



**Beverly Hills Fire Department**  
 Fire Prevention Bureau  
 445 North Rexford Drive  
 Beverly Hills, CA 90210

# OFFICIAL FIRE DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION

Vegetation clearance is a year round responsibility. Clear early, clear often.

This brochure was produced with collaboration from various community groups including the Surivable Urban Forest Workgroup and the Citizens Forest Advisory Committee. The Beverly Hills Fire Department gives its sincere thanks to the California State University, Northridge Art Department and the following staff and students who participated in the development and layout of this brochure:

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# 2016



**BEVERLY HILLS FIRE DEPARTMENT**



# BHFD

## BRUSH CLEARANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION BROCHURE

Your property is in the **“Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone,”** and will be inspected on or after **April 1, 2016.**

Dear Property Owners and Residents:

This brochure is provided to communicate your role as a property owner or responsible resident in reducing hazards to make your home “defensible” should a fire occur in your area.

All properties located near wildland areas have the potential of being significantly impacted by wildfires. The Beverly Hills Fire Department has researched and developed a Vegetation Clearance Program which is focused on improving your safety, improving Firefighter safety, and increasing your home’s ability to withstand a major wildfire in your area.

Keeping your property clear of brush hazards is a year round responsibility. The Fire Department personnel will begin the Vegetation Clearance Inspection Program on April 1, 2016. There is an initial fee of \$100.00 for the cost of the inspection. This is a cost recovery fee for firefighter, staff, clerical and mailing costs associated with conducting the initial inspection. **To promote community awareness and participation in the Vegetation Clearance Program, the initial inspection fee will be waived if your property is found to be in compliance with the information provided in this brochure.** Your safety is our commitment.

If you have further questions, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau.



Sincerely,  
 Ralph Mundell  
 Fire Chief  
 Beverly Hills Fire Department

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## INSPECTIONS BEGIN APRIL 1, 2016



*When catastrophic fires occur, adequate brush clearance may be the determining factor in which homes will survive, and which will be lost.*

# HOW TO COMPLY WITH THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS VEGETATION CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Do you know where your property lines are?** Remember that fences often do not run on property lines. If you do not know your property dimensions, you can access maps from the Los Angeles County Tax Assessor's office at: <http://www.lacountyassessor.com>. The most accurate method is to have a licensed surveyor establish property boundaries.
- 2 Self-inspect your property.** Compare your vegetation with the diagrams in this brochure. Measure distances from structures to determine what areas require clearance.
- 3 Clear hazards and properly remove and dispose of cuttings prior to April 1,** the beginning of the Vegetation Clearance Inspection Sweep.

*Well maintained vegetation creates a greenbelt that reduces risk for these structures.*



## What You Can Keep

- Tree and shrub branches and foliage.
- Cultivated landscape vegetation.

