



Santa Clara County FireSafe Council

We lead the fight in protecting lives, homes, property, critical infrastructure, and the environment from catastrophic wildfires

Project Information & Disclosures

Thank you for your interest in participating in a hazardous fuel reduction project. The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council prides itself on thoughtful, well-planned, and carefully designed projects that help reduce the risks related to the devastating effects of wildfire.

Wildfire can kill people, pets, livestock, and wildlife. It can destroy homes, outbuildings, vehicles, and cherished property and keepsakes. It can lay waste to forests and openspace. It makes sense to help reduce the chances that a wildfire will take away those things we love.

As we prepare a wildfire risk reduction project, it's important to understand that the process of reducing the risk of wildfire also has its own set of risks to be aware of. We want to draw your attention to a number of possible unintended consequences, some of which are highly improbable, others are more common and predictable.

First, about your expectations – we use the words “reduce risk” not “eliminate.” We hope the treatments work as intended. Defensible space helps but won't guarantee your home will survive a wildfire. Wildfires are still capable of igniting homes with defensible space through ember showers, flame contact, and radiant heat.

Clearing a roadside buffer helps reduce the risk of wildfire but does not provide any guarantee that fires will be prevented or contained.

Roads are frequently the site of wildfire ignition due to thrown cigarettes, sparks from dragging chains, ejection of hot material from exhaust, etc.

Also, defensible doesn't mean “will be defended.” If a wildfire is sparked right next door, firefighters may not arrive at your property until long after the wildfire has done its damage.

Next, know that the work itself can be dangerous. You should try to stay out of the way of people operating chainsaws or chippers. Things can go wrong. Trees can fall the wrong way, that sort of thing.

Heavy equipment such as bucket trucks or masticators may be used. The weight, braces, wheels or tracks can damage surfaces or underground infrastructure. It's not common but it can happen. We and our

contractors take every precaution and all employees, contractors and entities contracted to the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council are insured and can provide proof thereof upon request.

And sometimes, the work area just isn't very pretty. It may be functional but you might have to do some grooming to clean up and tidy it the way you like.





It is a known trade-off that removing vegetation may destabilize the ground or nearby trees. Workers stress slopes as they drag cut material, or mechanical equipment may be used. Soil and rocks are likely to be disturbed. This can increase erosion in the winter.

Trees near the project area may experience new wind forces due to the loss of buffering after adjacent tree removal, which can increase the risk of the remaining trees falling or branches breaking.

Consult with an arborist and/or geotechnical specialist if you have very steep ground or have

concerns about the project's impacts. You can always decline having the work performed.

When we remove trees or shrubs, we don't remove the roots, nor do we eliminate the seed bank in the soil. You can expect the shrubs to grow back. Broom species especially produce many seeds that can lay dormant and sprout years, even decades, after the brush is removed. You will need to continue to remove new sprouts every year. Please plan for this.

All vegetation treatment equipment may be contaminated with pathogens, spores, seeds, insects or other unwanted organisms. Your property or your neighbors' may harbor these hazards to healthy trees and shrubs, which may be spread around during treatment. Also, bee or wasp nests can be a real problem. Let us know if you suspect they are in the area so the contractor can take precautions.

Please notify us if you know of any rare or endangered species on your property, or if you are aware of any bird nests or other wildlife are residing in the treatment area. We want to protect them. When animal nests are identified or marked, workers will leave a buffer of untreated vegetation around the nest, even if this results in ladder fuels or less-optimal clearing.

Hazardous fuels reduction removes fine fuels including small branches, shrubs and trees. Large diameter wood is often left on the ground to slowly decay.

We hope that your whole neighborhood supports the project and it helps you build community. But some people don't appreciate change and the project might not be as welcome as we all think it should be. Removing brush, branches or trees may result in loss of visual or sound screening from the road or neighbors. We don't survey property lines and rely on the information residents give us about where we may or may not work.

No good deed goes unpunished.
-- Clare Boothe Luce

Make sure you review the scope of work and treatment map, and go out and inspect any flagging. We need you to confirm no pipes, wires, septic tank, springs, delicate paving or other infrastructure that could be damaged by equipment exists in the path to, or the area of, the planned treatment. When you sign the form approving the project and consenting to the treatment, you are confirming you've reviewed the plan.

Also, inspect your property including the treatment area within 3 days of work completion and notify the contractor and SCCFSC coordinator if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!!!