



Self-inspection Checklist

To prepare for your Defensible Space Inspection



It's Defensible Space Inspection season!

Berkeley is at higher risk of wildfire because of its topography, winds, and adjacent wildland areas. The threat is magnified by dense older housing, abundant vegetation on/around homes, and narrow roads.

To prevent catastrophic wildfires from spreading through Berkeley, the Berkeley Fire Department inspects all properties in the Very High Fire Danger Severity Zone annually.



"Our goal is for firefighters and residents to work together to transition Berkeley into a Fire Safe community."

David Sprague, Fire Chief

How you can prepare for your inspection?

Begin to bring your property into compliance with Defensible Space laws now by following this self-inspection guide.

Step 1: General Requirements

The General Requirements found on page 2 must be addressed on all areas of your property within 100 feet of a structure - including structures on adjacent parcels. We recommend starting your inspection checklist by completing each item in this section.

Step 2: Establish Your "Zone 0"

"Zone 0" is the 5 ft. that surrounds structures. Removing combustibles from this area has been scientifically proven to significantly reduce the potential of structure ignition during a wildfire. Much of this work is not yet required by the Fire Code, but it has been adopted by many insurance carriers as best practice.

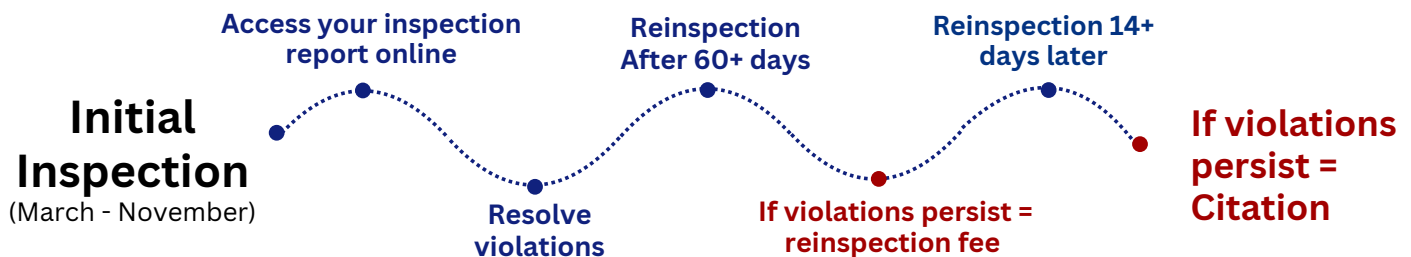
Am I required to do this work?

YES! The issues that are listed as **requirements** must be completed by law and will result in violations and citations if not resolved.

The issues that are listed as **recommendations** have been scientifically validated to reduce wildfire hazard, have been adopted by most insurance carriers as best practice, but will not result in a violation.

Once your property is inspected you have **60 days** to make corrections, if violations are noted, a re-inspection to verify compliance will occur not less than 60 days later. If violations have not been abated on the first reinspection, a reinspection fee will be charged and another reinspection will occur 14 days later.

Violations left uncorrected after two re-inspections will result in a citation.





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General Requirements - **REQUIRED BY LAW IN ZONES 1 & 2**

Applied 100' from any structure, *including structures on neighboring parcels.*

REMOVE...

- ...all **dead and dying** vegetation including trees, shrubs, leaves, palm fronds, grasses, weeds, and piles of vegetation.
- ...tree limbs that extend within 10 ft. of a chimney opening.
- ...live or dead combustible vegetation within 10 ft. of roads and driveways including grasses, weeds, or other vegetation that will transmit fire.
- ...leaves, needles, and other dead vegetative growth and debris from roofs, gutters, & solar panels.
- ...logs or stumps embedded in the soil or, if removal is not an option, isolate from other vegetation for 10 ft. in all directions.
- ...all flammable waste accumulation.

RELOCATE & INSTALL

- Relocate lumber and firewood more than 30 ft. from structures and store in an enclosed ember resistant container or use an ember resistant cover.
- Store gasoline or other flammable liquids in a sealed container. Place indoors or 30 ft. from any building or other combustibles including vegetation and mulch.
- Install 4" high address numbers, on a contrasting background, that are legible from the street.

TRIM & LIMB

TREE:

- Limb and strip hanging bark from trees up to 8 ft. or 4x the height of understory vegetation, whichever is greater.
- Provide horizontal separation of tree crowns: 10 ft. = flat ground, 20 ft. = moderate slope, 30 ft. = steep slope.
- Prune trees to provide at least 13' 6" of unobstructed vertical clearance above improved road surfaces.
- Trim or remove branches that overhang within 10 ft. of a roof. Exceptions are allowed if removal of the limb would jeopardize the health or stability of the tree.

GRASSES & SHRUBS:

- Provide horizontal separation between shrubs and/or ground cover plants: 2x height = flat ground, 4x = moderate slope, 6x = steep slope.
- Cut annual grasses and weeds to 4" or less and remove all clippings within 30 ft. of structure.

