



HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE RISK OF FOREST FIRE



PRACTICAL GUIDE

February 2026

The July 2023 law, the PPRIFs, the PACs and the prefectural order of 15 October 2025 relating to Legal bush clearing Obligations in the Bouches-du-Rhône.

WHY THIS GUIDE?

The regulatory texts (July 2023 law, PPRIF, PAC, prefectural order of 15 October 2025) are technical documents running thousands of pages, which are not always easy for the general public to interpret. Their requirements are nevertheless essential to know and to apply.



The Facts

The climate change context is causing a sharp increase in the risk of fire and forest fires.

Every property owner / manager shares in the collective responsibility in the face of forest fires.



Our Objective

To offer you a guide to understanding these complex requirements and to provide you with practical, easy-to-implement advice to protect your family, your property and our ecosystems.
To go beyond regulatory constraints and create genuine levers of resilience.



The CARTAGENIA Web App

An application developed by PyroVigil & Agex BE.

Geolocation tools for all plots within the Domain, and calculation of complex OLD overlaps.

Access codes provided by the AFUL.



ACCESS THE WEB APP!



*Because bush clearing, creating access routes and water points means, above all, protecting lives.
Together, let us make our Domain a fire-resilient space!*

THE CARTAGENIA WEB APPLICATION

Your AFUL Générale simplifies all complex OLD calculations with CARTAGENIA



CARTAGENIA - Web Mapping Application

Developed specifically by PyroVigil & Agex BE for the **Domaine de Pont Royal**.

Makes regulations clear and accessible, enabling truly effective action.

- General map of the area's land use plans
- Geolocation of your plot
- Calculation of numerous and complex overlays of **land use plans** that apply to your plot and beyond
- Metric accuracy depending on the quality of the device – indicative, not legally binding



ACCESS THE WEB APP!

✓ No credential needed !

- On the login page, click on “I’m just making a quick visit”.
- Go to the “Job-Specific modules” block and click on “Fire Defense map”
- Select **Malemort** and click on “Access the map”
- **Zoom in to find your plot**, and click on it to view all the relevant information.



PyroVigil Services for Property Owners

- Fixed-price mini-studies to optimise and enhance your OLD
- Calculation of crown outlines and heights (LiDAR survey from vehicle)
- Calculation of vegetation biomass volumes by layer
- DFCI slope classes, preliminary planning studies, fire risk assessments

PYROVIGIL — Forest Fire Protect

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SIRET 98765885300013 — Partner of AFUL Générale du Domaine de Pont Royal

SOME CONTEXT

AN INTENSIFYING FOREST FIRE RISK

92%

of municipalities
in the Bouches-du-Rhône
affected

+30%

projected increase
in fires by 2050

+80%

increase in risk across the
Mediterranean basin

**4 record
summers**

2021 – 2024
2021 – 2024

≠ Winter

The risk now spans
from spring to autumn, and
even winter!

Aggravating Factors of Climate Change

- **Longer and more intense droughts** : flammable vegetation over extended periods
- **More frequent violent winds** : the mistral and easterly winds generate ultra-rapid fire spread
- **Record heatwaves** : extreme temperatures that dry out vegetation
- **Mega-fires** with pyro-convective phenomena (smoke plumes several kilometres high)

Severe Consequences (2021–2024)

- Tens of thousands of hectares destroyed every summer
- Mass evacuations and homes destroyed
- Long-lasting damage to ecosystems
- Iconic landscapes disfigured – major economic and tourism losses

DEFENSIBILITY: A VITAL CONCEPT!

Defensibility is the capacity of an area to be effectively protected by firefighters during a forest fire, while ensuring their operational safety.



DEFENSIBLE ZONE

= Firefighter intervention guaranteed

- bush clearing (OLD) carried out correctly
- Access routes of adequate dimensions (4 m × 4 m clearance)
- Water supply available (compliant fire hydrant)



NON-DEFENSIBLE ZONE

= NO Firefighter intervention

Your home may be left to burn even if emergency services are nearby!

During a major fire, firefighters focus their efforts exclusively on defensible zones.

The 3 Pillars of Defensibility



1. bush clearing (OLD)

To prevent lethal heat transfer



2. Compliant access routes (4m × 4m)

To enable access, passing and turning manoeuvres.



3. Fire Water Points (FWP)

For fire-fighting and the protection of property and lives

Today, all municipalities are progressively subject to “Information Notices” (PAC) or Forest Fire Risk Prevention Plans (PPRIF), which analyse and cross-reference the fire risk hazard with defensibility assessed on site.

