



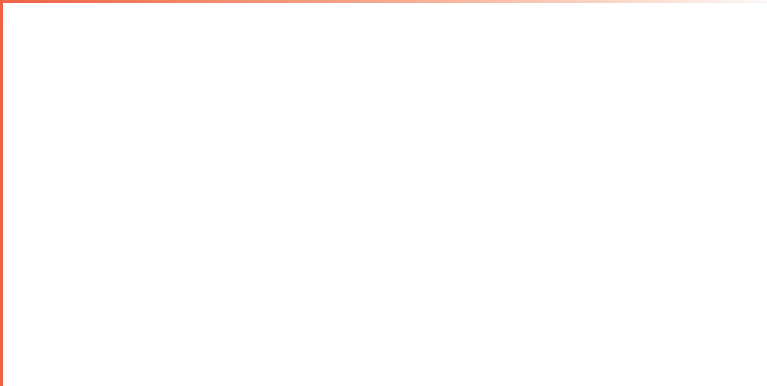
# Please join Councilmember Scott Sherman for a Fire Safety Town Hall

September 3, 2014 Starts at 5:30-7:00pm

Mission Trails Visitor Center

1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119

Please rsvp to (619) 236-6677 or btetlow@sandiego.gov



## Guide to living in the Wildland Urban Interface. Defensible Space Works!



A property containing a habitable structure and native or naturalized vegetation is required to provide 100 feet of brush management in two district zones (Zone 1 and Zone 2) **Special requirements may apply if your home was built pre-1989.** Check with Fire Rescue or Development Services Department before you begin your work to better understand how the requirements apply to you. This guide generally describes brush management requirements and techniques.

### Zone 1 Typically extends 35 feet out from the habitable structure

- Must be maintained on a regular basis by thinning and pruning trees and plants, controlling weeds, and maintaining irrigation systems.
- No habitable structures are permitted. New construction (i.e. fences, walls, palapas, play structures, gazebos, and decks) must be non-combustible and/or have a minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating. Previously conforming structures (legally constructed prior to ordinance) may remain unless they constitute a distinct danger to life or property.
- Plants should be primarily low-growing (less than 4 feet in height), low-fuel, and fire-resistive.
- All portions of trees, other than the trunk, which extend within ten feet of a structure or the outlet of any chimney, must be cut back.
- Trees adjacent to or overhanging any building must be free of dead wood.
- Roof and rain gutters must be free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.

### Zone 2 is from 36-100 feet. Typically comprised of undisturbed vegetation on a slope subject to sensitive biological resource protections.

- Must be maintained on a regular basis by controlling weeds and removing invasive species.
- Brush management activity is not allowed **March 1 through August 15** in coastal sage scrub, maritime succulent scrub, or coastal sage-chaparral habitats, unless an exception is specifically granted.
- Selective thinning and pruning of native and non-native plants is required to reduce the fuel-load. Do not grade or grub native plants, soils or habitats. Non-native plants must be pruned before native plants. Violators will be responsible for restoration and mitigation costs as applicable.
- NO structures or permanent irrigation are allowed in Zone 2.
- A permit is required to re-vegetate or reconfigure Brush Management Zone 2. Failure to obtain the required permits could result in costly corrective action.

