



VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Undeveloped Properties Within Wildland-Urban Interface Areas (WUI)

The following minimum standards apply to undeveloped/non-landscaped areas of unimproved and developed parcels within the wildland-urban interface. This standard does not apply to agricultural parcels – see separate handout. 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 during firefighting activities. This standard applies year-round. Multiple abatement efforts may be required due to regrowth. Special property conditions may require additional or modified abatement.

The wildland-urban interface areas are those areas that **have been designated** by the State of California as being within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Further information about Fire Hazard Severity Zones can be found at <https://gis.data.ca.gov/datasets/789d5286736248f69c4515c04f58f414>.

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.

Modifications to last year's requirements are **highlighted**.

STANDARDS FOR ABATEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

General Weed Abatement for Undeveloped Parcels

- Parcels five acres or less in size: Weeds and grasses must be disced or mowed; with material mulched, or raked and bagged and removed from the property, or rototilled. This applies to the entire area, including along streets and around the perimeters near fences, and around structures
- Parcels in-between five and ten acres: Disc or mow a 20' perimeter around the area. No cross breaks are required.
- Parcels ten acres or more: Disc or mow a 20' perimeter around the area. Disc 20' wide perimeter breaks as well as 20' wide cross breaks in 5-acre grids. 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.
- Within the areas of weed abatement:
 - Remove dead trees and shrubs
 - Remove dead leaves, shed bark, etc.
 - Limb smaller trees from the ground to one-third the height of the tree
 - Limb larger trees at least six feet up from the ground
 - Maintain at least six feet between the top of shrubs and tree limbs
 - Mulched material may remain at a depth not exceeding 4 inches

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Defensible Space

In addition to General Weed Abatement, the following areas shall be maintained as defensible space:

- Within 20 feet of end of pavement of roads/sidewalks, and
- Within 100 feet of any structure (structures on the subject property or on neighboring properties), and
- 10 feet on either side of formal foot trails
- 10 feet on either side of a combustible fence

General: 0 - 100 feet from structures

- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of four inches. An increase is allowed when required control erosion on steep slopes – contact the Fire Department for details.
- Spacing
 - Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees. (See attached diagram #3)
 - Create vertical space between grass, shrubs, and trees. (See attached diagram #2)
 - Alternative for areas 30 feet or more from structures: use Continuous Canopy Option (See attached diagram #4)
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of four inches.
- Remove dead and dying trees, bushes, and brush.

Structures: 0 - 30 feet from structures

- Remove all dead plants, grasses, and weeds
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles on the ground
- Remove/trim branches that overhang the roof or come within 10 feet of a chimney (See attached diagram # 1)
- Ensure wood piles are at least 30 feet from structures

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 4 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.

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- 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.

Dead trees, bushes, downed branches and twigs, piles of leaves, and similar materials: These materials shall be removed. Exception: mulched materials scattered to a depth not exceeding four inches.

Living Trees and bushes:

- Consult with an arborist prior to trimming trees, especially oak trees to promote healthy trees and reduce tree damage.
- Consult with the city prior to removing 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 may 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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