What is the PPRIF?

The Forest Fire Risk Prevention Plan (PPRIF) crosses fire hazard data with defensibility assessed on site.

Properties may be classified in risk zones:

- low,
- moderate,
- high or very high >> **Zone R = Red.**



Consequences for Properties in Red Zone R

- **Building prohibition** on undeveloped land
- **Reconstruction subject** to prior achievement of defensibility
- **No extension or reconstruction permitted** in the event of destruction
- **Massive loss of asset value** – properties very difficult to sell or insure

[Download the PAC 2014 documents for Bouches-du-Rhône](#)

THE ECONOMIC EQUATION: INVEST NOW OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES?

Example for a home valued at €500,000 in a risk zone:

WITHOUT defensibility compliance	WITH compliance and works completed
Home unsellable and dangerous	Home protected and defensible
PPRIF red zone discount: -50 to 70%	Sellable at full market price +++
Significant criminal liability + compulsory works	Normal sale + “secured” premium
Insurance surcharge: €80/month (€5k deductible)	Standard rate, or even reduced
PPRIF reclassification takes 5 years even after works	Favourable PPRIF zoning
Extension and reconstruction impossible if destroyed	Extension and reconstruction possible, no excess
Home value: €150–200k if a buyer can be found...	Home value: €550k

COST OF NOT INVESTING: €300–400k + administrative ordeal + ongoing risk-related stress

THE OLD: COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION

Since 1985, Legal bush clearing Obligations (OLD) have been the cornerstone of defence against forest fires. A correctly cleared plot of land offers up to 80% additional protection!



Your Family and Your Property

- Safe evacuation
- Reduced risk of being trapped
- Protection of the home, outbuildings and vehicles



The Emergency Services

- Effective and safe intervention
- Close-range defence
- Better visibility for air tankers and helicopters



The Forest and Its Ecosystems

- Protection of wildlife (endemic species, game, birds, etc.) and endemic Mediterranean flora
- Prevention of soil erosion



Landscape and Biodiversity


- Preservation of views
- Preservation of ecological corridors
- Enhancement of the local area and living environment

Living in a forest zone is a privilege that comes with collective responsibilities.
Your bush clearing protects your neighbours, and theirs protects you in return!

WHO IS SUBJECT TO THE OLD?

Persons Subject to the Obligation

- Owners of land in an urban zone (U) as defined by the local planning document (PLU)
- Owners of a building, installation, construction site, car park, swimming pool, tennis court or private access road
- Owners of camping sites, car parks, depots and other installations
- Road managers (State, Département, municipalities), SNCF Réseau, RTE, Enedis, motorway companies

 **The obligation may be contractually transferred to the occupant (tenant, farmer), but the property owner remains ultimately responsible.**

Legal Liability Incurred

Penalties Sanctions

Formal notices, compulsory works at the owner's expense

Fines

Up to €750 for an individual in the event of non-compliance

Civil and Criminal Liability

In the event of a fire worsened by lack of bush clearing

Insurance Difficulties

€5,000 excess (Insurance Code), possible exclusion from fire cover

Not concerned: boundary walls, worthless outbuildings, ruins, water tanks, maintained agricultural land, maintained leisure parks and gardens.

BUSH CLEARING: WHAT AND WHERE?

WHAT NEEDS TO BE CLEARED AND WHERE?

Buildings and Installations Concerned

- Houses, buildings and outbuildings with human occupation
- Mobile homes, long-term caravans, campsites, residential leisure parks (PRL)
- Workshops, hangars, permanent greenhouses, transformers, radar installations
- Car parks, shared garages, depots, gas tanks
- Wind turbines, solar farms, industrial buildings and classified installations (ICPE)
- Swimming pools, sports grounds, airfields, cemeteries

Linear Networks

- Private access roads (4 m × 4 m clearance for emergency vehicles)
- Public roads, electricity lines, pylons, gas pipelines

Regulatory Distances

50 m

Minimum mandatory distance around buildings

100 m


Minimum mandatory distance around buildings in very high risk areas

(PPRIF or prefectural order)

Zone U

In urban zone U of the PLU: obligation applies to the entire plot (built or unbuilt)

NOTE: Where multiple obligations overlap on the same plot, the owner is responsible for all OLD obligations affecting the interior of their plot (except electricity lines).

The AFUL  **CARTAGENIA** tool simplifies all these complex calculations!



ACCESS THE TOOL!

BUSH CLEARING BEYOND YOUR PLOT BOUNDARY

It is very common to need to carry out bush clearing on a neighbouring undeveloped plot (outside urban zone U). This must be done amicably or through official channels.

