



Hillside Fire Safety Information

Everyone is now aware of the possibility of wildfire in any brush and grass-covered land in California. As lucky as we are to live in Mandeville Canyon, we must be educated to that possibility and do all that we can to keep our families and our homes safe. Fire preparedness has made our area safer than it was a few years ago.

Improvements are constantly being made in brush clearance, warning systems, readiness and fire-fighting response. Here is some information for everyone to consider. We hope it is helpful and encouraging.

NotifyLA- Register your phones and devices online at this site and you will be immediately alerted and instructed in any emergency:

<https://emergency.lacity.org/alerts/notifyla>

Early warning: We have early warning of fires within or outside the Canyon via NotifyLA on our registered devices. If an emergency warning is received by any means turn on local TV immediately. If a threatening fire approaches, LAPD will likely come to your door with a warning, an order to evacuate or to “shelter in place”, that is to stay in your home.

Note: Lives have been lost in fires elsewhere when residents did not exit soon enough and then tried to flee their homes at the last minute as flames approached their property. The “Shelter in place” order will be given when a safe exit is not feasible.

ALERTWildfire is a new system of several fire-spotting cameras on our ridges, which allow quick response to any fire day and night. The cameras are monitored by volunteers and controlled by Fire Departments. To see what the cameras see go to:

<http://www.alertwildfire.org/orangecoca/>

Scroll down to Vicente Peak cameras 1&2, Westridge, Mountaingate 1&2, Temescal Trailhead, Topanga 1&2, etc.

An Emergency Alert System, which will be solar powered and not be vulnerable to electrical power shutdown to our area will begin installation in Mandeville Canyon and completed by this Fall, 2021.

The “**Ready, Set, Go!**” program of the LA Fire Department is designed to walk you through the steps to take to ensure you are prepared for a possible wildfire. Lots of information is available at:

<https://www.lafd.org/ready-set-go>

Brush Clearance is mandated up to 200 feet from your hillside home. LAFD annual notices are issued in April. The goal is to eliminate “fuel” from brush and trees before a fire. This includes ornamental vegetation. Create 10 or more feet of space between trees and your home, if possible. Limit grasses to 3 inches and plant size to 3 feet. Trim bushes and lower branches of trees to eliminate a “fire ladder” between ground and tree crowns.

Wildfire Preparation, information, regulations, etc. can be found at:

<http://lafd.org/Brush>

Los Angeles County Fire Department offers a comprehensive guide to home defense:

<http://fire.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/A-Guide-to-Defensible-Space-Ornamental-Vegetation-Maintenance.pdf>

To report fire safety violators, or to reach a Fire Inspector contact the Los Angeles Fire Department by calling (800) 994-4444 during office hours (7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, except holidays) or by emailing LAFDBrush@lacity.org.

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority – MRCA - protects and maintains the parkland surrounding Mandeville homes. Their crews will clear brush in the parkland areas beyond your property line. MRCA Brush Unit Manager: Leigh Croley - Leigh.croley@mrca.ca.gov

Los Angeles Fire Department is divided into four areas. The LAFD West Division Commander is Deputy Chief Armando Hogan (323) 957-4121 armando.hogan@lacity.org

LAPD Senior Lead Officer, West LA, is Matthew Kirk 310) 444-0742, e-mail 34713@lapd.lacity.org

Fire Station 19, our local fire station, is located at 12229 West Sunset Blvd. Report all emergencies to 911. Business tel. 310 575 8519. First responders can reach Canyon homes in minutes with fire equipment and ambulance. These life savers have proven themselves time after time. They are our greatest asset.

Fire Fighting Aircraft: Except in extremely high winds, fires in Mandeville will be attacked by fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. See great new air equipment available:
<https://www.latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot/entertainment/story/2021-06-15/southland-fire-departments-to-have-additional-helicopters>

Fire Evacuation: Mandeville Canyon has been a leader in Fire Evacuation Exercises and training. Single file Emergency Evacuation exercises provide practice for First Responders, as well as residents. They prevent confusion and panic in real emergencies. We have had two successful evacuation exercises: the first in 2014 saw over 900 cars smoothly evacuate the Canyon in less than an hour. Another successful drill was held in 2018, followed by a community-wide Fire Information meeting at Paul Revere Middle School with experts for all departments. The 2019 Getty Fire in the Sepulveda basin and 405 freeway prompted a mandatory evacuation. Mandeville was emptied of residents in about 40 minutes.

