



GUIDELINE 427

REAL ESTATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE INSPECTIONS

Notice of New Requirements

Effective January 1, 2026, Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD) Ordinance 34, Article 4, Chapter 6, Section 617 will apply to all sales and transfers of residential property located within a *High* or *Very High* Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) throughout all of Ventura County. This includes the following areas:

1. The cities of Camarillo, Moorpark, Ojai, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks.
Note: The City of Port Hueneme has no designated FHSZs.
2. All unincorporated areas of Ventura County.

VCFPD Ordinance 34, Article 4, Chapter 6: This section of the ordinance is considered the local Vegetation Management Ordinance for the purposes of Civil Code Article 1.5 (Sections 1102 through 1102.19) within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Ventura County Fire Protection District.

Section 617 – Defensible Space Inspection Upon Sale of Residential Property: The following is a breakdown of what's new in Ordinance No. 34 with a simplified summary of each code section.

Mandatory Defensible Space Inspection – Required in the High & Very High FHSZ

Section 617.1 Before selling, transferring, or exchanging ownership of any residential property within the Ventura County Fire Protection District, the seller must have the Fire District perform a Defensible Space inspection. This inspection checks whether the property meets the required vegetation-clearance and fire-safety standards.

Prior Inspections Within the Last 6-months

Section 617.2 If the Fire District has already completed a Defensible Space inspection and issued approval within the last six months, the seller does not need a new inspection. Instead, the seller must request a copy of that existing approved inspection report.

Who Requests the Defensible Space Inspection

Section 617.3 Inspection requests whether for a new inspection or for a copy of an approved report must be made by the seller or their authorized representative.

If Corrections are Needed

Section 617.4 If the required inspection finds any violations of the defensible-space standards, those issues must be corrected within 30 days from the date of the correction notice or before escrow closes whichever comes first. After corrections are completed, the seller must request a new inspection to obtain a valid approval report before escrow closes. If the seller cannot reasonably complete the corrections before escrow closes, the seller and buyer may agree that the buyer will

complete the corrections within 60 days after closing, except in situations described in Section 617.5. A copy of this agreement must be provided to the Fire District's Fire Prevention Bureau before escrow closes and must clearly state that the buyer understands they are responsible for completing the required corrections.

Enforcement if Corrections are Not Completed

Section 617.4.1 If corrections are not completed within the required timeframe, the Fire District may take enforcement action and complete the work at the property owner's expense.

If a Fire Hazard Notice to Abate has Already Been Issued

Section 617.5 If the Fire District has already issued a formal "Notice to Abate Fire Hazard" for the property, all listed hazards must be corrected by the deadline stated in that notice. If the deadline falls after the expected close of escrow, the buyer and seller must make an agreement on who will complete the corrections. A copy of this agreement must be provided to the Fire District's Fire Prevention Bureau before escrow closes and must state that the buyer understands they are responsible for completing the required work.

Helpful Resources

For information regarding VCFD Real Estate Inspections and to request an inspection, please visit our **VCFD Real Estate Inspection webpage**:

<https://fire.venturacounty.gov/ab38/>

To determine if your property is located within a Fire Hazard Severity Zone, please visit the **Cal Fire FHSZ Viewer**: (This link is also on the VCFD Real Estate Inspection Page.)

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6a9cb66bb1824cd98756812af41292a0>

For information regarding defensible space and community wildfire preparedness, please visit our **VCFD Community Wildfire Preparedness webpage**:

<https://fire.venturacounty.gov/fire-hazard-reduction-program-fhrp/>

Please contact the Community Wildfire Preparedness Division (CWPD) for any questions regarding this bulletin. fhrp@venturacounty.gov (805) 389-9759.