



Fire Hazard Reduction Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why did I get this notice from the Burbank Fire Department?

All properties located in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) have been identified by Cal Fire and adopted by the Burbank Fire Department into the Burbank Municipal Code. All properties in the VHFHSZ are automatically included into the Burbank Fire Department Fire Hazard Reduction Program.

Map link - <https://www.burbankfire.us/home/showdocument?id=1610>

What is the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) and who determines this zone?

Cal Fire is required by law to designate Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) on all State Responsibility Area (SRA) land. Cal Fire recommends VHFHSZ zones for all Local Responsibility Area (LRA) land. The City of Burbank, which is LRA, can adopt Cal Fire recommended VHFHSZ areas or amend the local code to be more restrictive.

Classification of all lands within State Responsibility Areas into fire hazard severity zones is required by law. Therefore, the fire hazard severity zone designations and accompanying maps must follow the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) and be approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). The regulation can be found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1280.01 and entitled "Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the SRA."

California Government Code § 51179 states, "A local agency shall designate, by ordinance, very high fire hazard severity zones in its jurisdiction within 120 days of receiving recommendations from the director pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 51178. A local agency shall be exempt from this requirement if ordinances of the local agency, adopted on or before December 31, 1992, impose standards that are equivalent to, or more restrictive than, the standards imposed by this chapter."

What gives the Burbank Fire Department the authority to conduct inspections in the VHFHSZ areas?

California Government Code §51178 - *The director shall identify areas in the state as very high fire hazard severity zones based on consistent statewide criteria and based on the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas. Very high fire hazard severity zones shall be based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors including areas where Santa Ana, Mono, and Diablo winds have been identified by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection as a major cause of wildfire spread.*

California Government Code § 51182 - *(a) A person who owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains any occupied dwelling or occupied structure in, upon, or adjoining any mountainous area, forest-covered land, brush-covered land, grass-covered land, or any land that is covered with flammable material, which area or land is within a very high fire hazard severity zone designated by the local agency pursuant to Section 51179, shall at all times do all of the following...*

Read California Government Code § 51182:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=51182

Health and Safety Code (HSC) §13146 - (a) *The chief of any city or county fire department or district providing fire protection services, and their authorized representative, shall enforce such building standards and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal in their respective areas.*

California Fire Code 1.1.3.2 - *When adopted by a state agency, the provisions in this code shall be enforced by the appropriate enforcing agency, but only to the extent of the authority granted to such agency by the legislature - Sec. 14.6 Wildland Urban Interface fire areas.*

California Fire Code 1.Division II.108.1 – (a) *The fire code official is authorized to enter and examine any building, structure, marine vessel, vehicle or premises in accordance with Section 104.3 for the purpose of enforcing this code.*

Why am I being inspected? I don't have brush on my property.

If your property is within the VHFHSZ, an inspection is required. Ember cast from a brush fire due to proximity to natural brush hillsides, local geography, and potential winds are validation for neighborhood homes to be included into the VHFHSZ. This ember zone is typically found on the perimeter of the community and close to or adjacent to wildlands. This zone will experience a significant ember assault during a brush fire incident. Embers spread wildfire by igniting landscape vegetation, roofs, attics (through attic vents), and wood decks.

Why am I being charged \$23.00?

The new annual \$23.00 fee is Burbank-specific and was approved by Burbank City Council on May 24, 2022. This fee was developed to be cost-neutral due to increased inspection requirements and program management. Notice of the new fee was mailed to all addresses within the VHFHSZ zone in June 2022 and the City of Burbank Mayor held a Public Service Announcement that ran on local television and was posted to social media platforms.

The Burbank Fire Department uses a billing agency, Wittman Enterprises LLC, to send out billing invoices, process invoice payments, and follow up on collections. Their payment receiving address is located in Sacramento.

When will my property be inspected?

Inspections begin every year after June 1 and are completed before August 1.

Do I need to be home for the inspection?

Most inspections do not require you to be onsite. If there is an area that requires property access, the inspector may return at a later time when someone is present, or the inspector will call or email the resident for access.

Who do I call if I have questions?

Call Captain Jim Moye at (818) 238-3388 regarding brush clearance requirements, VHFHSZ inspection zone clarification, inspection fee details, and any other concerns with the brush clearance program.

For more information, visit www.burbankfire.us.

How much time do I have to make corrections?

Typically, a property owner that receives a Violation Notice will have 30 days to complete the required corrections.

What needs to be removed or maintained on the property?

The Burbank Fire Department only enforces the California Fire Code and codes adopted into the Burbank Municipal Code (BMC).

BMC 9-1-9-304.1.2.1: <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Burbank/#!/Burbank09/Burbank0901.html#9-1-9-304.1.2.1>

Have there been changes impacting brush clearance and defensible space programs?

Yes, the state legislature approved two laws to address structure losses related to wildland fires: AB 3074 and AB 38.

What is AB 3074?

Assembly Bill 3074 creates a 0–5-foot ember-resistant zone around all structure within the VHFHSZ. This Assembly Bill was passed into law in 2020. The Burbank Fire Department will not enforce the 0–5-foot regulations until there is clarification of the requirements from the State Fire Marshal’s Office. Clarification is expected in fall 2023 or spring 2024.

For more information: <https://openstates.org/ca/bills/20192020/AB3074/>

What is AB 38?

Assembly Bill 38 requires all real estate sellers with structures in a FHSZ to ensure compliance with local brush clearance or defensible space requirements to close escrow.

For more information: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b2fc79e82aec4ecab4250987db7312cb>

To schedule an AB 38 inspection: <https://www.burbankfire.us/ab38inspection>

For more information on the Burbank Fire brush clearance and defensible space requirements:

<https://www.burbankfire.us/brushclearance>