

County of Santa Clara

Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency

Agriculture and Environmental Management
1553 Berger Drive, Building 1 San Jose, CA 95112
80 W. Highland Avenue, Building K San Martin, CA 95046
12425 Monterey Road, San Martin, CA 95046

Vector Control District
1580 Berger Drive, San Jose, CA 95112
Fax (408) 286-2460



<http://cepa.santaclaracounty.gov>

December 10, 2024

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ABATE WEEDS

Dear Parcel Owner:

Fire safety is essential to protect lives, preserve property, ensure the well-being of our communities, and minimize the environmental impact. Implementing fire safety measures by removing fire hazards from your parcel is a proactive way to reduce the risk of injury, death, and extensive damage caused by fires. Effective prevention and preparedness measures not only save lives but also safeguard our environment and reduce economic losses. Maintaining proper clearance requirements, known as *Minimum Fire Safety Standards*, is a shared responsibility. Since fire doesn't respect property boundaries, your jurisdictional city (or County if in unincorporated areas) contracts with the County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Program to ensure that all parcels meet these *Minimum Fire Safety Standards* obligations. You are receiving this notice and information because our team has determined that your parcel is under the jurisdiction of the Weed Abatement Program. Please read the information carefully and contact us for clarification or additional information.

The governing body representing this parcel has or will adopt a resolution declaring your parcel as one that may contain fire hazards from weeds or other debris. Following this action, your governing body will conduct a public Commencement Hearing as part of a public meeting to consider an abatement order requiring you to remove any hazardous vegetation or combustible debris before the deadline in the included *Weed Abatement Program Schedule*. The public Commencement Hearing will be held on the date and at the place stated in the enclosed *Notice to Destroy*. It will provide an opportunity for you to raise any objections or concerns about this requirement and the parcel being on the Weed Abatement Program.

If you believe your parcel includes an environmentally sensitive habitat, please check the box on the blue *Return Reply Form* and provide any additional information on the *Return Reply Form* to assist us in determining the best approach to abating your parcel from fire hazards.

If, after the public Commencement Hearing, the Weed Abatement Program is approved for your parcel, the County is authorized by your city, and the California Health and Safety Code sections §14875-14922 to inspect your parcel to confirm that the parcel has been cleared of hazards and is compliant with *Minimum Fire Safety Standards* (see enclosed 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 before your jurisdiction's deadline. All parcels designated to be part of the Weed Abatement Program will have a \$105 annual inspection fee to cover the cost of the program. This \$105 cost will be included on your property tax bill as a special assessment.

In addition to the \$105 annual inspection fee, if the parcel is found non-compliant at the time of our inspection, the parcel will be assessed a processing fee of \$597 per parcel, and the property will be scheduled for abatement by the County-designated contractor. You will not incur additional charges if the abatement work is completed before the County-designated contractor arrives. However, should the County-designated contractor perform the abatement work, the parcel will incur the cost associated with the contractor's work plus an additional County administrative fee of \$961 per parcel.

For those parcels requiring a warrant, a fee of \$1,323 per parcel will be assessed.

The County will use the lowest cost method of abatement considering the physical characteristics of your property and any other environmental or related concerns. Fees are detailed on the price list included in the *Notice to Destroy*. The total amount of fees incurred will be included as a special assessment on your property tax bill following confirmation of the charges by your city (or the County if the parcel is in an unincorporated area) at a public Assessment Hearing. This Assessment Hearing will be scheduled in late spring/early summer, with the exact date determined by your governing body. Typically, Assessment Hearing information is posted at the physical location of the governing body (typically at a city hall building or other government center and most also publish this information on their websites) prior to the meeting.

You can avoid all costs, other than the \$105 annual inspection fee, by completing the abatement work yourself according to Minimum Fire Safety Standards (see enclosed brochure) prior to the abatement deadline for your jurisdiction and maintaining the Minimum Fire Safety Standards for the duration of fire season, which typically runs March through October. Parcels will be removed from the program after three consecutive years of voluntary compliance (work completed by parcel owner prior to the deadline and confirmed by our inspection).

In preparation for this program, please complete and return the enclosed blue *Return Reply Form* so we are notified of your plans for abating your property.

If you designate on your *Return Reply Form* that you intend to abate the weeds yourself, you need to complete the abatement before the deadline listed on the attached abatement program schedule and maintain fire-safe conditions for the duration of the fire season. Responding that you intend to provide maintenance 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 abate hazardous vegetation as required after the deadline for your jurisdiction at your cost.

Enclosed you will find the following information:

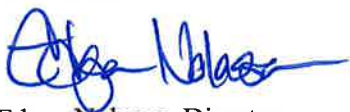
- √ ***Return Reply Form* specific to your parcel. Please complete and return it to us.**
- √ ***Notice to Destroy Weeds* informing you of an upcoming public Commencement Hearing (that you may attend if you have any objections to the proposed removal of hazardous vegetation or debris from your parcel). Your jurisdiction may offer you the ability to participate in this meeting virtually; please confirm directly with your jurisdiction.**
- √ ***Weed Abatement Program Schedule* for your city with current County abatement fees.**
- √ ***County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Brochure*.**

Please be aware that any abatement performed by the County must comply with all applicable 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 parcel owner identified by this mailing, please notify us immediately at (408) 282-3145. If you sell your parcel after the date of this letter, it is your responsibility to notify the new owner and include the obligation to pay any abatement costs in your sale agreement. Without taking this action, you will be responsible for all hazard abatement charges assessed to the parcel.

Our goals are voluntary compliance with the Minimum Fire Safety Standards and that all properties remain safe from fire. If you have any questions or need on-site advice to help you achieve compliance with the Minimum Fire Safety Standards, please call us at (408) 282-3145.

Sincerely,



Edgar Nolasco, Director
Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency