

Controlling Your Own Destiny:

A Local Leader's Toolbox for Reducing Wildfire Risk

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025 | 11 AM - 12:30 PM









THANKS FOR JOINING US TODAY!

Host & Moderator

MELISSA KUEHNE
Director of Enterprise Programs
and Special Projects
Institute for Local Government





OVERVIEW

Welcome & Introductions

Presentations & Discussion on Wildfire Risk Reduction:

- Dave Winnacker Retired Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief and RPMG Consultant
- Jeff Isaacs Current Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief
- Casey Irving Current Moraga-Orinda Fire District Marshal

Audience Q&A

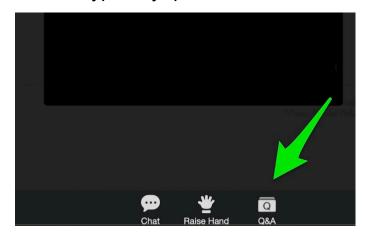
Wrap Up & Adjourn

We welcome your written questions and comments in Zoom's Q&A feature throughout the webinar!



TECH OVERVIEW & HOUSEKEEPING

- All webinar participants will be on MUTE for the duration of the event.
- Please type any questions for into the Q&A BOX at any time during the session.



A recording of the session will be available shortly after the webinar.



ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ILG)



NON-PROFIT, NON-PARTISAN AND HERE TO HELP

- The Institute for Local Government is the nonprofit training and education affiliate of three statewide local government associations
- Together with our affiliates, we serve over 2,500 local agencies – cities, towns, counties, and special districts
- We provide practical and easy-to-use resources so local agencies can effectively implement policies on the ground







California Special
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Our mission is to help local government leaders navigate complexity, increase capacity & build trust in their communities.



Services

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Promoting Good Government at the Local Level

REDUCING YOUR COMMUNITY'S WILDFIRE RISK

A free webinar series for local government staff & elected officials



Join us for a series of four free webinars, starting in September 2025. You will learn from subject matter experts and real-world practitioners about the action steps you can take to minimize your community's wildfire risk.

This series is hosted by the Institute for Local Government, in partnership with





Mon, Jan. 26, 2026, 11 AM – 12:30 PM | Ch-Ch-Changes: CEQA and How It Impacts Your Wildfire Risk Reduction **Efforts**

Registration Now Open!



TODAY'S PANELISTS



Dave Winnacker
Retired Moringa-Orinda Fire
District Chief
RPMG Consultant



Jeff Isaacs
Current Moringa-Orinda Fire
District Chief



Casey Irving
Current Moringa-Orinda Fire
District Marshal





The Application of State Fire Safe Minimums in California

Dave Winnacker Jeff Isaacs Casey Irving

Nov 2025

Urban Fire Loss Framework



Agenda

- Wildfire and Wildfire Initiated Urban Fire Review
- State Laws
- Authority to adopt
- Steps to adopt
- Reasons to adopt more restrictive measures
- Tools for residents to demystify fire safe requirements
- Modifications and AMMRs
- State maps purpose and background
- Zone Zero update

