



# Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District

P.O. Box 410 • 18027 Calle Ambiente • Rancho Santa Fe • California 92067-0410  
Tel. (858) 756-5971 • Fax (858) 756-4799

**Board of Directors**  
*James Ashcraft, President*  
*John Tanner*  
*Nancy Hillgren*  
*Randall Malin*  
*Tucker Stine*

**Fire Chief**  
*David C. McQuead*

Dear Rancho Santa Fe Community Member,

In August 2023, the world was once again reminded of the devastating effects of a wildfire as we watched the tragic events unfold in Maui. In total, 2,207 structures were destroyed, and 101 lives were lost. Surrounded by rubble, one “Miracle House” was spared in Lahaina. A recent renovation of a non-combustible roof, vegetation removed from around the structure, and a stone buffer kept the airborne embers from igniting the structure, these renovations are known as **Home Hardening**.

Our community is no stranger to wildfire, Cedar fire 2003, Witch Creek 2007, Cocos Fire and the Bernardo Fire in 2014. Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD) has been one of the leaders in implementing ignition resistant construction requirements for the last two decades. When these home hardening practices are combined with defensible space, it has been proven to lessen the impact from wildfire on a community.

Wildfire defense is a community effort that starts with you. Ensure your property has at least 100 feet of defensible space from all structures. Remove all combustible vegetation and material within 5 feet of the structure creating an **Ember Resistive Zone** and replace with hardscape. We recommend you be proactive and harden your home by installing ember resistant vents, non-combustible siding, gutter guards, ignition resistant decking, and dual pane windows with one pane of tempered glass. For a complete list, see attached pages 4 & 5.

**Please review the enclosed fire safety documents, which include:**

1. Courtesy Notice to Abate Hazard. **(Page 2)**
2. Understanding Home Ignition Zones. **(Page 3 & 4)**
3. Low Cost Retrofit Guide and Home Hardening **(Page 5 & 6)**
4. Evacuation Guidelines **(Page 7 & 8)**
5. Updating Your Mailing Address through the County of San Diego **(Page 9 & 10)**

RSFFPD takes pride in community safety. If you have any questions or would like a complimentary defensible space inspection of your property, one of our inspectors would be happy to assist you. Inspections may be scheduled by e-mailing [weedabatement@RSF-Fire.org](mailto:weedabatement@RSF-Fire.org) or by calling our Administration office at 858-756-6023.

Sincerely,

RSFFPD Fire Prevention Bureau



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## COURTESY NOTICE

### NOTICE TO ABATE FIRE HAZARDS

(This is not a notice to grade your property)

*If your property is in compliance, you can disregard this notice. If you have questions about property compliance, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at (858) 756-6023.*

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that all lot(s) or parcel(s) of land within the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, California, shall be required to be abated of all fire hazards or conditions that may become a fire hazard in compliance with RSFFPD Ordinance 2022-02 and the 2023 County of San Diego Consolidated Fire Code.

Property owners or property managers shall be responsible for year-round maintenance of:

- Home Ignition zones which include Zone 0 “Ember Resistive Zone” (0-5’), Zone 1 “the Intermediate Zone” (5’-50’) and Zone 2 “the Extended Zone” (50’-100’).
- 100’ of defensible space around any structure, including neighboring structures.
- Proper vegetation maintenance within 20’ of a public or private road by thinning brush, native vegetation, and cutting annual grasses. Grasses and weeds shall be no taller than 4” in height. Trees shall be limbed up 6’ above the ground or 3 times the height of a shrub directly beneath the tree and have a minimum of 13’ 6” vertical clearance over a roadway.
- Annual weeds and grasses are required to be abated as soon as they mature or start to turn brown.

Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District Specialists will be making routine hazard abatement inspections over the course of spring, summer, and fall. Owners of non-compliant properties will receive notification(s) to voluntarily abate such hazards. If the hazard has not been abated after thirty-five (35) days, the property will be subject to the District’s *Forced Abatement Process*. The cost of abatement shall constitute a special assessment against the respective parcel of land. The respective assessment shall include, but is not limited to, the cost of the abatement, a Fire District administrative fee, reasonable attorneys’ fees and other costs incurred by the District to enforce such abatement. Property owners or managers are strongly urged to arrange for the clearing of their own parcels, as the above requirements are strictly enforced. If your property is forcibly abated, the cost will be much higher than if you choose to abate the property yourself or commercially.

#### **WARNING – ENVIRONMENTALLY PROTECTED OPEN SPACE, PLANT(S) OR ANIMAL SPECIES**

Clearing of vegetation as required by this letter on property(s) that contains threatened or endangered species is subject to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Deliberate taking, clearing or removal beyond that specifically allowed by this notice and/or the MOU is not authorized and may be in violation of the State and Federal Endangered Species Act. Please contact the Fire District with questions about compliance with the MOU and this notice. You should also contact USFWS at (916) 445-0411 or CDFW (858) 467-4201 if you have been notified that you have a threatened or endangered species on your property.



# Understanding Home Ignition Zones

## STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP PROTECT YOUR HOME BEFORE A WILDFIRE

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### Within 0-5 Feet of a Structure

- Use hardscape material such as rocks, pebbles, pea gravel, pavers, or concrete within the first 5 feet of your home.
- Remove sheds, trash cans, decorative plant trellises, artificial turf, and all other combustible material.
- Fencing and attachments be constructed of non-combustible materials, such as iron, masonry, heavy timber or stucco.
- Inspect the roof for any loose or missing tiles, shingles or bird stops.
- Make sure eave and attic vents are ember and fire resistant. (Brandguard, Embers Out, O'hagen Fire & Ice, or Vulcan Vents)

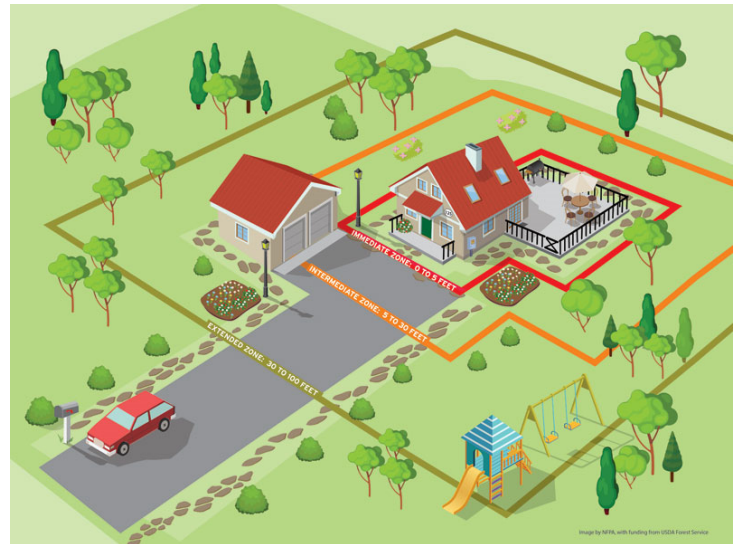


**Non-combustible materials such as, paving stones, gravel, and decomposed granite should be used within 5 feet of the home.**

### Within 50-100 Feet of a Structure

- Remove any dead or dying vegetation including palm fronds and eucalyptus debris.
- Thin out native vegetation by at least 80%
- Limb up trees at least 6 feet above the ground or 3 times the height of underlying vegetation.