1 Amicable Approach

Meet with the neighbouring owner and jointly identify the trees to be felled.
Request written authorisation specifying the agreed trees.

2 Management of Felled Wood

Felled timber remains the property of the neighbour (unless agreed otherwise or sold).
Prepare an inventory to facilitate quoting and formalising the agreement.

3 In the Event of Refusal

Send [the official letter template](#) (from the prefecture website) by registered post.
If no response is received within one month, the OLD works are charged to the neighbouring owner.

4 Co-ownerships

The residents' association is responsible for the bush clearing of common areas.
Each co-owner remains responsible for their private areas.



THE IDEAL: seek agreement with neighbours and, ideally, pool the works to reduce costs.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with the prefectural order of 15 October 2025 — the regulatory reference document

Areas Excluded from OLD

- Riparian vegetation (trees and shrubs within $\pm 10/15$ m of watercourses)
- Regularly maintained agricultural land
- Steep-sloped areas ($\geq 40\%$) with erosion risk (State-validated study required)

Possible Exemptions (as specified in the Prefectural Order)

- Vegetation on pergolas
- Shrub hedges or alignment hedges under 3 m in height
- Retention of an isolated tree near a building
- Tree clusters $< 50 \text{ m}^2$ more than 20 m from buildings
- Trees > 15 m: no crown spacing requirement if pruned above 5 m
- Dead trees > 20 m from buildings if safety is ensured
- Special provisions for leisure parks and outdoor hospitality
- Car parks

Purpose and Method of bush clearing

To reduce combustible vegetation in order to lower fire intensity and limit fire spread.

To ensure sufficient interruption of the vertical and horizontal of the vegetation canopy. Bush clearing is neither clear-cutting nor land clearing.

Recommended method: work from the centre outwards

- Start close to the house (zone 0–20 m)
- Work outwards (zone 20–50 m)
- Identify priority problem trees first (biomechanical issues, plant health, prohibited or invasive species)
- Wait until all felling is complete before assessing crown spacing

⚠ Full mechanical shredding over >5,000 m² is prohibited from 15/03 to 15/08 except for maintenance. Major works (felling) should ideally be carried out between November and March.

Summary of the 3 Zones

Zone	Distance	Trees — Canopy	Special Features
ZONE 1	0 – 20 m	≥ 3 m between canopies	Maximum safety, 0 combustibles in sub-zone 0–2 m
ZONE 2	20 – 50 m	≥ 3 m (4–5 m recommended)	Transition felling of dead, overtopped trees
ZONE 3	> 50 m	Crown spacing not applicable	Felling of dead coniferous trees only

ZONE 1: maximum safety — no fire spread must be possible!

Roofs, Ground Vegetation & Shrubs

- **Systematic raking and removal of all plant debris** (dead leaves, needles, pine cones)
- **Cleaning of roofs and gutters**
- **Removal of ALL herbaceous vegetation** (except closely mown lawn)
- **Under tree canopy** : shrub layer completely removed
- **Outside canopy** : shrubs kept more than 3 m from buildings and from the canopies of other trees/shrubs

Trees

Crown spacing (full canopy of the tree):

- 3 metres between the canopies of retained trees
- 3 metres between canopies and buildings

Pruning mandatory:

- Height: minimum 2 metres for trees over 6 metres tall
- For trees under 6 m: pruning to one third of their height
- Removal of dead branches
- Removal of branches touching or overhanging the roof

Storage and Facilities

Firewood: Permitted ONLY under a closed or covered shelter

Vegetation piles: **PROHIBITED** – mandatory removal

Compost: Permitted in a closed composter only

Mulch: Permitted as mineral mulch, **PROHIBITED** if wood chip/bark/straw

★ **A SUB-ZONE 0–2 m is strongly recommended (as exists in many countries):**

>> ZERO plants or combustible materials – plants, wood chip, bark, wooden furniture, plastic or any combustible material.

ZONE 2 – TRANSITION & ATTENUATION

20 – 50 m

Tree Layer

- Crown spacing ≥ 3 m minimum (4 to 5 m recommended)
- Pruning: +2 m minimum for trees > 6 m (more is recommended)
- Removal of dead branches, ALL dead trees and overtopped trees (= beneath another tree)

Shrub layer – removal or pruning to comply with:

- +3 m between the canopies of retained shrubs
- +3 m between shrub canopies and tree canopies
- +3 m between canopies and buildings

Herbaceous layer – regular maintenance

Annual mowing before 1 June + second pass recommended during the 1st week of July.

