

County of Santa Clara

Department of Agriculture and Environmental Management
Weed Abatement Division



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

November 21, 2016

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ABATE WEEDS

Dear Property Owner:

To protect your property and the surrounding area from possible fire, your jurisdiction contracts with the County of Santa Clara to operate a Weed Abatement Program. The County is providing this notice and information packet to you as part of the Program. Please read the information carefully and call us for clarification or additional information.

Your jurisdiction has or will adopt a resolution declaring your property as one that may contain potential fire hazards from weeds or other debris. In addition, your jurisdiction will be conducting a public hearing to consider an abatement order requiring you to remove any hazardous vegetation or combustible debris. The public hearing will be held on the date and at the place stated in the attached notice to destroy weeds. The public hearing provides an opportunity for you to raise any objections and/or concerns to the requirement that you remove fire-hazardous vegetation and/or debris from your property prior to the deadline provided in the attached abatement schedule.

The Weed Abatement Program works in coordination with parcel owners if their property is habitat to protected species of plants and/or animals. If you believe your parcel includes an environmentally sensitive habitat, please check the box and explain this on the reply form to assist us in determining the best approach to weed abatement at your property.

If, after the public hearing, the Weed Abatement Program is approved for your property, the County is authorized by its contract with the cities and by State law to perform an inspection of your property to determine whether the property has been cleared of hazards according to 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 prior to the deadline for your jurisdiction.

As a result of the parcel being included in the Weed Abatement Monitoring program you will be responsible for an annual fee of \$60.00 to cover the cost of the compliance inspection.

If you fail to complete the abatement work prior to the County inspection of your property, you will be responsible for an inspection fee of \$485 per parcel, and your property will be scheduled for abatement by the County contractor. If you complete the abatement work before the County contractor, you will not incur further charges. Should the abatement work be completed by a County contractor, you will be assessed the contractor's charges plus a County administrative fee of \$434 per parcel.

The County will use the least costly method of abatement considering the physical characteristics of your property and environmental concerns. Fees are detailed in the attached price list. The total amount will be included as a special assessment on your property tax bill following confirmation of the charges by your

jurisdiction. Notice of the date of that meeting will be posted at a location prescribed by your jurisdiction (typically at the Civic Center) at least three days prior to the meeting.

You can avoid all costs, other than the annual 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 through October. Parcels will be removed from the program after three (3) consecutive years of voluntary compliance (work completed prior to the deadline).

In preparation for this program, please complete and return the enclosed Reply Form so that we are aware of your intentions regarding the maintenance of your property.

If you designate in your reply that you intend to abate the weeds yourself, you are expected 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. County contractors will proceed to abate hazardous vegetation as necessary after the deadline for your jurisdiction.

Enclosed you will find the following information:

- ✓ **A Reply Form specific to your property. Please complete and return promptly.**
- ✓ **A Notice to Destroy Weeds informing you of an upcoming public meeting that you must attend if you have any objections to the proposed removal of hazardous vegetation or debris from your property.**
- ✓ **A Weed Abatement Program Schedule for your city and a current County price list.**
- ✓ **A Brochure about the Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program.**

Please be aware that any abatement performed by the County contractor 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 owner of the property identified by this mailing, please notify the County immediately. 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,



Amy Brown, Director
Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency

2017 Return Reply Form

WYATT DOUGLAS AND HIND

IMPORTANT: Please complete this form and mail back to the Weed Abatement Program no later than **February 15, 2017**. Thank you.

TRA: 15-033

WYATT DOUGLAS AND HIND
128 LOS TRANCOS CIR
PORTOLA VALLEY CA 94028



Please check the box that
applies for each parcel
(see explanations below):

Parcel Number	Site Address	A	B	C
503-13-117	22551 MT EDEN SARATOGA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- A** I am no longer the owner of this property, and the new owner information is listed below. Please return Reply Form immediately.
- B** I intend to maintain this parcel in a manner consistent with the Minimum Fire Safety Standards from **April 15, 2017 through the end of the fire season (typically runs through October)**. All parcels on the abatement list remain subject to inspection to ascertain compliance. Non-compliance by the deadline will result in an Inspection fee or the abatement of weeds by the County contractor and the resulting charges added to the property tax.
- C** I request that the County Contractor perform weed abatement work on this parcel. Charges for this work will be added to my property tax bill. Work may commence on or about March 12th, 2017.

