

# FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



## COUNTY OF SAN MATEO *FIRE DEPARTMENT*

FIRE CHIEF  
IAN LARKIN

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WEBSITE: [www.cfsfire.org](http://www.cfsfire.org)

320 Paul Scannell Drive, San Mateo, California 94402 (650) 573-3846 \* Fax (650) 573-3850

Date: July 1, 2019

## **WEED REMOVAL REQUIREMENTS FOR UNDEVELOPED PROPERTIES IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF SAN MATEO COUNTY**

### **THIS DOCUMENT SUPERCEDES: 'ABATEMENT OF FIRE HAZARD' (June 24, 2019)**

The San Mateo County Ordinance Code (Chapter 1.12) declares that any accumulation of debris, garbage, refuse, weeds, or overgrowth which constitutes a fire hazard is a public nuisance that should be abated by the owner or occupant of the property. In addition, San Mateo County Ordinance Number 04767 requires that property be maintained free from weeds in excess of 18 inches. Reducing the quantity of flammable vegetation and combustible materials reduces the intensity of an uncontrolled fire. Lowered fire intensity allows fire crews closer access, quicker suppression, and overall safer fire operations. Removing accumulated flammable material helps reduce the likelihood of a major conflagration.

#### **[San Mateo County Ordinance No. 04767](#)**

**San Mateo County Building Regulations, Article 11 (Property Maintenance Code), Section 9225 §302.4 Weeds.** [Amended] Premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds in excess of 18 inches. Noxious weeds shall be prohibited. Weeds shall be defined as a herbaceous plant not valued for use or beauty, growing wild, and regarded as hindering the growth of superior vegetation, and does not include trees or shrubs provided; however, this term shall not include cultivated flowers and gardens.

Upon failure of the owner or agent having charge of a property to cut and destroy weeds after service of a notice of violation, they shall be subject to prosecution in accordance with Section 9003 of these Regulations and as prescribed by the Authority Having Jurisdiction. Upon failure to comply with the notice of violation, any duly authorized employee of the jurisdiction or contractor hired by the jurisdiction shall be authorized to enter upon the property in violation and cut and destroy the weeds growing thereon, and the costs of such removal shall be paid by the owner or agent responsible for the property.

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### Guidance for Weed Removal:

1. If you know or suspect that your property contains sensitive habitats or protected areas including those containing wetland or riparian (streamside) vegetation, you must notify County Fire for further instructions. For information concerning what constitutes sensitive habitats and protected areas, please contact the Planning and Building Department of San Mateo County at (650) 363-1825.
2. No vegetation removal shall be performed within any wetland area or within a 100-foot buffer zone surrounding a wetland or within any area with riparian vegetation, including a 50-foot buffer zone surrounding the riparian vegetation.
3. Active wildlife nesting sites should not be disturbed.
4. Open burning is prohibited. Exceptions may be allowed by obtaining a special permit from County Fire and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.
5. Disking for the purpose of removing flammable vegetation is not allowed within the Coastal Zone.

### Additional References:

[2016 California Fire Code Section 304 Combustible Waste Material](#)

[San Mateo County Ordinance Code, Chapter 1.12, Abatement of Nuisance](#)

[California Health and Safety Code 14875 et seq.](#)