



Fire Protection Planning

WHO: Living in Southern California, wildfire risk is a reality; however, Rancho Mission Viejo, LLC has worked closely with the OC Fire Authority (OCFA) and the County of Orange for decades to ensure our communities are designed and built with state of the art fire protection technology in order to adapt safely within a natural environment of incredible beauty. Rancho Mission Viejo has taken steps to address fire safety in its community design, home construction, and landscape materials—which has been recognized with a Firewise USA designation from the National Fire Protection Association. You can read more about the designation [here](#).

WHAT: In the same way we carefully analyze all of our community infrastructure needs, Rancho Mission Viejo engages fire safety professionals to evaluate, develop and implement the multi-faceted Ranch Plan Fire Protection Program, a three-party agreement between Rancho Mission Viejo, OCFA and the County of Orange.

HOW: The Ranch Plan Fire Protection Program is based on sophisticated research and fire behavior modeling, and addresses methods of home construction, community design, landscape materials and maintenance.

- *Construction* - Homes on The Ranch are built to maximize fire safety and are constructed in compliance with building and fire code requirements for wildland interface. All homes have inside sprinklers installed and roofs are made with non-combustible coverings in the event of a fire.
 - Rancho Mission Viejo was one of the first master-planned communities to have 100% of its homes sprinklered, well before this was a required building practice for the State of CA.
- *Fuel Modification Zones* – Each Village at Rancho Mission Viejo is surrounded on all sides by fuel modification zones designed as a non-combustible buffer where a wildfire approaching a neighborhood will run out of fuel. These zones also serve as defensible space for firefighters. The required width of each fuel modification zone is based on fire behavior modeling to understand the conditions specific to each Village. Fuel modification zones on The Ranch range from 110 to 170 feet.
- *Landscaping* – Extensive planning of the type and locations of all plant material for common area landscaping was intentionally and rigorously considered to help reduce the hazard to the community from an ember cast during a wildfire. Certain highly flammable plant species identified by OCFA as “Undesirable” are prohibited to be installed anywhere within The Ranch community. There are also stringent rules for the landscaping of private homeowner lots for all residents within The Ranch Plan.
- *Emergency Vehicle Access* – The Rancho Mission Viejo community meets or exceeds emergency vehicle access standards.
- *Infrastructure and Facilities* – In concert with the OCFA, Rancho Mission Viejo works to ensure all the necessary facilities (i.e. fire stations) and equipment are in place to meet public safety needs.
- *On-going Maintenance* – There is an on-going relationship for landscape maintenance and supervision between The Ranch Master Maintenance Corporation and OCFA. The two entities are constantly working together to refine and improve the fire protection methods to ensure the community is safe.

WHY: New construction standards and materials for homes within the Wildland Urban Interface have been modernized through testing procedures set forth by the State Fire Marshal and have been implemented in The Ranch Plan and provide a higher level of protection than homes built in past decades.

The Orange County Fire Authority has consistently been on the cutting edge of implementing fire safe building standards and proper maintenance practices for vegetation management zones designed to protect communities from a wildfire. Based on these standards, many of the communities and the homes that have been designed, constructed and routinely maintain vegetation management zones have survived frontal assaults by wildland fires, where homes without these protections have not.

OCFA, the OC Sheriff Department along with local emergency agencies are in charge of managing and directing civilian procedures in the unincorporated area of OC during large-scale emergencies (i.e. wildfire, earthquake, flood, etc.).

For more information, visit www.ocfa.org

In case of emergency, dial 9-1-1.