Please provide any additional information such as new owners, presence of piping, irrigation, crops or other improvement. If your property is fenced/locked, please provide instructions on how to enter the property. If you are no longer the owner of the property identified by this mailing, please notify the County immediately. If you sell your property after December 1st, 2016, 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 liable for all hazard abatement charges assessed to the property. Thank you

☐ Please check if you feel this parcel is environmentally sensitive

Signature

Name (please print)

Date

()
Day time phone

Fold Here First

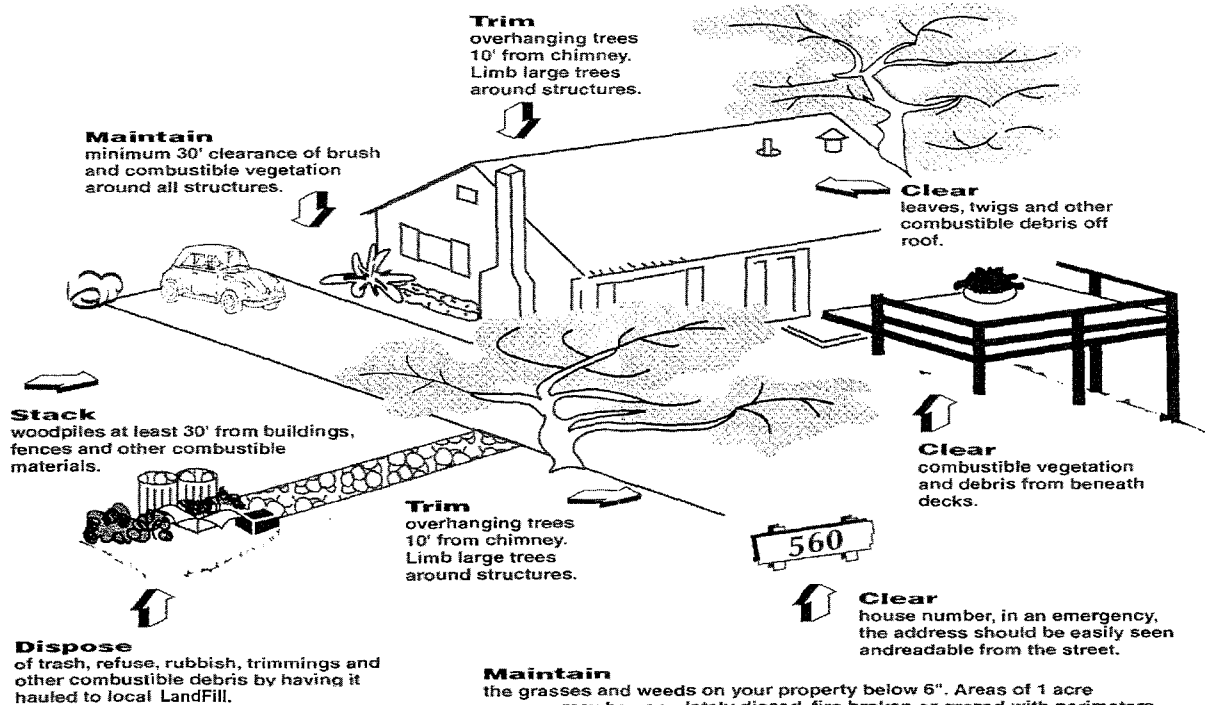
Return Address

Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program
Department of Agricultural and Environmental
Management
1553 Berger Drive, Bldg. #1
San Jose, California, 95112