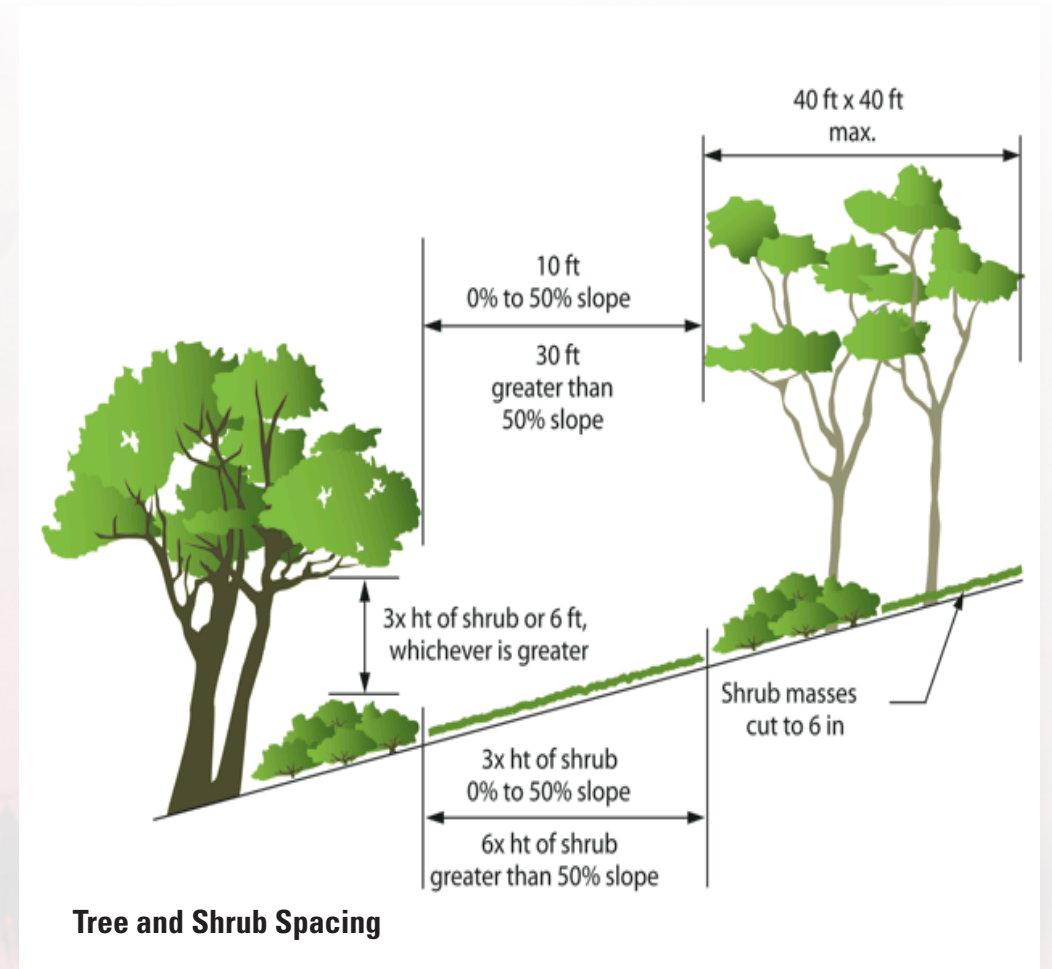
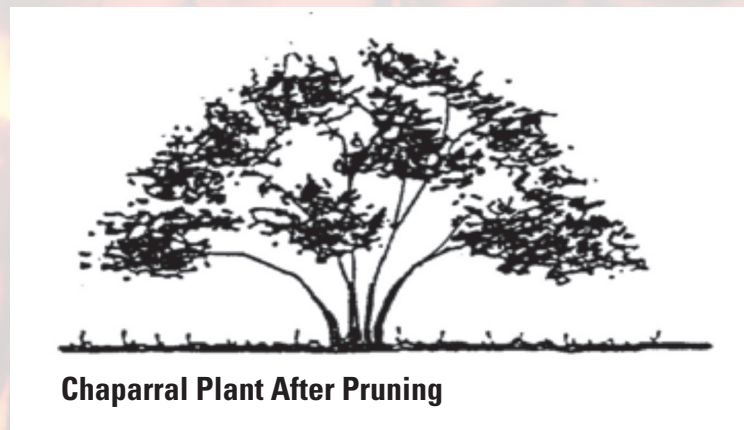
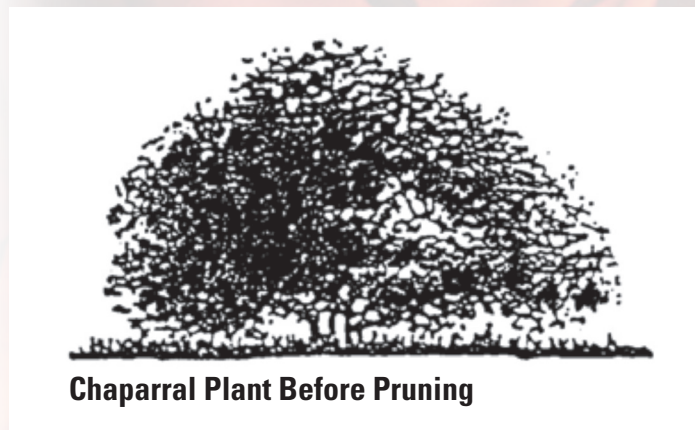
# How to Selectively Thin and Prune Plants and Trees in Zone 2 and Avoid Clearing Sensitive Vegetation in Violation of the Code

**Step 1: Remove** as much dead wood as you can and invasive species within the Brush Management Zone areas.

**Step 2: Thin** the entire Zone 2 area. Start by cutting down 50% of the plants over 2 feet in height to a height of 6 inches. Don't go any lower than 6 inches so the roots remain to control soil erosion. The goal is to create a "mosaic" or more natural look, as shown below, so do your cutting in a "staggered" pattern. Leave uncut plant groupings up to 400 square feet — that's a 20x20-foot area, or an area that can be encircled by an 80-foot rope — separated by groupings of plants cut down to 6 inches. Thinning should be prioritized as follows: 1) invasive non-native species; 2) non-native species; 3) flammable native species; 4) native species; and 5) regionally sensitive species.



**Step 3: Prune** all plants or plant groupings that are left after the thinning process to achieve the horizontal and vertical clearances shown in the illustration below. Remaining plants, 4 feet or more in height, should then be cut and shaped into "umbrellas." This means pruning one half of the lower branches to create umbrella-shaped canopies.



This allows you to see and deal with what is growing underneath. Upper branches may then be shortened to reduce fuel load as long as the canopy is left intact. This keeps the plant healthy and the shade from the plant canopy reduces weed and plant growth underneath. Vegetation that is less than 4 feet in height, like coastal sage scrub, should be cut back to within 12 inches of the root crown.

**Step 4: Dispose** of the cuttings and dead wood by either hauling it to a landfill; or, by chipping/mulching it on-site and spreading it out in the Zone 2 area to a depth of not more than 6 inches.

**Step 5: Thin and prune annually** because plants will grow back.



This information is available in alternative formats upon request.  
(August 2014)

Printed on recycled paper

## Get more information

City of San Diego Development Services Department - Obtaining permits for brush management on private property with restrictions  
 City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department - Brush/Weed Abatement, Use of goats  
 City of San Diego Park & Rec. - Brush Management on City-owned Open Space  
 City of San Diego Landscape Standards - Guidance on plant materials (prohibited invasive species) and brush management  
 San Diego County Recorder - Property restrictions (easements, permits, dee or title)

619-446-5000  
 619-533-4444  
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 619-237-0502

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