

Supporting Oakland and surrounding areas in reducing the risks of wildfire danger to people, property and environs



EDUCATION
ADVOCACY
PROGRAMS
COMMUNITY BUILDING

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HOME HARDENING HOT TOPIC: FENCES & GATES

Our March meeting featured a presentation by Sheryl Drinkwater, Licensed Architect and Home Hardening Expert, on fences, gates and the impacts they have on home hardening. Here's her quick rundown of best practices:

1. Retrofit your fence or gate for at least the first 5 feet from the house.
2. Use a noncombustible material like metal or concrete.
3. If you are ready to build a new fence, use a non-combustible material.
4. Maintain weeds and dead material near your fence.
5. Regularly clean and repair your fence for best performance and longevity.

To learn more about best practices, get ideas for fire-smart fence and gate design, and see an extensive gallery of examples selected by Sheryl, [watch the recording](#) and see the [PDF](#) of her slides.



Pattern formed concrete



Berkeley Hills



Stucco and wood




Check out some creative DIY fence ideas using salvaged materials and local resources shared by Chris Cullander of the Berkeley FireSafe Council. [PDF](#)

Swapping Your Fence Could Save You Money

Do you have insurance through the California Fair Plan? Replacing wooden fencing with non-combustible gates and fencing in the first five feet of your home can qualify you for a discount on your insurance.

The FAIR plan offers **12 wildfire hardening discounts**. Actions you may already be taking, like cleaning out debris and vegetation from under decks or living in a Firewise

Dwelling Fire policyholders who obtain all 12 discounts may see a discount of up to **16.4%** off the wildfire portion of their policy premium.



Commercial policyholders who obtain all 12 discounts may see a discount of up to **13.8%** off the wildfire portion of their policy premium.



USA community, could help reduce your risk of wildfire and lower your insurance costs.

Check with your insurance broker to learn which discounts apply to your policy. [See the full list of discounts.](#)



OFSC Guide – [Home Hardening for Wildfire](#)

OFSC Guide – [Home Hardening for Wildfire: Assessment Checklist](#)

JOIN US ONLINE – OFSC APRIL MEETING



OFSC MEETING (ONLINE)

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

7:00–8:30pm

[REGISTER](#)

April's special presentation – Berkeley's Reaction and Adaptation to Zone 0: Michel Thouati, CEO of [HelpBerkeley.org](#) and Creston Firewise lead. Michel has been a lead spokesperson for the Berkeley FireSafe-FireWise Alliance on Zone 0 response. Meeting **AGENDA**

We welcome everyone from all Oakland and East Bay communities to observe, participate, and/or get involved.

SPEAKING OF ZONE 0, WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

The California Board of Forestry & Fire Protection is **resuming Zone 0 conversations** in their first advisory committee meeting of 2026.

The meeting will take place on April 23rd from 1–7pm, and people can attend either online or in person in Southern California.



Attend and share your feedback on the proposed regulations [Register](#)

NEW FIREWISE COMMUNITY IN THE WORKS!

Castle Court Firewise is making its way toward becoming our latest Firewise Recognized community. The group recently completed their neighborhood Firewise

walkthrough, an important step in the recognition process.



OFSC Firewise lead Joelle Fraser, and Castle Court neighbors were joined by Oakland Fire Marshal Darin White, Edgar Molina-Perez from the Fire Prevention Bureau, Jessie Godfrey, Horticulture Advisor serving the SF Bay Area, and architect and home hardening expert Sheryl Drinkwater. Together, they assessed the area to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities to wildfire for homes and the community.

This walkthrough will help guide organizers as they develop their three-year community action plan and move toward becoming Firewise recognized.



Is your community interested in becoming a Firewise USA® recognized site? See how OFSC can help your neighborhood group with the process – visit our program page [Firewise USA® for Oakland](#)

ALCO D5 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FAIR

ALAMEDA COUNTY DISTRICT 5 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FAIR

Hosted by: 

Sat, May 2, 10 AM – 1 PM

Emeryville Center of Community Life
4727 San Pablo Ave, Emeryville

Learn useful tips and tools to keep ourselves and our community safe in the event of a natural disaster!



Register at
bit.ly/d5preparedness



The office of Alameda County D5 Supervisor Nikki Fortunado Bas and Alameda County Fire Department are hosting an Emergency Preparedness Fair. **OFSC will be in attendance – come visit our table!**

Saturday / May 2 / 10am–1pm
Emeryville Center of Community Life
4727 San Pablo Ave, Emeryville

Come curious and leave with essential tips and tools. This event will be open to the public and food and giveaways will be provided. **Register today** and share widely with neighbors, friends and family.

PG&E AWARDS OFSC \$70,000

We're pleased to announce that Oakland Firesafe Council (OFSC) has been awarded \$70,000 from PG&E to fund **critical fuel reduction projects** on residential properties throughout the Oakland Hills. Following the January 2026, announcement of this year's funding opportunity, our Board, alongside Firewise leaders and neighborhood networks, immediately mobilized outreach efforts to identify eligible projects.



