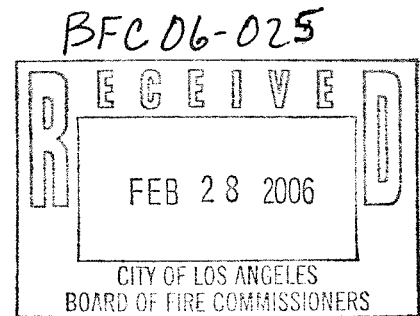


# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



WILLIAM R. BAMATTRE  
FIRE CHIEF

February 28, 2006



TO: The Honorable Board of Fire Commissioners  
City of Los Angeles

FROM: William R Bamattre, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION OF BRUSH CLEARANCE UNIT

## DISCUSSION

In 1981, the Brush Clearance Unit was established as part of the Bureau of Fire Prevention and Public Safety. The Brush Clearance Unit is responsible for the enforcement of the Fire Codes by conducting inspections of properties located in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

The enclosed PowerPoint presentation is an overview of the Brush Clearance Program. It provides a description of the defined Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the Mass Mailer Informational Brochure, and the brush inspection process.

The Brush Clearance Unit is proud of its commitment of service in the hillside communities and of the low incidents of brush fires that result in damage to residential property due to the implementation of the Brush Clearance Program.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM R. BAMATTRE  
Fire Chief

Attachment





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*Valley Fire Prevention Office  
Marvin Braude Constituent  
Building  
Van Nuys*

- 1 Captain II
- 1 Captain I
- 1 Inspector II
- 13 Inspector I
- 3 Civilian Staff

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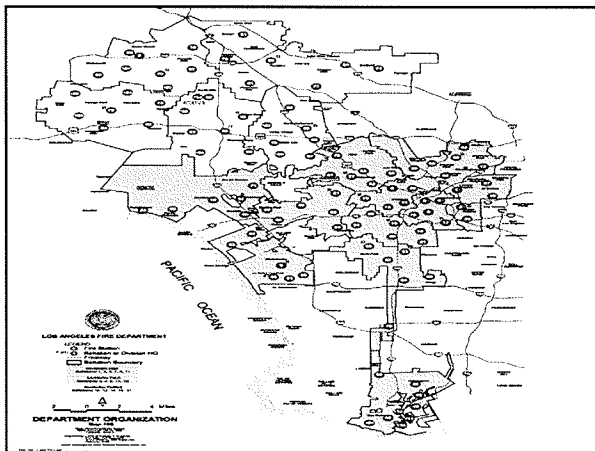
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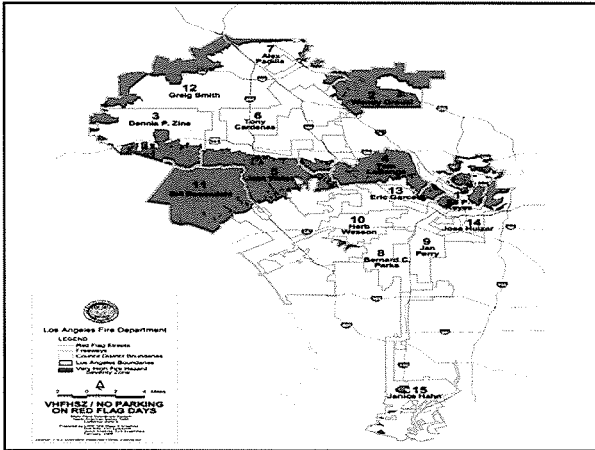
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## *Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone*

- VHFHSZ or “Zone”
- Approximately 158 square miles
- Approximately 130,000 properties
- 13 Inspectors in the Brush Clearance Unit are responsible for this area

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## *Major Brush Fire History*

- 1963 *Bel Air Fire*: 484 homes lost - Mountain Fire District established
- 1971 *Chatsworth Fire*: 198 homes lost – Fire Buffer Zone established, increasing area of Mountain Fire District
- 1985 *Baldwin Hills Fire*: 53 homes and 3 lives lost – Mt. Washington, El Sereno, and Baldwin Hills added to the Mountain Fire District
- 1993 *Oakland Hills Fire*: 3403 homes lost – Bates Bill enacted (AB-337). Required the establishment of a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ lies mostly within the boundaries of the Mountain Fire District)
- 1997 Section 57.21.07 of LAMC amended – established 200' clearance around any structure in the Zone

