



COUNTY FIRE
DISTRICT

Home Hardening and Zero Zone

July 25, 2026

Presented by LAHCFD's
Debbie Stocksick, Community Preparedness Specialist
Paige Russell, Operations Project Manager



Introducing our Community Education and Risk Reduction Team



Dee King Raub

*Project Specialist
Risk Reduction*

Webinar Facilitator



Denise Gluhan

CERR Manager

Webinar Facilitator



Debbie Pardue Stocksick

*Community Risk
Reduction Specialist*

Presenter



Paige Russell

*Operations Project
Manager*

Presenter



Introduce Yourself

Please tell us in (in the Chat):

- Where do you live?
- Do you live in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)?
- What are you hoping to learn today?



Agenda

We will discuss:

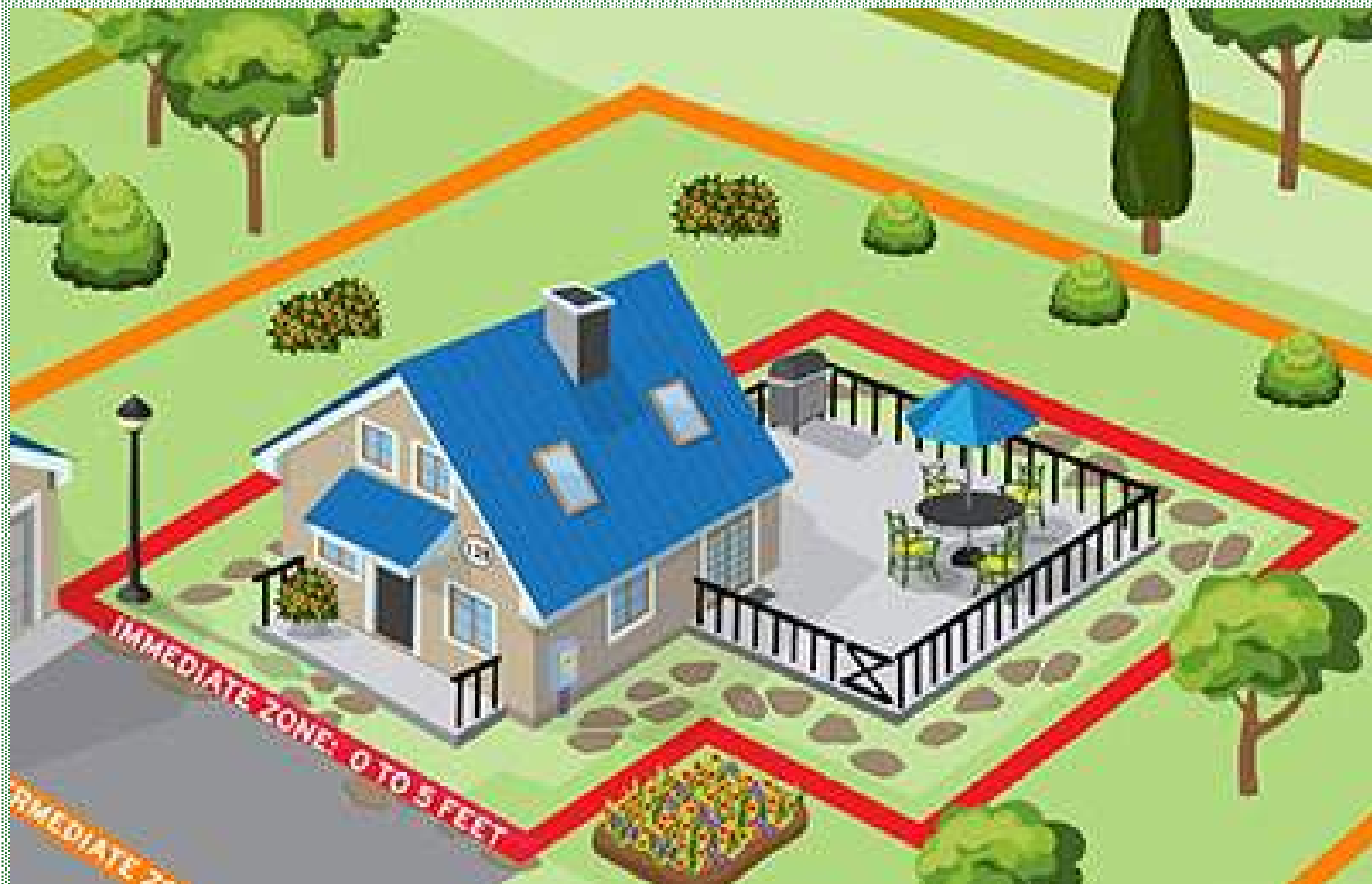
- Home Hardening and the Zero Zone
- Myth Busters
- Insurance Resources
- LAHCFD District Resources
- Assess Town Hall (In-Person Only)

Questions and
Discussion at
the end



Use the CHAT to
participate

How We Approach an Assessment





Three Ways Homes Ignite During a Wildfire?

Radiant Heat

Direct Flame Impingement

Embers

What is the number one cause of home ignition?



What is the number one cause of home ignition??



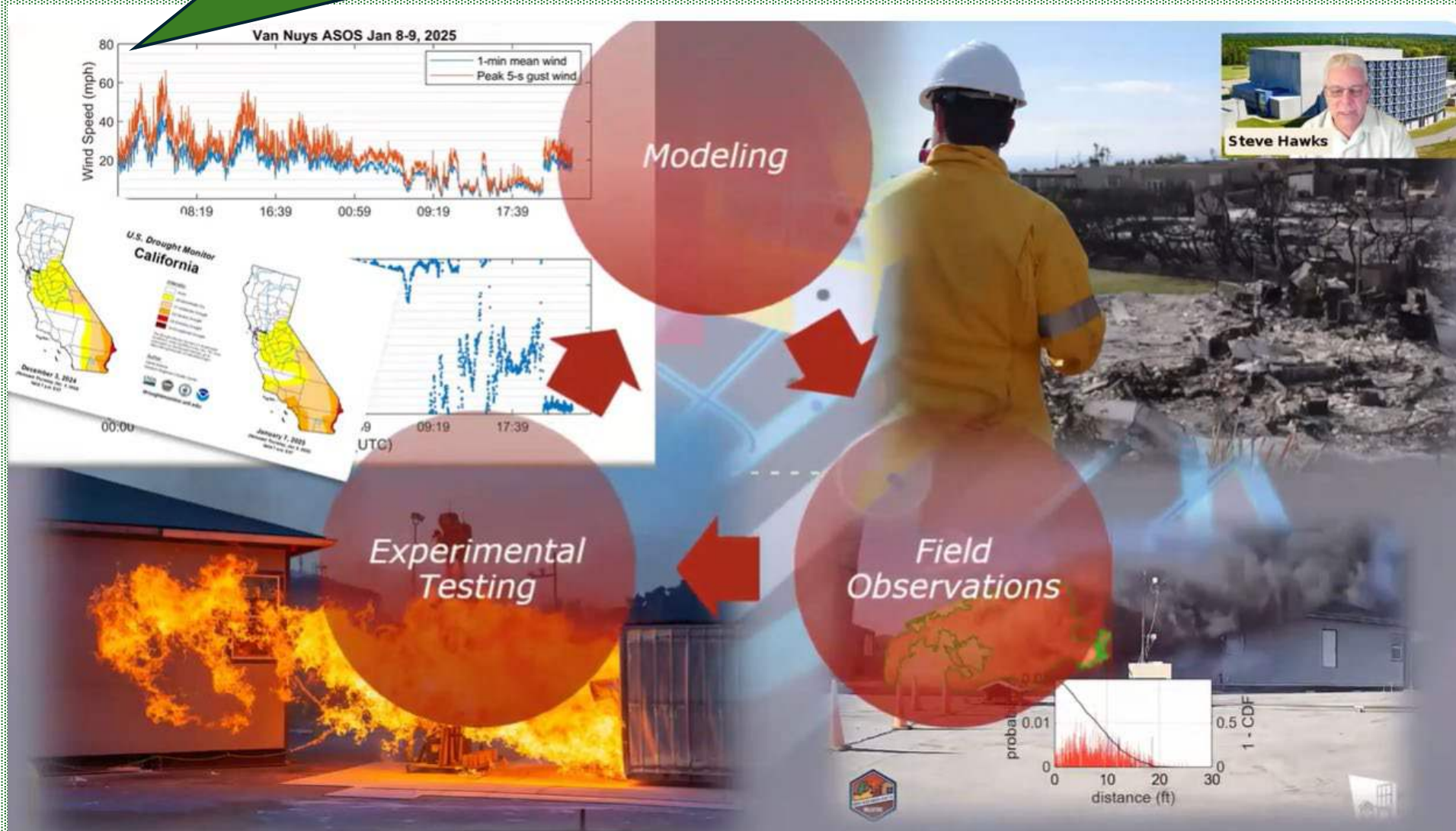
Up to **90%**
of home ignitions
during wildfire events
are caused by **EMBERS.**

The illustration shows a house with a red roof and blue windows being hit by a wildfire. A circular inset shows a close-up of falling embers. The background is a yellow and orange sky with silhouettes of trees and mountains.

WILDFIRE AND SAFETY

USDA

Wait! How do you know it was caused by embers?



Home Hardening: Testing Structures



What IS Home Hardening?