The community response was truly overwhelming, and we are happy to report that 8 projects have been funded. These projects will play a vital role in reducing hazardous vegetation and strengthening our collective resilience against wildfire.

Additional projects that were not awarded in this grant will be kept on a waitlist for future funding opportunities.

Thank you to everyone who applied and to our Firewise and neighborhood leaders for spreading the word. Together, we are making the Oakland Hills safer from wildfire!

WILDFIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION Of Note from the March Meeting

Congrats to WPC Chair Tom Grossman on new puppy, Scout, pictured here at age 11 weeks – Did you know that Zone 0 makes a good pee spot?



At their March 26th meeting, the City of Oakland's Wildfire Prevention Commission (WPC) received preliminary reports about the expenditure of Measure MM funds, the vegetation management activities conducted, and the hiring of a person with environmental expertise to oversee future expenditures and work plans. More information on these topics is expected at the April meeting so that the WPC can report to the City Council during the budget process.

The **next meeting** of the WPC is Thursday, April 16, 5–7pm, in-person at City Hall and on Zoom [WPC webpage](#)

The WPC serves as the public oversight body for Measure MM funding, providing an estimated \$2.7 million annually to support vegetation management activities in Oakland to reduce wildfire risk.

REMINDER: INSURANCE WEBINAR



Insurance Matters: Understanding and Renewing Your Insurance

Monday / April 13 / 2–3pm / Online

Hosted by [Pacific Region Garden Clubs](#) featuring Emily Rogan of United Policyholders (UP). This is the third of five Firewise webinars designed to help you lower your risk of wildfire loss. [Register](#)

PREPAREDNESS POTLUCK & WORKSHOP



On March 22, 2026, the East Bay Resilient Neighborhoods Network (EBRNN) hosted a 90-minute potluck workshop at OFD Station 1 focused on **personal emergency preparedness**, in partnership with Community Organized Relief Effort ([CORE](#)).

Attended by about 25 community members, the session covered emergency basics, key documents to safeguard, and how to assemble a go-bag. Representatives from Oakland's Office of Emergency Services and Oakland Firesafe Council were also in attendance.

The EBRNN is a growing collective of neighborhood associations which meets quarterly. [Learn more](#) and get involved!

MORE OF NOTE

- **Vegetation Cleanup Event (April 11, 9am–3pm)**
Berkeley Firewise Alliance hosts a community cleanup to help reduce fire risk.
[Details & sign up to volunteer](#)
- **Earth Day Habitat Restoration (April 18, 9–11am)**
Volunteers will remove invasive species to support wildfire resiliency and restore habitat at King Estate Open Space in Oakland, CA
[Details & sign up to volunteer](#)
- **United Policyholder's WRAP Working Group Meeting (April 21, 1pm)**
April meeting – [Register](#). March 17th meeting [recording](#).
- **Author Talk: *Red Flag Warning* (April 22, 6–7:30pm)**
Editor Dani Burlison leads a discussion at Oakland Public Library (Montclair) on *Red Flag Warning: Mutual Aid and Survival in California's Fire Country*.
[More info](#)
- **East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (EBWCG)**
March 25th meeting [recording](#). Next meeting is May 27 – agenda and meeting materials are posted closer to that date on their [website](#).



OFSC's **GENOAK** emergency 2-way radio network will be utilized in 2 upcoming radio communications exercises; the statewide **BEACON Exercise** on April 30th and the Bay Area UASI **Golden Eagle Exercise** on May 12th. GENOAK GMRS radio operators will coordinate with ORCA (Oakland Radio Communication Assn.) Amateur radio operators to provide simulated field situation reports and submit requests for mutual aid and resources.

- **New Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Toolkit**
Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) + American Property Casualty Insurance Association release a practical, science-based guide for communities. [PDF](#)
- **Statewide Interactive Risk Map Live**
CAL FIRE shares data from their study to identify communities at higher wildfire risk due to limited evacuation options. [More info & see map](#)
- **CAL FIRE is hiring Firefighter I**
Join CAL FIRE and be on the front lines of protecting communities and natural resources. [Learn more](#)

AND FINALLY

- **NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS** – Our newsletter is published once a month, about one week before our third Wednesday of the month meeting. If you have something you'd like to announce or share, send along a submission by the **first Monday** of the month for consideration. EMAIL: outreach@oaklandfiresafecouncil.org
- Was this newsletter forwarded to you? Join our mailing list: [SUBSCRIBE](#)

- The following OFSC meeting is on May 20



Oakland Firesafe Council (OFSC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the risks of wildfire danger to people and property through preparedness education, programs and materials, outreach, advocacy and volunteer opportunities.

[CONTACT](#)

OFSC free services and communications are received by thousands in Oakland and the East Bay. We're only able to continue doing this with the help of donors like you.

SUPPORT

Oakland Firesafe Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Donations are tax-deductible.

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