

# ESP

# FOCUS

## Wildfires

### Get Ready, Set, Go!

On August 26, 2009, an arsonist ignited the Station Fire in the Angeles National Forest bordering Los Angeles County, and became the largest wildfire in its recorded history. It burned 160,577 acres – roughly the



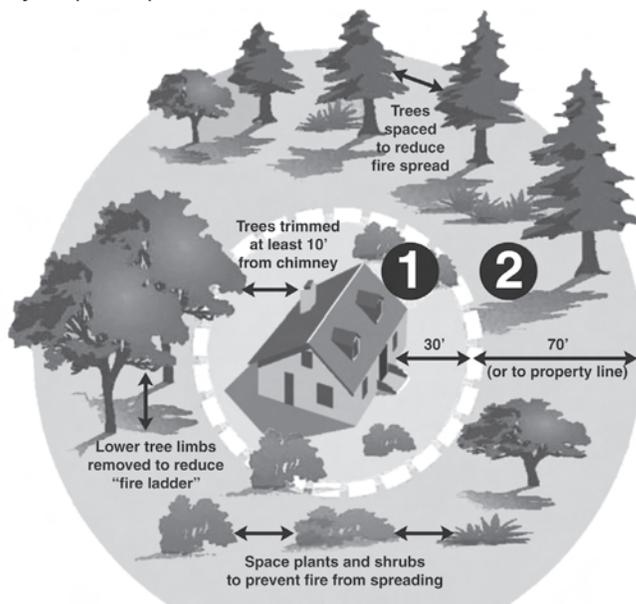
size of the City of Chicago – killed two Los Angeles County firefighters, and burned until mid-October. Fire is, and always has been, a natural part of Southern California's landscape. These wildfires are often fueled by dry vegetation and driven by hot, dry "Santa Ana" winds, making them extremely dangerous and impossible to control. Fire season is now year-round and requires everyone to be on heightened alert, especially for those living in wildland area communities.

Following these simple steps from the County's new Ready, Set, Go! Personal Wildfire Action Plan may save your life, your family, and protect your home from a devastating wildfire.

### Create Defensible Space Around Your Home

Defensible space is the area around your home that is free of flammable plants and objects. This space is wide enough to prevent the flames and heat from a wildfire to reach your home. The County's Brush Clearance Program features two zones to help protect your property, as you can see in the diagram above right. Zone 1 extends 30 feet out from all buildings, structures, decks, etc. To increase your protection, remove flammable vegetation within 30 feet of your home, or 50 feet if you live in areas determined to be "High Hazard."

In Zone 2, thin out or remove vegetation an additional 70 feet from your home, for a total of 100 feet. High Hazard Areas may require up to 100 additional feet, for a total of 200 feet.



### Check these websites

- [www.fire.lacounty.gov/SafetyPreparedness/ReadySetGo/home.asp](http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/SafetyPreparedness/ReadySetGo/home.asp)
- [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) (Federal Emergency Management Agency)
- [www.calema.ca.gov](http://www.calema.ca.gov) (California Emergency Management Agency)
- [www.noaa.com](http://www.noaa.com) (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
- [www.firesafecouncil.org](http://www.firesafecouncil.org) (The Fire Safe Council)
- [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov) (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection)