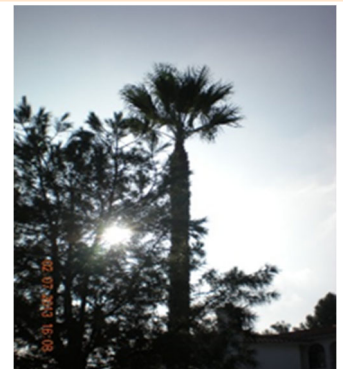
**The palm tree on the left needs to have its fronds removed. Flying embers can get trapped in the dense fronds and cause the tree to catch fire. Flaming fronds or embers brands can be carried by high winds and may travel up to a mile creating spot fires ahead of the fire front. Embers are less likely to be trapped in the tree on the right.**



Zone 0 (0-5') Ember Resistant Zone (Red) — Zone 1 (5'-50') Lean, Clean and Green Zone (Orange) — Zone 2 (50'-100') Reduced Fuel Zone

### Within 5-50 Feet of a Structure

- Remove any dead vegetation, including palm fronds and eucalyptus debris.
- Plant drought-tolerant and fire-resistive vegetation with irrigation.
- Prune tree branches back a minimum of 10 feet from rooftops and chimneys.
- Propane tanks should be a minimum of 10 feet away from structures, vegetation, and other combustible materials.
- Firewood should be neatly stacked a minimum of 30 feet from any structure.
- All trash enclosures and trash cans should be a minimum of 10 feet from any structure and have tightly fitted lids.
- Limb up trees at least 6 feet above the ground or 3 times the height of underlying vegetation.



## Mulch

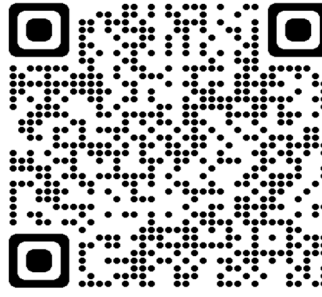
- Wind blown embers may ignite ground mulch, increasing the potential for fire to spread to your home.
- Rubber mulch burns faster and hotter, creating a more severe fire. Rubber mulch is required to be 5 feet from the structure.
- Piles of mulch are very difficult to extinguish, they require copious amounts of water and manpower.
- In many mulch fires, the smoldering mulch tunnels under the surface and then breaks out into flames igniting nearby vegetation or structures.
- Mulch along the structure may spread flames into the walls through the weep screed and catch your building paper on fire.



The weep screed serves as a vent so that moisture can escape the stucco wall finish just above the foundation.



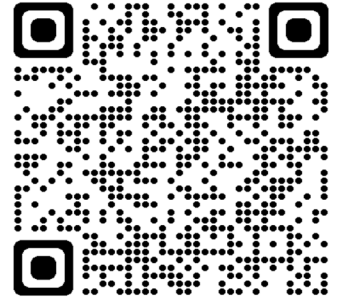
However, ventilation holes in the weep screed may allow flames into the walls of a structure.



Link to the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety's video showing the effects of wind blown embers on a non compliant structure.



Please visit this link to a informational video about defensible space from Deputy Fire Marshal Conor Lenehan.



## Tips for Safely Removing Vegetation

- Complete mowing and weed whipping before 10:00 am, especially if it is a hot or windy day.
- Use a string trimmer instead of a lawn mower, brush blade, or tractor on weeds and dry grasses.
- Before you begin, be aware of rocks in the area as a blade striking a rock can create a spark and cause a fire.
- Spark arresters are mandated for all portable gasoline powered equipment.
- Make sure the exhaust system, spark arresters, and mower are working correctly.
- Keep the mower, including the engine, free of dust, oil, carbon build up, and other flammable materials.
- Have a garden hose, shovel and fire extinguisher on hand at all times and know how to use them. Keep a cell phone nearby in case of an emergency.
- Double check that equipment has not been recalled.
- If possible, have a spotter work with you to help watch for fire.

**This handout is not an endorsement of any company nor does it guarantee your structure surviving a wildfire. It is merely a guide to help you prepare for the upcoming wildfire season. For more information, contact the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District at 858-756-6023 or visit [www.rsf-fire.org](http://www.rsf-fire.org).**



# EMERGENCY EVACUATION

**W**ildfires are unpredictable and spread quickly. Roads become congested with vehicles, making evacuation a slow process. Long before evacuation seems likely, gather your family, your pets and your belongings and leave the area. Plan ahead so you know where you are going and what you are going to take with you. This pamphlet will help guide you through the evacuation process.

