

# FUELBREAKS

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## A FACT SHEET FOR STOREY COUNTY HOMEOWNERS

**Fuelbreaks** are natural or constructed barriers used to stop or slow fires that may occur. They also provide a control line from which firefighters can work.

An effective firebreak is created when the majority or the entire fuel load (trees and shrubs) is removed from a swath of land large enough to serve the following purposes:



- ◆ Stop or slow the advance of a raging wildfire and increase the effectiveness of firefighting opportunities;
- ◆ Provide safe evacuation routes for residents and safe access for firefighters when aligned on existing roads;
- ◆ Help confine fires to limited areas; and,
- ◆ Protect private property.

### **DESCRIPTION**

Existing roads in fire-prone areas provide excellent opportunities to create effective fuelbreaks. However, the area within the road easement is many times too narrow for complete treatment. In these cases, the firebreak treatments may necessarily extend onto adjacent properties.

Fuelbreaks should always be revegetated with seedings of low stature fire-resistant grasses and wildflowers to provide ground cover and soil stability while leaving as little fuel as possible.

**When constructing fuelbreaks, it is essential that all tree branches, shrubs, pine needle litter from beneath remaining trees, and other plant biomass be removed from the site immediately to a safe disposal area. This material dries rapidly and can contribute to the fire hazard problem if allowed to remain on the premises. Tree stumps should be cut as close to ground level as possible to allow fire suppression vehicles to pass over them.**