



## **Residential Assessment Program (RAP) FACTS**

### **Fire Suppression Effectiveness and Firefighter Safety**

The Residential Assessment Program is provided to assist residential property owners while at the same time increasing the effectiveness of fire suppression efforts as well as firefighter safety.

### **What's New?**

In November of 2008 significant changes were made in the ordinances regarding hazard reduction in the mountains, watershed, and desert areas. Prior to these changes, the primary emphasis of hazard reduction was the removal of dead and dying vegetation. This led to increased fire risk due to vegetation overgrowth and stress.

### **State and County Codes**

State and county codes overlap and are intended to compliment one other. Both codes outline guidelines for reducing the fire threat in the wildland urban interface areas.

### **County Road and Utility Easements**

Roadside easements are the responsibility of homeowners and not county roads.

### **Bank Owned Homes**

Banks are responsible for maintaining their properties. Delays can occur in clearing bank owned properties due to increased legal requirements.

### **Did you know?**

#### **Plant Species**

The spacing or the removal of combustible vegetation is contingent upon the species of plants involved. Some plants present more of a fire hazard than others. For example, juniper, manzanita, spanish broom, chamise, and greasewood tend to present greater fire destructive potential and therefore are more closely regulated, whereas vinca, lilac, and ornamental trees pose less of a fire risk and therefore are regulated more liberally.

#### **Junipers**

Junipers shrubs present an increased fire risk due to their inherent high concentration of oils and resins. Junipers also present an additional hazard in the manner in which they trap large amounts of combustible debris underneath the plants. Smaller and properly spaced juniper species which have been manicured and cleared of accumulated combustibles are acceptable.

### **Plant Spacing**

The rule of thumb for plant spacing is one and one half to two times the height of plants. For example, a single two foot high shrub should be located four feet from the next shrub.

### **Combustible Fences**

Fences made of combustible materials present a hazard in wildland urban interface areas. Manicured, living, green, non-volatile plant species growing on fences are acceptable as long as they don't form a continuous fuel pattern which comes in contact with a structure.

### **Trees**

Any tree four inches or less in diameter which is located within thirty feet of a structure and within ten feet of another tree needs to be thinned. In an effort to prevent the laddering of fire into trees, trees should be pruned up six feet, but no more than half the overall height. Ornamental trees are excluded from this requirement.

### **Firewood**

Firewood should be stacked tightly and be located 30' from structures. If it's not possible to maintain the 30' spacing requirement, then it should be placed in the least hazardous location possible.

### **References**

San Bernardino County Fire - [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org)  
Mountain Area Safety Task Force – [www.calmast.org](http://www.calmast.org)  
California Public Resource Code, Section 4291-4299