COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Zone 0 (Zero) FAQ

November 1, 2026



The proposed Zone 0 regulations have not yet been finalized or adopted into law. Prior to implementation or enforcement by OCFA, the proposed requirements must complete all applicable administrative and regulatory approval processes. Upon adoption, OCFA will update this form and publish the finalized requirements on its website for public reference.

Zone 0 (Zero) FAQ

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

November 1, 2026

1

When will these new proposed requirements take effect?

An effective date is still pending. On August 28, 2026, the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection submitted this document to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for review. It was subsequently withdrawn on September 8, 2026. Prior to becoming law, this document must be reviewed and then approved through the OAL. The OAL has 30 working days to review the record for clarity, necessity, and legal validity. The OAL either approves the regulation and files it with the Secretary of State (making it law) or disapproves it for procedural errors. Once a guidance document is made public for the new requirements, the timeline will then begin at the local level. The California State Board of Forestry has emphasized that implementation will prioritize education and outreach. For more information regarding the OAL, please visit their website at OAL | Office of Administrative Law.

2

What is Zone 0?

Zone 0 is an area of defensible space within the first five feet (0-5 feet) of a home or other building, including decks and stairs. It is considered the most important area to keep clear of combustible items such as woody mulch and plants to reduce the risk of a structure igniting during an ember-driven wildfire.

3

What is the purpose and why is it important?

Zone 0 reduces the likelihood of structure ignition by reducing the potential for direct ignition of the structure from flame contact, by embers that accumulate at the base of a wall, and/or indirect ignitions when embers ignite vegetation, vegetative debris, or other combustible materials located close to the structure that result in either a radiant heat and/or a direct flame contact exposure to the structure. Data shows the majority of homes lost to wildfire are ignited by flying embers that can travel miles ahead of an active front of a wildfire. Keeping the area closest to structure clear of combustibles helps prevent embers from igniting flammable materials on or adjacent to the structure.

4

Where did Zone 0 come from?

Through Assembly Bill 3074 (2020), the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection was directed to create an ember-resistant zone within 5 feet of structure. The zone has been termed "Zone 0" as it applies to the first five feet around the house, building, and any attached decks or stairs in a 0-5 feet perimeter.

Zone 0 (Zero) FAQ

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

November 1, 2026

5

Who will be affected by Zone 0?

Zone 0 will apply to all areas identified as State Responsibility Areas (SRA) and "Very High" Fire Hazard Severity Zones of the Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). It will also immediately apply to all new construction in the SRA and "Very High" areas of the LRA, once the regulations and the statutorily –required guidance document are finalized. Please visit CAL FIRE's website for more information on Fire Hazard Severity Zones at Fire Hazard Severity Zones | OSFM.

6

How will OCFA implement these new proposed requirements?

Similar to the State Board of Forestry, OCFA will prioritize education and outreach. The proposed regulation would incorporate existing homes in two phases, with early adoption encouraged and support provided for a range of approaches based on community priorities and needs. If approved and adopted into law, OCFA would review the application and enforcement of these requirements to ensure they achieve the intent of the code. The goal is to give homeowners time, resources, and guidance to make changes effectively and affordably. New construction would be required to comply with the regulation once it becomes effective following adoption.

7

What are the new proposed requirements?

While the rules and language are being worked through at the state level, the proposed rule language recommends an implementation approach that prioritizes education and outreach. While Zone 0 requirements will apply to new construction upon adoption of the regulation, existing homes and structures can implement actions in phases over time within different areas of Zone 0:

- Phase 1 (Implemented within the first 3 years): Includes removing combustible items such as firewood, dead leaves and branches, mulch, and wood chips within 5 feet of the structure. Removing dead and dying plants, trimming trees according to regulations, and implementing or adjusting for allowable vegetation during this time period. To ensure alignment with current state law, combustible debris on roofs and rain gutters, dead tree branches, and branches within 10 feet of chimneys would be required to be removed upon the effective date of the regulations.

- Phase 2 (Implemented within 5 years): Local jurisdictions will assign a timeline, within 5 years of the effective date of the regulations, for the creation of an under-eave safety zone for vegetation other than trees, replacing combustible gates, and making any necessary adjustments to sheds and fencing.

Note: As a local fire agency, in the Local Responsibility Areas OCFA may authorize alternative practices based on local variations such as geography/topography, fire risk, lot size, response resources, structure composition, or compliance with the California Wildland Urban Interface code. These practices must provide substantially similar practical effects to the regulations.

8

Where can I find information on Zone 0?

More is found at OCFA's website at www.ocfa.org/rsg under Immediate Zone. Please also visit the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's website at Board of Forestry & Fire Protection | BOF.