HOME HARDENING

No branches
near chimney

Class A roof

1/8" or
smaller mesh
on vents

Double-paned
windows

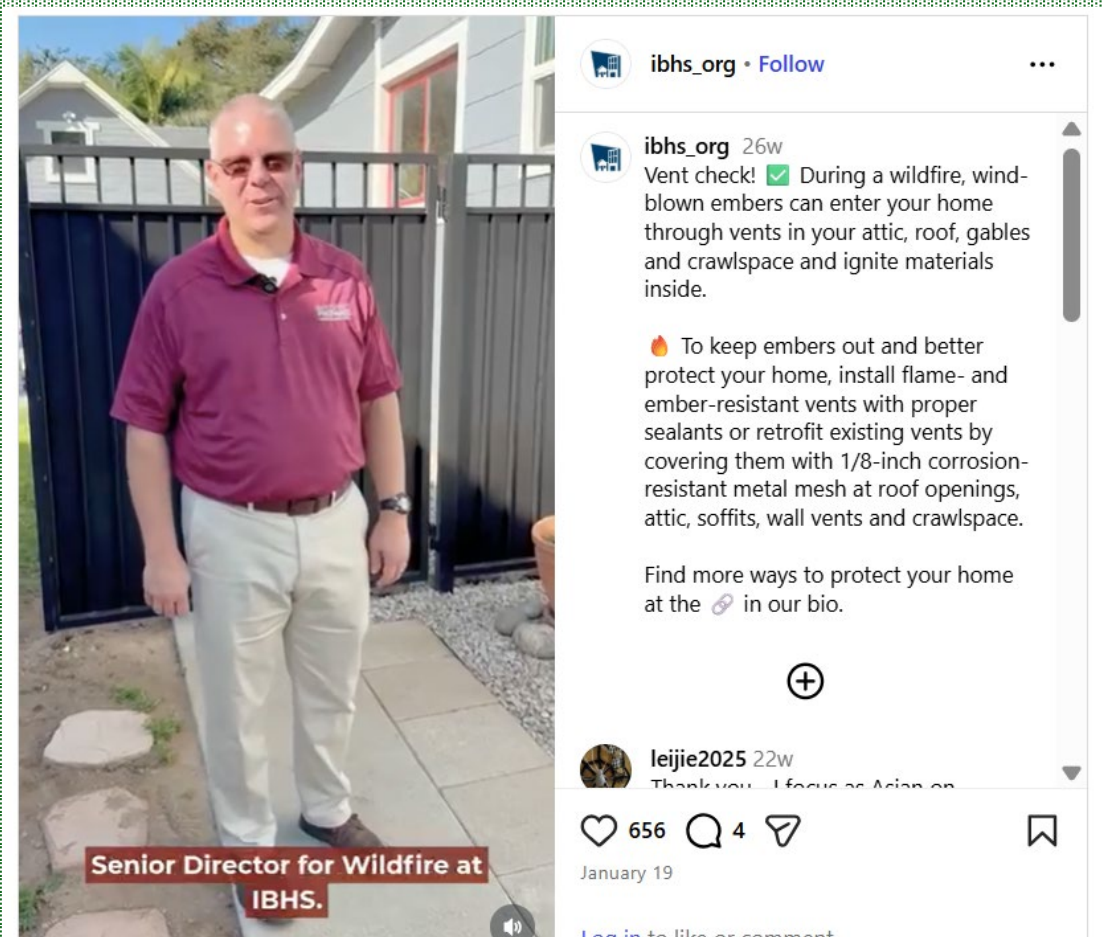
Weather stripping
to close gaps

Non-combustible
siding on first 6 inches
from foundation

Other Considerations:

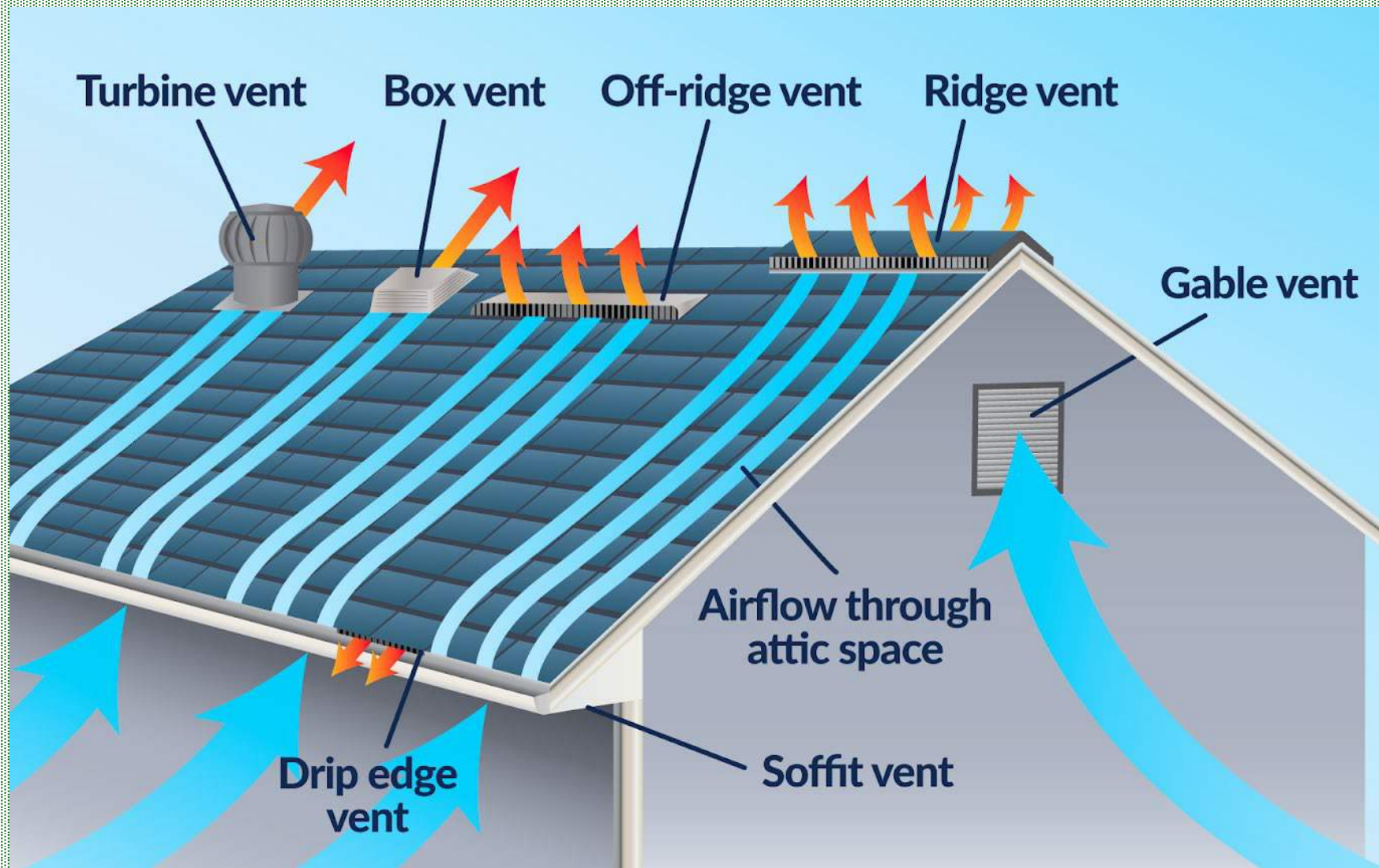
- **Metal Gutters and Gutter Guards**
- **Keep Roof and Gutters Clear of Debris**
- **Open Eaves? Consider using fire resistant caulk for gaps larger than 1/8"**
- **Skylights: Double-paned, tempered glass**
- **Treat ALL structures and attachments on your property (Decks, Fences, Sheds, and ADUs... EVEN Hot tubs should have space around them)**

Video: Vents and Embers



<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DTtOHEUAZsd/>

Types of Vents



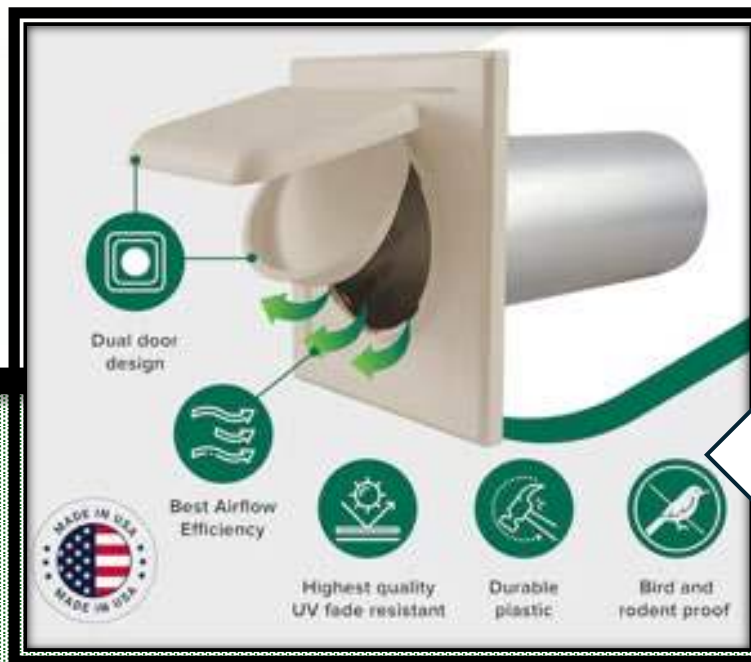
More Vents



Dormer Vents



Gable Vents



Check your Drier
vent too

Class A Roof?



