Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District

Community Risk Reduction Division **www.metrofire.ca.gov**

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SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN FIRE DISTRICT					
FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD					
STANDARD TITLE:	**Weed Abatement Requirements and Inspections**				
STANDARD NUMBER:	11	EFFECTIVE DATE:	04/02/09	REVISION DATE:	01/01/26

PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard is to prevent fire hazards created by vegetative growth and the accumulation of combustible debris through voluntary compliance.

SCOPE

This standard outlines the weed abatement requirements and inspection procedures within the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (Metro Fire) jurisdiction, in an effort to reduce the risk of vegetation fuels which endanger public safety by creating a fire hazard.

Code References: California Health & Safety Code (H&S) Section 14875 & 14876; California Code of Regulation (CCR) Title 19 Section 3.07 (b); California Fire Code (CFC) Section 304.1, 304.1.2, 304.1.3; California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 4291; Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District Ordinance 2025-02; Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District Fee Ordinance No. 2023-02.

DEFINITIONS

Abatement: The removal of combustible growth and material from property, including the investigation, inspection, preparation, service and/or publication or administrative notices and other related clerical costs, actual removal of weeds and/or rubbish whether performed by the Fire District or a contractor.

Combustible Growth: Annual grasses, weeds, vines, ferns or other vegetation that will support fire and its growth, intensity and spread that is not decorative or cultivated.

Cost of Abatement: Any and all costs incurred by the Fire District to enforce the Weed Abatement Standard, but not limited to, investigation, inspection, preparation, service and/or publication or administrative notices and other related clerical costs, actual removal of weeds whether performed by Fire District or contractor.

Cutting: The use of rotating blades to reduce the height of combustible growth.

Discing: The turning of soil and combustible growth.

Dry Season: The time of year during which, based on seasonal weather pattern and precipitation averages. The dry season is typically May – November, and is also characterized by lower humidity, lower fuel moisture, and higher daily temperatures, resulting in increased fire danger.

Firebreak: An area without combustible material that will support or communicate fire. Firebreaks are constructed by thorough disking or scraping the soil with a tractor of other similar means.

Imminent Hazard: The conditions constituting a fire hazard of such a nature that fire, life and safety of the public are substantially and imminently endangered thereby.

The following violations substantiate the declaration of an imminent fire hazard:

- Vegetation approximately 4 feet high adjacent to a structure.
- Homes adjacent to the property have wood shake shingle roofs.
- Due to mid-summer and dry weather conditions, the risk for fire is substantially above average in the Sacramento region.

Regrowth: Any combustible growth which returns after abatement.

Scraping: The use of a flat blade to reduce the height of combustible growth to bare earth.

Vegetation: Weeds, grass, vines or other growth that is capable of being ignited and endangering property, shall be cut down and removed by the owner or occupant of the premises.

Weeds: All vegetation growing upon streets or private property in this jurisdiction and includes any of the following:

- Vegetation that bears seeds of a downy or wingy nature
- Sagebrush, chaparral, and any other brush or weeds which attain such hard growth as to become, when dry, a fire menace to adjacent improved property.
- Vegetation that is otherwise noxious or dangerous.
- Poison oak and poison ivy when the conditions of growth are such as to constitute a menace to the public health.
- Dry grass, stubble, brush, litter, or other flammable material which endangers the public safety by creating a fire hazard.

PROCEDURE

All dry grass, brush, vines or other dry vegetation shall be cleared and maintained for an area of not less than thirty feet (30) from all structures, combustible fences, vehicles and combustible storage. Additional clearances may be required when topographical or geographical conditions warrant said action. The methods of abatement listed in this standard are to be used.

METHODS OF ABATEMENT

1. **Discing:** The discs shall be set at an angle sufficient to cut the sod loose and adequately bury the dead growth of weeds, grass, or noxious vegetation existing at the time. It shall be done each time the dead growth exceeds six (6) inches in height. Discing may include roto-tilling or cultivating.

