



WYNOLA ESTATES
FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

ZONE 0 - Can I Keep My House From Burning Down?



Southern California Santa Ana Winds about 2003. Photo courtesy of NOAA

Many destructive fires in Southern California are wind driven fires from seasonal Santa Ana winds. These winds are responsible for about 90% of the total area burned during the fall and winter wildfire seasons. Historically, wildland fuel reduction was the primary tool used to save homes. Decades of research now shows the immediate surroundings of a structure are largely responsible for damage or loss. Hence the new zone 0 was updated from zone 1 to its own designation.



Eaton fire in Altadena, California, on Jan 8, 2025.

The majority of homes lost to wildfire are first ignited by embers and small flames. With few exceptions, this held true for the Witch Fire, one of the catastrophic fires studied. By reducing the susceptibility of embers for the home, and the area immediately around the structure (“home ignition zone”), the chances of surviving a wildfire with minimal or no damaged have greatly increased.

In addition, priority should be given to the area 100-200 feet from the home. Clearing the 5’ zone does not replace clearing the outer zones around the home. These cleared zones are intended to slow the fire down and lower flame height.

The Noncombustible Zone 0 0-5 feet from the home

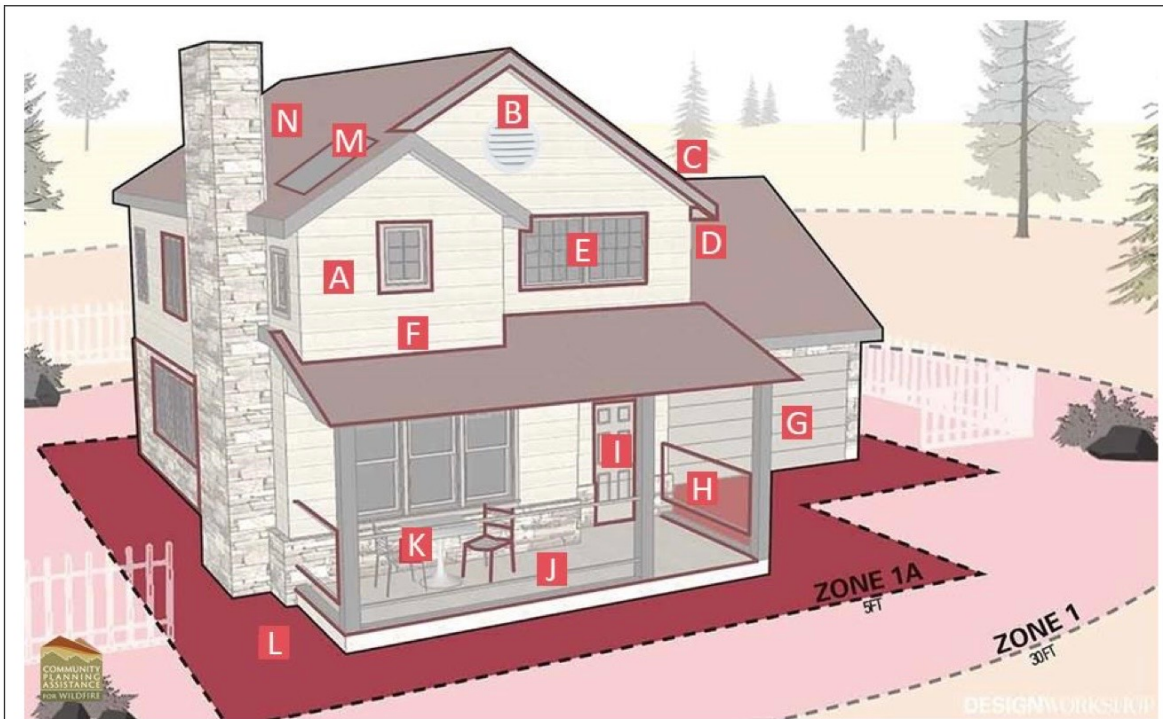
Includes the home. This is the zone most vulnerable to embers. Harden the home to wildfire with ignition-resistant siding, roofs, decks, attic vents, eaves, and windows. Avoid storing combustible materials on or under decks. Remove vegetation and flammable mulch to create a five-foot buffer zone around the home. Clean gutters and roofs of debris.

The Intermediate Zone 1 5-30 feet from the home

Use careful landscaping to reduce the continuity of fuels and help slow fire down. Remove branches that overhang the structure. Replace wood fencing with noncombustible metal fencing where it attaches to the home.

The Extended Zone 2 30-100+ feet from the home

Space and prune trees and vegetation to keep flames smaller, lower to the ground, and to interrupt fire's path.



- A.** Use noncombustible or ignition resistant siding and trim (e.g., stucco, fiber cement, fire-retardant treated wood).
- B.** Cover vent openings with 1/16th to 1/8th inch corrosion-resistant metal mesh.
- C.** Clear debris from roof and gutters regularly. Install noncombustible gutters, gutter covers, and downspouts.
- D.** Install ignition-resistant or noncombustible roofs (composition, metal, or tile). Use noncombustible eaves and cover eaves with screened vents.
- E.** Install multi-pane windows with at least one tempered-glass pane and metal mesh screens. Use noncombustible materials for window frames. Limit the size and number of windows facing large areas of vegetation.
- F.** Install a 6-inch vertical noncombustible surface on all gables above roofs.
- G.** Install weather stripping around and under garage doors. Consider installing 1-hour fire rated garage doors.
- H.** Avoid combustible lattice, trellis, or other decorative features.
- I.** Install weather stripping around and under doors. Consider installing a 1-hour fire rated door.
- J.** Use ignition-resistant or noncombustible decking. Enclose crawl spaces. Remove combustible materials from underneath, on top of, or within 5 feet of deck.
- K.** Use noncombustible patio furniture.
- L.** Establish and maintain a 5-foot noncombustible buffer around the home. Use noncombustible fencing within this zone.
- M.** Use glass panes for skylights, not materials that can melt (e.g., plexiglass).
- N.** Cover chimneys and stovepipe outlets with 3/8th to 1/2 inch corrosion-resistant metal mesh.

A home can never be made fireproof, but home hardening practices decrease the chance that flames, radiant heat, and embers will ignite your home. Infographic by [Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire](#) with modifications to include information from [CAL FIRE](#).

Cal Fire designates fire hazard severity zones based on burn history, vegetation, terrain and climate, including wind patterns. We are in the highest risk zone. Homes in these zones have to be maintained to higher standards. As a community we can get this done