Class A Roofs

Class A fire-retardant roofs are currently mandated for all new construction, structural re-roofing, and major roof replacements (over 50% of the roof) in the town of [Los Altos Hills](#). [1, 2, 3]

How do I know if my roof is Class A?

Los Altos Hills implemented strict town-wide Class A requirements as part of local wildfire safety amendments. They have been in effect for new structures and major alterations since the late 1990s / early 2000s

Keep Your Roof and Gutters Clear of Debris



Overhanging
branches
require more
frequent
cleaning.

Keep Your Roof Clear of Debris

Note where leaves collect. This is where they will also collect during a wind event. Consider using flashing against siding.



Complex Roofs

Skylights or Solar Panels?



Trim Back Overhanging Trees



SHALLOW EAVE

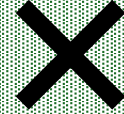
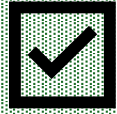
DEEP EAVE

Trim Back Overhanging Trees

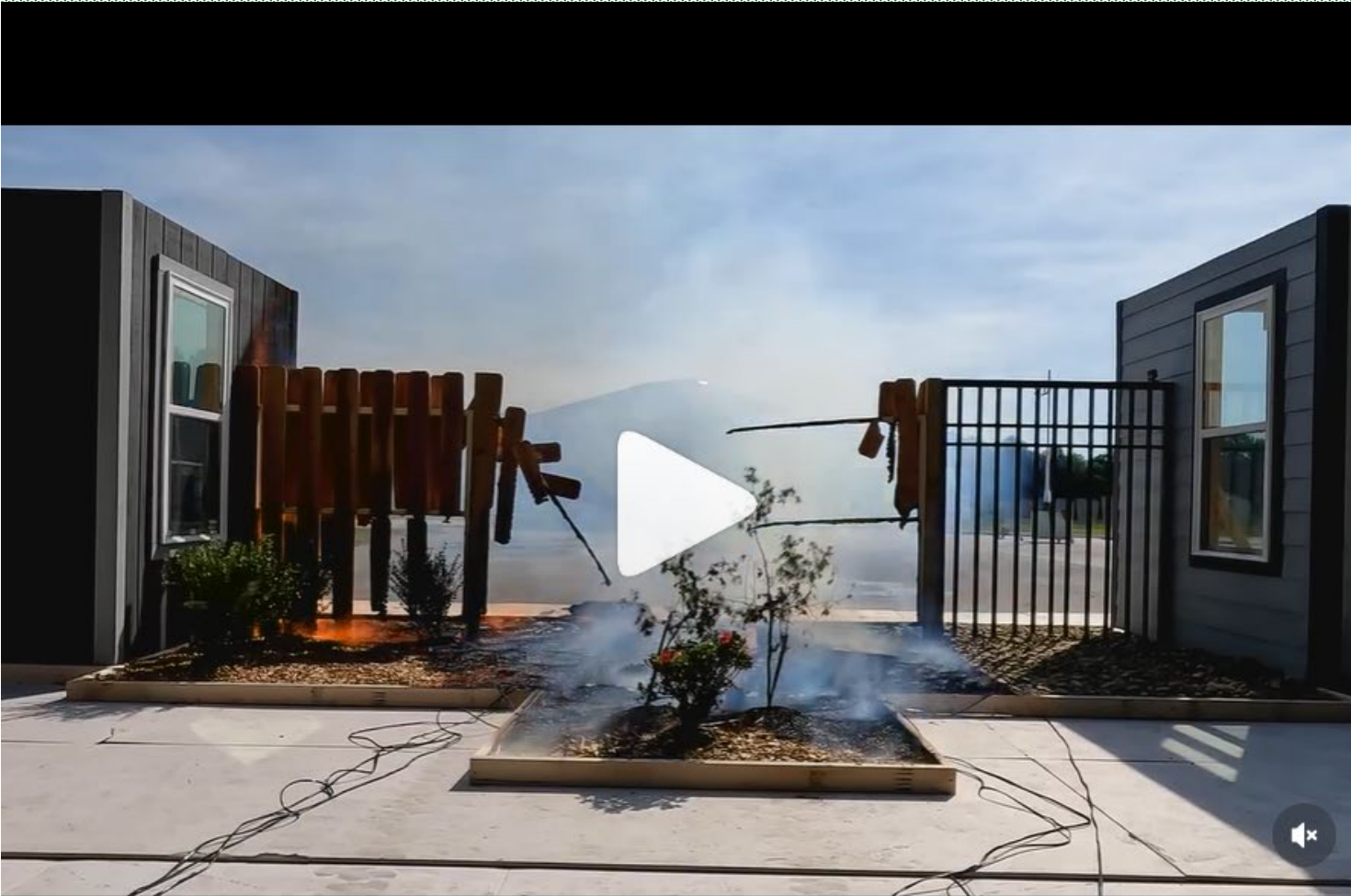


Trim limbs a minimum of 10' away from chimneys. Branches should not touch the roof and should be trimmed 5' above roofline.

Metal Gutters and Gutter Guards



Video: Attached Fences



<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CrLZO5gKZO/>



ibhs_org • Follow



ibhs_org 166w

Your fence makes a difference.

A combustible fence can ignite and act like a wick leading a [#wildfire](#) straight to your home. To help prevent this, fencing attached to your home or within 5 feet of your home should be made from noncombustible material such as metal. [#california](#) [#californiawildfires](#) [#wildfireseason](#) [#wildfires](#) [#wildfireprevention](#) [#wildfirescalifornia](#) [#wildfirerelief](#) [#wildfireready](#)



58



5

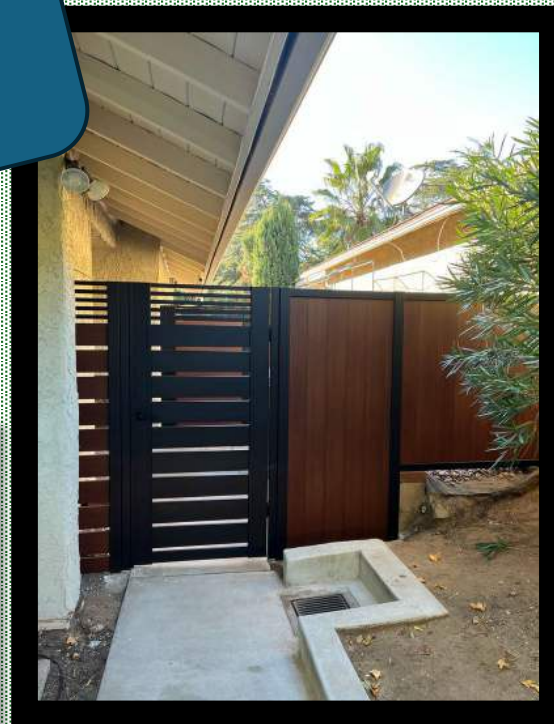


April 28, 2023

[Log in](#) to like or comment.

Attached Fences

“WHERE TO START?
If replacing the whole fence is not realistic right now,
begin by clearing debris from the base, removing
combustible mulch nearby, and upgrading the 5’
section that touches the house.”





