

[NAME OF AGENCY]

[NAME OF REVIEWING UNIT]

**General Plan Fire Safety Element
Standard Recommendations
Version 2**

[DATE]

**Board of Forestry and Fire
Protection**



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Purpose and Background: The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF/Board) is required to review and make recommendations for the fire safety element of general plan updates in accordance with Government Code (GC) §65302.5. The review and recommendations apply to those general plans with State Responsibility Area (SRA) (Public Resources Code 4125) or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) (GC 51175).

The statutory requirements for the Board review and recommendations pursuant to GC 65302.5 (a)(1) and (2), and (b) are as follows:

- *“The draft elements...to the fire safety element of a county’s or a city’s general plan...shall be submitted to the Board at least 90 days prior to... the adoption or amendment to the safety element of its general plan [for each county or city with SRA or VHFHSZ].”*
- *“The Board shall... review the draft or an existing safety element and report its written recommendations to the planning agency within 60 days of its receipt of the draft or existing safety element....”*
- *“Prior to adoption of the draft element..., the Board of Supervisors... shall consider the recommendations made by the Board... If the Board of Supervisors...determines not to accept all or some of the recommendations..., the Board of Supervisors... shall communicate in writing to the Board its reasons for not accepting the recommendations.”*

Methodology for Review and Recommendations: The Board established a standardized method to review the safety element of general plans. The methodology includes 1) examining the general plan for inclusion of factors that are important for mitigation of fire hazard and risks, and 2) making recommendations related to these factors. The evaluation factors and recommendations were developed using CAL FIRE technical documents and input from local fire departments.

Enclosed are a set of recommendations directed at communities that include:

- Medium Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone acreage and/or State Responsibility Area acreage, or abuts large amounts of VHFHSZ/SRA
- Some existing, stable financial and physical resources
- General community support
- Some previous wildfire protection planning efforts

The General Plan Safety Element of each jurisdiction that fits those criteria will be assessed based on the recommendations below.

Review Process and Timeline

The county, local jurisdiction, and local fire unit will receive and review technical guidance documents, the BOF checklist, and other relevant information from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and CAL FIRE.



The county or local jurisdiction will work closely with the local fire unit during the development of the general plan and the safety element in particular.



90 days prior to the adoption or amendment of the General Plan: The county or local jurisdiction will submit the safety element to the local fire unit for review.



No more than 30 days later: The unit will submit to the BOF their findings and recommendations.



No more than 60 days later: The Board will consider the fire unit's recommendations and will approve or approve with amendments the recommendations at the next Board meeting.

Standard List of General Plan Safety Element Recommendations

Draft 9.2

Please click on the appropriate box to “check” whether the plan satisfies each point. Standard recommendations are included in the checklist but please highlight or add additional comments as necessary.

1.0 Inter-agency Wildfire Protection Planning

- 1.1 General Plan references and incorporates County or Unit Fire Plan: Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify, reference or create (if necessary) a fire plan for the geographic scope of the General Plan. The General Plan should incorporate the general concepts and standards from any county fire plan, fire protection agency (federal or state) fire plan, and local hazard mitigation plan. Identify or reference the local Unit Fire Plan and, if applicable, the Community Wildfire Prevention Plan.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Ensure fire plans incorporated by reference into the General Plan contain evaluations of fire hazards, assessment of assets at risk, prioritization of hazard mitigation actions, and implementation and monitoring components.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 1.2 Map or describe existing emergency service facilities and areas lacking services, specifically noting any areas in SRA or VHFHSZs. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Include descriptions of emergency services including available equipment, personnel, and maps of facility locations.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Initiate studies and analyses to identify appropriate staffing levels and equipment needs commensurate with the current and projected emergency response environment.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for emergency service training that meets or exceeds state or national standards.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 1.3 Inter-fire service coordination preparedness/mutual aid and multi-jurisdictional fire service agreements. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Adopt the Standardized Emergency Management Systems for responding to large scale disasters requiring a multi-agency response. Ensure and review mutual aid/automatic aid and other cooperative agreements with adjoining emergency service

providers.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Wildfire Protection Planning Recommendations:

2.0 Land Use:

2.1 Disclose wildland urban interface hazards including Fire Hazard Severity Zones designations and other vulnerable areas as determined by CAL FIRE or fire prevention organizations. Describe or map any Firewise Communities or other firesafe communities as determined by the National Fire Protection Association, Fire Safe Council, or other organizations.

Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Specify whether the entity has a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) designation pursuant GC 51175 and include a map of the zones that clearly indicates any area designated VHFHSZ.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Adopt CAL FIRE recommended Fire Hazard Severity Zones including model ordinances developed by the Office of the State Fire Marshal for establishing VHFHSZ areas.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

2.2 Goals and policies include mitigation of fire hazard for future development. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Adopt fire safe development codes to be used as standards for fire protection for new development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) within the entity's jurisdiction that meet or exceed statewide standards in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 1270 et seq and have them certified by the Board of Forestry.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for specific ordinances, or specify the current existing ordinances, code sections, or regulations, that address evacuation and emergency vehicle access; water supplies and fire flow; fuel modification for defensible space; and home addressing and signing.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Consider mitigation of previously developed areas that do not meet Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 1270 et seq. or equivalent local ordinance.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

2.3 The design and location of new development provides for adequate infrastructure for the safe ingress of emergency response vehicles and simultaneously allows civilian egress during an

emergency: Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop pre-plans for fire prone areas that address civilian evacuations to temporary safety locations.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Develop a policy that approval of parcel maps and tentative maps is conditional based on meeting regulations adopted pursuant to §4290 and 4291 of the Public Resources Code, particularly those regarding road standards for ingress, egress, and fire equipment access.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

2.4 Fire suppression defense zones. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies that create wildfire defense zones for emergency services, including fuel breaks or other staging areas where WUI firefighting tactics could be most effectively deployed.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

2.5 Prioritizing asset protection from fire when faced with a lack of suppression forces.

Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify and prioritize protection needs for assets at risk in the absence of response forces.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Establish fire defense strategies (such as fire ignition resistant areas) that provide adequate fire protection without dependency on fire resources (both air and ground) and could serve as safety zones for the public or emergency support personnel.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Land Use Planning Recommendations:

3.0 Housing:

3.1 Incorporation of current fire safe building codes. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Adopt building codes for new development in State Responsibility Areas or incorporated areas with VHFHSZ that are based on those established by the Office of the State Fire Marshal in Title 19 and Title 24 CCR, referred to as the “Wildland Urban Interface Building Codes.”

