



WYNOLA ESTATES
FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

OWN YOUR ZONE - PART 1 - EMBERS



Zone 0 is all about embers. Embers can travel over a mile ahead of the fire causing smaller fires known as spot fires. The traditional approach to wildfire protection focuses on vegetation, but that is only 1/2 the equation. What we want to protect is our families and homes. Homes burn because they are flammable. So how do we make them less flammable? We can substantially reduce risk to our home by implementing zone zero guidelines.

Zone 0", in defensible space terms, refers to the first five feet of space that extends out from the walls or an attached deck of your home. This area was included in Zone 1 in the past but is being looked at more closely now, due to the tragic and devastating wildfires across California over the last few decades. Science and data are showing us this 5' area of a home can be the most vulnerable to ignition from embers and smoldering fires, igniting fences and wood gates, home siding, leaf litter or vegetation, causing the structure to burn.

Structures Destroyed by Wildfires

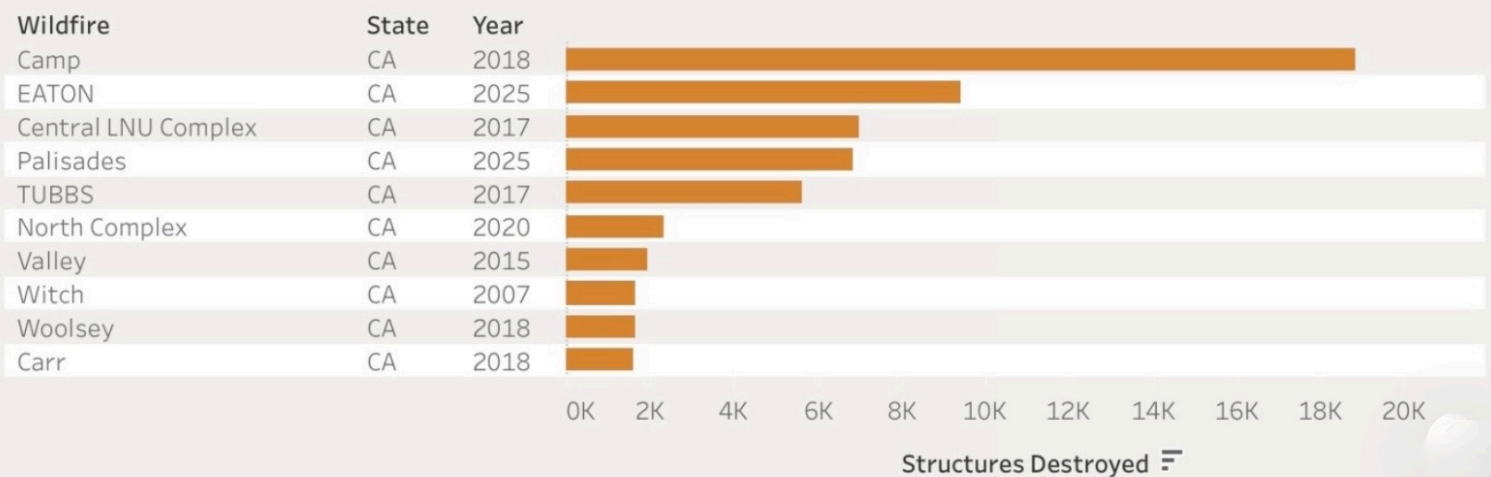


87,596 structures
destroyed (2006 to 2025)



499 wildfires that
destroyed structures

Top 10 Most Destructive Fires



Vegetation in Zone 0: Amplifying Damage to Structures

Vegetation within the first five feet of a home—known as **Zone 0**—significantly increases heat exposure during a wildfire and can amplify structure damage, even when plants are well-watered.

These Pacific Palisades homes had well watered plants next to the home. The plants still burn and the home surface area next to the plants is weakened from prolonged contact with the smoldering plant matter, putting the home at greater risk for fire. The best science on wildfire risk reduction shows that there should be **no** combustible materials of any kind within zero to five feet of your home.



Figure 1. Examples of the range of damage observed to homes and vegetation during post-event damage investigations. Figure (a) shows damage documented during an IBHS field investigation in LA after the Palisades Fires (2025). Figures (b), (c), and (d) are courtesy of CAL FIRE.