Some Building Terminology

Non-Combustible

- 3 coat Stucco
- Metal
- Fiber Cement Board (e.g. Hardie Plank)
- Masonry

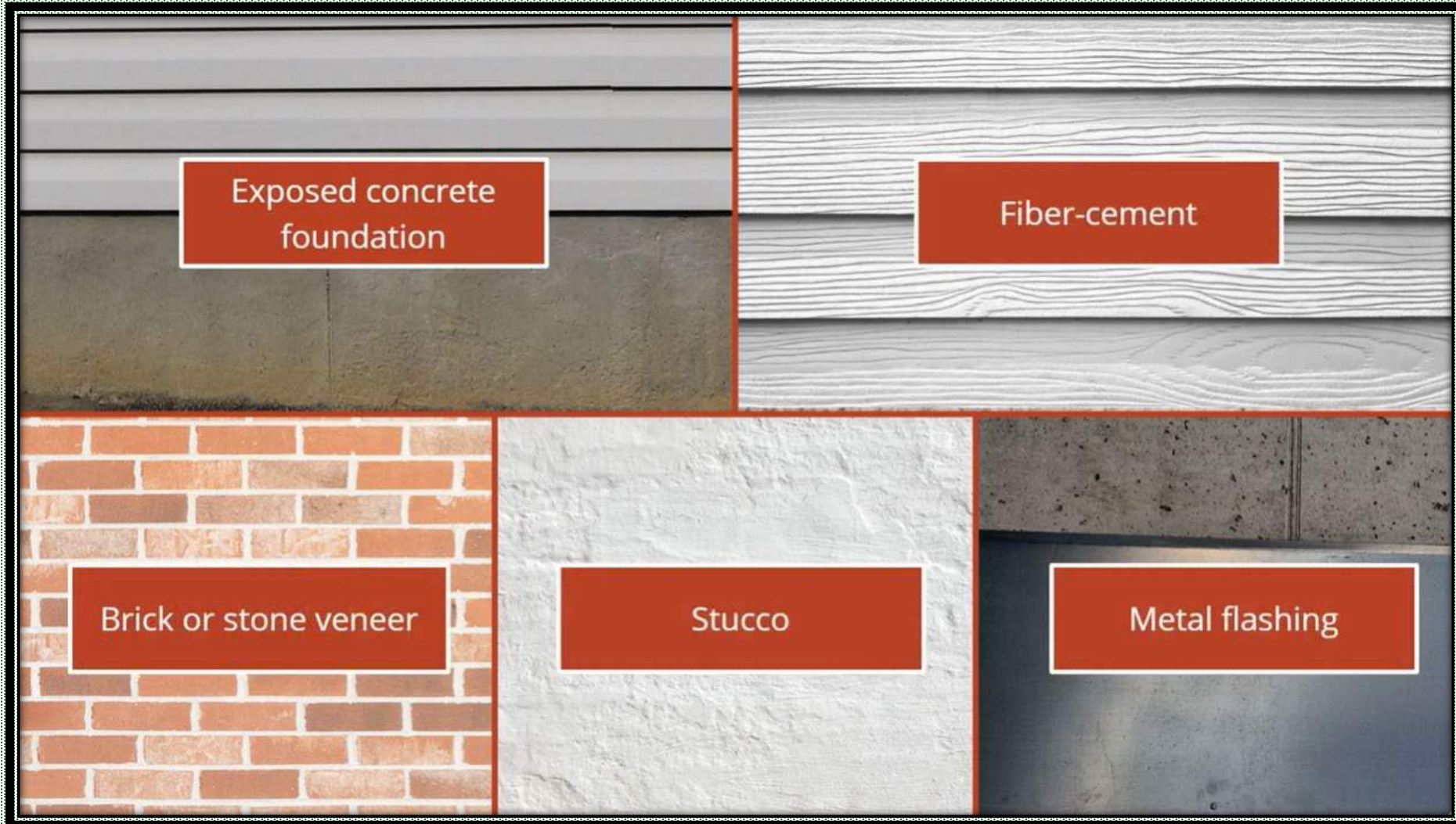
Combustible

- Untreated Wood-especially soft woods

Ignition-Resistant

- Pressure-treated wood with Fire Retardant

Non-Combustible Home Siding



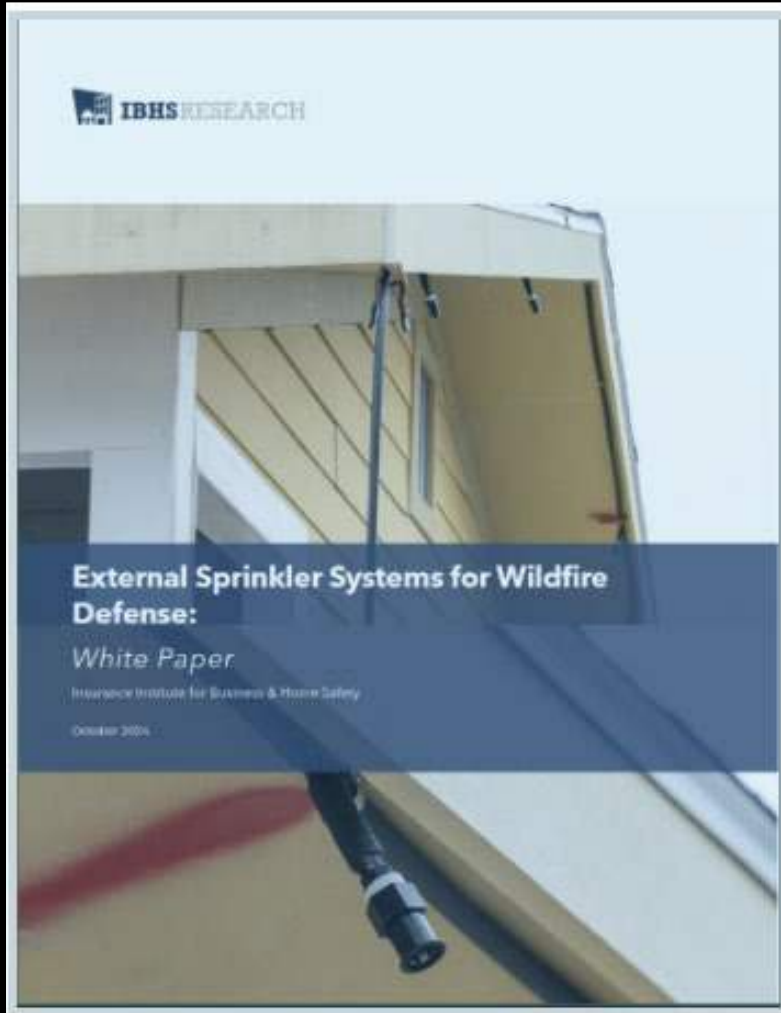
VIDEO: Why Do I Need 6" of Non-Combustible Siding?

My Zero Zone doesn't have any vegetation. Why do I need 6 inches of vertical clearance?



IBHS 1-minute Video on Siding
Mitigations That Matter: 6-Inch Vertical Noncombustible Siding Clearance

What About External Sprinklers? 2024 IBHS White Paper



Key Takeaways

- ☐ Passive wildfire mitigation strategies (e.g., Class A roof, noncombustible siding, 0–5-foot noncombustible zone around the house, etc.) for community and parcel level mitigation should never be replaced by active strategies (e.g., external sprinklers).
- ☐ Standard performance criteria for external sprinkler systems must be developed
- ☐ Limited methodical research exists
- ☐ Infrastructure Needs

Overwhelmed? Consider Prioritizing

HOME HARDENING

No branches
near chimney

Class A roof

1/8" or
smaller mesh
on vents

Double-paned
windows

Weather stripping
to close gaps

Non-combustible
siding on first 6 inches
from foundation

Prioritize

ROOF:

- Trim Trees (5' from roofline, 10' from chimney).
- Keep Roof and Gutters Clear of Debris
- Metal Gutters and Gutter Guards

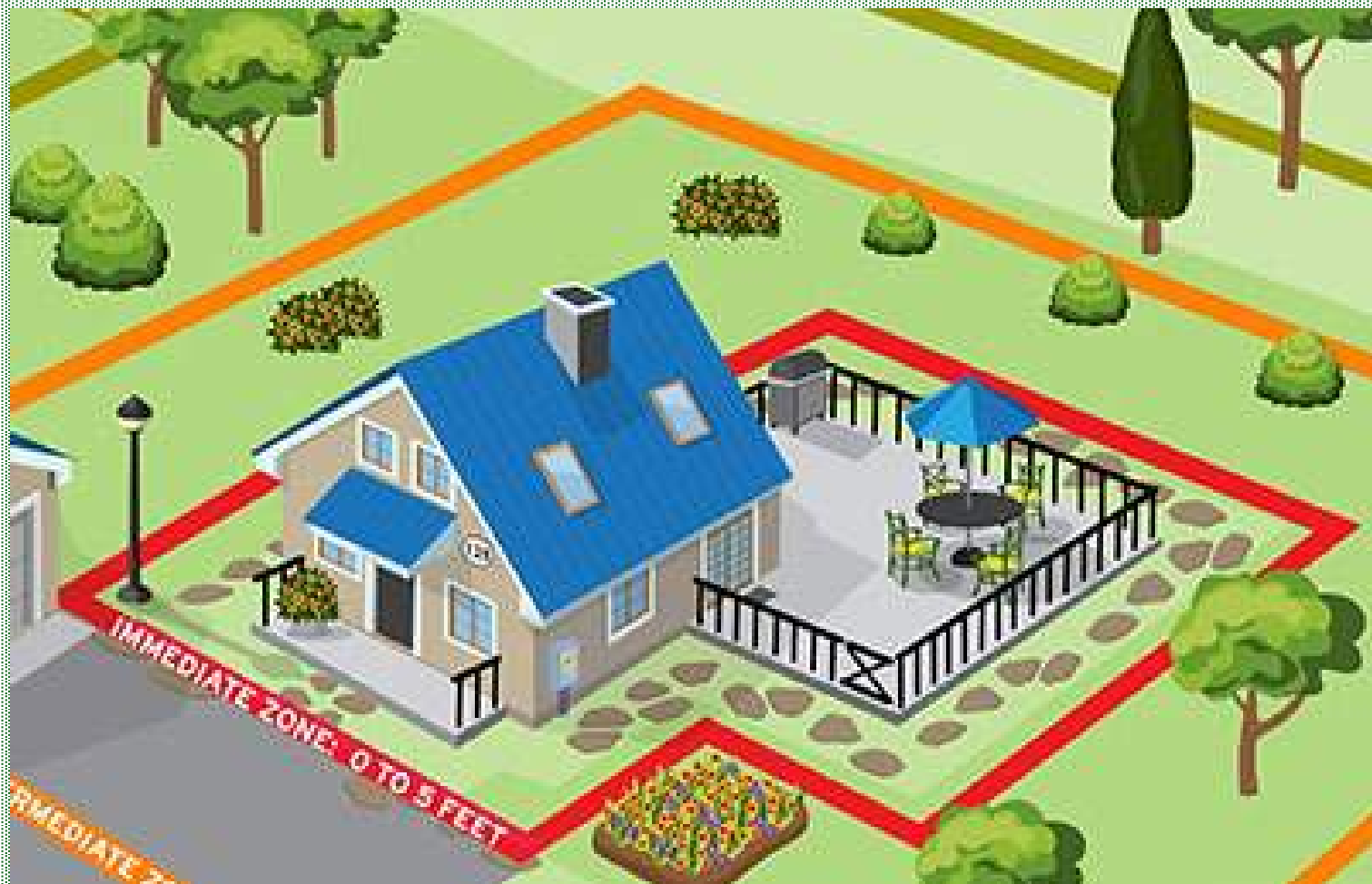
VENTS and GAPS:

- Open Eaves? Consider using fire resistant caulk for gaps larger than 1/8"
- Replace ALL vents with 1/4" screens with 1/8" to 1/16" screens

DECKS and FENCES:

- Non-combustible attached fences for first 5'
- Remove all combustible items from under decks

Zone 0, the Zero Zone, or the Immediate Zone





Video: What *IS* the Zero Zone?