## AFTER

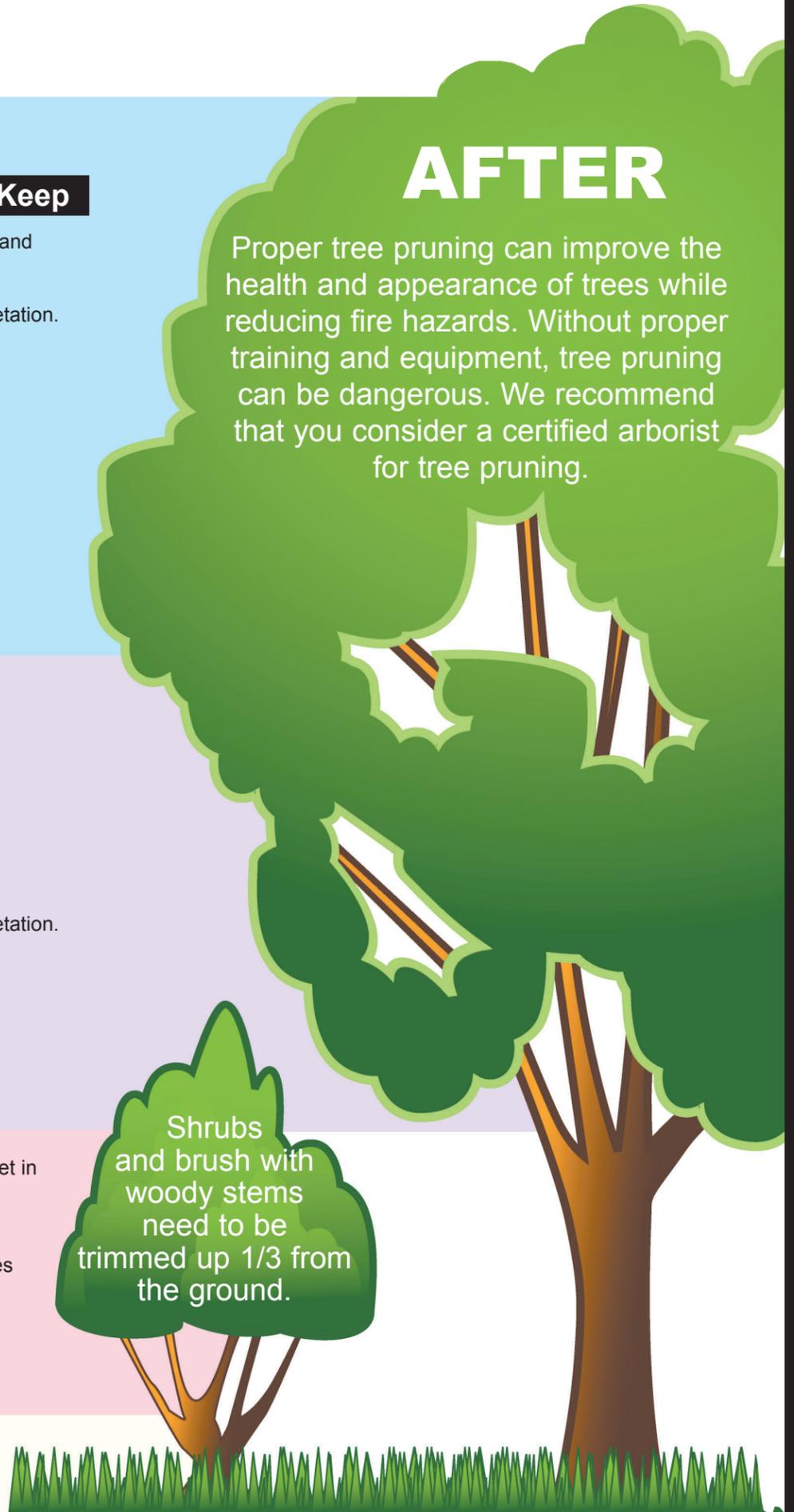
Proper tree pruning can improve the health and appearance of trees while reducing fire hazards. Without proper training and equipment, tree pruning can be dangerous. We recommend that you consider a certified arborist for tree pruning.

- Tree and shrub foliage.
- Cultivated landscape vegetation.

- Trunks of trees over 18 feet in height (no foliage in bottom 6 feet).
- Foliage of shrubs and trees less than 18 feet tall.
- Cultivated landscape vegetation.

- Groundcover, grass and weeds (dead or alive).

Shrubs and brush with woody stems need to be trimmed up 1/3 from the ground.



# HEIGHT EXPLANATION

## BEFORE

Untrimmed Tree

### High Hazard Plants

The following are high hazard plants:

- Acacia Fir
- Cedar Juniper
- Cypress Pampas Grass
- Eucalyptus Pine

Vegetation should be properly maintained and not used in mass plantings in a manner that could transmit fire from the native growth to any structure.

- For trees taller than 18 feet, remove lower branches within 6 feet of the ground.
- For trees and shrubs less than 18 feet high, remove lower branches to 1/3 of their height.
- Choose landscaping plants that are fire-resistant.

Overgrown Brush or Shrubs

Tall Grass & Weeds

Higher than 15 feet above ground

### What to Remove

1. Remove dead limbs, branches and other combustible material from portions of trees adjacent to or overhanging any building or structure.
2. Prune branches to remove all vegetation within 10 feet of any chimney outlet.
3. Prune branches to remove all foliage directly above roof surfaces to provide a five-foot vertical separation between the roof and the foliage.

