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FOREWORD

The *Fire Safe Guides for Residential Development in California* have been well received and well used. However, the time has come for an update and a new title – *Structural Fire Prevention Field Guide*. New legislation, new research data, and new technology such as geographic information systems (GIS) must all be discussed in this updated guide. Much of the experience gained has validated previous fire safe guides. In addition, CDF now has a vital “Fire Plan,” and federal agencies have revised their Fire Management Policy.

The purpose of this new *Structural Fire Prevention Field Guide* is to facilitate implementation of state ordinances within the Urban-Wildland Interface in order to make structures safer. This Guide is intended for wide distribution to agency staff, to help homeowners, landowners, decision-makers, and local government planners learn more about factors important to land use decisions.

The Introduction of this updated Guide presents the difficulty of structure protection when accumulated fuels (due to successful fire suppression) make property damage more likely and firefighting harder. Increased numbers of structures in the wildland change firefighting strategies and often limit defensive options.

This Guide discusses the legal underpinnings of fire safe requirements, including laws and regulations covering general fire prevention and wildland fire safe regulations, recommended standards spanning entire fire and building codes, and spatial factors of lot development, infrastructure, and building construction. Guidelines for hands-on implementation of fire safe strategies through fire resistant landscaping or fuel modification are also included in this guide. A section on land use planning, particularly how fire safety can be incorporated into land use planning decisions at the general plan level, is an important portion of this guide. The section presents ways to assess hazards for land use planning decisions, with specific information on how to identify needs for increases in pre-fire management. Finally, the guide describes how to develop and implement a fire safe plan for large areas (i.e. less than a county, larger than a subdivision).

The appendices provide a useful bibliography, a glossary, statutes and regulations, legal opinions on fire safe issues, and fire resistant landscaping or fuel modification methods.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection hopes this document will be well used to help enhance structure protection and minimize damage to California’s abundant and precious natural resources. Users should feel free to put this material to good use by copying graphics, quote regulations, etc.

This document contains several hyperlinks to other documents and on-line sources of information about structural fire prevention and protection.