

# VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STANDARDS



The following minimum standards apply to undeveloped/non-landscaped areas of unimproved and developed parcels that are not located in a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) area. Separate handouts are available for Wildland-Urban Interface areas and agricultural property. Property owners are required to maintain their property free of hazards, including any hazard created by the presence of weeds, grass, brush, debris, growth, or other matter, which may support fire spread. This standard applies year-round. Multiple abatement efforts may be required due to regrowth. Special property conditions may require additional or modified abatement.

Removal of weeds, dead vegetation including leaves, brush, tree limbs, and combustible material such as trash and debris, plus management of live trees, bushes, and brush is required as specified below.

## STANDARDS FOR ABATEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

### Fuel Reduction Areas (FRAs) Defined

#### **Commercial and Industrial Parcels**

- The entire parcel.

#### **All Other Parcels**

- Parcels five acres or less in size: The entire parcel.
- Parcels between five and ten acres:
  - 20' perimeter around the area.
  - Within 100' of a structure on the subject or a neighboring structure
  - No cross breaks are required.
- Parcels ten acres or more:
  - 20' perimeter around the area.
  - 20' wide cross breaks in 5-acre grids
  - Within 100' of a structure on the subject or a neighboring structure

### Fuel Reduction Standard within the FRAs

- Abatement of weeds is required in all FRAs. Cut, mow, disc, blade, rototill or graze.
- Fence lines may require hand-mowing/weed-eating to ensure completion of fuel break. When terrain is too steep or rugged for a tractor, a hand mowed fuel break may be required.
- Remove dead or dying trees and shrubs and downed tree limbs and branches.
- Remove dead leaves, needles, shed bark and similar material on the ground that exceed four inches in depth.
- Limb smaller trees from the ground to one-third the height of the tree
- Limb larger trees within six feet of the ground
- Maintain at least four feet between the top of shrubs and tree limbs
- Remove/trim branches that overhang a roof or come within 10 feet of a chimney
- Remove all fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches.

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### All Parcels except Ag and WUI

#### STANDARDS for SPECIFIC ABATEMENT METHODS/SITUATIONS

Weeds and Grasses: Weeds and grasses must be disced, mowed, rototilled, bladed, or grazed. Cut vegetation must be raked, collected and removed from the property or mulched in an approved manner. Depth of mulched vegetation (i.e. cut into small pieces) shall not exceed three inches when dry.

- Weeds, grasses, and similar vegetation shall be maintained at a height of no more than four inches from the ground.
- Mow or graze in areas where discing, rototilling or blade work would undermine a roadbed or disturb a slope.
- All discing work to remove weeds, grass, crops or other vegetation or organic material which could be expected to burn, shall be substantially turned over so there is insufficient fuel to sustain or allow the spread of fire.
- Handwork, including mowing, weed eating or hoeing, may be required where access by larger equipment is not possible. Handwork may also include the use of remote-controlled equipment.
- Blading and dozing must expose 75% minimum of clean dirt. Care shall be taken not to disrupt the existing grade. Sloughed off dirt and grass shall be spread out and not bermed up. Any piles of combustible material not mulched and spread in an approved manner shall be hauled away.

Slopes: Property with slopes up to 75 degrees are expected to mitigate their vegetation and debris hazards. Equipment is available to mow these types of slope grades. Owners with slopes greater than 75 degrees shall contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at 925-454-2361 to determine appropriate management standards.

Combustible storage: Combustible trash, rubbish and/or litter shall be removed from the property. Storage of combustible materials such as lumber, cord wood, hay or straw shall be neatly stacked, provided all weeds and vegetation is removed within 10 feet of the pile/stack.

Living Trees and bushes:

- Consult an arborist prior to trimming trees, especially oak trees to promote healthy trees and reduce tree damage.
- Consult with the city prior to removing living trees to determine whether a permit is required.
- Multiple plants of the same type can be considered a single plant when the diameter of the group does not exceed 10 feet.

#### ENFORCEMENT

Routine vegetation management inspections will be conducted **during the first two weeks of June**. **Failure to comply with these standards could result in abatement by the City with abatement, administrative and legal costs charged to the property owner.**

**Exception:** Individual property owners with landlocked lots shall contact the Fire Prevention Bureau regarding appropriate abatement requirements prior to the compliance date. Landlocked is defined as a parcel of real property which has no access or egress (entry or exit) to a public or private street and cannot be reached except by crossing another's property.

**Contact us**

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