



City of Santa Barbara
Fire Prevention Bureau
High Fire Hazard Area
Defensible Space Requirements
Ordinance #5779

Santa Barbara City Fire Department
 925 Chapala St.
 (805) 564-5702

Vegetation within Santa Barbara’s “*High Fire Hazard*” areas, native or otherwise, must be maintained to create an effective fuelbreak by thinning dense vegetation and removing dry brush, flammable vegetation and combustible growth from areas within **30 to 150 feet (depending on High Fire Hazard Area Zone)** of all buildings or structures. All parcels in the high fire hazard area shall meet these Fire Department requirements year round per Chapter 8.04 of the City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code, as adopted by Ordinance #5779.

High Fire Hazard Area Defensible Space Requirements by Zone	
Coastal Interior	30 to 50 feet defensible space required from structure
Coastal	50 to 70 feet defensible space required from structure
Foothill	100 feet defensible space required from structure
Extreme Foothill	150 feet defensible space required from structure

You Must Annually

- ◆ Cut and remove hazardous brush, shrubs, and flammable vegetation such as dry grass and weeds within **100 feet** of any structure and within **4 inches** of the ground.
- ◆ Clear vegetation from streets and driveways both horizontally and vertically along your property. Flammable vegetation must be cleared on each side of a street or driveway for a distance of **10 feet** and a vertical distance of **13 feet, 6 inches**. Vegetation must be cut to within **4 inches** of the ground. This applies to your public or private driveway and any public or private streets that border your property.
- ◆ Remove dead wood, trim the lower branches, and limb all live trees to **6 feet** above the ground (or as much as possible with younger, smaller trees), especially trees adjacent to buildings.
- ◆ Trim tree limbs back a minimum distance of **10 feet** from any chimney opening.
- ◆ Remove all dead trees from your property.
- ◆ Maintain the roof of all structures free of leaves, needles or other vegetative debris.
- ◆ Legally dispose of all cut vegetation, including any debris left from previous tree trimming and brush removal. Cut vegetation may be chipped and spread throughout the property as a ground cover, up to **12 inches** in depth, and at least **30 feet** from any structure.

Exceptions

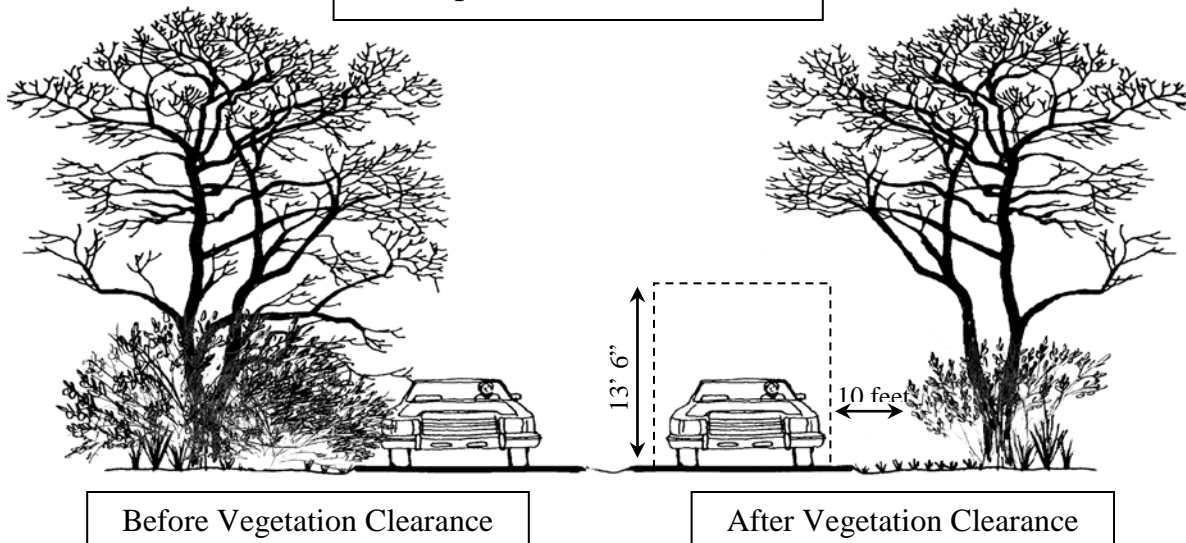
Shrubs, hedges, and bushes may be retained throughout the 100 feet, provided:

- ◆ They are spaced at least **18 feet** from other shrubs, bushes or structures.
- ◆ They are maintained free of dead wood and litter and trimmed at least 2 feet up from the ground, or 1/3 of their height, whichever is less.
- ◆ They do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire to a structure.
- ◆ Oak trees and other native specimen trees may be retained throughout the 100 feet, provided:
- ◆ All dead wood is removed and lower branches are trimmed and limbed to 6 feet above the ground.
- ◆ They do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire to a structure.

Special Considerations

- ◆ The Fire Department supports increasing the distance of defensible space beyond the 100 foot requirement on slopes greater than 20 percent. Before completing this work, contact the Fire Department (564-5702) for approval.
- ◆ When thinning vegetation and removing dry brush avoid creating erosion problems, causing siltation or pesticide contamination into creeks or drainages, and damaging the habitat of protected wildlife species. Contact the Fire Department (564-5702) for advice regarding erosion control.
- ◆ If you need to remove or alter any tree within the City setback you must contact the Parks and Recreation Department, City Arborist at 564- 5433 to obtain a permit.

Example of Road Clearance





City of Santa Barbara High Fire Hazard Area

