

Fire Safety Concern - Lincoln Highlands

The North Bay fires remind us of the extreme danger posed by the tinder dry conditions in the Oakland hills area, particularly the 21+ acre Head Royce School (HRS) campus and former Lincoln Child Center property now owned by HRS. Both properties are out of compliance with the City's vegetation management requirements, according to Vincent Crudele, Vegetation Management Supervisor, Fire Prevention Division, Oakland Fire Department. The prevention department is down to four inspectors and very little remaining funds, and despite several months of effort, they have not been successful with gaining satisfactory compliance from HRS. Though portions of the property have been weed whacked, much has been neglected and overgrown with dead grass, shrubs, weeds and vegetation that has not been removed. The obvious danger posed by combustible fuel is not only a risk to HRS students, teachers and staff, but the greater neighborhood area including Lincoln Highlands, Dimond, Glenview, Laurel, Oakmore, Piedmont Pines, Montclair, Woodminster, Redwood Heights, Crestmont, and potentially beyond. Evacuation from the Lincoln Avenue canyon area could be extremely problematic.

HRS must immediately correct all conditions for which it has received Violation Notices in 2017 from the Oakland Fire Department. Hereafter, it must comply with all City of Oakland Fire Department rules and regulations. Neighbors must be vigilant and immediately report any sign of fire.

Contacts:

Oakland Fire Department Emergency 911
Head Royce School 510- 531-1300
Vice Mayor and Councilmember District 4 Annie Campbell Washington 510-238-7004
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Reminder from Oakland Fire Department Wildfire Prevention District:

1. For residential homes, the minimum required defensible space zone is 30 feet on flat ground parcels, no slope. It is always recommended that more distance be achieved if possible and ground fuels (seasonal weeds and grasses, non-ornamental brush) be cut and removed as far from the home as possible. 4907.2 CFC
2. 50 feet of defensible space is required minimum (or to the property line if less than 50 feet) for residential properties that are on a slope up to 45 degrees. Again, more is recommended if this can be achieved.
3. 100 feet of defensible space is required minimum on residential parcels (or the property line if less than 100 feet) when the slope is greater than 45 degrees.
4. Any RESIDENTIAL parcel with a slope greater than 70 degrees MUST clear to property lines of all feral ground fuels. Cut and remove all non-ornamental seasonal

weeds, grasses and brush to a height not to exceed 6 inches and maintain throughout fire season, May thru November annually. The steeper the slope, the more defensible space is required to prevent fire from rapid uphill travel due to the flames pre-heating upslope fuels causing radiant heat ignition.

5. Tree branches must be pruned away from overhanging the residential roofline along the horizontal plain (rain gutter) when these branches are within 10 feet of the roof in the vertical space above the roof. The homeowner needs 10 feet of “cold air space” above the roof to reduce the chance of radiant or conductive heat transfer in a fire. Large branches above the 10 foot height may remain but should be trimmed of any dead twigs or smaller material branches. 4907.3.1.1 CFC

6. Making sure that the rain gutters are clear of debris throughout fire season is critical, clean them often. Embers carried by the wind in a fire event often ignite residential fires when they fall into rain gutters full of leaves and pine needles. 4907.1 CFC.

7. Nothing in the fire Code requires the removal of LIVE TREES. The code only requires that trees be limbed and pruned up from the ground at least 6 feet or ¼ the height of the tree to prevent a ground fire from becoming a canopy fire. Please survey your trees and prune up as needed. 4907.3.1.3 CFC.

Here is a message from Mr. Crudele on how we can all work together to prevent the tragedies we are now witnessing in the North Bay.

“If all neighbors collectively follow these guidelines, you are creating a fuel break around your homes. A continuous fuel break protects not only your individual home, but your neighborhood as a whole. Vegetation Management is not a ‘one time’ per season effort. It must be ongoing annually as fire season is at least 6 months of the year depending on our local weather. Re-growth occurs and must be abated to maintain the best possible defensible space as the Oakland Hills IS a designated Very High Fire Severity Zone.” **Please see the Fire Department website regarding prevention:**
<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/fire/documents/marketingmaterial/oak041869.pdf>

This message is from the Neighborhood Steering Committee, representing the residential area surrounding HRS.

cc: Next Door
Dimond Improvement Association
Annie Campbell-Washington and Oakland City Council
Oakland City Manager
Mayor Schaff
Board of Trustees, HRS
Vincent Crudele