



SONOMA COUNTY FIRE SAFETY GUIDE: WHAT EVERY HOMEOWNER & BUYER SHOULD KNOW

Prepared for Sonoma County homeowners, buyers, and neighbors who want to feel more informed, prepared, and confident when it comes to wildfire safety.



WHY FIRE ZONES MATTER IN SONOMA COUNTY

Living in Sonoma County means enjoying incredible beauty — rolling hills, open space, redwoods, vineyards, and scenic rural properties. But it also means understanding wildfire risk.

A home's location within a fire hazard zone can affect:

- Home insurance availability
- Insurance pricing and coverage
- Future resale value
- Defensible space requirements
- Emergency evacuation planning
- Long-term safety and preparedness

Whether you're buying, selling, or staying put, understanding fire zones is one of the smartest things you can do as a homeowner. It's not about fear — it's about being informed, prepared, and proactive. Knowing how your property is affected can help you protect both your home and your investment.

UNDERSTAND FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES



California designates properties into fire hazard severity zones based on vegetation, terrain, weather patterns, and wildfire history.

Moderate Hazard

Lower wildfire exposure, but preparation is still important.

High Hazard

Greater wildfire potential due to nearby fuels, terrain, or weather patterns.

Very High Hazard

Areas with elevated wildfire exposure where additional planning, hardening, and defensible space are especially important.

Important: A home outside a "Very High" zone can still face insurance challenges or wildfire exposure depending on location and surrounding conditions.



Before You Buy A Home

Here are a few things I recommend every buyer review before moving forward with a property:

Check the Fire Hazard Map

Review the state and local fire hazard severity maps for the property.

Research Insurance Early

Do not wait until the last minute. Insurance availability can vary dramatically depending on the property location, vegetation, roof type, and access roads.

Evaluate Defensible Space

Look at:

- Tree clearance
- Brush management
- Slope around the home
- Distance between vegetation and structures

Consider Access & Evacuation Routes

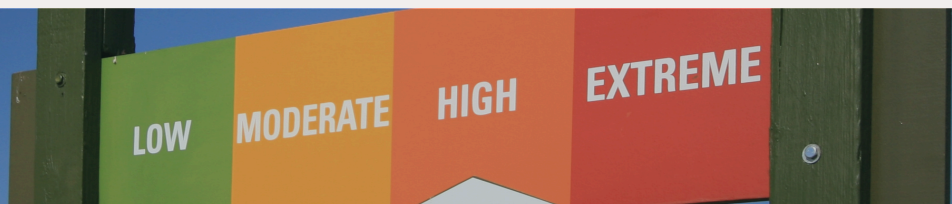
Homes with limited road access or long driveways may require additional planning.

Review Roof & Exterior Materials

Fire-resistant materials can improve safety and help with insurability.

Quick Fire-Smart Home Checklist

- ✓ Clear leaves and debris from roofs and gutters
- ✓ Keep vegetation trimmed away from structures
- ✓ Maintain 100 feet of defensible space when possible
- ✓ Use ember-resistant vents
- ✓ Store firewood away from the home
- ✓ Create an evacuation plan for your household
- ✓ Keep emergency supplies easily accessible



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WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Defensible space is the buffer between your home and surrounding vegetation that helps slow or stop the spread of wildfire. It gives firefighters safer access to your property and can significantly improve a home's survivability during a wildfire event.

ZONE 0: IMMEDIATE ZONE (0-5 FEET)

The most critical area.

Best practices:

- Remove combustible materials
- Avoid wood mulch near the home
- Keep roofs, decks, and gutters clean
- Use noncombustible landscaping when possible

ZONE 1: INTERMEDIATE ZONE (5-30 FEET)

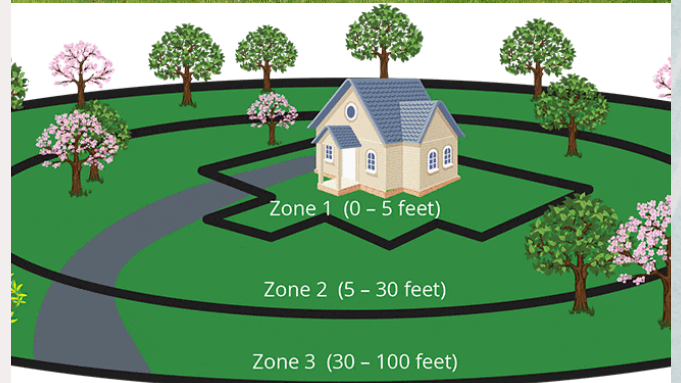
- Reduce fuel and spacing concerns.
- Best practices:
 - Trim shrubs and trees
 - Space plants appropriately
 - Remove dead vegetation
 - Keep lawns maintained and hydrated

ZONE 2: EXTENDED ZONE (30-100 FEET)

Slow fire spread and reduce intensity.

Best practices:

- Remove excessive brush
- Reduce ladder fuels
- Space trees apart
- Maintain road and driveway clearance



EVERGREEN BENEFITS.

Fire Safety Upgrades That Can Help

Many homeowners are proactively making upgrades that improve both safety and long-term insurability.

Popular improvements include:

- Class A fire-rated roofing
- Dual-pane tempered windows
- Ember-resistant vents
- Noncombustible fencing near structures
- Interior sprinkler systems
- Backup generators
- Improved driveway access
- Fire-resistant siding and decking

TIPS:



Get in touch with a connected local expert that knows country properties and can help advise on questions or concerns you may have.

Emergency Preparedness Essentials

Every household should have some of the following essentials to support preparedness:

A “Go Bag” Ready

Include:

- Medications
- Flashlights
- Phone chargers
- Important documents
- Water and snacks
- Pet supplies

A Family Communication Plan

Know:

- Where to meet
- How to contact each other
- Alternate evacuation routes

Emergency Alerts Enabled

Sign up for:

- SoCoAlert
- Nixle alerts
- Local emergency notifications



THE BOTTOM LINE.

Wildfire awareness isn't about fear — it's about preparation, education, and making informed decisions.

The good news is that many Sonoma County homeowners are taking proactive steps to improve safety, strengthen their homes, and better understand their property risks.

If you're thinking about buying or selling in Sonoma County and want help understanding fire zones, insurance considerations, or property-specific risks, I'm always happy to help guide the conversation.



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Helpful Resources

- [CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps](#)
- [Sonoma County Emergency Management](#)
- [ReadyForWildfire.org](#)
- [SoCoAlert Emergency Notifications](#)

This guide is intended for educational purposes only and should not replace guidance from insurance professionals, fire safety experts, or local agencies.



REACH OUT.

Looking for more home buying tips, local insights, and real estate guidance? Be sure to explore more on the website or reach out anytime.

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