

# NOVATO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



Developed by the Marin County Fire  
Prevention Officers

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Tyler, Fire Chief

Fire Protection Standard 220

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Date: 01/27/2020

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### PREFACE

Included in Standard 220, 220-A, and 220-B are the requirements for preparing and submitting a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP). Standard 220 has been developed collaboratively with Fire Departments and Fire Districts throughout Marin County with the intent of providing a comprehensive and consistent application of regulations outlined in the California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 9 (California Fire Code), Government Code, Title 5, Division 1, Part 1, Chapter 6.8, Section 4290 and 4291 of the Public Resources Code, the International Wildland Interface Code and locally adopted ordinances.

Please contact the Fire Prevention Division if you have any questions or require clarification.

### WHAT IS A VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN?

A Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) is the assessment of your properties fire hazard related to topography, aspect and vegetation, a proposal for mitigation of those hazards, and a prescriptive plan for future maintenance and care of the area surrounding your home.

Components of your VMP may include, but not be limited to: identification of hazards, survey of vegetation, proposed modification of hazards and vegetation, reduction and/or removal of fuels, fire safe landscaping, creating defensible space, shaded fuel breaks, fire breaks, maintenance of access and egress components, and other prescriptive measures needed to mitigate the hazards of wildfire.

### WHEN IS A VMP REQUIRED?

A Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) is required for all new homes and structures, subdivisions, and those buildings that are undergoing substantial remodel that are located within the Wildland-Urban Interface as defined by the Novato Fire District.

### ADJACENT PROPERTY

In the event minimum required defensible space crosses property lines, the property owner will be required to obtain a “defensible space easement” from the adjoining property owner. If this cannot be obtained, the proposed structure may be required to be re-sited or other feasible mitigation measures shall be required to reduce the risk of ignition or spread of wildfire to the structure(s).

For existing structures, additional fire protection measures may be required to mitigate a reduction in the required defensible space. To provide maximum wildfire protection for your home, a combination of near-home vegetation management, appropriate building materials, and related design features must be used.

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If the property for which the VMP is being prepared is adjacent to Open Space land owned publicly or privately, make note of this fact in the VMP. You may be required to submit the VMP to the owner for review. Any limitations set by the Public or Private land owner, shall be incorporated into your proposed VMP.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Defensible Space

Defensible space is the buffer you create and maintain between buildings, structures of access points on your property and vegetation including grass, trees, and shrubs.

Defensible space is provided to help slow or stop the spread of wildfire and protect your home from catching fire, either from direct flame contact or radiant heat. Defensible space is also important to help protect firefighters when they are defending your home.

#### Home Ignition Zones

Another term used in the context of defensible space planning is the "Home Ignition Zone" or HIZ. The HIZ reduces a home's ignition potential based on the proximity to available fuel types within 100 feet or more from a home. More defensible space may be necessary if your home is on a steep slope or in a windswept exposure. For a description of plan requirements for each zone, please see VMP Standard 220-A, or visit <http://www.firesafemarin.org/defensible-space>.

#### Immediate Zone (ZONE 0): 0'-5'

The Immediate Zone extends 0-5' from your house. It's the area closest to your house, including the structure itself, decks, outdoor furniture, and the outside walls and coverings. This area is most vulnerable, and should be most aggressively maintained for fire resistance.

#### Intermediate Zone (ZONE 1): 5'-30'

The Intermediate Zone from 5' to 30' out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. Keep this area "Lean, Clean, and Green" and employ careful landscaping to create breaks that can help influence and decrease fire behavior.

#### Extended Zone (ZONE 2): 30'-100'

The extended zone from 30' to 100' (or more, if required due to steep slopes, nearby vegetation conditions, and/or your local fire department). The goal here is not to eliminate fire but to interrupt fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground.

#### Access Zone (Zone 4): 0'-10'

The access zone extends 10 feet horizontally from the edge on either side of the road or driveway and shall not extend within the 14 foot vertical clearance above the surface of the roadway or driveway, as required for emergency access. All landscape shall meet the requirements for separation as stated in the Zone 1 above.

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### Fire Safe Landscaping

Fire safe landscaping uses fire-resistant designs and materials in conjunction with carefully selected plants, to strategically resist the spread of fire to your home. For more information please visit <http://www.firesafemarin.org/landscaping>.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE VMP?

At a minimum, the VMP shall contain the information listed below:

**SITE PLAN-** The site plan shall include the following:

1. Site plans shall be drawn to a conventional scale.
2. The name, address, and phone number of the plan preparer shall be included on the plans.
3. A vicinity map shall be shown on the site plan that clearly shows the subject property and surrounding roads.
4. The site plan must show all existing and proposed lot lines, labeled with their metes and bounds, open space, and the boundaries of existing and proposed easements and rights of way.
5. The footprints of all existing and proposed structures and buildings on the subject property must be indicated and drawn to scale.
6. Their use, location, and setbacks to all property lines must be indicated.
7. The minimum setbacks from the exterior walls of the buildings to each HIZ must be dimensioned on the plans.
8. The footprint of existing structures on adjacent properties within the extended 100' HIZ (Zone 3)

**NARRATIVE-** Vegetation Management Plan "Narrative" shall describe:

1. The existing property conditions including existing plants/shrubs/trees and hardscape
2. The proposed scope of the work
3. A disclaimer for future plantings
4. The description and requirements for all Home Ignition Zones (Zone 0 –Zone 3).
5. A description of long term maintenance and safety practices
6. (Please see Standard 220-A for example language)

**GRAPHIC PLAN-** The plan sets shall be required to include the following graphic detail:

1. All building(s), structure(s), property lines, and access/egress roads or driveways.  
The plan shall graphically indicate the extents of each home ignition zones (Zones 1,2 & 3)
2. The location and configuration of existing plants/shrubs/trees
3. The location of the existing plants/shrubs/trees planned to be removed and/or modified
4. The location and configuration of plants/shrubs/trees to be planted
5. The location and type of mulche and ground cover material (organic and inorganic)
6. (Please see Standard 220-B for a plan example)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. The plan shall include a schedule/list of plants to be used and/or retained.
2. The plan shall include a schedule/list of fire prone plants. See Standard 220-B for an example of a plant list.
3. Irrigation details, if applicable. Remember, while all plants will eventually burn, healthy ones with high moisture content will be more difficult to ignite.

### PERMIT APPLICATION & REVIEW

Please provide (3) complete plan sets. Plans shall be submitted to the Novato Fire District for review. *Note, contact your local Fire Prevention Division to identify digital plan submittal requirements.*

All plan submittals will require a Novato Fire District permit application and required fees.

Landscape plans will be deemed incomplete if they fail to meet the minimum submittal information required by this standard.

The VMP shall be submitted to the Fire Code Official for review prior to implementation. The VMP shall include line drawings and a text narrative describing specific and applicable contributing factors in the selection and design of the plan.

Once approved, the required VMP mitigation shall begin prior to construction. All work prescribed in the VMP shall be complete prior to the completion of the project and request for clearance of final fire holds.

Exceptions to requirements set forth in this Standard shall be at the discretion of the AHJ.