## When a Fire Approaches

**PLEASE NOTE: You do not need to wait for an official evacuation order to leave.** If at any time you feel threatened, go ahead and evacuate. This is especially true for families with young children, individuals with a medical condition, and those with large animals. Determine the best evacuation route, keeping in mind it might not be the main road or your normal route. Most communities within the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District have narrow roads, which can cause traffic congestion leading to panic for those evacuating. By evacuating early, you give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire.

- Listen for fire updates on the television, radio, landline or cell phone. Updates are also posted on various emergency services websites and social media accounts (see list on back page). Since the electricity may go out, make sure your cell phone is fully charged and you have an alternate means of keeping it charged.
- Know and follow evacuation orders. Every resident needs to be prepared to evacuate in under 15 minutes when ordered to do so.

EVACUATION ORDER	EVACUATION WARNING	SHELTER IN PLACE
Immediate threat to life. This is a lawful order to leave now. The area is lawfully closed to public access	Potential threat to life and/or property. Those who require additional time to evacuate, and those with pets and livestock should leave now.	Go inside, shut all doors and windows leaving them unlocked. Turn on lights. Prepare to self-sustain until further notice and/or contacted by emergency personnel for additional direction.

- Know at least two ways out of your neighborhood. Take the shortest route and evacuate in the opposite direction of the fire.
- If you have large animals, start the evacuation process early.
- If you have a gated driveway, leave the gate in an open position.
- Know and be familiar with your school or daycare emergency plan so you know what to expect and how you will be notified of when and where to pick up your children.
- Call your out-of-town contact and let them know you are evacuating and where you are going.
- Once you have left, stay out of the area until authorities permit re-entry. This may take a while as fire and safety personnel have to make sure it is safe and the infrastructure is in place for residents to repopulate the area.

Most wildfire-related civilian injuries and fatalities occur when homeowners wait too long to evacuate their homes. By evacuating early you are removing you and your family from harm's way and are giving firefighters the ability to protect your home without having to worry about civilian safety.

# If Safe Evacuation is Not an Option:

## Shelter in a Structure:

- A building should be your first choice for shelter if evacuation is not possible.
- Close all doors and windows and leave them unlocked.
- Stay inside the house until the fire front passes. Although it may be very hot in the house, it may be unsurvivable outside.
- Keep all family members and pets (in carriers) and shelter in a room at the opposite end of your home from where the fire is approaching; making sure you have two possible exit routes.
- Keep car keys, cell phone, ID, and flashlight with you.
- Monitor the fire and be observant. Watch for small (spot) fires and extinguish them if safe to do so.
- Call 9-1-1 and let them know your location.
- Plan for the loss of power and have water stored by filling the sinks and tubs along with buckets inside your house to put out burning embers or small fires. Have your fire extinguishers out and in convenient locations.
- Protect your airway by breathing near the floor if it becomes smoky or hot.
- Leave the house only if it becomes too hot or smoky inside, or when it's obviously safer outside.

A structure offers more protection than a car so if there is a building nearby get inside it. If there is no building, park and stay in your car, it is safer than being out in the open where you could be directly exposed to flames and radiant heat.

Find a safe place to park that has little or no vegetation, such as a shopping center if available. Turn on headlights and emergency flashers to make your car more visible during heavy smoke. Close all windows and doors, shut off all air vents and turn off the air conditioner. Get below the windows under blankets, preferably wool, and lie on the floor to shelter yourself from the intense radiant heat. Call 9-1-1 and let them know your situation. Stay in the vehicle as it will provide you with some insulation from the heat.

