



City of Malibu News

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Statewide Wildfire Safety Law Requires Defensible Space Inspections for Real Estate Transactions in Malibu

(Malibu CA) – On and after July 1, 2021, when a property is sold that is located in a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, which includes the entire City of Malibu, documentation is required showing the property has passed a Defensible Space Inspection.

“Malibu is committed to doing everything possible to help residents be prepared for wildfire and to create conditions that will make the community more fire-safe, so I encourage every homeowner to make sure their property has defensible space,” said Mayor Paul Grisanti. “It is safer for you and your family, it protects your home and your community, it’s the right thing to do, and it is the law in California.”

This inspection is required under California's AB-38, passed this year to promote wildfire safety by requiring homes to have defensible space.

Defensible space is the buffer created between any building on a property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), defensible space, coupled with home hardening, is essential to improving a home’s chance of surviving a wildfire. It helps slow or stop the spread of wildfire, protects the home from catching fire from embers, direct flame contact or radiant heat. It also provides firefighters a safe area to in which to work while defending homes.

CAL FIRE's Defensible Space Self-Assessment tool at <https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace> will guide homeowners through the process, step by step, through submitting the form.

To request an inspection for AB-38 compliance, fill out the CAL FIRE form:
<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/e659f03a6e8447af8663e42cf48f60fd>.

Homeowners should note that the property’s Assessor Parcel Number (APN) must be included with the Defensible Space Inspection Form (AB-38 DSI Request Form). The APN can be found on a property tax statement, or by searching for an address in the Los Angeles County Assessor website: <https://portal.assessor.lacounty.gov/>.

If the property does not pass the inspection, the inspector will explain what needs to be done to bring the property into compliance and will schedule another appointment. If the property still does not meet the requirements, the seller and the buyer can enter into a written agreement allowing the buyer to bring the property into compliance within one year after closing escrow. Once a property has passed inspection, the inspection report must be submitted to the state within six months prior to entering a sales contract.

For more information, visit <https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace>.

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