What is Defensible Space? Get to know your Zero Zone

Defensible Space
ZONE ZERO

FIRE
SAFE
MARIN



<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DPB5bODEfBr/?hl=en>

Let's Start with the Easy Stuff!



- Move firewood 30' away from home.
- Move cushions inside during vacation, red flag warning days, or evacuations.
- Store trash cans at least 5' away.
- Store propane tanks outside of the 5' zone.



Exercise: What Opportunities Do *YOU* See?



Exercise: After Mitigation Efforts





Let's discuss Ordinances versus Best Practices

LAWS/ORDINANCES

"What You Must Do"

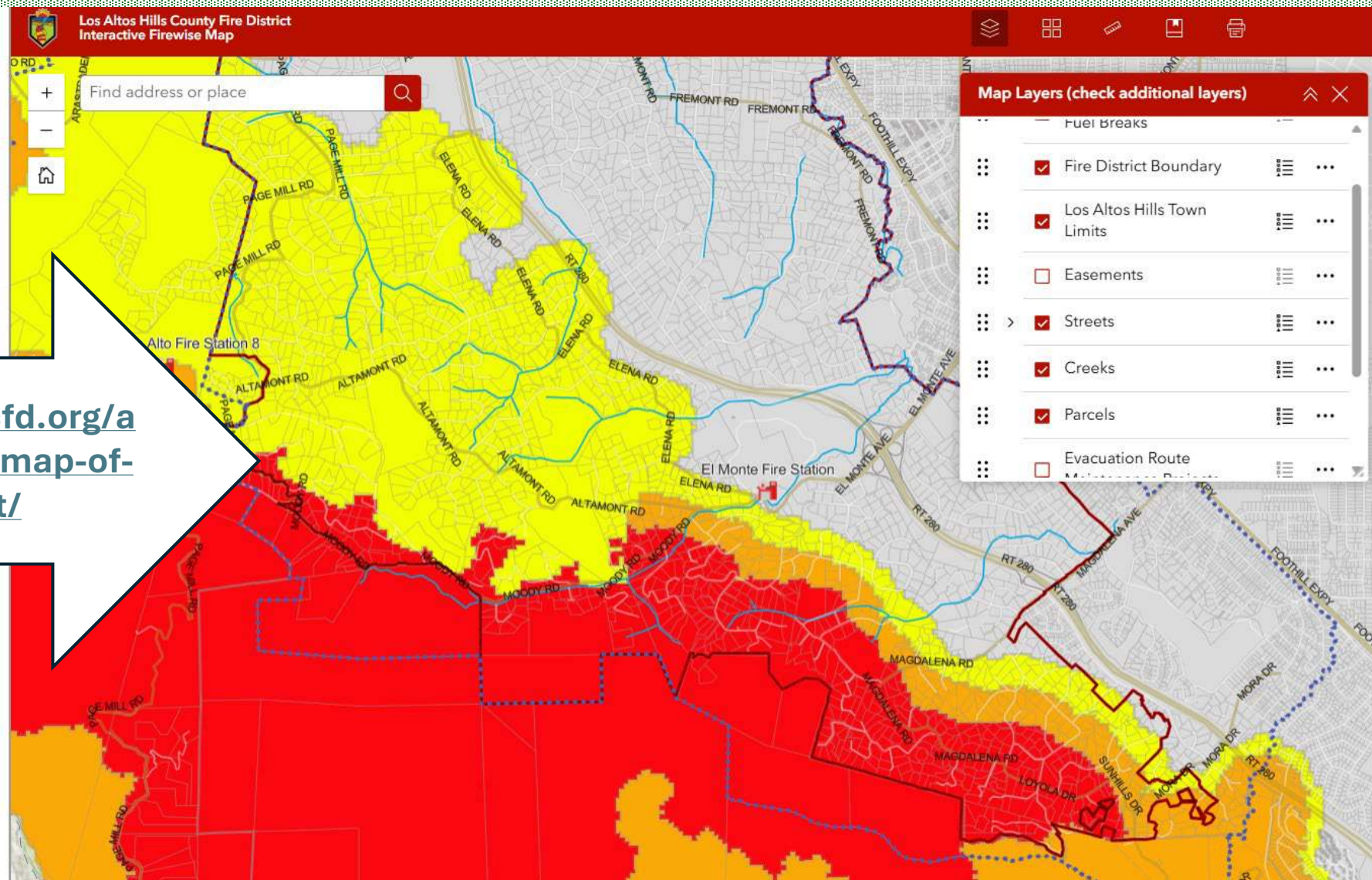
Focus on the minimum legal requirements enforced by your local fire department or state forestry agency (e.g., CAL FIRE Defensible Space).

BEST PRACTICES

While local ordinances set the minimum legal baseline for property clearance, science-based best practices provide a comprehensive system designed to withstand severe ember storms and radiant heat. Best Practices are **NOT** universally enforced.



<https://www.lahcfd.org/about-the-district/map-of-the-district/>



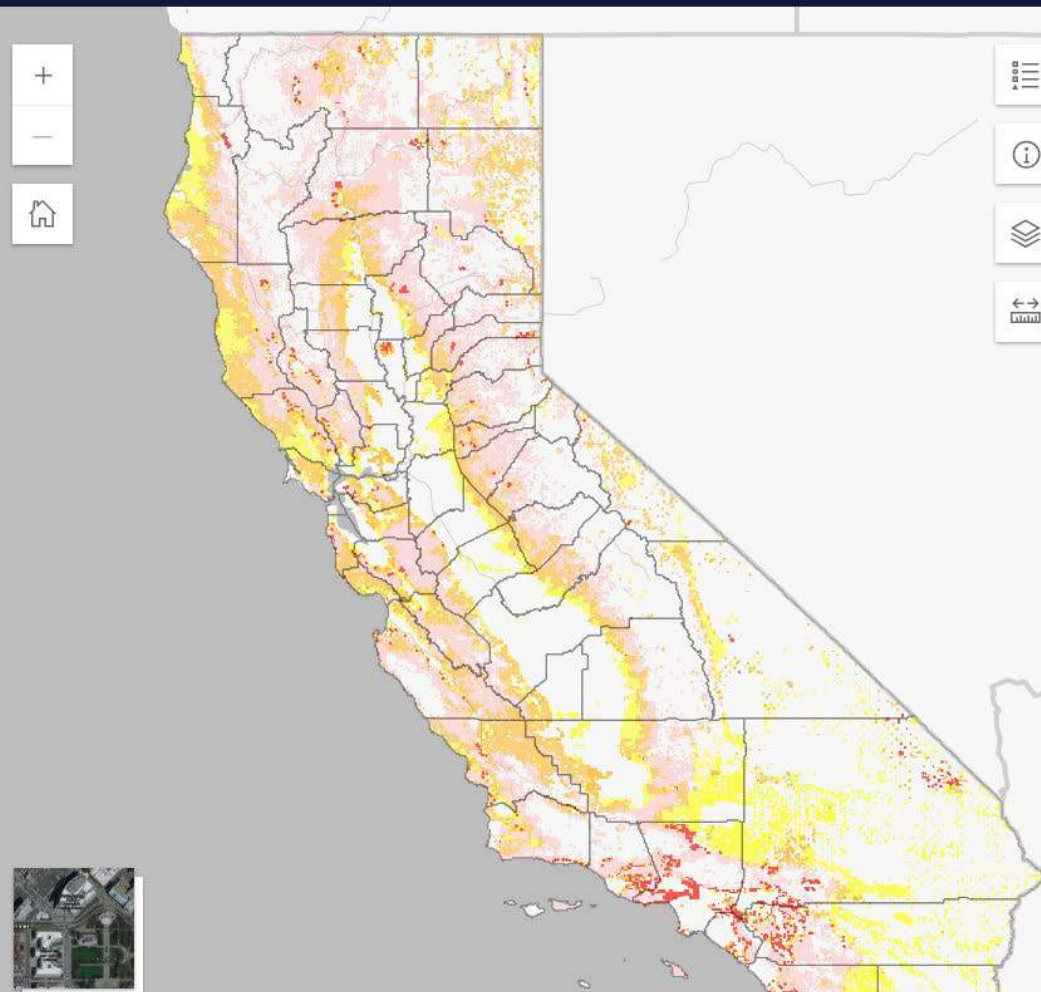
Am I in the designated WUI?



