

FULLERTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD

APPLICATION:

BRUSH CLEARANCE ON ALL EXISTING PROPERTIES LOCATED WITHIN THE PROTECTION AREA

JUSTIFICATION:

CURRENT EDITION OF CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE (CFC)

STANDARDS:

- I. Brush clearance creating defensible space must be maintained on all properties **identified by the fire code official**. A minimum of 100 feet of defensible space will be required from any portion of a building, shed, patio cover, trellis or similar structure which shall comply with the following guidelines. For properties with less than one hundred feet of space between the structure and the property line, these regulations shall apply to the entire space and may require off-site mitigation by adjacent property owners.

If identified, each person or entity who owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains any parcel of land within or adjacent to the protection area shall comply with the requirements of this Standard.

NOTE: When required by the fire code official, additional fire protection or firebreak may be required by removing brush, flammable vegetation and combustible growth beyond the 100 feet from such buildings or structures, due to extra hazardous conditions causing a firebreak of only 100 feet to be insufficient to provide reasonable fire safety.

II. GROUND COVER

- A. Vegetation up to eighteen inches in height shall be considered ground cover.
- B. Ground cover shall be properly planted, irrigated, and maintained within 30 feet of a structure.
- C. Green grass and other live vegetation located more than 50 feet from a building or structure and less than 18 inches in height above the ground need not be removed where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.
- D. Disking of ground cover in the non-irrigated areas is not allowed unless approved by the fire code official.

- E. Non-planted areas may be covered with a maximum of five inches of mulch or its equivalent (as approved by the fire code official).
- F. All ground cover & vegetation/weeds that is either dead and/or dying shall be cut to a maximum of 3" and immediately removed and properly disposed, unless approved by the Fire Code Official.

III. TREES:

- A. New and existing trees shall be pruned to maintain a minimum clearance of 10 feet to any portion of a building, shed, patio cover, trellis, or similar structure.
- B. New and existing trees shall be pruned to maintain a minimum clearance of 10 feet to any outdoor fireplace or chimney, indoor fireplace chimney, incinerator, or other heat and/or spark producing device.
- C. Trees shall be pruned to remove branches and undergrowth a minimum of 6' from the ground to provide both a horizontal and vertical clearance under the tree crown.
- D. Trees shall be maintained free of dead wood and foliage, and all dead trees shall be immediately removed.
- E. All cut ground cover, trees, bushes, shrubbery and debris that is upon the ground shall be removed & disposed of properly unless approved by the fire code official.

IV. SHRUBS AND BUSHES:

- A. New and existing shrubs and bushes that are located on land with minimal or no slope shall be pruned and/or planted so that the mature shrub or bush is separated from all other shrubs and bushes by at least two times the height of the shrub or bush, branch tip to branch tip.
- B. New and existing shrubs and bushes that are located on any slope shall be pruned and/or planted so that the mature shrub or bush is separated from all other shrubs and bushes by at least six times the height of the shrub or bush branch tip to branch tip.
- C. Dead and/or dying growth shall be immediately removed or cut to a maximum of 3".
- D. For the purpose of firefighter access and egress, a minimum of three feet of clear space shall be provided along all sides of any structure.

- V. CLEARANCE OF BRUSH AND VEGETATION FROM ROADWAYS: The fire code official is authorized to require areas within 10' of each side of any portion of a roadway, highway or private street which are improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular traffic to be cleared of vegetation and other combustible growth. **Exception:** Single specimen trees, ornamental shrubs or cultivated and irrigated ground cover such as grass, ivy, succulents, or similar plants used as ground cover, provided that they do not form a means of readily transmitting fire.

- VI. **STORAGE OF FIREWOOD:** Firewood and combustible material for consumption on the premises shall not be stored in unenclosed spaces beneath buildings or structures, on decks or under eaves, canopies of other projections or overhangs. Storage of firewood and combustible materials in the defensible space shall be located a minimum of 15 feet from any structure and separated from the drip lines of trees and shrubs by a minimum of 15 feet.
- VII. **ROOFS:**
- A. All roofs of structures in designated areas shall comply with the following:
 - B. Leaves, needles, twigs, and other combustible matter shall be removed from roofs and rain gutters.
 - C. Any portion of any tree, bush or shrub, which is located within ten feet of the outlet of a chimney, shall be removed.
 - D. All chimneys on either indoor or outdoor fireplaces capable of burning solid fuel shall have an approved spark arrester.
- VIII. **USE OF EQUIPMENT:** No person shall use, operate, or cause to be operated, in, upon or adjoining any property location within the protection area any internal combustion engine which uses hydrocarbon fuels, unless the engine is equipped with a spark arrester and maintained in effective working order, or the engine is constructed, equipped and maintained for the prevention of fire.
- A. Spark arrestors affixed to the exhaust system of engines or vehicles shall not be placed or mounted in such a manner as to allow flames or heat from the exhaust system to ignite any flammable material.
 - B. Spark arrester is a device constructed of nonflammable material specifically for the purpose of removing and retaining carbon and other flammable particles over 0.0232 of an inch in size from the exhaust flow of an internal combustion engine that uses hydrocarbon fuels or which is qualified and rated by the United States Forest Service.
 - C. Engines used to provide motor power for trucks, truck tractors, buses, and passenger vehicles, except motorcycles, are not subject to this section if the exhaust system is equipped with a muffler as defined in the Vehicle Code of the State of California.
- IX. **UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** The fire code official may suspend enforcement and require reasonable alternative measures designed to advance the purposes of this standard if he/she determines in any specific case that any of the following conditions exist:
- A. Difficult terrain.
 - B. Danger of erosion.

- C. Other unusual circumstances that make strict compliance with the clearance of vegetation provisions of this Standard undesirable or impractical.

Alternative means and methods or modifications to this Standard may only be approved by the fire code official. Additional technical assistance, fire modeling or alternative methods may be required (refer to CFC Appendix Chapter 1, Areas 104.7.2 thru 104.9) at no cost to the Fire Department.

Landowners who are adjacent to riparian areas (wetlands), vernal pool depressions, coastal sage scrub, open space easements, have the potential for rare, threatened or endangered species or have received notice from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the occurrence of rare, threatened, or endangered species on their property in areas subject to these clearance requirements **must notify both agencies in writing at least 10 days prior to vegetation clearing.**

The agencies will have up to 10 days following receipt of such notification to (1) determine whether the proposed clearing complies with State and/or Federal endangered species requirements and (2) to suggest voluntary, alternative abatement measures if feasible and warranted. Failure of agencies to respond within 10 days will allow the landowner to proceed with abatement activities without further delay. Failure by landowners to provide adequate notification as described above may render landowners liable under State and Federal law.

If your property setback is less than 100' from an adjacent property and you wish to clear that adjacent property immediately, you must obtain permission from that property owner. Otherwise, you must wait for forced abatement to occur.

Contact info:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Attn: Orange Co. Division Chief 3883 Ruffin Road
2177 Salk Avenue, Suite 250 San Diego, CA 92123
Carlsbad, CA 92008 858-467-4201
760-431-9440

For further information regarding weed abatement requirements contact:

**Fullerton Fire Department
Fire Prevention Division
(714) 738-6500**