



Rebuilding Guide

Rebuilding after the CZU fires? This document is an overview of the steps you need to take, and will also help you better understand the process of moving forward. You don't need an architect, contractor or plan to get going. *Note that text that appears in gold is a clickable link that will take you to the associated website/document.*

Thinking of selling instead of rebuilding? This guide may help to add value because the steps involved will reduce the uncertainty for potential buyers.

The County has created the [Recovery Permit Center \(RPC\)](#) to provide dedicated services to fire survivors and help navigate the rebuilding journey from preclearance initial conversations to permit issuance, inspections and getting you back in your home. The Long Term Recovery Group and disaster recovery case managers can also help you with additional resources both technical, financial, emotional and demystifying the process.

Step 1. Pre Application Meeting. The first step is to call the [RPC at 831-454-5323](tel:831-454-5323) for a free pre-application meeting. They will give you the information you need to get started on your preclearance.

Step 2. Preclearance. The preclearance process starts with a site map. This shows where things were located on your property before and where they will go. At this point if you do not know what will be rebuilt simply show the new building the same as the old. This can be changed later and the information you get from the preclearance process is invaluable in planning your rebuild. [The preclearance process costs between \\$1,000 and \\$2,500.](#) The costs and needs of the Environmental Health and Geologic departments can push the cost higher.

- The cost of a site plan is separate from the fees paid to the County. You can create your own site map or have your architect/designer/surveyor create it. The county will also accept site plans from: getasiteplan.com. They have offered a 30% discount for CZU rebuilds using code 6tkgjf37.
- The site plan requirements can be found here: [SCCFireRecovery-PermitCenter.pdf](#)

Step 2.1: Environmental Health. There are a number of different possibilities as there are combinations of public and private water, sewer, and septic in our community. Items below are general and site specific issues may need to be addressed on a case by case basis. The RPC will help you determine what option works for the parcel.

- a. **Public Sewer.** Reconnection should be required and possible.
- b. **Public Water.** Reconnection should be required and possible.
- c. **Septic.** Generally if your septic is still functioning, it can be reused. Pump reports and other records of system functionality prior to the fire will be reviewed by the RPC. If your septic was destroyed in the fire, California Health and Safety Code requires it come up to current standards.
- d. **Private Well.** Generally if the well is still functioning, it can be used again.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON SEPTIC. Should you wish to build a larger home than what was previously there and the configuration of that home requires a NEW septic system (typically if you add bedrooms this is triggered, the NEW septic system will be required to adhere to current septic code requirements, which likely will be more strict than if you are able to repair your existing system.

Step 2.2. Geologic Hazard Clearance. There are essentially [three paths forward](#), plus a fourth option that combines aspects of the three with work by your geotech. Each path can lead to "no further investigation, with clearance issued at any time as determined by a discretionary review by the Santa Cruz County geologist.

Path A. No Further Investigation

Good to go, site is clear of Geologic Hazards.

Path B. Geologic Hazard Assessment Required

This is usually a desktop report created by County staff that alerts you to potential hazards at your rebuilding site.

- If cleared through this report then you are geologically cleared and can proceed.
- If after review further investigation is required by the county but you decide to utilize the CZU rebuilding directive then the information in this report will inform the acknowledgement of geologic risk to be recorded later and you can proceed.

Path C. Full Geologic Report Required

This is only necessary when required by County Geologic staff and you plan to rebuild without use of the [CZU Fire Rebuild Directive](#). [The cost ranges from \\$5-50k](#) or more. This is a full report that your Geologic Engineer can use to develop mitigants to geologic risk at your site.

- For those inside the [Atkins Debris Flow Flood Study](#), you may be able to use that report to substitute for a site specific geologic report and still follow the traditional county review process.

Step 3. Fire Safety. This review is done internally at the RPC and with the local fire jurisdictions. If clearance is not issued, items that need to be addressed will be identified. Once you have received [your three clearances \(Environmental Health, Geologic Hazard, and Fire Safety\)](#), you will be ready to proceed with submitting your building plans for permit review and issuance (typically a 2 week review process). If there are additional items to fix, there may be resubmittals required but those are expedited even more.

We hope this guide is useful but if any part of it is unclear, just call the Recovery Permit Center at [831-454-5323](tel:831-454-5323). They are happy to help.