Urban Fire Loss Framework





Highly Receptive Fuels

Pre-Conditions

Rapid Fire Spread Through Vegetation

Wildfire

Vulnerable Structures at Entry Points

> Firefighting Suppression Outpaced

WUI Fire

Tightly-spaced Contiguous Structures

Sustained Urban Fire Spread

Urban Fire

Vegetation Fire Pathways

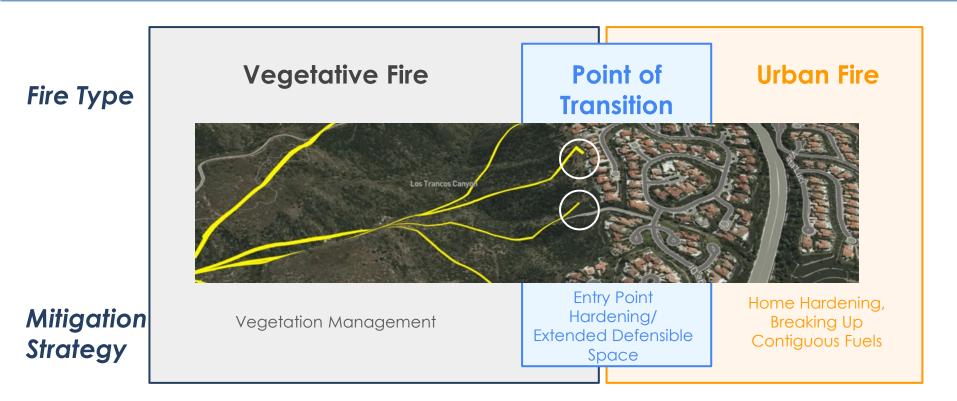
Where will fire move most rapidly across the landscape and expose values at risk?

Urban Fire Spread

How will fire travel within the built environment?

Wildland Initiated Urban Fire Sequence





Mitigation effectiveness is measured by **structures protected** and **minutes gained** for the firefighting response

Fire Spread Mechanisms



Phase: Wildland Fire

Fire spreads from vegetation to vegetation through ground and ember components

Mechanism: Ground Fire

Wind-driven fire burning through surface vegetation

Mechanism: Vegetation Embercast

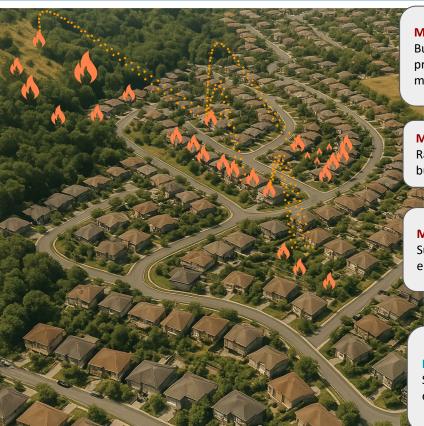
Burning material carried by the wind produced by vegetation

Phase: Transition

Initial structures are ignited by vegetation, creating new fire behavior dynamics.

Phase: Urban Fire

Fire burns through structures, landscaping, and other built environment elements.



Mechanism: Structure Embercast

Burning material carried by the wind produced by structures. Heavier and carry more energy than vegetation embers.

Mechanism: Direct Heat Transfer

Radiant and convective heat transfer from burning structures to neighbors.

Mechanism: Surface Fire Spread

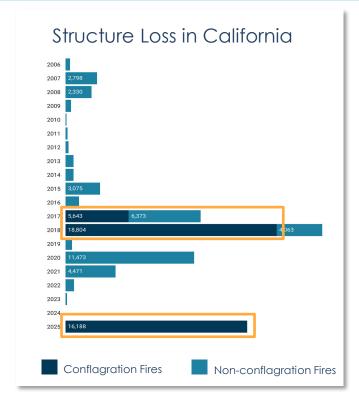
Surface fire spread between landscaping elements and adjacent structures.

Phase: Structure to Vegetation

Structures can ignite vegetation through embers, direct heating, or surface spread.

Major Loss, Few Fires





Only 4 Fires Account for 50% of California's Structure Loss

These fires were characterized by high spread rates under extreme weather conditions

80,745

Total Structures
Burned

40,110

Conflagration
Structures Burned

50.3%

Conflagration Rate

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State Laws



The State of California has a long history of adopting fire safe laws, dating back to the 1960s. These laws are regularly updated and include:

- 1. Defensible Space in PRC and Government Code
- 2. Restrictive vegetation plans in Chapter 49 of the Fire Code
- 3. Restrictive land use requirements in Title 14 of the CCR
- 4. Application of enhanced building code requirements in Chapter 7A of the Building Code (Soon to be WUI Code)
- 5. Required materials in OSFM's BML under Title 19 of the CCR

Defensible Space

- Public Resource Code 4291 and Government Code 51182 required 30' of defensible space starting in 1965. In 2008, this was extended to 100', or the property line, whichever is closer. Of note, standard CEQA exemptions only cover fuel mitigation work within 30'.
- AB 3079 (2020 Friedman) created a new Ember Resistant Zone, referred to as Zone 0. The regulation that will enact this requirement is currently being developed by the Board of Forestry in compliance with an Executive Order issued in January.