6 to 15 feet above ground

- Requirements 1, 2 and 3 from above apply in this height range.
4. Remove all dead vegetation.

3 inches to 6 feet above ground

5. Prune branches to remove all foliage lower than 6 feet from all trees, brush and shrubs taller than 18 feet in height.
6. Prune branches to remove all foliage from the lowest 1/3 of all trees, brush and shrubs less than 18 feet in height.
7. Remove all dead vegetation.
8. Cut grass and weeds to a maximum height of 3 inches.

0 to 3 inches above ground

9. Dead material, grass stubble and weeds are okay here. Please keep stubble and roots to reduce erosion.



Excessive landscaping vegetation increases the level of risk for these homes, and can be as dangerous as native vegetation.

## 4

### All properties will be charged a cost recovery inspection fee if found to be noncompliant.

If you receive a "Notice of Noncompliance," refer to this brochure to help you understand what additional work needs to be done. Prompt correction (before the compliance due date on the Notice of Noncompliance) is the only way to avoid additional noncompliance reinspection fees.



Share the responsibility



Community and the Fire Department working together

### Council-approved cost recovery and fee structure for brush inspections beginning FY 2015/2016

Inspections	Inspection Fees Total
No Violation Found on 1st Inspection	No Fee
Non-Compliance on 1st Inspection	\$577.00
Continued Non-Compliance on 2nd Inspection	\$629.00
Continued Non-Compliance on 3rd Inspection	\$862.00
Lot Clearing by City Staff	Actual Cost

# WHERE TO CLEAR

**You are only responsible for vegetation and hazards that are on your property.**

Requirements apply to any portion of your property that is within 200 feet of any structure, even if the structure is not on your property, including structures across the street.

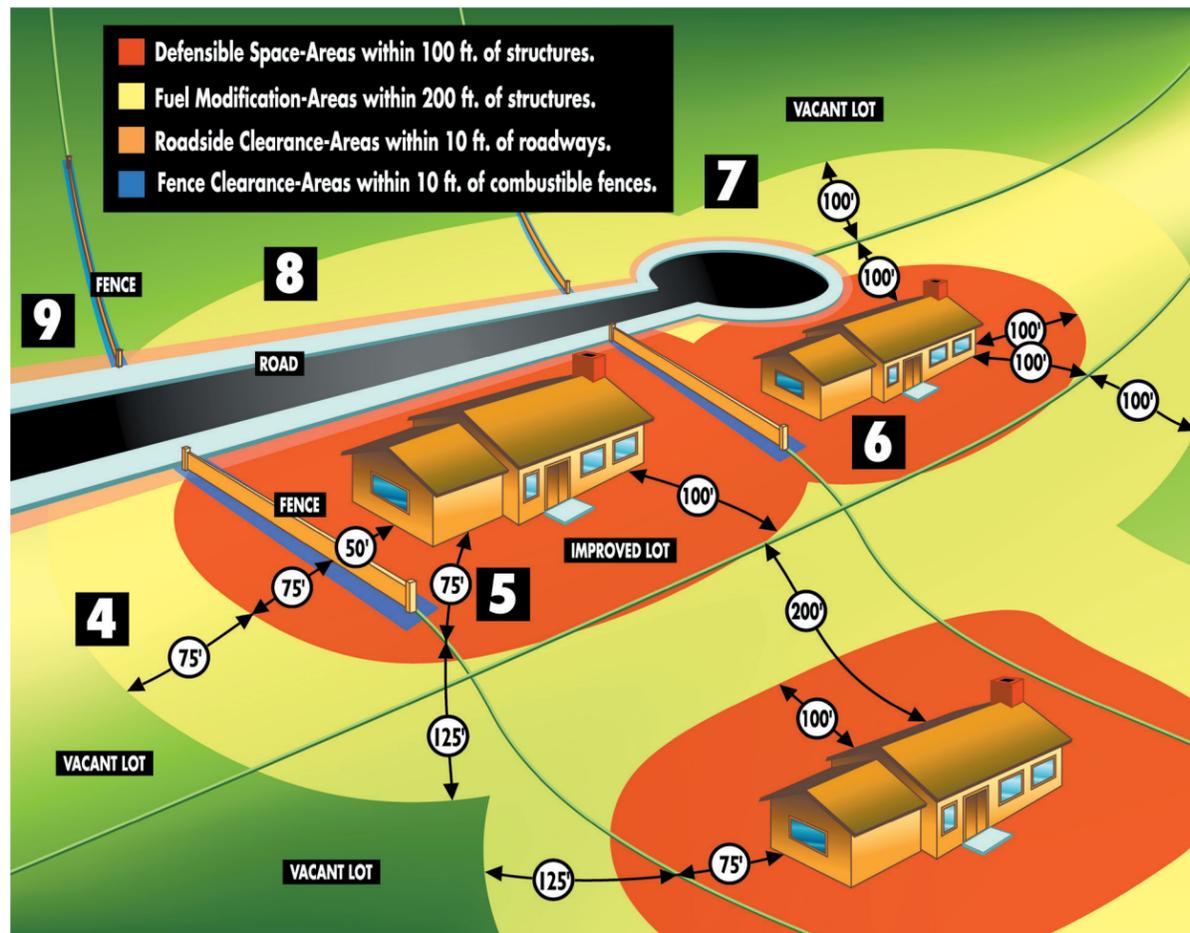
The area within 100 feet of a structure must be maintained to provide a "Defensible Space" where vegetation is less flammable and not excessive in volume. This "Defensible Space" allows firefighters to work around the structure while protecting it from fire.