Fold Here Second
Use Staples To Secure

MINIMUM FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS

1. Vegetation must not exceed 6 inches in height any time after the compliance deadline.
2. Maintain grasses and weeds below 6 inches for 10 feet horizontally on both sides of all roadways, including driveways and access routes. Roads and Driveways must maintain a clearance of 10' W by 13'6" H for all vegetation
3. Clear flammable vegetation a minimum of 30 feet around any structure, occupied or not. Ornamental vegetation should be kept clear of dead material. Some conditions, such as slopes, may require up to a 100-foot clearance.
4. Parcels one acre or less shall be completely abated. Parcels over one acre up to five acres require 30-foot clearance around structures and perimeter property lines. Additional 30-foot cross fuel breaks may also be required.
5. Parcels larger than five acres require 30-foot clearance around structures and perimeter property lines in addition to 30-foot cross fuel breaks as needed to separate the remaining vegetation into sections no larger than five acres.
6. Keep property clear of accumulation of combustible debris, such as trash, wood, and dead vegetation. Stacked firewood and neatly piled yard waste is not considered to be combustible debris.
7. Keep vegetation cleared from under the eaves of houses.
8. Trim tree branches to at least 10 feet away from chimney.
9. Clear leaves, pine needles and debris from roof and gutters.



Fire Resistant Landscaping

The following is a partial list of fire resistant plants that you may choose to use around your home to reduce the risk of fire. Contact your local nursery for selections appropriate to your area. All grasses, including those purportedly fire resistant, must be maintained below 6" in height.

Trees:

African Sumac
California Pepper

Shrubs:

Bearberry
Carmel Creeper
Carolina Cherry
Catalina Cherry

Escallonia

Hopseed Bush
Lemonade Berry

Groundcover:

Aaron's Beard
Australian Daisy
Candytuft
Sterile Capeweed

Freeway Daisy

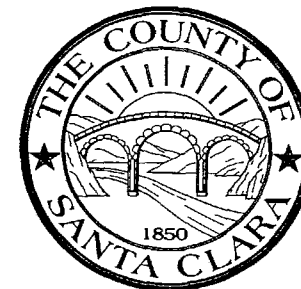
Rock rose (except Gum Variety)

Fire Safety Through Vegetation Management

Santa Clara County

Consumer and Environmental
Protection Agency

Weed Abatement Program



1553 Berger Drive #1

San Jose, Ca 95112

Phone (408) 282-3145

Fax: (408) 286-2460

SCC.WeedAbatement@cep.sccgov.org

The Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program

The Santa Clara County Department of Agriculture and Environmental Management and your city are working together to protect your community from fire. We need your help. Please read and follow the directions provided in this brochure regarding fire prevention on your property. The purpose of the Weed Abatement Program is to prevent fire hazards posed by vegetative growth and the accumulation of combustible materials.

The Weed Abatement program is entirely funded from fees charged to residents. Fees will be assessed for any property in the program. This is to cover the cost of the compliance inspection for the property. Properties that fail the compliance inspection will be charged a failed inspection fee, even if the resident completes the weed abatement. If the property requires abatement by the County contractor, the property owner will be responsible for the actual cost of abatement plus an administrative fee. Properties that meet and maintain the minimum fire safety standards will not be charged other than the annual fee.

Program staff annually inspect parcels at the beginning of the fire season, which is typically in March or April depending on your jurisdiction. If the parcel is not in compliance at the time of inspection, the property owner will be charged a failed inspection fee, and the owner will be sent a courtesy notice as a reminder to abate the weeds. If the weeds are not abated by the property owner, the work will be completed by the County contractor. The property owner will pay the contractor's fees plus a County administrative fee. All fees will be included in your property tax bill.

Our Goal Is Voluntary Compliance

Property Owner's Responsibilities

- Do not allow a fire hazard to exist on your property. The Minimum Fire Safety Standards (MFSS) in this brochure give you guidelines to follow in order to maintain your property and protect against a fire hazard. **Please contact our office if you need guidance or have any questions regarding the requirements!**
- Make arrangements to have your property maintained throughout the year. Contractors can be found in the yellow pages. You may choose to have the County contractor maintain your property. A current price list is included in your packet.
- Please complete and return the Reply Form provided in your mailing packet by the date on the form. Indicate your preference regarding performance of weed abatement services.

