

2. PROPERTY FIRE PREVENTION INSPECTIONS

2.1 Fire Prevention Inspections

The goal of the fire prevention program is to educate homeowners of measures to prevent the ignition and spread of unwanted human-caused fires. Emphasis should be placed on loss reduction and prevention of large and damaging fires and to provide firefighter safety. One of the necessary tools utilized to accomplish this goal is the **structural fire prevention** inspection. Inspections are a fire prevention engineering activity. Coordinated with other ignition management activities, the inspections are aimed at eliminating or reducing fire hazards and risks by changing the environment through removing or reducing the heat source, modifying or reducing the fuels, and modifying the act or omission, allowing the heat source to contact the ignitable fuels.

2.2 Authority

Authority for California's fire protection agencies to enforce state forest and fire laws is contained in **PRC 4119**. Agency personnel may inspect all properties, except the interior of dwellings, subject to the state forest and fire laws, for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with such laws. USFS personnel that are allowed to do routine inspections for the reduction of fire hazards around buildings as described under PRC 4291 must be designed, in writing, by the Director of CDF. This designation allows certain Forest Service employees to act as an authorized agent for CDF to do routine fire inspections as specified in the Four-Party Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement. If a violation of state law is found, Forest Service employees should contact their local CDF office and Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer.

2.3 Guidelines

Success depends on all personnel, including fire prevention, fire control, and resource management staff. All contacts should be handled so citizens will understand and participate in fire prevention efforts. Citizen participation will lead to reductions in total wildfire costs and losses. To the extent resources are available, local inspection programs should concentrate on areas that have the greatest potential for large and damaging fires with the accompanying loss of life and property.

All personnel involved in inspection activities should have a badge, name plate, and the proper shoulder patch to facilitate proper identification. Unit fire prevention plans should contain local inspection policy and procedures, including minimum training requirements for fire prevention inspectors.

All inspections conducted for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with state forest and fire laws will be recorded on the Interagency Fire Hazard Inspection Notice (LE-38a [USFS R5-5100-209] – **Appendix B**) to provide for: uniform law enforcement, a record for timely follow-up, public education, standardized written notice, and documentation of inspection activity level for program effectiveness and direction.

2.4 Liability

If fire law violations are observed, or significant hazards or risks are evident, the violations should be recorded on an appropriate inspection form. Corrective information, such as handout material, should be provided to the occupant to facilitate correction and compliance.

The occupants should understand that they are responsible for any fire that escapes their control or property. Explain that if a fire should start on their property, because of certain hazards, and spread to a neighbor's property, the neighbor may have civil recourse for damages through the courts. In addition, the wildland fire agency may recover suppression costs and the occupants may face criminal charges.

2.5 Interior Structure Inspection

CDF, USFS, and BLM may not inspect the interior of a structure unless specifically authorized under PRC 4291. Local fire agencies may have the authority and should be encouraged to inspect single-family structure interiors upon request.

2.6 Mechanical Equipment

If mechanical equipment is present, follow the suggested inspection procedures and state law requirements found in the Interagency "*Industrial Operations Fire Prevention Field Guide*."