The area between 100 feet and 200 feet from structures is the "Fuel Modification Area." Reduction of the volume of plant material lessens the likelihood that radiated heat would ignite the structure. In extreme wind-driven fires, flame lengths can reach well beyond 100 feet.

**You are only required to clear on your own property.**

**Clearance is required:**

- within 10 feet of roadways, (driveway, road, alley)
- within 10 feet of combustible fences
- within 200 feet of structures



Property lines are shown in green. Large numbers in black squares indicate parcel numbers.

Parcel 4 needs roadside fence clearance and clearance for house on parcel 5.

All of parcel 6 is within 200 feet of structures and must be cleared.

Parcel 8 must be cleared for house on parcel 5, the roadside and the combustible fences.

Parcel 5 needs clearance within 200 feet of house on parcel 6 and their own house.

Parcel 7 must clear within 200 feet of house on parcel 6 and within 10 feet of the fence between their land and parcel 8.

Parcel 9 needs roadside and combustible fence clearance.

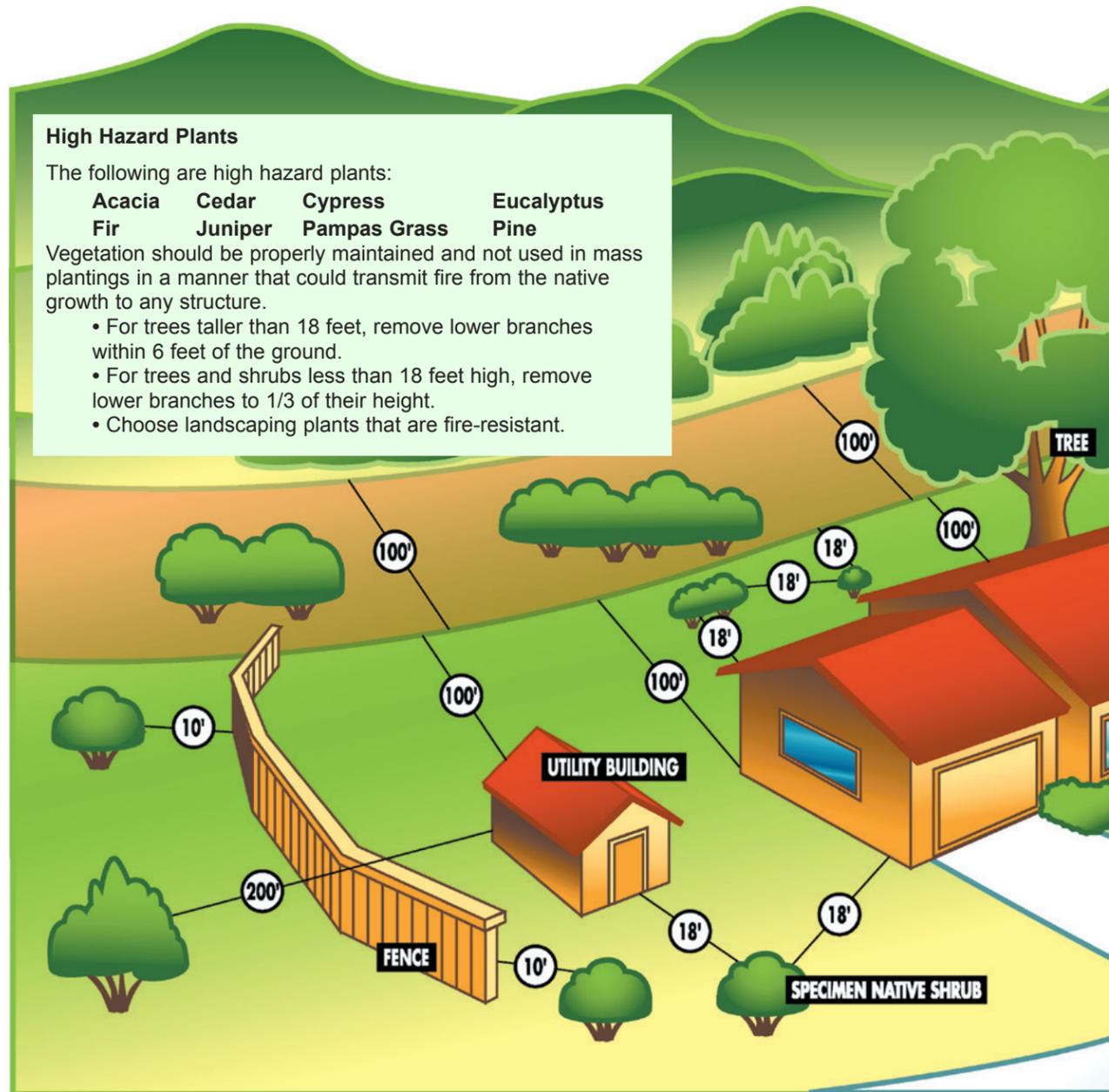


7. Dead trees provide unnecessary fuels that could help intensify a fire.

8. This requirement does apply to cultivated landscape vegetation. Remove all dead vegetation and reduce live vegetation. You can further reduce the amount of vegetation that could fuel a fire by selecting individual plants to keep and removing less desirable plants.