2. **Mowing:** Dead weeds shall not exceed two (2) inches in height at the completion of the mowing. It shall be done each time the dead growth exceeds six (6) inches in height. Combustible material produced by mowing shall be removed from the property.

3. **Scraping:** The blade shall be set at an angle sufficient to cut the growth of weeds, grass or other vegetation down to bare ground.

PARCELS ONE ACRE OR LESS

Total weed abatement of the parcel is required.

PARCELS GREATER THAN ONE ACRE

1. A firebreak thirty (30) feet in width shall be maintained around the perimeter of the property.

2. Intersecting firebreaks sixty (60) feet in width shall divide the parcel into four approximately equal sections.

PROPERTY ZONED FOR AGRICULTURAL USE

1. A firebreak thirty (30) feet in width shall be maintained on agricultural land that abuts structures, wooden fences, roads, etc.

2. Cut vegetation or tree and shrub cutting piles that result from the clearing operation shall be removed from the property.

3. All stubble or residual growth must be abated as soon after harvest as possible.

4. The firebreak shall be maintained even if a valuable crop is planted on the parcel.

5. The firebreak shall be provided along livestock grazing pastures unless determined abatement will endanger livestock food supply or present a significant animal injury potential.

6. Firebreaks are not required where extreme environmentally sensitive conditions exist, including protected wetlands.

NOTIFICATION, INSPECTION TIMELINES, AND FEES

1. Metro Fire does not process weed complaints or conduct inspections within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) or the cities of Citrus Heights or Rancho Cordova. To file a complaint within these areas, contact the corresponding number below.
    - Cal Fire (SRA) - (916) 902-5136
    - Citrus Heights - (916) 725-2845
    - Rancho Cordova - (916) 851-8770

2. New weed complaints will only be processed during the declared dry season; typically May to November.

3. When a new complaint is received, Metro Fire will determine if the property and hazard meet the intent of the weed abatement program.

4. Overgrown lawns, dead or dying trees, leaf piles or similar blight or nuisance complaints will not be processed.

5. For concerns regarding abandoned properties, blights or nuisances, contact Sacramento County 3-1-1.

6. Once a property is determined to meet the weed abatement program parameters, a notice is mailed to the property owner informing them a hazard may exist.

7. Thirty (30) days after the first notice is mailed, the first inspection is completed. If the property is noncompliant at the first inspection, a second notice is mailed.

8. Fifteen (15) days after the second notice is mailed, a second inspection is completed. If the property is noncompliant at the second inspection, a Notice to Abate is posted on the property and a Notice to Abate letter is mailed to the property owner.

9. Seven (7) days after the Notice to Abate letter is mailed, a final inspection is completed. If the property is noncompliant at the final inspection, Metro Fire will initiate coordinating a weed abatement contractor to complete property abatement at the owners' expense.

FEES

1. Failure to comply will result in a charge of $118 administrative fee and $159 inspection fee, plus the total charge of remediation (abatement).

2. If non-compliant at the first inspection, and if not corrected, a subsequent fee will be charged for each follow up inspection, and the total cost of remediation (abatement) is billed at the end of compliance.

3. Failure to pay for such services may result in a lien being placed on the property and subject to collection with property taxes as specified under Section 25845 of the Government Code.

Quick Reference for non-compliant properties:		
Initial Inspection	No fee is charged	First Notice
First Inspection	Fee is charged	Second Notice
Second Inspection-Notice to abate Posted	Fee is charged	Final notice
Final Inspection	Fee is charged	
Contractor contacted to abate property	Fee is charged - total cost of abatement	

INSPECTION PROCEDURES

1. The reported hazard must be clearly visible from the street, public way.

2. Inspections of backyards are not permitted.

3. Climbing fences is not permitted.

4. An inspection of a property from a neighboring property or building is not permitted.

5. A picture of each non-compliant property shall be taken.

IMMINENT HAZARD

Metro Fire will notify the County of Sacramento when an imminent hazard exists on a parcel in the unincorporated areas of Sacramento County.