## Receiving Emergency Updates

Various emergency services agencies provide updates on their websites and across social media platforms during emergency situations as they are able. The following may be helpful resources for you and your family:

### San Diego County

- Website: [www.sdcountyemergency.com](http://www.sdcountyemergency.com)
- Twitter: [twitter.com/SanDiegoCounty](https://twitter.com/SanDiegoCounty)
- Reverse 9-1-1 registration and SD Emergency download: [www.readysandiego.org](http://www.readysandiego.org)

### RSFFPD

- Website: [www.rsffire.org](http://www.rsffire.org)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/RSF\\_Fire](https://www.twitter.com/RSF_Fire)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/RSFFire](https://www.facebook.com/RSFFire)

### CALFIRE

- Website: [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/CALFIRESANDIEGO](https://www.twitter.com/CALFIRESANDIEGO)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CALFIRE](https://www.facebook.com/CALFIRE)



Pulse Point, Watch Duty, and the SD Emergency app, available for free in the App Store and on Google Play.

For more information about wildfire preparedness and emergency services, please visit our website, [www.rsffire.org](http://www.rsffire.org).



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## Low-Cost Retrofits

As of July 1, 2021, California Civil Code 1102.19 will require the seller of any property located in a high or very high fire hazard severity zone to provide a disclosure notice including any State Fire Marshal low-cost retrofits completed. These low-cost retrofits help reduce the risk of damage or loss during a wildfire.

### Roofing and Gutters

When it is time to replace your roof, replace it with fire-resistant Class A roof material. Block any spaces between your roof covering and sheathing (bird stops). Install non-combustible corrosion resistant metal gutter covers on gutters to prevent the accumulation of leaves and debris in the gutter.

### Attic Vents

Inspect your existing attic, crawl space, and wall vents. Replace or retrofit non-compliant vents with ember & flame-resistant vents. Some listed and approved venting companies are: Brandguard, Vulcan, Embers Out, and O'Hagin (Fire & Ice models). They offer easy to install retrofit options that fit in place of or behind existing vents.

### Eaves

Inspect the eave construction of your home. Retrofit any under eave vents if not already equipped with ember resistant screening. If your home has exposed rafters and/or roof decking, enclose your eaves with non-combustible, ignition resistant materials, or heavy timber construction.

### Windows & Doors

Replace single pane windows with windows that are multi-paned with a minimum of one pane tempered glass. Ensure any vinyl window frames have metal reinforced corners. Replace any plastic or acrylic skylights with multi-paned glass skylights with a minimum one pane tempered glass. Add a minimum 1/16" non-combustible screen behind any operable skylight. Exterior doors shall be minimum 1 3/8" thick or 20-minute rated. Glass doors shall be of multi paned glass with a minimum of one pane tempered glass. Louvered exterior doors shall be backed by ember resistant metal mesh. Install non-combustible weather stripping to seal gaps greater than 1/8-inch in garage doors to prevent ember intrusion.

### Auxiliary Structures & Attached Decks/Patio Covers

Screen or box in any existing cantilevered or above grade decking with exposed structural members. Replace traditional wood decking with non-combustible or ignition-resistant materials. Provide metal flashing where the decking directly attaches to the wall of the home. Ensure your patio covers, gazebos, and trellises attached to the home are constructed of non-combustible, ignition-resistant materials, or heavy timber (minimum 4" nominal lumber size). Limit the number of combustible furnishings that are placed on top of attached decks and under patio covers during wildfire season. Ensure that combustible items and vegetation are removed from underneath, on top of, or within five feet of a deck. Auxiliary structures such as sheds, detached patio covers, pergolas, etc. shall be constructed of ignition resistant materials and have a Class-A rated roof material. Combustible structures shall be set back a minimum of 50 feet from your home. Maintain proper clearance from vegetation and provide defensible space around auxiliary structures.

### Exterior Siding

Inspect exterior siding for dry rot, gaps, cracks, and warping. Caulk or plug gaps greater than 1/16-inch in siding and replace any damaged boards, including those with dry rot. Replace combustible wood or vinyl siding with non-combustible or ignition resistant materials such as stucco, cement fiber board, metal, or masonry.

### Fencing

Remove or replace combustible gates or fencing attached to the structure within the first 5 (five) feet of the structure.