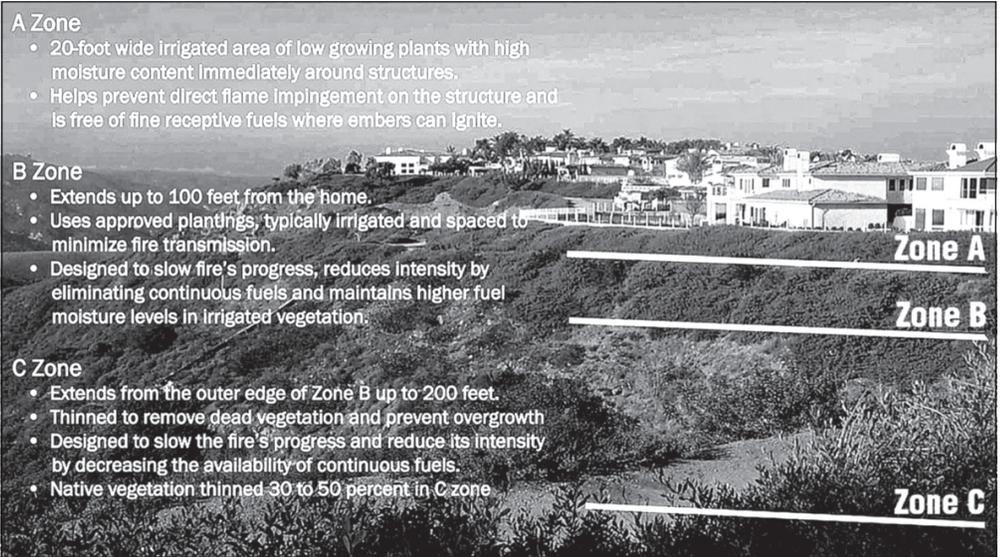
# NOVEMBER

[www.espfocus.org](http://www.espfocus.org)

## Get READY...Get in the Zone!

Defensible space is the area around your home that is free of flammable plants and objects. This space is wide enough to prevent the flames and heat from a wildfire to reach your home. There are two zones to help protect your property, as you can see in the diagram above. Zone 1 extends 30 feet out from all buildings, structures, decks, etc. To increase your protection, remove flammable vegetation within 30 feet of your home, or 50 feet if you live in areas determined to be "High Hazard."

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## Learn How to "Harden" Your Home

Embers from a wildfire will find the weak link in your home's construction and the quality of the "defensible space" surrounding it. You can safeguard your home by assessing it and taking these steps to "harden" it from the threat of wildfire:

- Roof your home with fire-resistant material.
- Block any spaces to prevent ember intrusion.
- All vent openings should be covered with 1/8 inch metal mesh. Fiberglass will melt and burn.
- Ensure that all trees are far away from power lines.
- Install dual-paned windows with exterior tempered glass to reduce breakage in a fire. Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break before the home ignites.
- Fire-resistant building materials, such as brick, cement, masonry, or stucco, provide more protection than wood-siding.
- Keep a fire extinguisher and tools, such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hoe, easily accessible.
- Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.
- Have multiple garden hoses long enough to reach any area of your home

## Get SET – Prepare your Family

Your Wildfire Action Plan should be prepared with all members of your household well in advance of a fire. Once you finish your plan, rehearse it regularly with your family and keep it in a safe, accessible place. Below is a partial checklist; more preparation lists are available at [www.fire.lacounty.gov](http://www.fire.lacounty.gov).

- Create and rehearse a Family Disaster Plan that includes meeting locations and communication plans.
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand and train your family on how to use them.
- Make sure your family knows where the gas, electric and water main shut-off controls are and how to use them.
- Plan several different escape routes.
- Assemble an emergency supply kit and keep an extra one in your car.
- Maintain emergency contact numbers.
- Appoint an out-of-state friend or relative as a point of contact.
- Keep a portable radio or scanner available.

## GO Early – Don't Hesitate!

Don't wait until the fire comes to your neighborhood. By leaving early, you will give your family the best chance of survival. You will also help County firefighters by keeping the roads clear of congestion, which will help them move more freely and do their job to save your home! To get started, make a kit of the following items:

- Keep a pair of old shoes and a flashlight handy for a night evacuation.
- Keep the six "P's" ready for immediate evacuation:
  - o People and pets
  - o Papers, phone numbers and important documents.
  - o Prescriptions, vitamins, and eyeglasses.
  - o Pictures and irreplaceable memorabilia
  - o Personal computers (information on hard drive and discs).
  - o "Plastic" (credit cards, ATM cards) and cash.
- Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion.
- Don't wait to be told by authorities to leave. They may not have time to knock on every door.
- Have a predetermined meeting place.
- Have several escape routes.

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This information sheet is produced as part of the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase home, neighborhood, business and school emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) and representatives from Contra Costa, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties, Southern California Edison, the Southern California Earthquake Center and the American Red Cross assist in the development of campaign materials and coordination of the campaign.