



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

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"Proud Protectors of Life, Property, and the Environment"

DARYL L. OSBY
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

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April 15, 2019

Dear Residents:

The 2018 Fire Season was one of the most devastating fire seasons in California history. Large, wind-driven fires, like the Camp and the Woolsey Fires, led to death and destruction across the State. Following the fires, California experienced above-average rainfall during the winter months. Now, as we move toward our dry summer season, we have abundant new vegetation that will soon dry out and increase the threat of fire.

There is no guarantee any structure will survive the indiscriminate destruction of a wind-driven fire. However, studies have identified three factors that may decide whether or not your home survives the next wildland fire: Ornamental vegetation, landscape maintenance, and hardening structures to resist catching fire from wind-blown embers. Embers are lightweight, burning pieces of vegetation or construction material which are sent high into the air by winds or smoke and can land a mile or more away, starting new fires.

In the past, Los Angeles County Fire Department personnel focused mainly on removing native vegetation during annual defensible space inspections. However, it has become clear that ornamental vegetation is also a major ember producer leading to structure fires. Vegetation that looks green on the surface may be hiding dead or dying vegetation that can catch fire from flying embers. For this reason, Department personnel will be looking much closer at maintaining your ornamental vegetation during this year's inspection. The Department has also developed the enclosed brochure titled, *"A Guide to Defensible Space, Ornamental Vegetation Maintenance,"* for you to refer to while reviewing your own property.

Ember-proofing, or "hardening" your home may be the critical difference between a home surviving or being destroyed during a wildland fire. To assist you with hardening your home, the Department has developed the enclosed information sheet titled, *"How to Safeguard (Harden) Your Home."* Choosing the right fire-resistant materials to build and protect your home as well as preparing your property can lessen the threat of fire and windblown embers.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department takes every precaution to protect you and your home from wildland fires. However, preparing your family and property prior to the next

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wildland fire will greatly increase the chances that your family will be able to evacuate safely and your home will survive.

You can prepare your family now by going to www.fire.lacounty.gov/rsg and developing a *Ready! Set! Go! Wildfire Action Plan*. The *Ready! Set! Go! Wildfire Action Plan* provides details on how to retrofit your home with fire-resistive features, create defensible space, and develop a family evacuation and communication plan.

You play an important role in protecting your family and property. Through advance planning and preparation, we can all be ready for the next wildland fire. For additional information, please visit our website at www.fire.lacounty.gov, follow us on social media, or call our public information team at (323) 881-2411.

Stay safe,


DARYL L. OSBY, FIRE CHIEF

Enclosure