

FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO *FIRE DEPARTMENT*

FIRE CHIEF
IAN LARKIN

ASSISTANT CHIEF
JONATHAN COX

FIRE MARSHAL
GARY SILVA

DEPUTY FIRE MARSHALS
RANDY AMORES
PATRICK GRIFFIN

WEBSITE: www.cfsfire.org

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

Owner: _____ Date: July 1, 2019

Address: _____

Parcel # in Violation (APN): _____

UPDATED WEED REMOVAL INFORMATION

THIS LETTER SUPERCEDES:

'NOTICE TO ABATE FLAMMABLE VEGETATION AND RUBBISH' (May 31, 2019)

Dear Property Owner:

The recent 'Notice to Abate Flammable Vegetation and Rubbish' mailer, dated May 31, 2019, you received from my office has generated a significant number of questions and concerns. For clarification, the document was intended to provide you (owner of an undeveloped parcel) with information and awareness about local weed removal requirements, it was **not** a formal legal notice of nuisance or violation.

Additionally, we have fielded several questions about specific information in the 'Abatement of Fire Hazard' document. We have taken this opportunity to update the document into a more straightforward and understandable format, now called 'Weed Removal Requirements for Undeveloped Properties in Unincorporated Areas of San Mateo County', please find it attached.

With the recent increase in large and damaging fires in California it is incumbent upon all of us to take actions to reduce the risk locally. Thank you for taking this issue seriously and helping to do your part to keep the community fire safe. For free nonregulatory assistance to reduce the fuel load on your property, including the chipper program and other services, contact Casey Stewman at the Resource Conservation District at casey@sanmateoRCD.org or (650) 712.7765 x115. Additional information about reducing fire risk is available through the San Mateo County Fire Safe Council at <http://firesafesanmarateo.org/>.

If you have any questions, please contact us at the San Mateo County Fire Marshal's Office at: (650) 573-3846 or smcfdfiremarshal@fire.ca.gov

Thank you,

Gary Silva
Fire Marshal
San Mateo County Fire Department

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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.*](#)