Find your Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ)

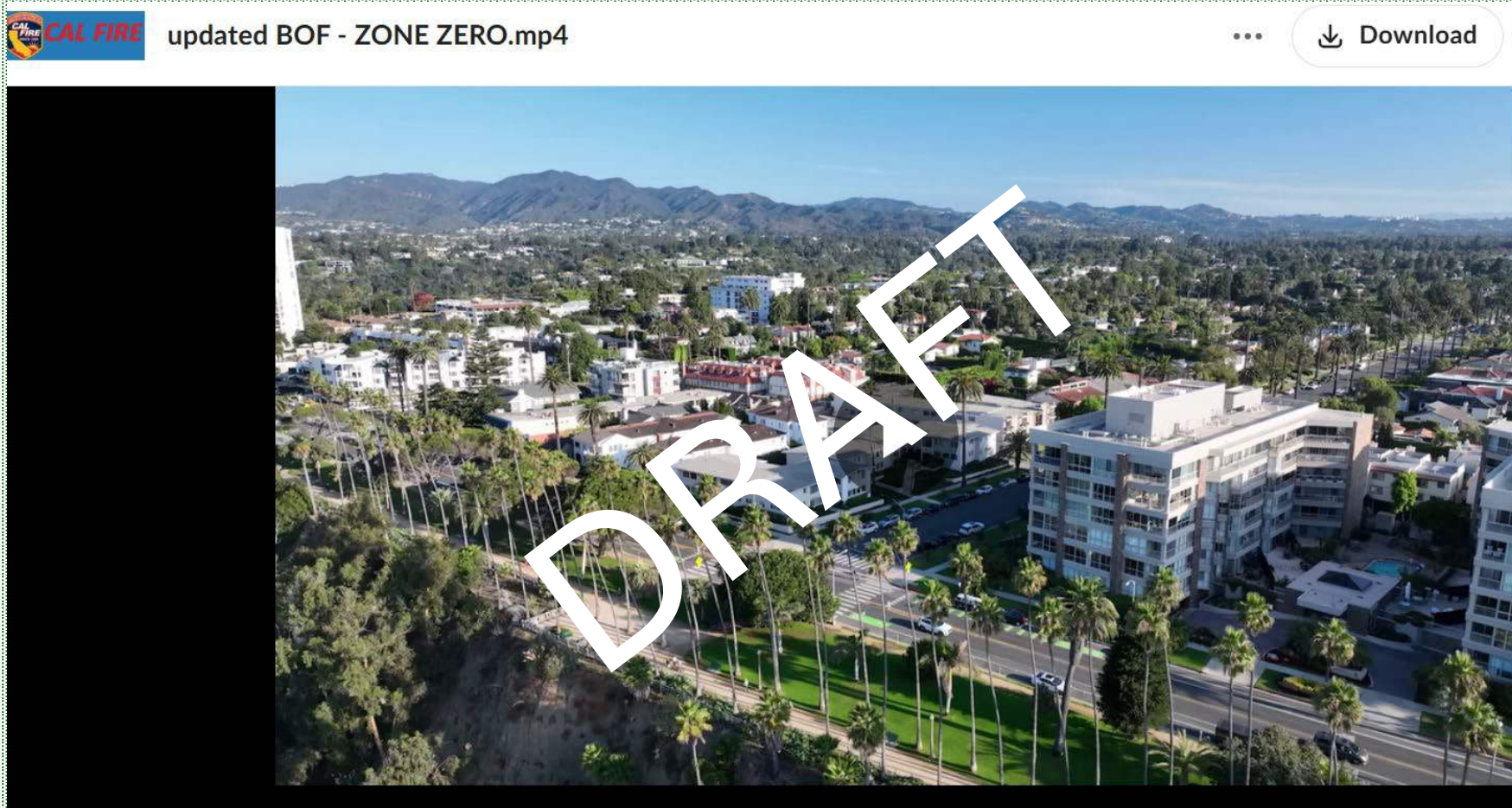
Search for your address

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5065c998b4b0462f9ec3c6c226c610a9>





7 minute VIDEO: Zone Zero / California Requirements in the WUI



<https://calfire.app.box.com/s/3ja7vbmjy4rqwuqxhs4lr9uw2ec04khn>

Some Common Myth-Understandings

*I'm not in
the WYUI or
a hazard
area. I don't
need to take
action*

*My house will be
ugly without my
foundation
plantings!*

*Eucalyptus
trees
EXPLODE*

*My
neighbor's
tree is the
problem!*



Trees

*I am
surrounded
by trees!*

*My
neighbor's
tree is the
problem!*



Eucalyptus Trees Literally Explode!



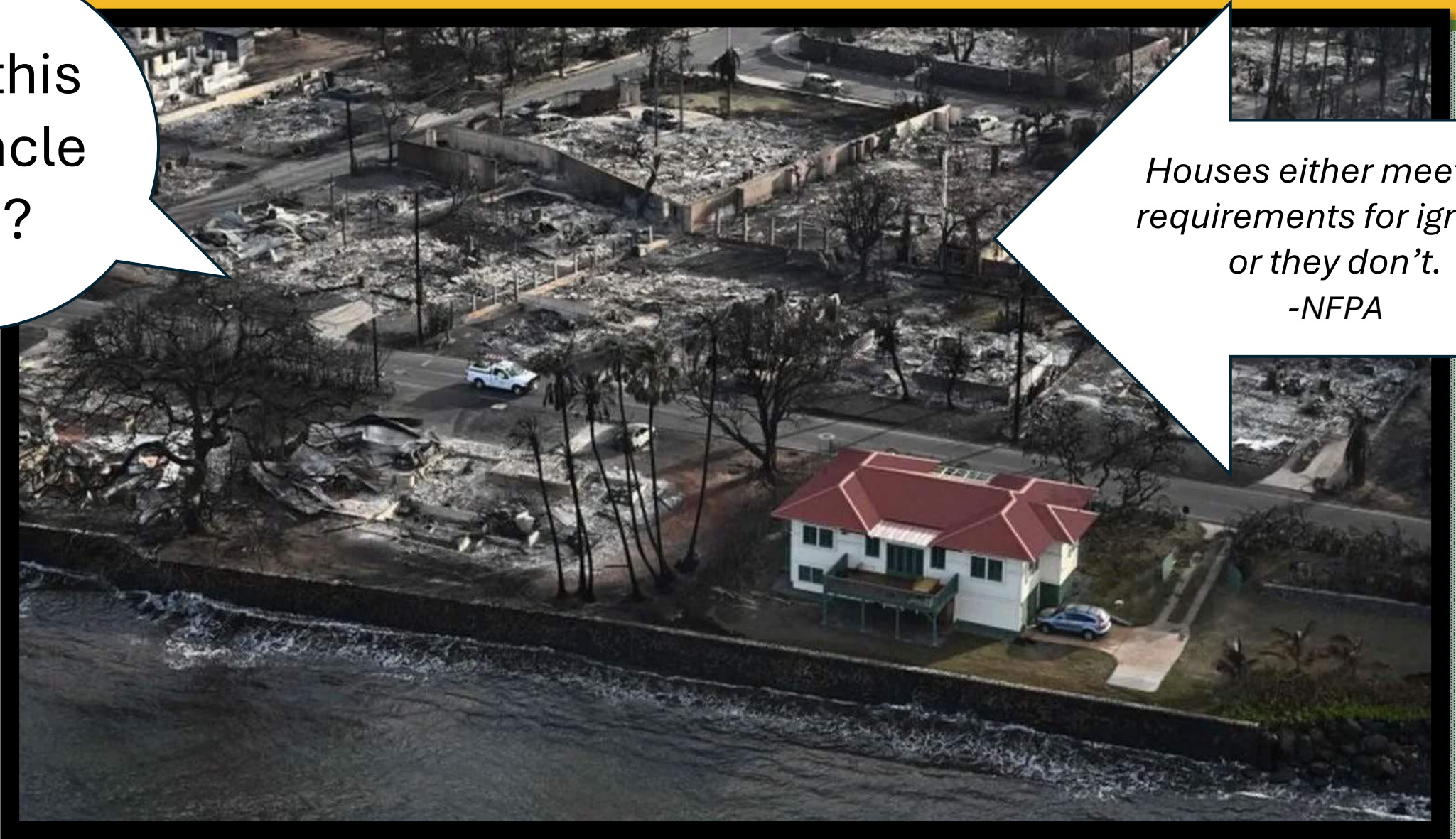
<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/X12RVGz7JNA>



Myth #2: The Miracle House

WAS this
a miracle
or...?

*Houses either meet the
requirements for ignition
or they don't.*
-NFPA





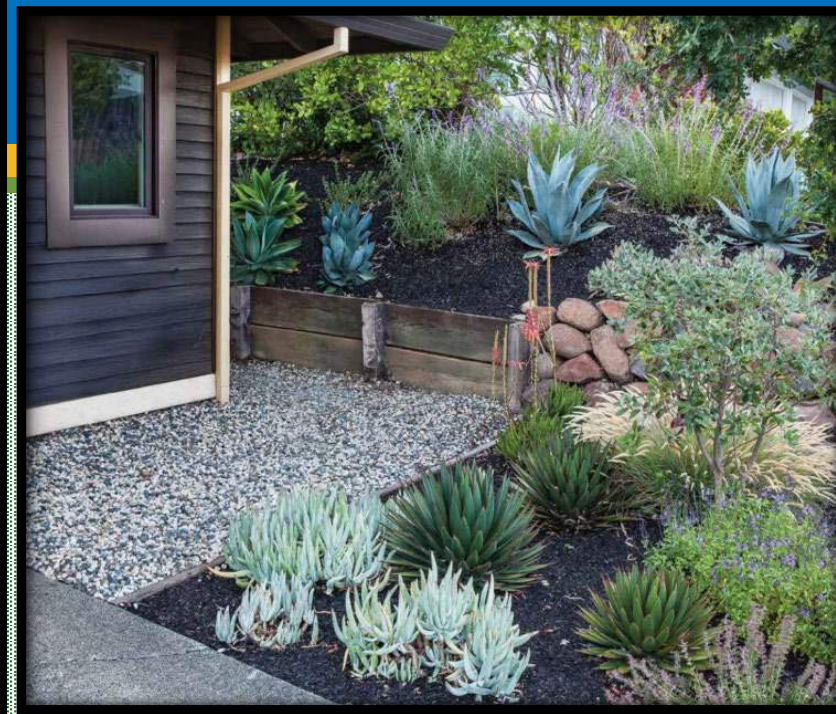
My home is not in the designated WUI area, so I don't need to do anything.