Chapter 49



Chapter 49 applies to new construction in SRA and new construction in VHFHSZs in LRA as well as WUI Fire Areas or other areas designated by the local agency

Provisions include:

- Components of fire plans, where required
- Components of vegetation management plans, where required
- 3. Access requirements

Section 4901 General

4901.1 Scope

This chapter contains minimum requirements to mitigate conditions that might cause a fire originating in a structure to ignite vegetation in the Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area, and conversely, a wildfire burning in vegetative fuels to transmit fire to buildings and threaten to destroy life, overwhelm fire suppression capabilities or result in large property losses.

4901.2 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide minimum standards to reduce the likelihood of life and property loss due to a wildfire through the use of performance and prescriptive requirements for construction and development in State Responsibility Areas (SRA) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) designated as a Moderate, High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

Title 14



Title 14 applies to new parcels or tentative maps created after 1991 in SRA and 2021 in LRA VHFHSZ. Of note, the requirements may be applied on existing parcels "to the extent that conditions relating to the perimeters and access to the Buildings were not imposed as part of the approval of the parcel or tentative map."

Subchapter 2. State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations

Article 1. Administration

Article 2. Ingress and Egress

Article 3. Signing and Building Numbering

Article 4. Emergency Water Standards

Article 5. Building Siting, Setbacks, and Fuel Modification

Chapter 7A/WUI Code



Identifies the materials and methods of assembly required in any FHSZ and H/VHFHSZs in LRA. Of note, this includes defensible space requirements in LRA HFHSZs as a condition of approval.

The WUI Code will become Part 7 of Title 24 (Building Standards Code) effective January, 2026.

Both include defensible space requirements by reference.

Both allow for applicants to request Modifications and AMMRs

Modifications are for use in cases where practical difficulties preclude implementation of code requirements.

Alternate Means and Measures Requests are for use in cases where the applicant can achieve the same practical effect as the code requirement IAW with approved testing methods.

Both can be applied if CEQA (taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters) considerations are possible.

Building Material List & Title 19



Under the authority derived from Title 19, OSFM maintains the Building Material Listing

- -Provides a list of approved materials to meet WUI construction requirements
- -Updated regularly based on new materials being brought to market

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of FORESTRY and FIRE PROTECTION OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



STATE FIRE MARSHAL LISTED WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) PRODUCTS HANDBOOK

Published by CAL FIRE

FIRE ENGINEERING AND INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION
BUILDING MATERIALS LISTING PROGRAM
September 2, 2025

Authority and Reasons to Adopt



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Authority



Both PRC (SRA) and GC (LRA) explicitly provide Local Agencies the authority to adopt more restrictive fire safety measures

Government Code 51175 (c) It is not the intent of the Legislature in enacting this chapter to limit or restrict the authority of a local agency to impose more restrictive fire and public safety requirements, as otherwise authorized by law.

PRC 4117 Any county, city, or district may adopt ordinances, rules, or regulations to provide fire prevention restrictions or regulations that are necessary to meet local conditions of weather, vegetation, or other fire hazards. Such ordinances, rules, or regulations may be more restrictive than state statutes in order to meet local fire hazard conditions.

Steps To Adopt



Should the local agency choose to adopt more restrictive measures, an ordinance, supported by a substantial finding of fact shall be adopted.

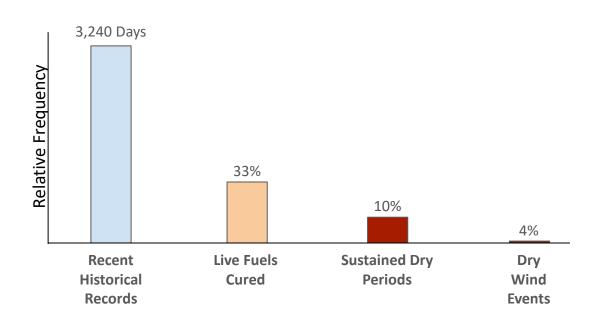
The finding of fact should include evidence of wildfire risk factors:

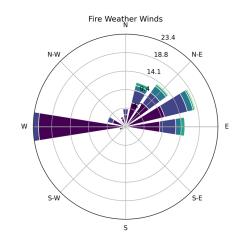
- Vegetation
- 2. Weather
- 3. Topography
- 4. Sources of Ignition
- 5. Fire History

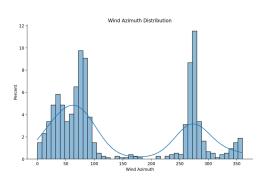
Alisa Laguna – Fire Weather Assessment



Strong dry winds tend to come either from the northeast/east or from the west. Fire weather winds from the south or directly from the north are unlikely. Newport Beach experiences high-severity fire weather events about 14 days per year.







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Newport Beach Fire History



Fire history indicates fast-moving, potentially destructive fires are common in this area during late fall Santa Ana events.

Crystal Cove State
Park provides the
greatest fuel
continuity between
development and
vegetated open
spaces in alignment
with the wind.



Coastal Fire, May 2022

Laguna Fire, October 1993, 4.4 miles per hour rate of spread

Crystal Cove / Los Trancos – NE Wind

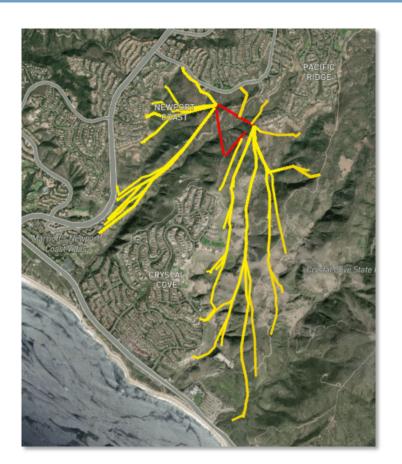


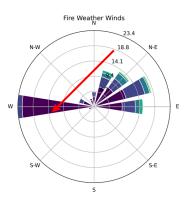
Los Trancos Canyon

Developments bordering Los Trancos Canyon are also at risk due to extensive connectivity with upwind fuels

Crystal Cove

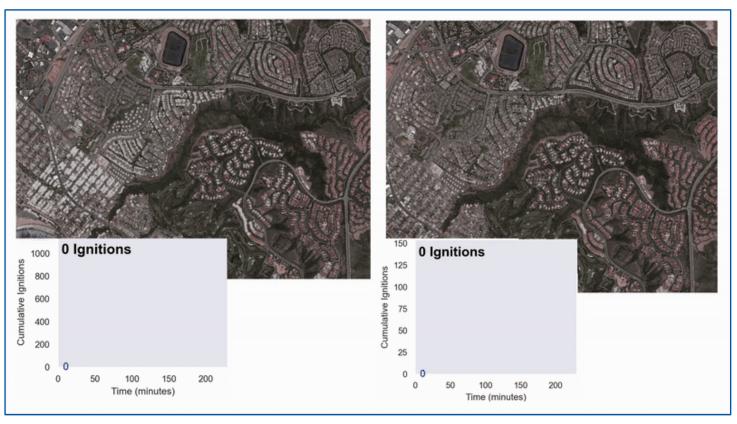
Northeast aspect of the development is most likely to be exposed to wind-driven fire





Greatest threat is a fire burning during a Santa Ana wind event through Crystal Cove state park or connected open space. North wind events tend to be drier, stronger, and longer duration events than west winds.

Potential Risk Reduction – Targeted Mitigation



Targeted mitigations are projected to reduce consequences of fire in Buck Gully by about 83% after 4 hours.

