



Local Responsibility Areas Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Approval Process

TOP TAKEAWAYS

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is releasing local responsibility area (LRA) maps, designated as moderate, high, or very high in a fire hazard severity zone. Cities will need to:



1 Make the map available for public review and comment within **30 days**.



2 Adopt the designation via local ordinance within **120 days**.



3 Submit the ordinance to the state within **30 days** of local adoption.

What Do the Maps Measure?

The maps show the physical conditions of landscapes, including fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other factors (such as wind) that are major causes of wildfire spread. The maps identify fire hazard not risk and are designated in **three categories: moderate, high, and very high**. Catastrophic risk is used as part of the modeling efforts for fire insurance.

Fire “hazard” is based on physical conditions that create a likelihood and expected fire behavior over a 30 to 50-year period without considering mitigation measures such as home hardening, recent wildfires, or fuel reduction.

vs.

Fire “risk” is the potential damage a fire can do to the area under existing conditions, accounting for any modifications such as fuel reduction projects, defensible space, and ignition resistant building construction.

Understanding the LRA Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Requirements:

Under existing state law ([Government Code Section 51177 to 51179](#)), OSFM is required to designate fire hazard severity zones in the LRA through the release of recommended maps.

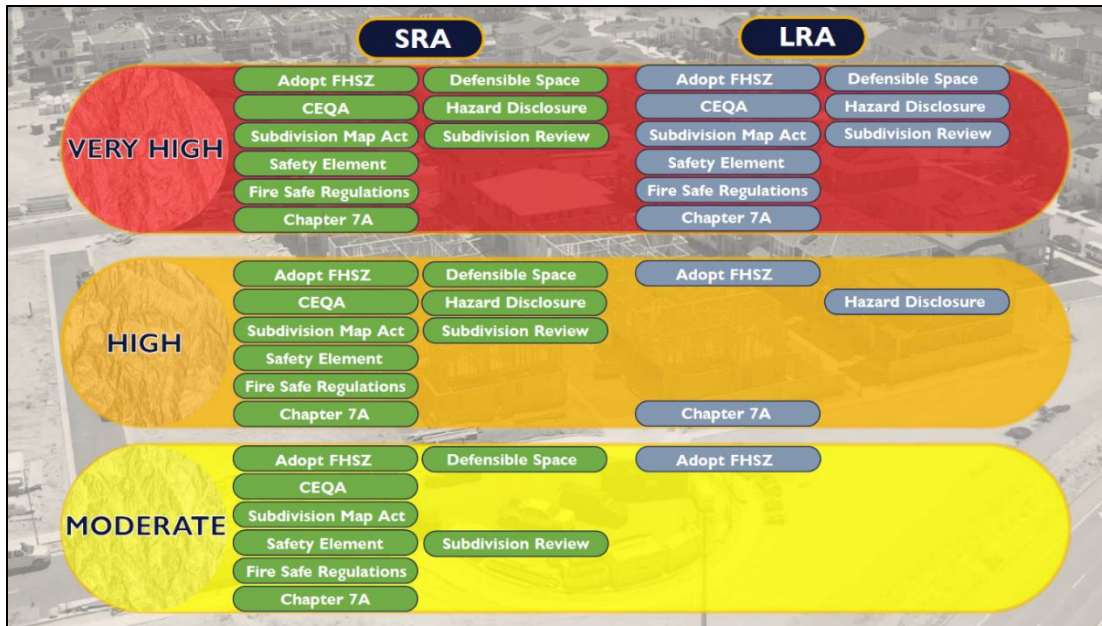
Local agencies with designations in their jurisdiction are then required to:

- ❑ Within 30 days of receiving the recommended maps, make the information, including the maps, available for public review and comment.
- ❑ Within 120 days of receiving the recommended maps, adopt the recommended map by local ordinance.
- ❑ Within 30 days of local ordinance adoption, submit the ordinance and other required documents to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

A local agency may only increase the level of fire hazard severity as identified by OSFM for any area within their jurisdiction. Fire hazard severity cannot be decreased.

Why Does This Process Matter?

The categories designate fire hazard, which then requires specific actions and mitigation measures, including meeting California Building Code Chapter 7A, defensible space, and fire safe regulations, per each category below. These measure are preventative and intended to help disclose fire hazards.



Graphic provided by California's Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Resources Available to Cities:

On Nov. 1, 2024, the League of California Cities notified city managers and fire chiefs that OSFM anticipated releasing these maps in early 2025. On Dec. 19, 2024, Cal Cities, in coordination with other local government groups, held a webinar with OSFM to go over the map approval process and statutory requirements with cities and counties. ***The webinar [recording](#) and [presentation](#) are available on the Cal Cities website.***

OSFM shared the following resources:

[State Fire Marshal's Office LRA Fire Hazard Severity Zone Informational Hub](#)

(This website is intended for local governments only - not the general public.)

- The hub includes:
 - Overview video on the LRA process
 - Pertinent reference materials and [LRA Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - OSFM regional contact information
 - A bookings application to schedule a meeting with OSFM staff
 - Public model information, data, and videos
 - Model ordinance

Additionally, the California Department of Insurance issued [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the fire hazard severity zone maps and the next to fire insurance. For further questions about the release process for the LRA fire hazard severity zone maps, contact your [regional CAL FIRE staff](#) or via email: FHSZinformation@fire.ca.gov.

Please contact Cal Cities Environmental Quality Lobbyist Melissa Sparks-Kranz if you have any questions: msparkskranz@calcities.org or (916)658-8232.