Coffey Park was NOT in the designated WUI either. Tubbs Fire 2017.



*My house will be
ugly without my
foundation
plantings!*



Your home can be safe
AND beautiful without
foundation plantings.



Fire Safe Marin: Preparing for Wildfire in Marin - Fire Safe Marin

Visualize a Beautiful AND
Fire Smart Yard



Prepare
Yourself

Harden
Your Home

Create a Fire
Smart Yard

Firewise

Resource

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY THIS SITE IS NOT MONITORED. FOR CURRENT INFORMATION GO TO [HTTPS://EMR.MARINCOUNTY.CA.GOV/](https://emr.marincounty.ca.gov/)

Fire Smart Landscape Basics

Firescaping uses fire-resistant designs and materials, in conjunction with careful selection of plants, to strategically resist the spread of fire to your home.



A VISUAL GUIDE FOR LANDSCAPERS **FIRE SMART YARDS** UNA GUÍA VISUAL PARA PAISAJISTAS



Fire Smart Yards: A visual guide for landscapers



I've addressed my defensible space! I don't need to harden my home.

NFPA® prefers the term **Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)** rather than **defensible space** because the word *defensible* can imply that someone will be present to actively defend the home during a wildfire.

In reality, a home can ignite even if all surrounding vegetation has been removed. Wind-driven embers can enter the home through vulnerable openings or broken windows and ignite combustible materials inside. The goal of the Home Ignition Zone is to reduce the home's overall vulnerability to ignition from embers, radiant heat, and direct flame contact.





INSURANCE

A ton of unknowns': months ago, LA residents lost wildfire insurance. Then the fires came

After insurers like State Farm dropped policies, to switch to the state's Fair plan was prohibitively pricey for many



Workers stand along Pacific Coast Highway over homes damaged by the Palisades fire in Malibu, California, on Wednesday. Photograph: Carolyn Kaster/AP

When James Borow realized last Tuesday that his Palisades house was on fire, he was 300 miles away in Las Vegas at the Consumer Electronics Show. The power was out at his house but a friend suggested he remotely turn on his Tesla and see if the cameras showed anything.

I lost my homeowner's insurance! Now what?

Insurance is SO expensive. Help!

I've done all this work on reducing risk. How do I get back on traditional insurance.

Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS): Wildfire Prepared Home Certification



**WILDFIRE
PREPARED**
— A PROGRAM OF IBHS —

wildfireprepared.org

**ADDITIONAL
REQUIREMENTS
FOR PLUS**

- ✓ Cover gutters.
- ✓ Enclose eaves.
- ✓ Install noncombustible siding.
- ✓ Upgrade windows & doors.
- ✓ Upgrade to a noncombustible deck.
- ✓ Move accessory structures at least 30 feet away.
- ✓ Remove parallel fencing.

BASE REQUIREMENTS

ROOF

- ✓ Ensure the roof covering is Class A fire-rated & maintained clear of debris.
- ✓ Choose noncombustible gutters & downspouts.

BUILDING FEATURES

- ✓ Install flame- and ember-resistant vents or 1/8-inch metal mesh over vents.
- ✓ Ensure 6-inch vertical noncombustible clearance at the base of exterior walls.
- ✓ Clear & maintain the underdeck area; enclose low-elevation decks.

0-5 FOOT NONCOMBUSTIBLE ZONE

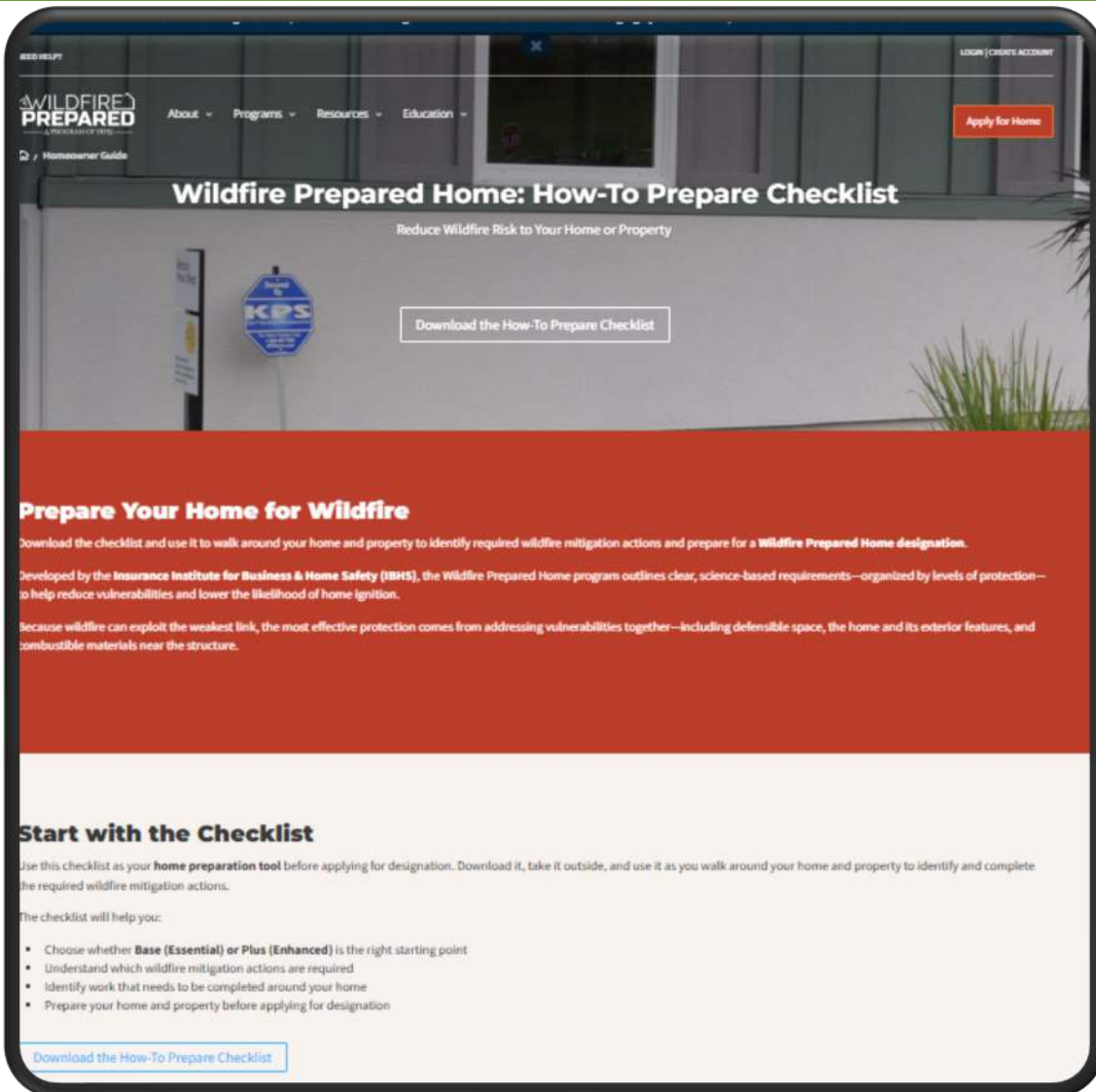
- ✓ Establish a **0-5 foot noncombustible zone** around the home and decks; remove overhanging branches; replace combustible fences within 5 feet.

5-30 FOOT DEFENSIBLE SPACE ZONE

- ✓ Maintain yard with spaced vegetation, structures, & other connective fuels; clear debris; remove firewood.
- ✓ Move structures at least 10 feet away & maintain a 0-5 foot noncombustible zone around them.



Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS): Wildfire Prepared Home Certification