Another LAFD/LAPD Fire Evacuation exercise has been promised by September of this year, which will be followed by a community-wide information meeting. The evacuation exercise and the information meeting will be enlightening. We hope your whole family will participate.

Santa Ana Winds: In addition to received warnings, it is important to note the wind direction and the wind speed over your property. Is smoke coming toward you or moving in another direction? Is it changing direction? By observation, you can judge for yourself the degree of danger.

Intense Santa Ana winds come from the northeast, Palmdale, etc., travelling southwest toward us. Though these winds are a threat to all when they drive a high desert fire in our direction, fire fighters remind us that we have a large buffer zone called the San Fernando Valley between us and the windy high desert. So, we should have fair warning and time for a safe evacuation when ordered.

Wind Driven Fire Behavior: We have been told that flames from a very high-speed wind-driven fire begun outside of our canyon would likely blow over us, and then more slowly burn back down into our Canyon from the enflamed ridges.

Your Canyon home would not necessarily be instantly attacked by an oncoming fire giving you time to safely react as ordered, either to evacuate or to shelter in place. Fires starting down in our Canyon tend to run up the slopes toward the ridges, feeding on uncut grass and brush.

Water Sources: Firefighters have generous water sources from the Encino reservoir in the Valley behind us and storage in underground reservoirs above us at Mulholland. Water flows to homes and fire hydrants via large pipes under Mandeville Canyon. That source is generous and reliable. Also, many homes have swimming pools, a great source of water. You can get a water pump with canvas hose like the firefighters use at big hardware stores (like Home Depot or Lowes or they can be rented annually). If you are ordered to evacuate, you can leave your pump and hose behind but ready for first responders to use. If you shelter in place, you may want the pump and hose after the fire has passed and leaves and tinder are smoldering.

Mandeville homes are located roadside, fire crews have access and fire hydrants available. Water-dropping aircraft is quickly on-scene. Once roadside houses are protected local fires run uphill where the only damage is to vegetation. This why ridgetop development should be discouraged. We have lost but one home to fire in Upper Mandeville since the beginning.

Fire Roads: Two Fire Roads lead up to the ridges above Mandeville. Hikers and bikers are very fond of these routes which connect with the network of fire roads. All are open to recreation. Our fire roads are Hollyhock and Garden Land near the end of Mandeville Canyon Road. These roads have not been used for evacuation, but on occasion, they have been used by police and fire resources to access the upper canyon when the lower Mandeville Canyon Road has been blocked.

These roads were once paved with asphalt. If paved once again, they might be useful emergency exits, especially Garden Land Rd. Cars could be safely escorted by LAPD vehicles. In a prolonged isolation period due to earthquake, supplies could be hauled in. Another route out of Mandeville in an emergency is Chalon Road up to Westridge (right) to Bayliss (left) to Queensferry (left) to Sullivan Canyon which leads to Sunset.

Help your Neighbor: Please look in on any neighbor who may be old, infirm or incapable in an emergency. If you can, help them prepare, just as you should prepare with supplies and connections on your devices before a crisis occurs. Call 311 or 911 if dependent neighbors need assistance you cannot provide.

History of Fires: In 1961, The Bel Air Fire, driven by high winds, swept lower Mandeville burning many homes. In 1978, a ridgeline wildfire started above us at Mulholland Drive, burning only one isolated Mandeville house high on a hill. Fire then traveled the ridge toward Pacific Palisades where more serious damage occurred.

In 2004, a fire was set in Lower Mandeville by a crazy arsonist whom residents captured later after he had started a new blaze which was extinguished by homeowners with garden hoses. No houses burned. A fire was set in 2014 by someone smoking in the uncut tall grass behind a Canyon home. A water-dropping plane and helicopters directed that fire uphill away from homes and none were burned. In 2017, a fire was started in-canyon by a spark from a metal blade weed-cutter. Water-dropping helicopters skillfully saved vulnerable houses and the 50-acre fire was directed harmlessly uphill away from residences. Note: Metal blade weed cutters are now illegal here.