



### Fire Hazards

After fire disasters, Gubernatorial Proclamations of a State of Emergency and Presidential Major Disaster Declarations have been declared on six occasions in Riverside County. Much of Riverside County is rated as a potential wildland fire area by the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention and by this Safety Element. Wildfire susceptibility is mapped in Figure S-11. A significant portion of the County is undeveloped and consists of rugged topography with highly flammable indigenous vegetation. In particular, the hillside terrain of Riverside County has a substantial fire risk. Fire potential for the County is typically greatest in the months of August, September, and October, when dry vegetation coexists with hot, dry Santa Ana winds.



*Mobile home fires erupted at a greater rate (49.1 per thousand) than other structural fires (1.1 per thousand) as a result of the Northridge earthquake. Because the County of Riverside has a large number of mobile homes, there is a potential for high numbers of earthquake-induced structural fires.*

Widespread fires following an earthquake, coupled with Santa Ana winds, constitute a worst-case fire suppression scenario for Riverside County. Because the fire danger is extremely high for three months of each year, there is a statistically significant chance that the worst-case fire suppression scenario could occur.

Following a major earthquake, water availability would likely be curtailed due to breaks in water lines caused by fault rupture, liquefaction or landslides. In addition, above-ground reservoirs are vulnerable to earthquakes, which would also affect the ability to fight fires.

Over time, all of California's wildlands will burn, as they are ecologically adapted to do. However, various human-created factors increase the risks that fires will occur; that they will be larger, more intense and more damaging; that fighting them will cost more; and that they will take a higher toll (in economic and non-economic terms).

The intent of these policies is to eliminate earthquake-induced fire as a threat and to develop an integrated approach to minimizing the threat of wildland fires.

### Building Code & Performance Standards

The County's extreme diversity and complex pattern of land use and ownership require equally diverse and complex techniques to effectively manage the fire environment. Custom strategies for each situation can be created through combinations of pre-fire management, suppression, and post-fire management. These strategies should lessen the costly impacts of future wildfires and offer alternatives to continually increasing suppression forces.

#### Policies:

- S 5.1 Develop and enforce construction and design standards that ensure that proposed development incorporates fire prevention features through the following:
  - a. All proposed construction shall meet minimum standards for fire safety as defined in the County Building or Fire Codes, or by County zoning, or as dictated by the County Engineer based on building type, design, occupancy, and use.