



City of Malibu News

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City of Malibu Re-Starts Fire Hardening Home Assessments for Residents During Stay-at-Home Orders as Part of Community-Wide Wildfire Preparedness

(Malibu, CA) – As part of the City of Malibu’s ongoing efforts to promote community-wide wildfire preparedness, the City has re-started its no-cost Home Ignition Zone Assessment Program to help residents harden their homes against flying embers, a major cause of homes catching fire during wildfires.

During the County and State novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic stay-at-home orders, the service is provided by a single staff member, using personal protective equipment (PPE) and maintaining physical distancing to help slow the spread of the coronavirus and protect seniors and vulnerable groups.

“Wildfires don’t care about stay-at-home orders, and our next fire is always around the corner, so we need to continue to do everything possible to enhance wildfire preparedness Malibu,” said Mayor Karen Farrer. “I am proud that the City is able to offer this incredibly valuable service for our community members even under these incredibly difficult circumstances.”

During wind-driven wildfires such as the Woolsey Fire, powerful, sustained winds can send burning embers travelling up to a few miles ahead of the fire front. According to fire behavior experts, more than 50% of homes lost during a wildfire catch fire due to flying embers, not direct flame contact or radiant heat. That means that all homes in Malibu are vulnerable.

Fire Safety Liaison Jerry Vandermeulen, who provides the service, is a former Ventura County Fire Captain. He is certified in “Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire” through the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in identifying specific areas that wildfire embers can find receptive fuels in and around a home. He will inspect your home and make recommendations on how to make it more fire resistant. There are simple and often inexpensive ways to make homes safer from wildfire, including modifying landscaping around the home, sealing eaves, and moving flammable materials away from structures.

Vandermeulen has conducted more than 150 home wildfire assessments for homeowners in the City of Malibu since the City launched the program in August 2019.

Vandermeulen is also available to meet with individuals, business owners, homeowners associations, or multifamily residential property owners or managers to offer guidance on brush clearance and home hardening. He can also explain how to monitor wildfire conditions, how to use Pulsepoint and other tools to maintain good

situational awareness well in advance of a wildfire, and how to prepare emergency and evacuation plans and supply kits.

To schedule an appointment, visit <https://www.malibucity.org/FireSafety> and click on “Book an Appointment” or contact Jerry Vandermeulen at 310-456-2489, ext. 387 or jvandermeulen@malibucity.org.

For additional wildfire preparedness information, visit the Los Angeles County Fire Department’s Ready, Set, Go program at <https://fire.lacounty.gov/ready-set-go.pdf>.

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