9. Reduce excessive vegetation in close proximity to structures. Consider removing acacia, pine, juniper, eucalyptus, cypress, and pampas grass to reduce the fuel load in proximity to structures. Break up plantings to reduce the likelihood that fire will travel from brush areas to structures.

10. This box may be checked because you need to remove existing material on your property, or because compliance with other requirements above will generate material that will need to be removed. "Machine processed" or "chipped" material may be kept on the property if it is spread to a maximum depth of 3 inches within 100 feet of structures and 6 inches elsewhere, except none of this material is allowed within 10 feet of any roadway.



## EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS

- Requirement 1 refers to NATIVE VEGETATION. It must be cut to 3 inches in height unless it is trimmed up 1/3 its height. All dead material must be removed. Plants that are within 100 feet of structures shall be trimmed up and spaced 18 feet apart.
- Requirement 2 also refers to NATIVE VEGETATION. It must be cut down to 3 inches near roadways and combustible fences. You may not leave the cut material on the ground near roadways.
- Keep vegetation back from the outlet of the chimney.
- Clean all plant litter from roofs regularly. These fine fuels are easily ignited by flying embers.
- “Trim up” so the foliage (leaves and twigs) is not near the ground. This separation prevents fire on the ground from igniting the plant.
- This separation reduces the likelihood of fire spreading and greatly assists firefighters in protecting your home.

