

## **Saratoga identified among communities at risk for wildfires**

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Saratoga is one of 14 communities in Santa Clara County that has been identified as being at risk for wildfires. With California entering its third year of drought conditions, the fire season has been extended well into winter, putting hillside areas in the city at further risk for wildfire.

The city of Saratoga, along with the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and the Saratoga Fire Protection District, are holding a meeting Feb. 25 on new services that will be provided to residents in parts of Saratoga that are prone to wildfire.

Property owners in the Saratoga Wildland Urban Interface Area, the western and southern hillside portion of Saratoga that is particularly susceptible to wildfire, are invited to come and learn more about protecting their property and their community from wildfire.

Residents will also have an opportunity to learn more about services provided through the city's collaboration with the FireSafe Council and the Saratoga Fire Protection District, such as chipping of materials cleared from defensible space.

The three entities came together last year to provide hazardous fuel reduction services and wildfire awareness education to property owners in both the city of Saratoga and the Saratoga Fire Protection District. Consequently, property owners in the urban interface area are now required to establish defensible space by clearing brush and grass around permanent structures and roads or driveways used for evacuation purposes. This practice is believed to help slow or stop the spread of wildfire and thereby reduce property damage and loss of life during fires. To assist property owners in creating and maintaining defensible space, the city provides free clearing and chipping services.

The Feb. 25 meeting will be held at 6 p.m. at the Saratoga Fire Department, 14380 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga.

For more information, visit [sccfiresafe.org/communities/saratoga-area](http://sccfiresafe.org/communities/saratoga-area).