



# Escondido Fire Department

## HAZARD REDUCTION AND VEGETATION CLEARANCE STANDARD

All property owners and responsible parties within Escondido Fire Department's jurisdiction must maintain **100 feet of defensible space** around all structures to protect lives, property, and the environment from wildfire threats.

### ZONE 0: IMMEDIATE ZONE (0-5 feet from structures)

#### ✓ REQUIRED:

**NO combustible mulch; NO vegetation** in direct contact with structures; **NO firewood, lumber, or combustible materials** storage; Remove all needles, leaves, and debris from roofs, gutters, decks, and foundations.

#### ✗ PROHIBITED:

Trees (except existing mature trees with no branches below roofline and no ladder fuels); Combustible attachments to structures (fences, awnings, shade sails); Any combustible storage or decorative items.

*Please note that aesthetics is not a consideration in determining the presence of a fire hazard. In addition, if the location on the property, topography, waterways, nonnegotiable grades or other similar conditions make completion of the fuel and vegetation management requirements unattainable, an approved alternative means of fire protection may be considered by the Fire Marshal.*

### ZONE 1: INTERMEDIATE ZONE (5-50 feet from structures)

#### ✓ VEGETATION REQUIREMENTS:

**Grass/weeds:** Maximum 4 inches height; **Organic mulch:** Maximum 3 inches depth (composted wood chips preferred). Remove all dead, dying, or diseased vegetation.

#### ✓ STORAGE REQUIREMENTS:

**Firewood:** Minimum 30 feet from structures with 10-foot bare mineral soil clearance; Wood piles separated from tree crowns by 15 feet minimum.

### ZONE 2: EXTENDED ZONE (50-100 feet from structures)

#### ✓ VEGETATION REQUIREMENTS:

**Grass/weeds:** Maximum 4 inches height; **Leaf litter:** Maximum 3 inches depth under healthy trees; **Organic mulch:** Maximum 3 inches depth.

#### ✓ MAINTENANCE METHODS:

Mowing, thinning, trimming (to preserve root structure for soil stability); Remove all dead, dying, or diseased vegetation; Fire-resistant plants for new/replacement landscaping.





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### ROADWAY AND DRIVEWAY CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

**20 feet clearance** on each side of roadways/driveways; **13.5 feet vertical clearance** minimum above the road surface.

### SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

#### High-Hazard Areas/Evacuation Routes:

Fire Chief may require up to **30 feet clearance** along designated evacuation routes.

#### Property Size Variations:

**≤ 1 acre:** 100-foot defensible space from structures+ complete property clearance required.

**> 1 acre:** 100-foot defensible space from structures + 30-foot perimeter clearance.

#### Vacant Parcels:

All vegetation: 4 inches maximum height; Remove all dead, dying, diseased vegetation; Maintain roadway clearances as specified above.

#### All Trees in Defensible Space:

**Limbing:** 6 feet minimum clearance from ground; **Canopy clearance:** 10 feet minimum from structures, rooflines, and chimneys; **Ladder fuels:** Remove or limb up 3x shrub height or tree height; **Palm trees:** Remove all dead fronds; and “skirts.”

### ORCHARDS, GROVES, AND VINEYARDS

#### ✓ REQUIREMENTS:

**10-foot firebreak** around perimeter; Remove all dead, dying, or diseased vegetation; **Dead grass between rows:** Mowed to 4 inches or disked to bare soil; **Mulch placement:** Requires Fire Department approval.

#### REMEMBER!

*Your defensible space is your first line of defense against wildfire. Proper maintenance protects not only your property but your entire community. Compliance is not optional – it's essential for public safety.*



(California Fire Code, as Adopted; Escondido Municipal Code; California Wildland-Urban Interface Code; California Public Resources Code; California Government Code;)