

Subject line: CVCA Fire Preparedness Update #4

FIRE PREPAREDNESS UPDATE #4

from the CVCA Firewise Team

With the enormous fires raging through Northern California, many of us have found ourselves grateful for the cold, damp, gray fog that has blanketed our area. But we all know that the weather can shift, and a return to hotter and drier days will intensify our fire risks.

Let's use this grace period to continue to build on the terrific work so far!

1) Take Advantage of Upcoming Chipper Days – Sept. 13

So very few things in life are free – but Chipper Days, sponsored by The Cypress Fire District, are one of them for our lucky community! At no cost to you, brush and branches that you set out by the roadside by first thing in the morning on **Sept. 13** will be removed by Cypress sometime between Sept. 13 and 26.

But there are a few rules you must follow:

- Stack your material neatly by the roadside.
- Piles must be no higher than 4 feet.
- Branches and brush must be 6-inches or less in diameter, arranged with the butt-end perpendicular to the road.
- **IMPORTANTLY – NO *Genista*; NO poison oak; NO vines; and NO metal objects.** Piles contaminated with these materials won't be collected.

For additional information see the [Cypress Fire District's Chipper Program](#) webpage.

2) Create a Five-Foot “Ember-Resistant Zone” around Your Home

Even wildfires that don't come close to your home can generate "ember storms" that can travel more than a mile ahead of a fire, causing spot fires and ignitions where the embers land – including on vulnerable areas of your home's foundation, landscaping, and decking. According to fire experts, creating a 5-foot "ember resistant zone" immediately adjacent to your home provides critical protection from airborne embers during wildfires. And the California State Legislature agrees. Starting in 2024, under a [new fire prevention law](#) (AB-3074) owners in high fire-hazard areas, like ours, will need to take additional steps to eliminate materials that might be ignited by embers within 5 feet of their homes. We can expect more specific requirements to roll-out from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection over the next few years.

In the meantime, here are some steps recommended by the [National Fire Protection Association](#) and by [CalFire](#):

- Remove flammable materials – mulch, flammable plants, leaves/needles, firewood, or anything else that can burn – at least 5 feet away from your home's exterior walls and from beneath decks or porches.
- Clean roofs and gutters of debris that can catch embers.
- Replace or repair loose, damaged, or missing shingles, roof tiles, windows, and screens to prevent ember penetration.
- Keep attic and basement vents clear of debris and install 1/8-inch metal mesh screening to prevent embers entering through the vents into your house.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks to keep out embers and avoid accumulations of combustible materials.
- Replace combustible (wood) fencing, gates, and arbors attached to the home with noncombustible alternatives.

For many of us, replacing flammable wood mulch next to our homes with stones, decomposed granite, or other non-combustible material might be a good place to start!

3) Stay Tuned for Further Firewise Progress!

First, a big “thank you” to everyone in the community who contributed to our Firewise action plan...!

The *Carmel Views Community Firewise Action Plan* has now been drafted and reviewed by our Firewise Advisory Committee (includes CVCA community members and external fire experts from partner organizations). The plan identifies a 3-year program of actions – ranging from developing new online resources to holding demonstration events – that will provide Carmel Views community members with the information and tools they need to help reduce wildfire risks to their families, homes, and property.

Adoption of the *Action Plan* by the CVCA Board is the next and final step in preparing Carmel Views’ application to the national Firewise USA® Program for official recognition as a community that is working to reduce wildfire risks. The Board will be considering the draft plan at its upcoming Sept. 9 meeting. Once finalized, the *Action Plan* will be posted on the CVCA website.

We anticipate submitting the completed Carmel Views application to Firewise USA® in September and will share the news when we hear back from the national program later this fall.

4) Keep Abreast of the Community’s Work on Evacuation Egress

Carmel Views currently has two egresses for community evacuation during emergency events – Canada Drive and, alternatively, Rio Vista Drive should Canada become impassable. (See the excellent [Carmel Views Evacuation Guidance](#) available on the CVCA website for more information on how to prepare for evacuations.)

CVCA is actively seeking additional alternative egress options that would improve residents’ ability to escape the neighborhood in the event of fire or other large-scale disasters like earthquakes. But this is not a task that our community can accomplish alone. Consequently, CVCA is working through the appropriate government body – Monterey County’s CSA-47 Advisory Committee, which advises the County on infrastructure and public safety investments for the neighborhoods of Carmel Views and Mar Vista. The

Advisory Committee's submissions to the County have highlighted the urgent need for additional escape routes in the event of fire or other large-scale disasters.

In late August, Advisory Committee members (Carmel Views residents S. Greenbaum, A. Miller, C. Wahle) met with Supervisor Mary Adams and senior leaders from Cal Fire and the County's Department of Public Works, Facilities and Parks to solve this long-standing problem. Several potential emergency egress routes were examined, and efforts are underway by the participants to identify and pursue the most feasible options. For more information contact Charlie Wahle, who Chairs the CSA-47 Advisory Committee at charliewahle@gmail.com

*Please email Liz Chornesky (ecwchorn@gmail.com), and copy your message to the Board (cvcaboard@gmail.com), if you have any questions or comments about this or future **CVCA Fire Preparedness Updates**.*