

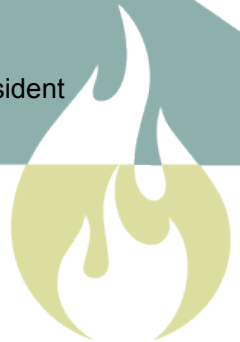
**The Creative Potential of Noncombustible
Gates & Fences
WCC Fire Safe Council
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Diablo Firesafe Council



Why address fences near the home?

Fence studies show that wood (combustible) fencing can provide fire pathways to your building. (NIST). In the 2021 Marshall Fire and the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire combustible fences along the wildland interface and in neighborhoods acted as a wick that enabled fire to spread to structures. (UCANR & IBHS)

CA Assembly Bill 3074, passed in 2020, directed the Board of Forestry to develop specific guidance for an **ember-resistant zone**, which includes fences & gates in the first 5 feet of the home.



NIST/Cal Fire



Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS)

Combustible Fence

Fences made of wood can ignite and bring fire to your home. Reduce risk by keeping fences clear of debris (i.e. pine needles & leaves) especially on fence rails which can collect debris.

Check regularly for debris and decay. Dry vegetation near a decaying fence can ignite the fence boards.

Avoid back to back fences which can trap fuels between them. Try to coordinate with your neighbors to have one hardened fence to better protect both of your homes.

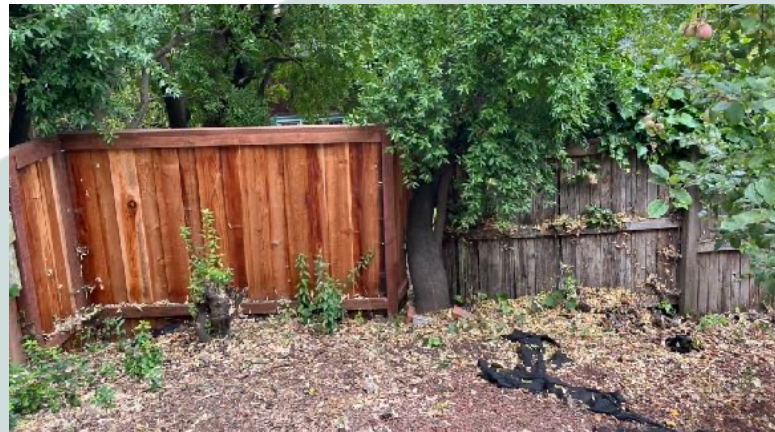
Berkeley Hills Fence along ROW



IBHS/NFPA



UCANR



Berkeley property line fences

Fence & Gate 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. Regularly **maintain** weeds and dead material near your fence.
5. Regularly **clean and repair** your fence for best performance and longevity.
6. Fences are not currently included in the current Chapter 7A (WUI) of the CA Building Code

Concrete fence



Fire Safe Marin



UCANR

Fence & Gate Design

Install the hinge for the swing side of the gate on the opposite side of your home and ideally swing in the exit direction. When you evacuate, leave the gate open.

This also creates a disconnect from your home and makes it safer for firefighters to enter your property.



Fire Adapted Ashland



Fire Adapted Ashland



M. Saarni



UCANR

Fence & Gate Design

A more open design makes it difficult for wind-blown embers to accumulate at the bottom of the panels and posts, and burn.



Hog Wire/Wood credit: UCANR



Berkeley Hills



IBHS

Since the fence may be below the overhang of a home, it can carry the fire up to the eaves and to the roof.



UCANR

Fence & Gate Design

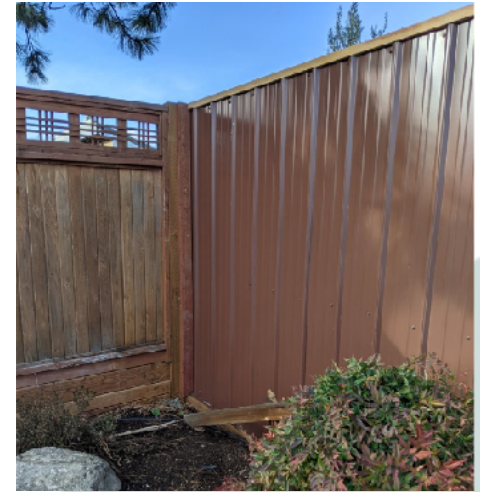
The less combustible material the better, but you do not need to replace all elements of your fence if they are in good condition. Heavier wood elements can minimize risk (i.e. timber and pressure treated wood posts).

Fence panels can be retrofitted to wire, cementitious and other non-combustible material when the posts are in good shape.

A longer run of wood fence can also pose less of a hazard if it is periodically interrupted by stone pillars or other non-combustible column materials.



Composite - Moso Bamboo X-treme



Fire Adapted Ashland



Hardie plank



Steel system



Stucco and wood

Fence & Gate Design

Styles and materials



Steel frame and hog wire



Aluminium (Mulholland Brand)



Hardie and wood frame (Fire Safe Marin)



Wildfire Defense Mesh



Hardie and steel frame



Hogwire in frame

Fence & Gate Design



Moz Designs



Pattern formed concrete

A steel privacy fence or a concrete wall can act as a radiant shield between neighbors.



Colorbond

Fence & Gate Design

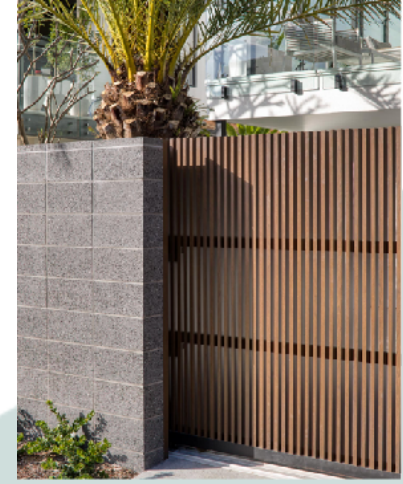


Kazoo Shearman, Berkeley Hills

DaVinci Gates (laser cut)



Knotwood Products
(wood grain alum)



MWF Solutions



Tessell breeze block



Sleekfence

Fence and Gate costs, resources

Options for new fence design. Cost will vary depending on material, degree of labor and installation conditions. May also require a building permit if above regulated height:

1. Off-the-shelf metal fence panels (i.e. Home Depot) \$
2. Chain-link fencing \$
3. Create metal or 'timber' wood frame panels with woven wire/mesh, custom
 - material supplier such as McNichols Co. \$\$
 - material Bushfire SS 1/8" mesh \$\$
5. Metal work/iron fabrication, custom \$\$-\$\$\$
6. Aluminum systems \$\$-\$\$\$
7. Moso bamboo, Hardie plank boards, Boral Tru Exterior (fly ash) boards, custom \$\$\$

Fire Safe Marin - Fences

<https://firesafemarin.org/harden-your-home/fire-resistant-fencing/>

Globus Gates

<https://globusgates.com/>

Durabond

<http://www.durabondfence.com> [Katherine Rogers rep for Colorbond]

MWF/Greenfield Fence

<https://www.greenfieldfenceinc.com/>

Superior Fence & Rail

<https://www.superiorfenceandrail.com/east-bay/>



Neighbors working together

Talk to your neighbors about grouping several projects together to create a project that is more attractive to a contractor (or handyman).



Oakland FireSafe Council

Take home message

Protecting your property involves making decisions to regularly and cyclically maintain your property - this means both vegetation and the structures. It can also be a creative new way to enjoy your home.

Gabion Wall in Kensington



Fred Hyer Design

