



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 0-5 feet 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.

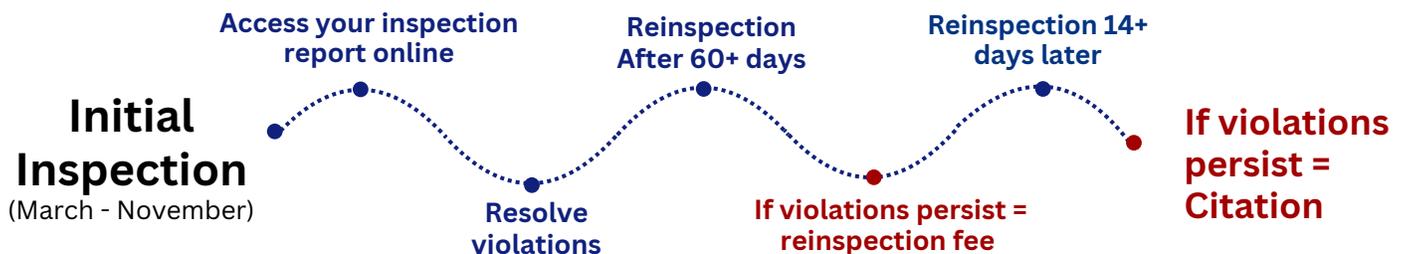
Am I required to do this work?

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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REQUIRED BY LAW IN ZONES 1 & 2

Applicable 100' from **any** structure.

REMOVE:

- All dead or dying vegetation including trees, shrubs, leaves, palm fronds, grasses, and weeds on the property. Including on roofs, gutters, & solar panels
- Tree limbs that extend within 10 ft. of a chimney opening.
- Dead or combustible vegetation within 10 ft. of roads and driveways including grasses, weeds, or other vegetation that will transmit fire.
- Logs or stumps embedded in the soil or isolate from other vegetation for 10 ft. in all directions.
- All flammable waste accumulation.

RELOCATE & INSTALL

- Relocate lumber and firewood +30 ft. from structures then enclose using an ember resistant container or cover.
- Store flammable liquids in a sealed container. Place indoors or +30 ft. from buildings, vegetation, mulch, or other combustibles.
- Install contrasting address numbers that are visible from the street and at least 4" tall.

TRIM & LIMB

TREES:

- 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 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 structures.

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



Self-inspection Checklist

Zone-Specific Requirements



Ember Resistant Zone (Zone 0) Recommendations**

These recommendations are expected to become law as they significantly improve resilience against wildfires.

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).

****Reducing these hazards in Zone 0 is strongly recommended and expected to become law. These actions have been proven to reduce the ignition potential of your home and property. If the BFD staff can require hazardous vegetation removal if it is a direct threat to your home.****

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

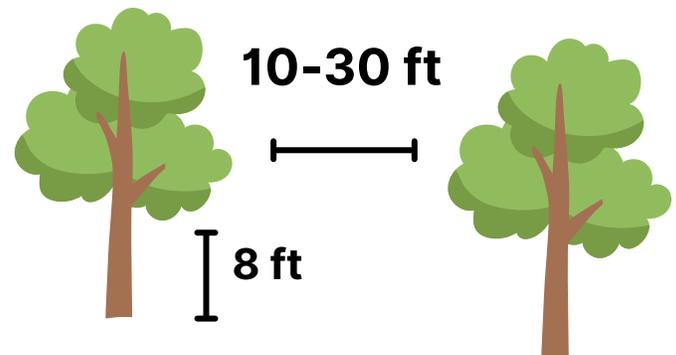


Know Your Zones

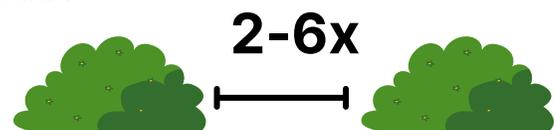
- ZONE 0** 0-5 feet from a structure
- ZONE 1** 5-30 feet from a structure
- ZONE 2** 30-100 feet from a structure

Horizontal and vertical clearance

Trees

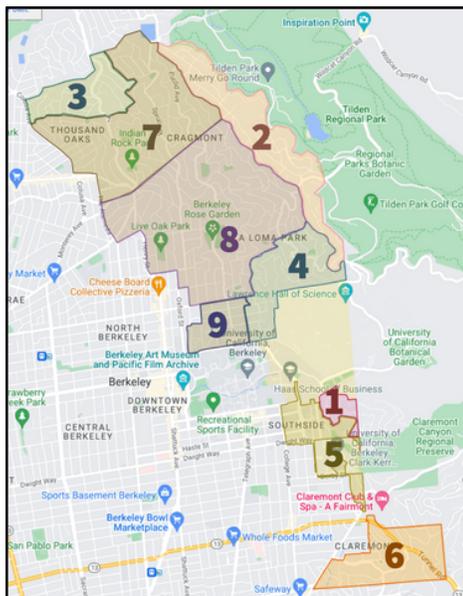


Shrubs



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

Get Prepared for your 2025 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

- Inspectors will ring your doorbell and ask for your permission to inspect the property.
 - If you are not home and would like inspectors to access your property for a full inspection; Log into your report through <https://www.defensiblespacereport.org/berkeley> and fill out the Right of Entry Agreement. Inspectors will make every effort to contact you when they arrive then complete a full defensible space inspection that includes the front, side, and back yards.
 - If inspectors are unable to reach you and there is no Right of Entry agreement on file, the inspections will be conducted based on what is visible from the street.
- 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 US mail.
- Based on the report, you may need to address one or more infractions. Infractions can be reviewed for compliance through the "Resident Checklist" on your report
- Inspectors may clear violations virtually or conduct a re-inspection based on the uploaded photos.
- 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