Example of vegetation in small amounts located in Zone 0 creating a pathway for fire spread: Wood mulch provided a pathway for fire to get close to the building and ignite a hot tub during the Glass Fire 2020

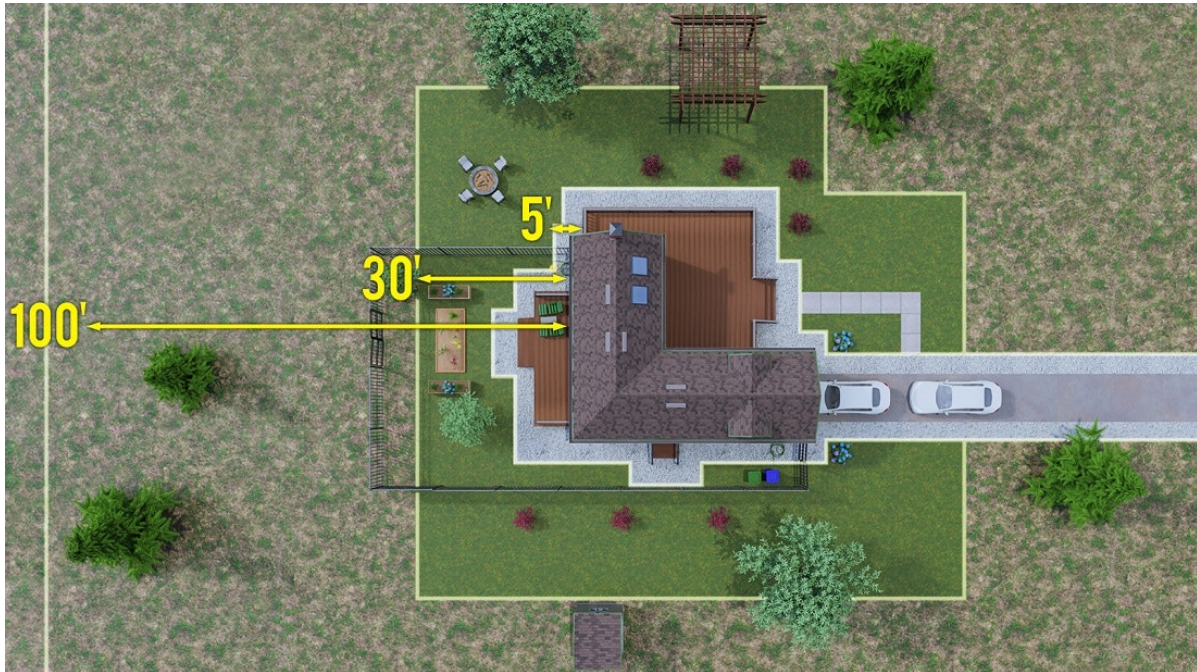
Key Takeaways:

Damage Amplifiers: Vegetation in Zone 0 amplifies the damage to homes, increasing the likelihood of structure ignitions and the severity of damage.

Moisture: Even well-hydrated plants will ignite and burn in conditions common during a suburban wildfire conflagration. The moisture content of plants increases the time to ignition, which in turn allows the structure to preheat longer, making the structure more susceptible to ignition when the vegetation in Zone 0 ignites.

Wind & Interventions: Local wind environments influence wind speed and direction. These fluctuations, along with firefighter interventions, help explain some of the contrasting observations regarding consumed and unconsumed vegetation documented in the field during post-event damage investigations after a conflagration.

This Means Zone 0 vegetation—regardless of species or moisture—poses a significant ignition risk to homes during wildfires. Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety



What to do:

1. **Use hardscape** like gravel, pavers, or concrete. No combustible bark or mulch.
2. **Remove all dead and dying plants**, weeds, and debris (leaves, needles, etc.) from your roof, gutter, deck, porch, stairways, and under any areas of your home.
3. **Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney** or stovepipe outlet.
4. **Limit combustible items** (like outdoor furniture and planters) on top of decks.
5. **Relocate firewood and lumber** to Zone 2.
6. **Replace combustible fencing, gates, and arbors** attached to the home with noncombustible alternatives.
7. **Consider relocating garbage and recycling containers** outside this zone.

Consider relocating boats, RVs, vehicles, and other combustible items outside this zone.

A VISUAL GUIDE FOR LANDSCAPERS

FIRE SMART YARDS

UNA GUÍA VISUAL PARA PAISAJISTAS



<https://firesafemarin.org/create-a-fire-smart-yard/>.

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