Program Staff Responsibilities

- Weed Abatement Inspectors will perform periodic inspections on all parcels included in the Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program. Properties that fail the compliance inspection will be charged a failed inspection fee, even if the resident completes the weed abatement.

- Inspectors will order the County contractor to perform all necessary abatement work on any parcel where the MFSS are not met. An attempt will be made to give the owner a courtesy notice prior to releasing the work order.
- The County contractor uses several methods of abatement including discing and handwork. The property owner is free to select whatever method they choose, provided the MFSS of all federal, state and local laws are met.
- The Weed Abatement Program will place inspection costs and the charges for County contractor services plus a County administrative fee on the property owner's tax bill during the next fiscal year.

Burrowing Owls

These small owls nest in abandoned ground squirrel burrows. Discing collapses the burrows and kills the young. These owls are listed as a state Species of Special Concern and are protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If you suspect burrowing owls on your property you **must** use another form of weed abatement such as mowing or weed-eating. If you request the County perform abatement services, please notify program staff or your City if burrowing owls are known to exist on your property.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why have I received an Abatement Notice?

A. Typically, a property is placed on the program if a Weed Abatement Inspector identified a potential fire hazard on the property. Fire Departments and other agencies also submit complaints to the Weed Abatement Program.

Q. What is required of me now that I am in the Program?

A. All property owners are required to maintain their property free of fire hazards throughout the year.

Q. The grasses planted on my property are fire resistant. Are they exempt from the Weed Abatement program?

A. No. Even grasses that possess some fire resistant qualities are not fire proof, and they can add fuel to any site that is subject to a fire. Additionally, fire resistant grasses are rarely found in a pure, homogenous stand but rather are usually found to occur mixed with other common introduced annual grasses that are highly flammable and hazardous in a fire event. Finally, many grasses occur in Santa Clara County and species identification is difficult in the field, especially after the spring when the reproductive portions required for identification have dried and dispersed. Weed Abatement Inspectors can only focus on the presence of grasses and weeds on your property and the Minimum Fire Safety Standards, and not on grass species identification. Therefore, all grasses are required to be below 6 inches in height.

Q. What is the SC County Weed Abatement Program?

A. This is a monitoring program and our primary objective is voluntary compliance. See the first two paragraphs of this brochure for further specifics.

More FAQ:

Q. How long will I be on the Program?

A. Your property will remain on the Program for three years. If no hazards are found during that time, your property may be removed from the program.

Q. How much will this cost me?

A. There will be an annual fee to cover the cost of the compliance inspection. If the parcel does not meet the MFSS when it is first inspected in the spring, or if work is required by the County contractor, you will be charged additional fees. Our goal is to ensure that the MFSS are met at the lowest possible cost to the property owner.

Q. How will I be billed?

A. Any charges for the inspection and any abatement work performed will appear as a special assessment on your next property tax bill.

Q. Why have you performed work on my property while the vegetation is still green?

A. Grass, weeds or piles of combustible debris have been declared a public nuisance by your jurisdiction. Abating fire hazards in the spring minimizes the volume of combustible material before the hazards increase and dries out completely during the peak fire season.

Q. Will you notify me prior to beginning abatement work?

A. Property owners are responsible for preventing fire hazards on their property. If the MFSS have been met, but further work is necessary, you will receive notice prior to the County contractor performing the work. If the MFSS have **not** been met, an attempt will be made to give the owner a courtesy notice prior to initial abatement.

Q. Where can I find someone to provide abatement services?

A. Weed Abatement contractors can be found in the Yellow Pages under "Weed Control Services" or "Discing Services". You may have the County contractor perform the necessary work; see your mailing packet for a current price list as administrative costs are charged.

Q. How can I get additional information or assistance regarding the specific requirements for my property?

A. Weed Abatement Inspectors are available to assist you and answer your questions. Please call our Customer Service line at (408) 282-3145 to schedule a consultation with program staff or to obtain additional information.

Q. I have Grazing Animals do I need to perform abatement?

A. Grazing animals do not absolve you of your responsibilities to provide a fire safe condition on your property. You will need to check with our office to determine if grazing is adequate or if additional work is required.