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## Garage doors

Install weather stripping to eliminate any gaps 1/8" or larger around garage doors. Add a battery back-up to automatic garage door openers so the garage can easily be opened if the power is out.

## Chimneys

Cover chimney or stovepipe outlet with a noncombustible corrosion-resistant metal mesh screen, 12-gauge thickness or larger, with openings no greater than 1/2". Close the fireplace flue during fire season when the fireplace is not in use.

Wood shake shingle roofs are no longer allowed as they are dry and ignite easily from just embers alone. Instead, consider a Class "A" fire resistive roofing material such as tile, slate, asphalt, concrete shingle, or metal.



Wood Shake



Clay tile Class "A" Roof



Slate tile Class "A" Roof

Eave vents are no longer allowed as embers "roll" under the eaves and enter your attic space igniting your attic. It is recommended that property owners replace their existing attic vents with ember resistant vents. Brandguard, Ember's Out, O'Hagin Fire & Ice line, and Vulcan are all companies that manufacture ember resistant attic vents.



Eave vent without ember resistant protection



Brandguard ember resistant attic vents

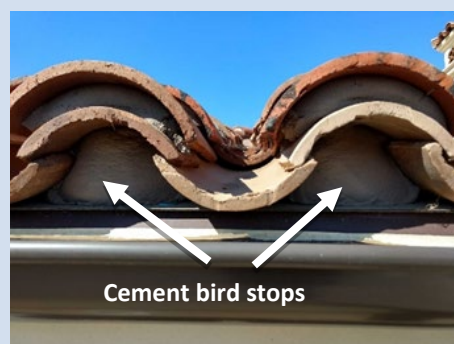


Eave vent with Brandguard retrofit

Fire resistive bird stops prevent embers from traveling under your roof tiles and igniting your roofing paper, any leaf litter or debris accumulation, or potential bird nests. Examples of acceptable bird stops are cement, metal, and clay.



No bird stops with nest



Cement bird stops



Metal bird stops





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## Updating Your Mailing Address

Dear Rancho Santa Fe Community Member,

If you have recently changed your mailing address or are still receiving letters from the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD) at an older or incorrect mailing address, you may need to update your mailing address at The County of San Diego Assessor's Office. The address listed with the County Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk is the address used to send important mail regarding your parcel, including letters from RSFFPD regarding notices.

Please follow the instructions below to update your mailing address. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the County Assessor Clerk for more information at (619) 236-3771 or [addr.arcc@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:addr.arcc@sdcounty.ca.gov).

How to Change Mailing Address:

1. Go to [www.sdarcc.com](http://www.sdarcc.com).
2. Scroll down to **Assessor Services** select **Address Change Request for Residential, Commercial, Business, Vessels & Aircrafts**.
3. For residential address changes, select **Change of Address – Real Property**.
4. Fill in the requested information, sign and email or mail the form to the address provided.

Sincerely,

RSFFPD Prevention Bureau



**JORDAN Z. MARKS**  
**ASSESSOR / RECORDER / COUNTY CLERK**

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, SUITE 103, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

**RECORDS DIVISION**

619/531-5556 \* FAX 619/685-2338

[www.sdarcc.com](http://www.sdarcc.com)

Email: [addr.arcc@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:addr.arcc@sdcounty.ca.gov)



**REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS ON REAL PROPERTY**

FOR YOUR PROPERTY TAXES AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Form Instructions: Fill in parcel information, sign and email or mail form to the address listed above.

**PARCEL NUMBER(S)\***

Parcel Number (1) 

			-				-				-		
--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--

Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel Number (2) 

			-				-				-		
--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--

Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel Number (3) 

			-				-				-		
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Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel Number (4) 

			-				-				-		
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Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel Number (5) 

			-				-				-		
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Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT OWNER'S NAME (AS ON TITLE)\*

NEW MAILING ADDRESS\*

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4

Still Occupy  Sold  Rental

Date Moved Out: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Signature\*

Date\*

Phone Number\*

**By typing in your name, you certify that you are the owner of the property or authorized agent.**