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Ensure new development proposals contain specific fire protection plans, actions, and codes for fire engineering features for structures in VHFHSZ. Examples include codes requiring automatic sprinklers in VHFHSZ.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

3.2 Consideration of diverse occupancies and their effects on wildfire protection.

Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Ensure risks to uniquely occupied structures, such as seasonally occupied homes, multiple dwelling structures, or other unique structures/owners, are considered for appropriate wildfire protection needs.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

3.3 Fuel modification around homes. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish ordinances in SRA or VHFHSZ for vegetation fire hazard reduction around structures that meet or exceed the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Defensible Space Guidelines for SRA and the Very High Fire Hazard severity zones, including vacant lots.

See http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/pdfs/Copyof4291finalguidelines9_29_06.pdf

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Reduce fuel around communities and subdivisions, considering fuels, topography, weather (prevailing winds and wind event specific to the area), fire ignitions and fire history.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Include policies and recommendations that incorporate fire safe buffers and greenbelts as part of the development planning. Ensure that land uses designated near high or very fire hazard severity zones are compatible with wildland fire protection strategies/capabilities.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

3.4 Identification and actions for substandard fire safe housing and neighborhoods relative to fire hazard area. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify and map existing housing structures that do not conform to contemporary fire standards in terms of building materials, perimeter access, and vegetative hazards in VHFHSZ or SRA by fire hazard zone designation.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Identify plans and actions to improve substandard housing structures and neighborhoods. Plans and actions should include structural rehabilitation, occupancy reduction, demolition, reconstruction, neighborhood-wide fuels hazard reduction projects, community education, and other community based solutions.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

3.5 Assessment and projection of future emergency service needs. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Ensure new development includes appropriate facilities, equipment, personnel and capacity to assist and support wildfire suppression emergency service needs. Future emergency service needs should be:

- Established consistent with state or national standards.
- Developed based on criteria for determining suppression resource allocation that includes elements such as identified values and assets at risk, ignition density, vegetation type and condition, as well as local weather and topography.
- Local Agency Formation municipal services reviews for evaluating level of service, response times, equipment condition levels and other relevant emergency service information.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Housing/Structures and Neighborhoods Recommendations:

4.0 **Conservation and Open Space:**

4.1 Identification of critical natural resource values relative to fire hazard areas. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify critical natural resources and other “open space” values within the geographic scope of the General Plan.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

4.2 Inclusion of resource management activities to enhance protection of open space and natural resource values. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop plans and action items for vegetation management that provides fire damage mitigation and protection of open space values.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for reducing the wildland fire hazards within the entity’s boundaries and, with the relevant partners, on adjacent private wildlands, federal lands, vacant residential lots, and greenbelts with fire hazards that threaten the entity’s jurisdiction.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

4.3 Integration of open space into fire safety effectiveness. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for incorporating systematic fire protection improvements for open space. Specifics policies should address fire mitigation planning with agencies/private landowners managing open space adjacent to the General Plan area, water

sources for fire suppression, and other fire prevention and suppression needs.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Conservation and Open Space Recommendations:

5.0 Circulation:

5.1 Adequate access to high hazard wildland/open space areas. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for adequate access in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones that meet or exceed standards in Title 14 CCR 1270 for lands with no structures, and maintain conditions of access in a suitable fashion for suppression access or public evacuation.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

5.2 Incorporate a policy that provides for a fuel maintenance program along roadways in the agency having jurisdiction. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop an adaptive vegetation management plan that considers fuels, topography, weather (prevailing winds and wind event specific to the area), fire ignitions and fire history.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

5.3 Emergency response barriers. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify goals and policies that address vital access routes that if removed would prevent fire fighter access (bridges, dams, etc.). Develop an alternative emergency access plan for these areas.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

5.4 Adequacy of existing and future transportation system to incorporate fire infrastructure elements. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for proposed and existing transportation systems to facilitate fire infrastructure elements such as turnouts, helispots and safety zones.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Circulation and Access Recommendations:

6.0 Post Fire Safety, Recovery and Maintenance:

The post fire recommendations address an opportunity for the community and landowners to re-evaluate land uses and practices that affect future wildfire hazards and risk. They also provide for immediate post-fire life and safety considerations to mitigate potential losses to life, human assets and critical natural resources.

6.1 Develop post-fire priorities and goals for the recovery of the built and natural environments.

Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Reevaluate hazardous conditions and provide for future fire safe conditions. Evaluate redevelopment in high or very high fire hazard severity zones.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Restore sustainable landscapes and restore functioning ecosystems. Incorporate wildlife habitat/endangered species considerations.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Provide polices and goals for maintenance of the post-fire-recovery projects, activities, or infrastructure.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

6.2 Post fire life and safety assessments. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop frameworks for rapid post-fire assessment and project implementation to minimize flooding, protect water quality, limit sediment flows and reduce other risks on all land ownerships impacted by wildland fire.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Post Fire Safety, Recovery and Maintenance Recommendations:

Additional Recommendations: