



Santa Clara County FireSafe Council

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council?

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is a non-profit organization composed of individuals, public and private agencies and companies that share a common, vested interest in preventing and reducing losses from wildfires.

2. What is the Mission of the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council?

The mission of the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is: *"Mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities and environment from wildfires."*

This mission is fulfilled through the combined resources of the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and its participating organizations, companies and individuals.

3. Who participates in the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council?

Organizations and companies participating in SCFSC include:

- CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection)
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- San Jose Fire Department
- San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services
- San Jose Water Company
- Santa Clara County Fire Department
- Santa Clara County Weed Abatement and Wildfire Protection Program
- Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- South Skyline FireSafe Council
- Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Department
- Other volunteer fire departments, neighborhood associations and individuals

4. Why does Santa Clara County need a FireSafe Council?

The communities in Santa Clara County are surrounded by many large, populated, Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas, primarily in the foothills on either side of the Santa Clara Valley.

There are many fire prone areas in Santa Clara County which are at risk of wildfires because of large accumulations of natural fuels. Due to climate change, our moist winters create more fuel, which in turn dries out during the record hot summers. This increase in dry and combustible fuel poses a greater fire risk. This recipe is all too familiar as evident by recent wild fires such as the Croy Fire in 2002 and the Summit Fire in 2008, both of which caused major loss of property and threatened thousands of lives. Terrain, vegetation and accessibility conditions in Santa Clara County create the potential for similar events in the future.

Living in California means learning to live with wildfires. The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council empowers individuals and communities to make our homes and neighborhoods "Fire Safe."

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5. What does the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council do?

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council's primary programs and projects are:

- **Community Outreach and Education Programs:** SCFSC volunteers distribute literature and other materials at community events and meetings. Community engagement is an essential part of these programs, which include Youth Education Programs for families and children living in Wildland Urban Interface areas.
- **Hazardous Fuel Assessment and Strategy Projects:** Our member organizations and other stakeholders identify fire prone areas in Santa Clara County, propose appropriate treatments to reduce the risk of wildfires and develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans.
- **Hazardous Fuel Reduction Projects:** These are typically clearing and chipping projects, which are based on Community Wildfire Protection Plans and designed to reduce hazardous fuel accumulations. We have five 2009-2010 federal grants for Defensible Space Chipping Programs for homeowners and residents in Santa Clara County.

Please see our Santa Clara County Wildfire Prevention Problems and SCFSC Solutions Fact Sheet for additional information on these activities.

6. Is the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council a city or county agency? Do you fight fires? What authority do you have?

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is simply a non-profit organization incorporated in California. We are a local council of the California State Fire Safe Council (for more information see their Web site at <http://www.firesafecouncil.org>).

We are not a city or county agency and we don't fight fires or have any authority but our members listed above include city and county fire protection agencies and departments, some of which do fight fires and have various authorities.

7. How can I become involved?

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council meets at 2:00 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Homeowners, residents and representatives of all interested organizations are welcome! Meetings are usually held at fire stations or other members' facilities.

Please see our Web site at www.SCCFireSafe.org for additional information and the date and location of our next meeting.

8. How is the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council funded?

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is partially funded by federal grants from the USDI Bureau of Land Management, the USDA Forest Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Local matching grants and donations come from foundations, organizations, companies and individuals. All our funding is used in the County. We do not receive any funding from, or pay any fees to, the California Fire Safe Council.

Please see our Web site at www.SCCFireSafe.org for additional information or to make a tax-deductible donation to the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council.