## WHAT TO REMOVE

Remove all dead material. This includes dead trees and dead shrubs. It also includes dead branches and dead undergrowth in live plants.

Remove any foliage that is within 10 feet of a chimney outlet.

Prune tree branches to create a 5-foot vertical space between roof surfaces and foliage.

Remove all or most native plants from the “Defensible Space” within 100 feet of structures. Prune the branches from the lower third of any native plants you keep in this area, and keep these plants spaced 18 feet apart. If the plant is over 18 feet in height, you only need to prune the lower 6 feet.

Reduce the fuel load in the “Fuel Modification Zone” from 100 feet to 200 feet from structures. Prune the branches from the lower third of any native plants you keep in this area. If the plant is over 18 feet in height, you only need to prune the lower 6 feet.

You may choose to machine process (chip or grind) the plant material you remove and spread it on the property as mulch. This is permitted within the following requirements:

- Do not spread this material within 10 feet of roadways.
- Material within 100 feet of structures is limited to 3 inches in depth.
- Material is limited to 6 inches in depth in all other areas.

## WHAT ABOUT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

**Slope Stability Problems:** Most brush clearance has little or no effect on slope stability and erosion. If you believe compliance with the brush clearance requirements will seriously increase the risk of slope problems, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau for more information.

**Appointments for Inspections:** The Fire Department does not normally make appointments for inspections due to the large number of properties involved and the limited staff to perform the inspections. Plan to have your property in compliance before inspections begin on April 1, 2016.

**Restricted Parking:** During "Extreme Fire Weather Conditions" the City of Beverly Hills will restrict parking on certain streets north of Sunset, in the "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone." These parking restrictions are required to ensure that residents can evacuate the area and firefighting equipment can get into the area.



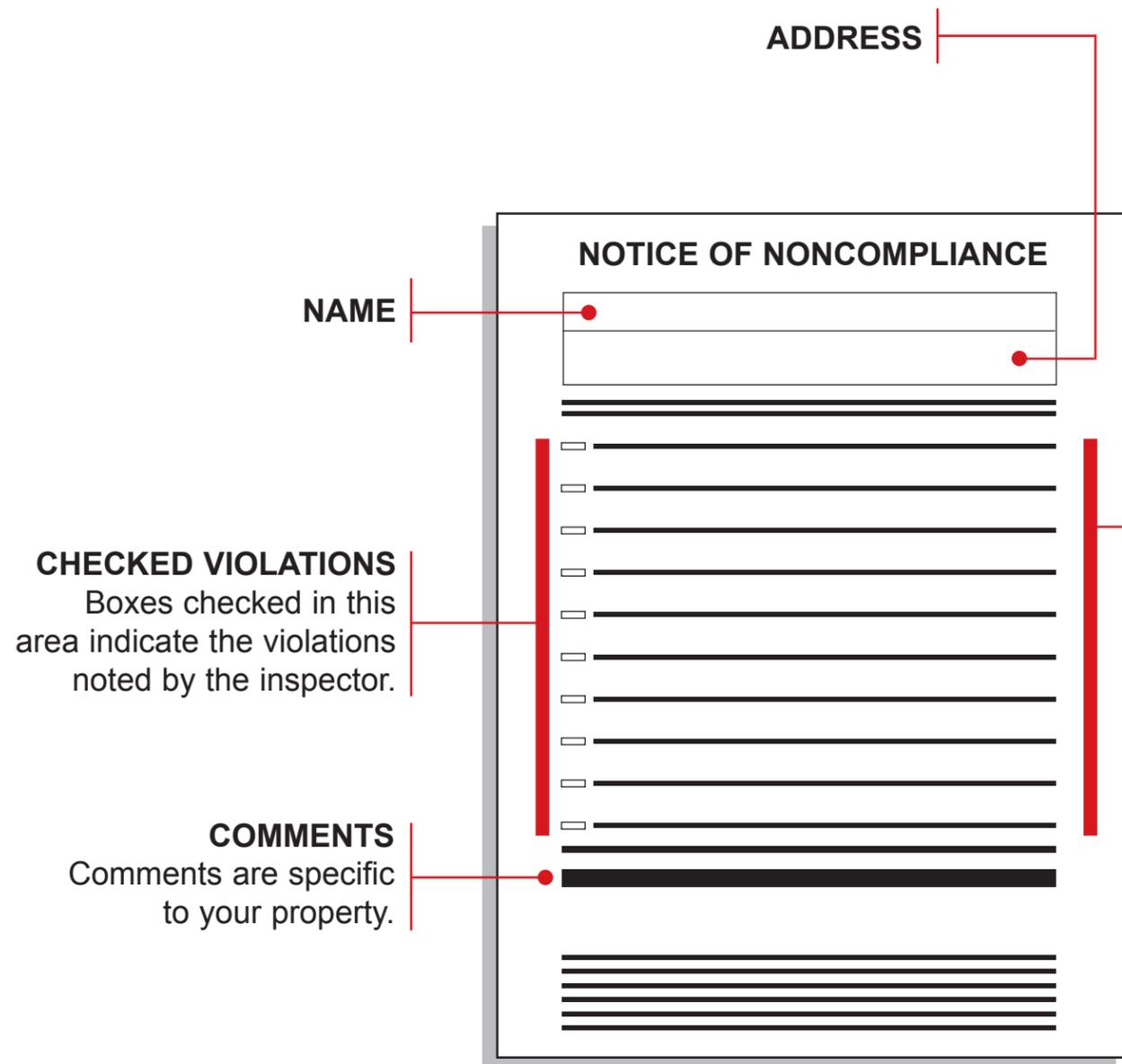
More Information: [Fire Prevention Bureau at \(310\) 281-2703](tel:3102812703)