<https://wildfireprepared.org/about/>



Fire Risk Reduction Community List Acceptance

Maximum Insurance Discount

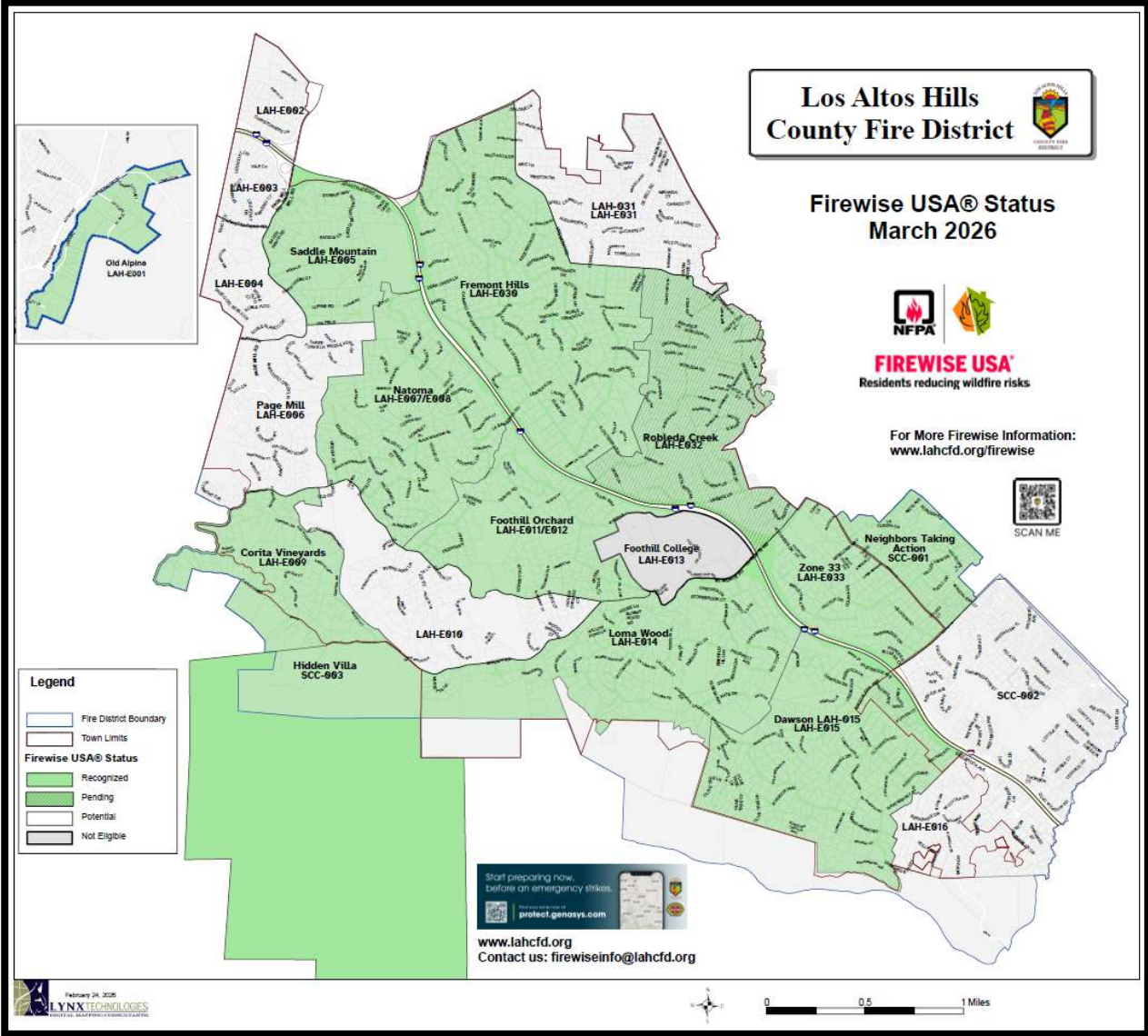
B. Community Level Mitigation Designations

This discount is automatically applied by the Company if the "Building Being Evaluated" is eligible.

Description	Maximum Premium Credit Available	Discount Applied?
The "Building Being Evaluated" is situated in a:		
a. Fire Risk Reduction Community listed by the Board of Forestry pursuant to Public Resources Code section 4290.1	[\$#.00]	[Yes/No]
b. "Firewise USA Site in Good Standing"	[\$#.00]	[Yes/No]
Note: In the event that a "Building Being Evaluated" is situated in a community that has attained both of the designations in items a. and b. above, and both designations are present at the same time, the maximum credit to be applied for Community-level Mitigation Designations is [\$#.00]. If the Community-level Mitigation Designations described in items a. and b. above have not both been attained, or they are not present at the same time, the maximum credit to be applied for Community-level Mitigation Designations is [\$#.00].		



Email firewiseinfo@lahcfd.





How to Navigate Non-Renewals

Resources available

Visit our Community
Outreach Page @
[May 2nd Event Joel
Laucher, United
Policyholders](#)

Los Altos Hills County Fire District Third Annual Wildfire Community Preparedness Day



Download the Presentations

Welcome, Introductions & Firewise Updates
with Denise Gluhan, LAHCFD

[Download Presentation \(P\)](#)

California wildfire in a warming climate
with Dr. Daniel L. Swain, Ph.D.

[Download Presentation \(P\)](#)

Home Insurance Shopping Tips
with Joel Laucher, United Policyholders

[Download Presentation \(P\)](#)

Beavers, Pixels and Wildfire: Increasing Community Resilience
with Dr. Cindy Schmidt, Ph.D., NASA Earth Science (ret.)

[Download Presentation \(P\)](#)

Speaker Biographies



Denise Gluhan
Los Altos Hills County Fire District

Captain Gluhan (ret.) retired from the Santa Clara County Fire Department in December 2018 and joined the Los Altos Hills County Fire District in 2019. She provides community education and information to the residents of Los Altos Hills, including emergency preparedness, wildfire preparedness, and the Firewise USA program.



Daniel L. Swain, Ph.D.

(Virtual presentation)

Daniel Swain, Ph.D., is a climate scientist with the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) focused on the dynamics and impacts of extreme events—including droughts, floods, storms, and wildfires—on a warming planet. Dr. Swain is an alumnus of the University of California, Davis (B.S., Atmospheric Science) and of Stanford University (Ph.D., Earth System Science), and completed his postdoctoral work at UCLA. He also authors the widely-read Weather West blog ([weatherwest.com](#)), which provides real-time perspectives on California weather and climate and can be found on Twitter ([@WeatherWest](#)) and YouTube ([@WeatherWest](#)).



Joel Laucher
United Policyholders

Joel Laucher works for [United Policyholders](#), a nonprofit that helps consumers with an array of insurance issues. He will discuss the basics everyone should know about the current, very challenging, homeowners insurance marketplace, including how to shop for coverage and how to possibly reduce your premium. Laucher previously worked for the California Department of Insurance.





2026 BRBP Workshop Series Calendar

**LOS ALTOS HILLS
COUNTY FIRE
DISTRICT**
presents

2026 Be Ready Be Prepared (BRBP) Workshop Series Calendar

All classes at Los Altos Hills Town Hall 10-12 Noon

1/24 Creating Emergency Plans Create an emergency plan, build supply kits, and stay informed with local alerts. Presented by Fire Capt Denise Gluhan (ret)	6/13 Fire Smart Landscaping Landscape with native plants while maintaining defensible space. Presented by Nikki Hanson of CA Sisters Landscaping and Fire Capt Paige Russell (ret)
2/28 Inclement Weather Prepare for inclement weather and protect your household. Presented by Fire Capt Denise Gluhan (ret)	7/25 Home Hardening And Zone 0 Learn home hardening and Zone 0 strategies to reduce wildfire risk. Presented by Fire Capt Paige Russell (ret)
3/28 Build a First Aid Kit Build or refresh a first aid kit and review basic first aid & 9-1-1 use. Presented by Ben Pantner of Pantner CPR Trainings and Fire Capt Denise Gluhan (ret)	8/22 Animal Preparedness Create a pet-inclusive emergency plan for evacuations and PSPS events. Presented by Julie Atwood of HALTER Project and Fire Capt Denise Gluhan (ret)
4/18 Make a Go Bag Build and customize emergency Go Bags for shelter-in-place or evacuation. Presented by Fire Capt Denise Gluhan (ret)	11/7 Fire Extinguishers & Holiday Safety Celebrate safely: check alarms, use decorations and heaters properly, and know P.A.S.S. Presented by Fire Capt Denise Gluhan (ret)

Register at lahcfd.org/classes Questions: education@lahcfd.org

**Classes in 2026 offered In Person
and Online!**

**To Register for Classes, Click
on the link below:**

[2026 Preparedness Calendar - Los Altos Hills
County Fire District](https://lahcfd.org/classes)

HIZ Assessment and Rebate Program

Register
Online
Today!

Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Assessment and Rebate Program - Los Altos Hills County Fire District



Home Ignition Zone

lahcfd.org/hiz-program

LOS ALTOS HILLS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT RESIDENTS:

You are eligible to participate in the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Assessment and Rebate Program.

PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:

- Onsite evaluation of your property to identify wildfire ignition risks
- Personalized HIZ report with recommendations to mitigate fire risk
- Up to \$3,000 in matching funds for completing rebate-eligible defensible space improvements

REGISTER ONLINE:
lahcfd.org/hiz



PLEASE NOTE: Improvements must be within the 100-ft defensible space zone and completed by a licensed contractor to be eligible for the rebate. Tree removal and some exclusions do not qualify for a rebate. Please read the Program Advisory on the registration page for further details.



BLUE DASHED BOUNDARY: REBATE-ELIGIBLE ZONE

HIZ Assessment and Rebate Program brought to you by:





Defensible Space Brush Chipping & Removal Program



2026 Program Schedule

The 2026 Defensible Space Brush Chipping & Debris Removal Program dates are subject to change and are dependent on weather, red flag warnings, and other safety conditions.

To request program services, visit: <https://www.lahcfd.org/dsbcregistration/>



Chipping Month	Online Registration Available	Deadline for Registration	Tentative Chipping Dates*
June 2026	May 4, 2026	May 25, 2026	June 8-19, 2026
July 2026	June 8, 2026	June 29, 2026	July 13-24, 2026
August 2026	July 6, 2026	July 27, 2026	August 10-21, 2026
September 2026	August 3, 2026	August 24, 2026	September 7-18, 2026
October 2026	September 7, 2026	September 28, 2026	October 12-23, 2026
November 2026	October 5, 2026	October 26, 2026	November 9-20, 2026
December 2026	November 2, 2026	November 23, 2026	December 7-18, 2026



Questions?



Contact Us

CERT: cert@lahcfd.org

Firewise: firewiseinfo@lahcfd.org

HIZ: hiz@lahcfd.org

General Class Info: education@lahcfd.org



Thank you!