**Learn More About Annual
Defensible Space Inspections,
and watch
step-by-step videos at
www.BerkeleyFireSafe.org**



Self-inspection Checklist

Zone-Specific Requirements



Ember Resistant Zone (Zone 0) Recommendations*

Adopting these recommendations will significantly improve the chances your home and neighborhood will survive a wildfire.

Zone 0 Applied 0-5 feet from any structure

- Use **hardscape** like gravel, pavers, or concrete.
- Remove **fire hazardous trees, shrubs & grasses including** Italian Cypress, Acacia, Eucalyptus, Pine, Thuja Juniper, Bamboo, Rosemary, Pampas, & Jubuta Grass.
- Remove **ALL combustible vegetation** from within 5 ft. of structures including climbing vines from structures vegetation growing near doors, windows, and vent openings. Irrigate any vegetation left regularly and frequently remove dead material.
- Limit combustibles materials** like plastic or wooden outdoor furniture.
- Replace combustible fencing, gates, and arbors** attached to the home with noncombustible alternatives.
- Consider relocating garbage and recycling containers** outside this zone (> 5 ft).

****Work in the ember-resistant zone (Zone 0) is strongly recommended and has been proven to reduce the ignition potential of your home and property. If the Fire Department staff observes a direct threat to your home, they can require hazardous vegetation removal.****

For more information, visit <https://www.berkeleyfiresafe.org/wildfire-risks>



Know Your Zones

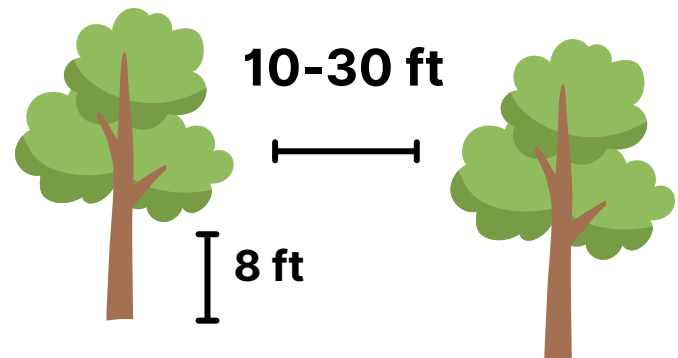
ZONE 0 0-5 feet from a structure

ZONE 1 5-30 feet from a structure

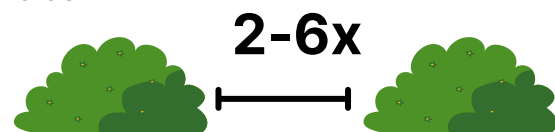
ZONE 2 30-100 feet from a structure

Horizontal and vertical clearance

Trees

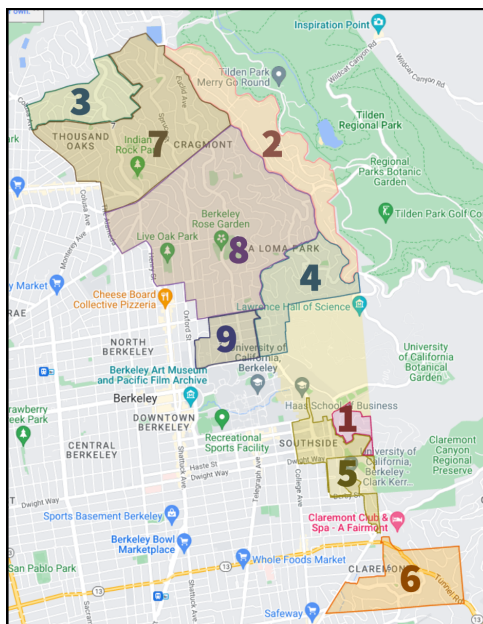


Shrubs



For more guidance visit: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace>

Get Prepared for your 2024 Defensible Space Inspection



Inspection Schedule*

- 1. March:** Panoramic Hill
- 2. April:** East of Grizzly Peak Blvd., Proximal to Wildcat Canyon & Tilden Park
- 3. May:** Cerrito Canyon
- 4. June:** Proximal to LBNL open space
- 5. July:** Derby Creek drainage at base of Panoramic Hill, South Campus
- 6. August:** Tunnel Rd. proximal to Claremont
- 7. September:** North of Marin Ave
- 8. October:** South of Marin Ave
- 9. November:** North of Campus

*This is our target schedule, it is subject to change

Inspection Process Step-by-Step

1. Inspectors will ring your doorbell, and ask for your permission to inspect the property.
 - If you are not home, the inspector will not enter your property. They will conduct the inspection based on what is visible from the street.
2. A door hanger will be left with a code you can use to access your inspection report. Owners of vacant lots and apartment buildings will receive notice of inspection and an access code via the US mail.
3. Based on the report, you may need to address one or more infractions.
 - Take pictures when infractions have been corrected and upload photos to the inspection website.
4. Inspectors may clear violations virtually based on the photos you upload or may return to your home to perform a re-inspection.
5. If you have not completed the recommended changes, a citation may be issued.

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For more resources, including the chipping program and resident assistance programs, visit www.BerkeleyFireSafe.org

