

County of Santa Clara

Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency
Weed Abatement Division



1553 Berger Drive
Building 1
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 282-3145
Fax (408) 286-2460

December 9, 2019

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ABATE WEEDS

Dear Property Owner:

To protect your property and the surrounding area from a possible fire, your jurisdiction contracts with the County of Santa Clara to operate a Weed Abatement Program. You are receiving this notice and information because it has been determined that your parcel is part of this Program. Please read the information carefully and contact us for clarification or additional information.

Your jurisdiction has adopted or will adopt a resolution declaring your property as one that may contain fire hazards from either weeds or other debris. Following this action, your jurisdiction will be conducting a public hearing to consider an abatement order requiring you to remove any hazardous vegetation or combustible debris prior to the deadline in the enclosed *Weed Abatement Program Schedule*. A public hearing will be held on date and location specified in the enclosed *Notice to Destroy Weeds*, and provides an opportunity for you to raise any objections or concerns with this requirement.

If you believe your parcel includes an environmentally sensitive habitat, please complete the enclosed *Reply Form* to assist in determining the best approach to weed abatement at your property.

After the public hearing, if the Weed Abatement Program is approved for your property, the County is authorized by contract with your city and the California Health and Safety Code sections 14875-14922 to inspect your property to determine whether the property has been cleared of hazards according to the Minimum Fire Safety Standards in the enclosed *Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program* brochure. Inspections will begin after the abatement deadline for your jurisdiction. This notice does not relieve you of your responsibility to complete the necessary work prior to the deadline for your jurisdiction. You will be responsible for an annual fee of \$101 to cover the cost of this compliance inspection.

If you fail to complete the abatement work prior to County inspection, the property owner will be responsible for a \$582 inspection fee per parcel, and the property will be scheduled for abatement by the County contractor. If the abatement work is completed before the scheduled County contractor job, further charges will not be incurred. However, if the County completes this work, a \$984 County administrative fee will be assessed per parcel in addition to the cost for abatement.

The County will make all efforts to use the less costly method of abatement considering the physical characteristics of the property and any environmental concerns. The enclosed *Notice to Destroy Weeds* includes a price list covering detailed fees. Following confirmation of charges by your jurisdiction, the total amount charged will be included as a special assessment on the property tax bill. A meeting notice will be posted at a location determined by your jurisdiction (typically in Civic Centers) at least three days prior to the meeting.

Other than the annual compliance fee, all other costs could be avoided by completing the abatement work yourself, according to Minimum Fire Safety Standards, prior to the abatement deadline for your jurisdiction and maintaining the Minimum Fire Safety Standards for the fire season duration, which typically runs through October. Parcels will be removed from the program after three consecutive years of voluntary compliance (work completed by property owner prior to the deadline).

If you designate in your reply that you intend to abate the weeds yourself, you need to complete the abatement before the deadline listed on the abatement schedule and maintain fire safe conditions for the duration of the fire season. Responding that you intend to provide maintenance yourself does not release you from this responsibility to have the maintenance *completed* before your deadline and *repeated* as necessary to maintain Minimum Fire Safe Standards. The County will proceed to abate hazardous vegetation as necessary after the deadline for your jurisdiction.

Enclosed you will find the following information:

- ✓ Reply Form specific to your property. Please complete and return promptly to inform your property abatement plans.
- ✓ Notice to Destroy Weeds informing you of an upcoming public meeting. You must attend if you have any objections to the proposed removal of hazardous vegetation or debris from your property.
- ✓ Weed Abatement Program Schedule for your jurisdiction and current County price list.
- ✓ Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program brochure.

Please be aware that any abatement performed by the County must be in compliance with all applicable environmental protection regulations. If your property falls within an area designated as possible habitat for burrowing owls or any other protected species of bird or animal, the methods used to remove vegetation may be regulated by specific laws or local ordinances.

If you are no longer the property owner identified by this mailing, please notify the County immediately at (408) 282-3145. If you sell your property after the date of this letter, it is your responsibility to notify the new owner and to include the obligation to pay any abatement costs in your agreement of sale. Without taking this action, you will be responsible for all hazard abatement charges assessed to the property.

Our goal is voluntary compliance with the Minimum Fire Safety Standards, and it is our objective to ensure that all properties remain safe from fire. If you have any questions about your property or need on-site advice to help you achieve compliance with the Minimum Fire Standards, please call the Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program at (408) 282-3145.

Sincerely,



Jo Zientek, Director
Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency