2 and 3 below. The amount of fuel modification necessary shall take into account the flammability of the structure as affected by building material, building standards, location, and type of vegetation. Fuels shall be maintained in a condition so that a wildfire burning under average weather conditions would be unlikely to ignite the structure, *and* if structure was to burn not to ignite adjacent vegetation. This paragraph does not apply to single specimens of trees or other vegetation that are pruned and maintained so as to effectively manage fuels and not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from other nearby vegetation to a structure or from a structure to other nearby vegetation. The intensity of fuels management may vary within the 100-foot perimeter of the structure, the most intense being 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 paragraph, “fuel” means any combustible material, including petroleum-based products and wildland fuels.
  - a. All mature trees need to be trimmed up off the ground 6 feet above grade level. Young/immature trees, trim limbs well above ground level. Objective is to prevent a ground fire from spreading into the trees.
  - b. All native shrubs and brush should be thinned and stripped of dead and/or decadent materials.
  - c. Remove that portion of a tree that extends within 10 feet of the outlet of a chimney or stovepipe.
  - d. Maintain a tree, shrub, or other plant adjacent to or overhanging a building free of dead or dying wood.
  - e. Maintain the roof of a structure free of leaves, needles, or other vegetative materials.
  - f. If it is necessary or desirable to re-vegetate, refer to the Plant list “Creating firewise landscape” located on the Fire District’s website for guidelines.
2. A greater distance than that required under paragraph 1 may be required by special order from the Fire Chief or designee (“Fire Chief”), if in the Fire Chief’s opinion this additional distance is necessary due to extreme

risks. Such risks including, but are 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 only be required if that clearing is necessary to significantly reduce the risk of transmission of flame or heat 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 property shall only be conducted following written consent by the adjacent landowner. It is the property owner's responsibility to obtain such consent, not the Fire District.
4. The Fire Chief may authorize the removal of any vegetation that is maintained on property inconsistent 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 the work that was done consistent with the procedures set out in the Code.

### III 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 feasible, consistent with fuel modification requirements. Avoid clearing vegetation during the bird breeding and nesting season (typically April 1 to July 31) 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" diameter generally don't need to be removed. It is important to minimize any disturbance of soil. The removal of non-native invasive plants is to be encouraged. Notification shall be made to the Fire District and Santa Barbara County Planning and Development for clarifications and advice.

### IV. ROADWAY/DRIVEWAY VEGETATION CLEARANCE

Property owners are responsible for vegetation maintenance of private roadways and, in most cases, public roads, which front their property.

A minimum 13 ½ foot vertical clearance shall be maintained above roadways and driveways to allow for the effective response of emergency vehicles at all times.

Horizontal clearance of vegetation shall be maintained 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.

Flammable vegetation shall be removed for 10 feet on each side of every roadway to prevent wildfire from spreading as a result of vehicular causation (catalytic converters, sparking due to metallic/asphalt abrasion, discarded cigarettes, vehicle fires, etc.).