



City of Malibu News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2020

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With Fire Season Upon Malibu, Homeowners Reminded that June 1 is Brush Clearance Deadline

(Malibu CA) – On June 1, 2020, local Los Angeles County Fire engine companies began conducting annual brush clearance inspections in Malibu and other coastal communities. Property owners not currently in compliance with brush clearance requirements are strongly urged to come into compliance as soon as possible, both to avoid fines and for the safety of their Malibu neighbors.

“We have already had our first Red Flag Warning day this year, which is a serious reminder that our next major wildfire is always around the corner,” said Mayor Karen Farrer. “To those residents who have already completed their brush clearance by the June 1 deadline, I thank you. If you have not yet completed your brush clearance, please act now to protect your home, your neighborhood and your community.”

Brush Clearance is an annual obligation for all property owners in high-risk wildfire zones, which includes the entire City of Malibu.

With the Woolsey Fire still fresh in memory, rigorous brush clearance is more important than ever. These measures create the “defensible space” that firefighters need to effectively protect life, property and the environment and to protect their own safety.

Properties that have provided adequate defensible space may require no or minimal intervention during a wildfire and stand the best chance of survival.

Having to inspect and re-inspect properties that are not in compliance also draws down valuable firefighting resources.

The Brush Clearance Program is a joint effort between the County of Los Angeles Fire Department and the County of Los Angeles Department of Agricultural Commissioner Weights and Measures, Weed Hazard and Pest Abatement Bureau. This unified enforcement legally has the ability to declare both improved and unimproved properties a public nuisance, and where necessary, require the clearance of hazardous vegetation. Non-compliant properties may be subject to a County administrative fine of \$500 and/or a non-compliance fee of \$648, to be assessed on the property tax bill.

Brush clearance and creating defensible space involves much more than just cutting dead and dry grass at the beginning of summer. It should be an on-going, year-round process that includes:

- Cut and remove all dead or dying vegetation and grass.
- Modify existing native vegetation by thinning and removing high-risk plants (laurel sumac, chamise, ceanothus, sage, sage brush, buckwheat and California juniper).
- Remove the lower one third large shrubs (lollipop) and all dead wood.
- Space out large native shrubs so that there is 15 feet between the edges of their canopies.
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches at least 10 feet from other trees and 5-6 feet off the ground.
- Remove dead branches hanging over your roof and keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Keep the first five feet around your house as clean as possible. Avoid accumulating combustible materials, keep any vegetation in this area well maintained, spaced apart and avoid the use of mulch or bark (better choices are dirt, gravel, hardscape or decomposed granite).
- Remove vines and climbing plants such as bougainvillea or wisteria from combustible structures.
- Remove or prune vegetation near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items around and under decks that could catch fire.
- Create separations between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire such as patio furniture, swing sets, etc.
- Access roads and driveways should be easily accessible and passable by large fire vehicles. This requires a minimum of 15 feet of horizontal clearance and 13.5 feet of vertical clearance from all trees, shrubs and vegetation.

For any questions or concerns related to the Brush Clearance Program or to request an inspection, please contact your nearest Los Angeles County Fire Station:

67- Piuma Rd.
(818) 222-1099

69- Topanga
(310) 455-1766

70- Carbon Canyon
(310) 456-2513

71- Point Dume
(310) 457-2578

72- Decker Canyon
(310) 457-6186

88- Civic Center
(310) 456-2812

99- West Malibu
(310) 457-3705

For more information on how to complete brush clearance and get an inspection, including a list of vendors, maps, a video and more, visit

<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/forestry-division/fire-hazard-reduction-programs>.

For more information on how to prepare and harden your home against wildfires, see the Defensible Space section of the County's Ready, Set, Go guide at <https://www.fire.lacounty.gov/rsg/>.

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