

**From:** FireSafe Occidental firesafeoccidental@gmail.com  
**Subject:** We Received Significant County Help to Make our Area More Fire Resilient  
**Date:** July 28, 2020 at 5:54 PM  
**To:** bburnett@sonic.net



## Fire Safe Occidental July 28, 2020 Newsletter



### Thanks for what you have done

We want to give a big shout out to all the residents who worked on reducing fuel levels on their property recently and to Sonoma County for all the chipping they did in our area over the past two weeks. It was a massive effort on both sides and Occidental is a little more fire resilient today because of it!

If you would like to part of the next chipping event with Fire Safe Occidental and Sonoma County, please contact us to be added to our list. We will need your name, phone number, address, and if you already have piles to chip or will be creating them if we get the go-ahead on chipping. Lastly, if you have already submitted a request for chipping with the county, please include your application number.

### [Add me to your list](#)

Some people have asked what to do with the chips, now that they are left. The most common action is to spread the chips on your property to inhibit weeds, decrease soil erosion, or to help retain moisture in your soil. For fire

safety, the spread chips should not be any deeper than 3", and not be left or scattered within 5' of a structure, including wooden fences. You should also keep them outside a 2' - 3' radius of the base of trees as chips up against the tree could cause the trunk to rot. The chips will decompose over time, improve the soil, and provide a better habitat for beneficial earthworms and other soil organisms that help retain soil moisture.

Alternatively, it is possible to remove the chips by taking them to one of the local compost companies. Recology should be able to advise on costs and locations where material may be discarded.

While wood chips still represent a fire hazard, they significantly reduce a property's overall risk compared to leaving dead trees and limbs standing for a number of reasons. First, chips are close to the ground. If spread, they can actually help retain moisture in the soil which could slow a fire. A minor improvement, but helpful. Second, being on the ground, means they will decompose faster than a standing dead tree. Third, and most importantly, chips won't create flames as high as the tree or branches they were made from, reducing the ability of a fire to get into the tree canopy where winds are usually higher and can spread fire faster.

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Fire Safe Occidental has numerous topics to help educate and inform residents--even during this time where we are not gathering for group meetings. Does anyone in our community have skills and time to help create online and recorded events? Please reach out to FSO here.

[I Can Help FSO!](#)

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Stay safe and keep in touch. Fire Safe Occidental is always looking for people who can get involved or ideas you may have about how we can best serve our community.



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