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## *Public Property*

- All City, County, State, and Federal property in the Zone are inspected in the first three months of the year
- Property owned by the City of Los Angeles is cleared by contractors hired by the Brush Clearance Unit
- Contractors submit "sealed" bids - lowest bid is awarded

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## *Mass Mailer*

- Mailed in mid-March
- Every property owner in Zone receives mailer
- Informational purposes only

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2006

Brush clearance is a year round responsibility. Clear early, clear often.

**OFFICIAL  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
NOTIFICATION**

This brochure was produced with collaboration from various community groups including the Sustainable Urban Forest Workgroup and the Citizens Forest Advisory Committee. The Los Angeles Fire Department gives its sincere thanks to the California State University, Northridge Art Department and the following staff and students who participated in the development and layout of this brochure:

David Moon - Acting Department Chief, Art Department  
Jerome L. Soria & Rudy M. Flores - Graphic Designers  
Paula DiMarzio - Associate Professor  
Miguel Ruiz - Permaculture Professor

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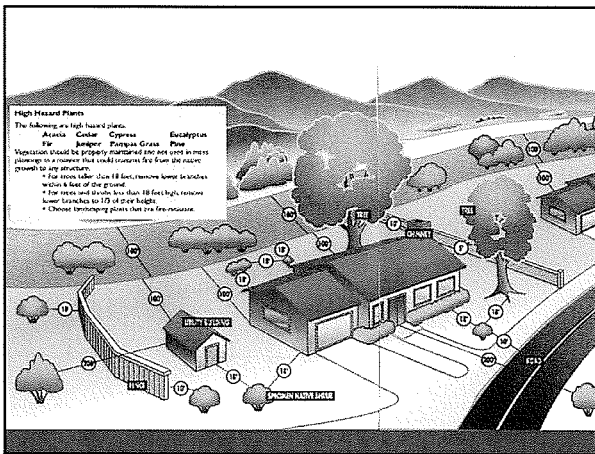
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- **Brush clearance requirements are illustrated and explained**
- **Brush Unit's telephone #, website, etc.**

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## ***Brush Task Force***

- **40 Firefighters**
- **Detailed from Fire Stations to assist Brush Clearance Unit Inspectors with initial inspections**
- **All BTF members attend an extensive training course prior to May 1**

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## *May 1st*

- Inspections commence
- Brush Task Force utilized for approximately one month
- First inspections take approximately entire month to complete

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## *Second Inspection*

- Properties that failed the first inspection are re-inspected in approximately two weeks
- For those properties that fail the second inspection, Inspector creates a very detailed list of the hazards and takes a series of photographs

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## *Second Notice of Non-Compliance*

- Approximately 3 weeks allotted to abate the hazard
- Owner has opportunity to attend "City Attorney Hearing" in BCU Office with Inspector
- Owner permitted to state any grievance with violation
- Inspector prepared to supply pictures of the hazards

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### ***Third Inspection***

- Properties that failed their second inspection are re-inspected
- If fails again, the property is posted and additional photographs are taken
- Work Order generated
- Contractors are allowed to bid on property

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### ***Third Inspection – cont'd***

- Contractor with the lowest bid is awarded
- Inspector follows up with contractor, ensuring parcel is cleared in the manner described in Work Order
- Once completed by contractor, property is re-inspected and photos are taken

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***Throughout this process Brush Clearance Unit Inspectors are using skills in topography, horticulture, and cartography. To ensure all hazards are abated, laser range finders, walking wheels, and digital cameras are also utilized.***

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## ***Vegetation Management System*** (VMS)

- Computer program and data base created specifically for the Brush Clearance Unit
- All violations and inspection information are entered into this data base by Brush Clearance Unit Inspectors
- Other information in VMS includes: invoice tracking, billing information, ownership, complaints, inspections status, comments, and violations history