# READING YOUR NOTIFICATION

## How to read your Notice of Non-Compliance

Inspections will begin April 1, 2016. If the Inspector finds a violation on your property, a "Notice of Noncompliance" will be mailed with information about the violation(s).

You can use this brochure to help you understand what the violations mean, and what you need to do about them.



# REQUIREMENTS

1. All native brush, weeds, grass, trees, landscape, and hazardous vegetation on your property within 200 feet of all structures, whether those structures are on your property or adjoining properties, shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements as noted on pages 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11.
2. Maintain all weeds and other vegetation free from dead material located within 10 feet of any combustible fence or an edge of that portion of any highway, street, alley, or paved driveway used for vehicular travel.
3. Trees shall be trimmed so the foliage is no closer than 10 feet from the outlet of a chimney.
4. Remove any accumulation of leaves, needles, twigs, and all other combustible material from the roof of any structure on your property.
5. Trees that are taller than 18 feet shall have lower branches trimmed so that no foliage is within 6 feet of the ground. Trees and shrubs less than 18 feet shall have branches trimmed so that foliage is removed from the lower third of the height of the tree or shrub.
6. Maintain 5 feet of vertical clearance between roof surfaces and foliage of overhanging trees.
7. All dead trees shall be removed from the property.
8. Hazardous vegetation on your property beyond 100 feet, but within 200 feet of all structures, shall be maintained as follows: Remove dead material from this area, except vegetation that is cut to 3 inches in height. Prune foliage from lower third of trees and shrubs up to a maximum of 6 feet.
9. If your property has been identified as having landscape vegetation that requires additional modification, you are directed to maintain your landscape vegetation in accordance with the requirements.
10. Remove and safely dispose of all cut or bagged vegetation, native or otherwise, all dead trees and all debris. Cut vegetation may be machine processed and spread on site. (Not to exceed 2" in depth of shredded material). Failure to properly remove could result in another violation.

(see page 5)

## WOOD ROOF ORDINANCE

For further information regarding the wood roof ordinance: Please contact the Building and Safety Department at (310) 285-1141 or visit [www.beverlyhills.org/woodroof](http://www.beverlyhills.org/woodroof).