



FIRE PREVENTION POLICY 204 EMERGENCY EVENT / ACT-OF-NATURE REBUILD

CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Purpose. To establish criteria under which legally existing structures damaged/destroyed by an act-of-nature or emergency event may be rebuilt.

1.2 Scope. Property owners that wish to use existing fire apparatus access and water supplies while rebuilding a damaged/destroyed structure shall do so in accordance with this policy. Property owners shall contact their local Building and Safety Office and Planning Department for any additional requirements.

1.3 Applicability. This policy shall only apply to those structures located within the jurisdiction of the Fire Department that are being rebuilt as a result of an act-of-nature or emergency event. Rebuilds resulting from structural issues caused by negligence, such as lack of maintenance, are not covered by this policy and must comply with all current adopted codes and standards.

1.4 Authority. Authority for this policy is granted under Section 104 of the 2019 Ventura County Fire Code.

1.5 Responsibility. It is the responsibility of all fire prevention personnel and anyone who is rebuilding a structure to read and be familiar with this policy.

1.6 Definitions.

1.6.1 Act of Nature: An event that directly and exclusively results from the occurrence of natural causes that could not have been prevented by the exercise of foresight or caution. Examples include, but are not limited to, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfires, floods, and violent winds.

1.6.2 Emergency Event. An event that is sudden, urgent, or unexpected. Examples include, but are not limited to, structural fires and structural impact by a foreign object.

1.6.3 Existing Square Footage. The gross square feet or gross floor area of a building that was legally constructed under a building permit or which legally existed prior to the adoption of the building code.

1.6.4 Floor Area, Gross. The floor area within the inside perimeter of the exterior walls of the building under consideration, exclusive of vent shafts and courts, without deduction for corridors, stairways, ramps, closets, the thickness of interior walls, columns, or other features. The floor area of a building, or portion thereof, not provided with surrounding exterior walls shall be usable area under the horizontal projection of the roof or floor above. The gross floor area shall not include shafts with no openings or interior courts.

1.6.5 Gross Square Feet. The sum of all areas on all floors of a building included within the outside faces of its exterior walls. (R-3 Occupancies and associated Group-U Occupancies only.)

1.6.6 Horizontal Projection. Any roofed projection intended for shelter or occupancy and constructed as a roof assembly or floor/ceiling assembly above. Horizontal projection may include, but is not limited to, awnings, canopies, marquees, patio covers, covered porches, balconies, eaves, eave overhangs, roofed overhangs, breezeways, and covered decks.

1.6.7 Rebuild. A rebuild is the making of extensive changes or repairs to the exterior envelope of any structure. Any alteration that includes extensive changes, repairs, or replacement is considered to be a rebuild if it includes any two of the following items: foundation, exterior wall(s), or roof structure. Rebuild projects shall be deemed new construction.

CHAPTER 2 POLICY

2.1 Rebuilding. A structure damaged/destroyed by an act-of-nature or emergency event may be rebuilt as outlined in this chapter.

2.2 Ownership. The requirements of this policy shall apply to the legal owner of the property at the time of fire-clearance application for the rebuild. Application must be made within the time frame specified in section 2.3.

2.3 Timing. A fire clearance shall be issued within five (5) years from the date of the event causing the damage.

2.4 Change of Use. If the occupancy classification of the existing structure changes, the requirements of this policy shall not apply. The new structure shall meet all current adopted codes and standards.

2.5 Structure Size. The structure shall be constructed to not exceed the previously legal existing square-footage.

2.5.1 Building Codes. The structure shall be constructed to meet current adopted building codes, including the installation of an automatic fire sprinkler system.

2.6 Multiple Structures Located on the Same Parcel. If multiple structures located on the same parcel were damaged/destroyed, the requirements of this policy shall be applied to each structure individually. Structures may be combined into a single large structure as required below.

2.6.1 Combined Structures Allowable Area. Structures shall comply with allowable heights and areas as permitted by the California Building Code.

2.6.2 Combined Structures Fire-Flow. The minimum fire-flow shall be provided for the gross floor area or gross square footage of the new structure.

2.6.3 Combined Structures Access. The existing access shall not be negatively impacted due to the combination of multiple structures.

2.7 Fire Apparatus Access. The existing fire apparatus access serving the property may be accepted, even if non-conforming to current access standards. Improvements may be suggested by Fire Department personnel to provide better overall safety.

2.7.1 Rebuilding Fire Apparatus Access. Where portions of the required fire apparatus access have been damaged/destroyed, it shall be required to be rebuilt to meet the minimum fire apparatus access standards.

2.8 Fire-flow. Fire-flow shall be considered existing and may be utilized if any of the following are met:

1. The structure is located within 1,000 feet of an existing purveyor supplied fire hydrant as measured along the fire apparatus access. A fire-flow verification form (Fire District Form 625) shall be completed by the purveyor for the hydrant. The Fire District will evaluate the resulting fire-flow capabilities of the hydrant and determine if adequate fire-flow can be supplied.
2. The property is served by an on-site private water system that was previously approved by the Fire District. Existing private water systems are subject to the provisions of Sections 2.8.1 and 2.8.2 of this policy.

Projects determined to not have existing fire-flow shall provide fire-flow in accordance with the current adopted VCFD requirements.

2.8.1 Under-sized Private Water Systems. Where an existing private water system is deemed to be under-sized to serve the existing structure, the system shall be upgraded to meet current codes.

2.8.2 Rebuilding Private Water Systems. Where an existing private water system has been damaged/destroyed, the system shall be rebuilt to meet current codes.

2.9 Temporary Structures. Any temporary structure used during the reconstruction process shall be in compliance with Ventura County Fire Department Policy Number 205.