ZONE 3

Beyond 50 m

All requirements of zones 1 and 2 apply, except crown spacing (which does not apply beyond 50 m from the infrastructure at the origin of the OLD). mtance entre houppiers (qui ne s'applique pas au-delà de 50 m de l'infrastructure à l'origine des OLD).

No felling except for dead coniferous trees.

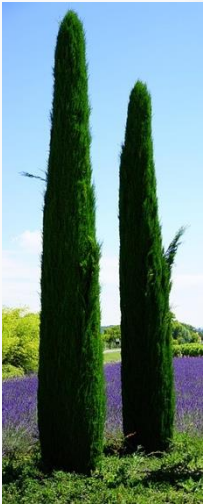
MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUES

Mandatory removal within one month of works, and no later than 15 June:

- On-site chipping (chips MUST be removed or used OUTSIDE the OLD zone)
- Removal to a recycling centre
- Exceptional burning (if chipping is impossible, in compliance with regulations)

VEGETATION: COMBUSTIBILITY LEVELS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The choice of vegetation is essential. Good bush clearing does not mean removing all trees, but selecting and positioning the right species. It is entirely possible to combine safety with landscape quality.



⚠️ CYPRESS TREES — devastating firebrands!

A burning 8 m cypress releases energy equivalent to a fighter jet engine!

A 15 m cypress with a 4 m diameter equals 5 Rafale engines (Byram formula: $I = H \times w \times r$).

Cypress, Mimosa and Eucalyptus are prohibited within 3 m of homes in several neighbouring départements.

A phytosanitary and biomechanical assessment should ideally be carried out by ornamental arboriculture experts to prioritise works.

The tree inventory can also establish combustibility levels as well as fragility, toxicity, allergen potential, climate resilience, water requirements, etc.

Very Low / Low — RECOMMENDED

Olive, Bay laurel, Carob, Fig, Pomegranate, Strawberry tree, Phillyrea, Box, Myrtle, Lime tree...

Low-Medium — ACCEPTABLE if maintained

Holm oak, Plane-tree mulberry, Citrus, Fruit trees, White oak, Montpellier maple...

High to Very High — NOT RECOMMENDED near buildings

Pines (Aleppo, Maritime, Stone), Rosemary, Lavender, Broom, Heather, Palms, Cistus, Kermes oak...

EXTREME — PROHIBITED near buildings

Eucalyptus, Mimosa (invasive), Green cypress, Blue cypress, Leyland cypress, Thuja

REGULATION OF PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS IN OLD ZONES

REGULATION OF PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS IN OLD ZONES

Legal framework: since 12/07/2023 (Art. L134-16 of the Forestry Code) + since 01/01/2025, the risk disclosure statement must explicitly mention the OLD zone

Seller's Obligations

- Attach a sworn declaration to the preliminary sale agreement and to the final deed of sale
- An inaccurate declaration may result in cancellation of the sale, price reduction, or a fine of €45,000 and 3 years' imprisonment
- A wronged buyer may pursue the civil and criminal liability of the notary and the estate agent (Art. 1602 of the Civil Code)

Penalties

- €30/m² not cleared + daily penalty of €100/day
- Insurance excess of €5,000

The Paradox to Be Aware Of

A property can legally be sold as soon as the built plot is cleared – even if the OLD beyond the plot, the access routes (4 × 4 m) and water points are not compliant. The buyer then inherits works that could cost tens to hundreds of thousands of euros, as well as the inability to rebuild in the event of a loss.

PYROVIGIL Defensibility Assessment

Since decree D134-7 does not require any independent assessment, the PYROVIGIL Defensibility Assessment is the only answer to this dangerous regulatory gap. It protects both buyer AND seller.

Bush clearing is not a burden.

IT IS PROTECTION AND INSURANCE for your family, the emergency services, your property, ecosystems and landscapes.

Carry out your bush clearing and achieve Defensibility quickly by meeting the standards for access routes and Fire Water Points

Maintain regularly in accordance with the technical requirements of the prefectural order of 15 October 2025

Your bush clearing protects lives: those of your family, neighbours, emergency services, and local wildlife and flora

Establishing your bush clearing is an initial investment that will quickly pay for itself and will thereafter require only much lighter maintenance

More than 100 homes destroyed in the Bouches-du-Rhône alone in 2025 (417 during the Gonfaron fire in 2021).

Do not wait for a formal notice!



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Thank you for your trust

*Together, let us make our Domain
a fire-resilient space.*