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6. What the New Rules Do

“Zone 0” is a relatively new concept in California fire policy, and it’s becoming a big focus because of what recent research and post-fire investigations have shown. Here’s why the state is moving toward new “Zone 0” rules:

1. The 0–5 Foot Zone Is the Most Critical for Home Ignition

- Studies by UC Berkeley, IBHS, Cal Fire, and others show that the area within **0–5 feet of a building (sometimes called the “home ignition zone” or “Zone 0”)** is where most fire losses start.
- Wind-blown embers settle here, ignite mulch, wood fences, or debris, and then the flames contact siding or decks.

2. Current Defensible Space Rules Stop at 5 Feet

- California’s long-standing defensible space law (Public Resources Code 4291) focuses on 30 feet and 100 feet from structures.
- Until recently, it did **not** regulate the first 5 feet right next to a house, even though that’s the most vulnerable area.

3. Post-Fire Assessments Show Patterns

- After fires like the Camp, Tubbs, and Dixie, investigators repeatedly found that homes with **non-combustible materials right up to the walls** survived at far higher rates.
- Homes with combustible mulch, plants, or wooden fences attached directly to the house were far more likely to ignite.

4. Climate Change & Urban Interface

- Longer fire seasons and hotter, windier conditions mean embers travel farther into neighborhoods.
- The “wildland-urban interface” now includes dense suburbs — making rules for the immediate perimeter of structures even more important.

5. Legal Mandate

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