Initial Igntions: 420 Mitigated Ignitions: 74 Avoided Ignitions: Δ -349

Hardened Parcels: 132

Return on Investment: 2.6

Tools



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Demystifying Fire and Requirements

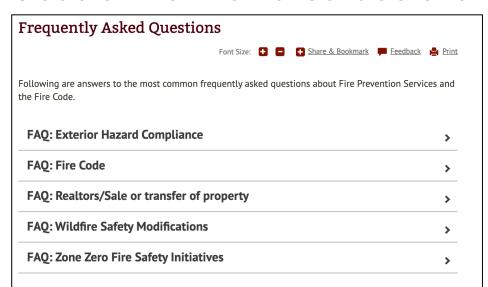


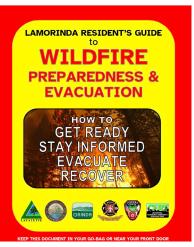
Start with explaining local fire conditions and characteristics (how)

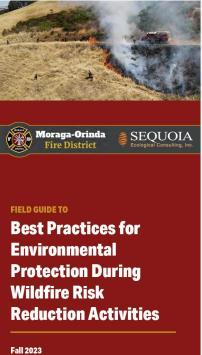
Tie these to mitigations (what)

And match heat transfer to specific mitigations (why)

Include environmental considerations







Modifications and AMMRs



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AMMRs and Modifications



Generally not well understood by the public, but these have been part of the fire code for decades.

Make the submission of requests simple and complete

Moraga Orinda Fire District CA						🖪 Sign i
Modifications	CHANGE TOPIC EF	Map	Satellite	J.	RHEEM VALLEY	Sylver Dr L
* Enter issue location or drag red dotted marker on map		LOST VALL	EY Orin Oaks	nda Park	DHEEM	15
Enter a location				Moraga Way	RHEEM VALLEY MANOR	BLUFFS
* Describe modification(s) and reason(s):	po	Pinehust Ra		Country Club	Commons Park ST. MARYS Moraga SARDENS	
* Specific violation(s) requesting a modification:		CA	NYON El Vista S	BMUD Valle daging Area	Gatherhouse Inter Design Studio	
* Have you reviewed the Wildfire FAQ?				1	LARCH	
(Please Select)	n irk	76	Reinhardt Redwood gional Park	(A)	Rancho Laguna Park	
* Inspection Number:		Google	•	Issue location	eyboard shortcuts Map data ©2025 of Other issues for top	
* Describe your problem or question in detail						
Drag image(s) here, or click to select file	(s)					

Tools



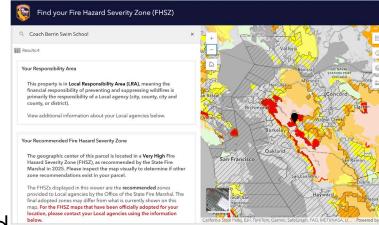
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State Maps



- History of Fire Hazard Severity Zones
- 2. Purpose of Fire Hazard Severity Zones
- 3. SRA maps
- 4. LRA maps
- Use by Insurance Industry
- 6. Frequency of updates
- How risk reduction activity is reflected



Zone Zero Update



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Zone Zero Update



- 1. The Board of Forestry continues to hold public hearings while updating the PLEAD. The most recent version includes multiple options with significant variation.
- 2. Per Executive Order N-18-25 the regulation shall be published no later than 1 January, 2026.
- Interested agencies and residents should visit the BOF website for the latest information or to provide comment at upcoming hearings.

AUDIENCE Q&A

What questions or comments do you have for us?





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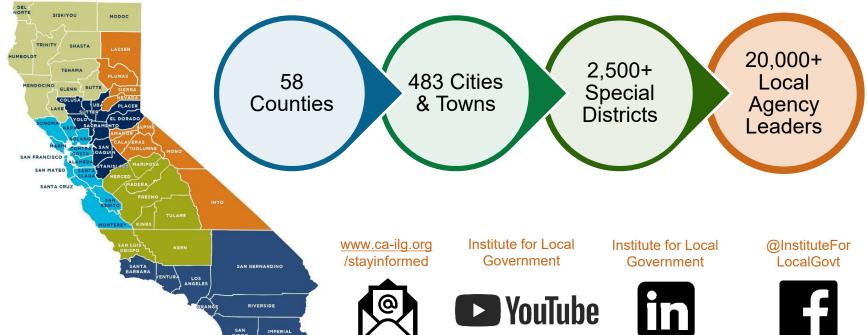


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Registration Now Open!



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RECORDING AVAILABLE SOON



The recorded presentation and materials will be shared electronically with all attendees a few days after the webinar.



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