



# Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Office of the Fire Marshal

## Exterior Hazard Control Standards For Vegetation Management within the Fire District

### Please read carefully

The following are requirements for exterior hazard control for vegetation management in the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. The Fire District may require additional abatement on properties due to special problems with terrain, land use, growth, location, or fire history in the area.

**Special problems associated with the property may permit modifications to the requirements, but it is the responsibility of the property owner, or person with control or possessory interest of the parcel to contact the Fire Marshal's Office to determine any modifications prior to the compliance date.**

**Non-compliance may result in having the abatement work contacted out by the Fire District and the Property Owner liable for all costs including administration fees.**

### General Requirements

These requirements apply throughout the fire season TO ALL properties within the Fire District.

- Abatement of exterior fire hazards shall be maintained on a year round basis. Parcels may require additional abatement during the fire season due to re-growth of weeds and other vegetation.
- Remove vegetation 3 feet from edge of roadway and 15 feet in vertical height. All combustible weeds, brush, debris or growth, which presents a fire hazard, shall be removed from the property and from public ways.
- The maximum height of grasses shall be 3 inches. Mowing is permitted for specific locations. Spraying is permitted if it shall leave grasses, either standing or laying down, with a maximum height of 3 inches.
- Abatement by burning within this jurisdiction is unlawful unless by permit, in accordance with the provisions of the California Fire Code, and all other applicable permits are obtained from appropriate governing jurisdictions. Burn permits are only issued to working agricultural properties.

### Trees

- Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead or dying wood.
- Trees must be limbed up to provide 6 feet of vertical clearance from the ground. Maintain a vertical clearance of not less than 6 feet between the ground and bottom branches of the tree.
- The Fire District shall require the removal of dead trees that are deemed a fire hazard.
- This requirement may not apply to the maintenance of trees; ornamental shrubbery or plants that are used as ground cover provided they do not provide a ready fuel supply to augment the spread or intensity of a fire.

### Structures

- Buildings shall be clear of 15 feet around the structure of all combustible materials of value. Materials shall be neatly stacked and maintained from buildup of dead vegetation, including leaves and grasses.
- Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetation growth.
- Remove any portion of a tree that extends within 10 feet of the outlet of a chimney or stovepipe.
- Single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or similar plants that are used as ground cover may be exempt if they do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from the native growth to any dwelling or structure.
- Provide and maintain at all times a screen over the outlet of every chimney or stove pipe that is attached to any fireplace, stove, or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel. The screen shall be constructed and installed in accordance with the California Building Code.

## **Additional Vegetation Clearance Requirements for all Parcels that are within the Very High Severity Zone as declared by the Fire District.**

- Maintain a minimum of 30 feet fire break on each side, around and adjacent to the dwelling or structure by removing and clearing away combustible brush, grass, leaves and other dead or dying vegetation to the property line, whichever is nearer.
- Occupied dwellings or structures may be required to have a clearance of up to 100 feet or to the property line, whichever is closer, if the Fire District finds extra hazardous conditions exist and a clearance of 30 feet is not sufficient to provide reasonable mitigation for fire safety. In general the greater the degree of slope, the greater distance of clearance around the structure is required.
- Single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or similar plants that are used as ground cover may be exempt if they do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from the native growth to any dwelling or structure.
- Grass and other vegetation located more than 30 feet from the dwelling or structure and less than 18 inches in height above the ground may be maintained where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.

## **Additional Requirements by Parcel Size – Parcels of land in rural, residential, business or industrial areas shall conform to the following requirements:**

### **Parcels 3 acres or less in size:**

- Abatement of exterior fire hazards shall be maintained on a year round basis. Parcels may require additional abatement during the fire season due to re-growth of weeds and other vegetation.
- Remove vegetation 3 feet from edge of roadway and 15 feet in vertical height. All combustible weeds, brush, debris or growth, which presents a fire hazard, shall be removed from the property and from public ways.
- Complete vegetation abatement of brush, weeds and grasses required. This may include a combination of disking, mowing, or spraying.
- Individual property owners with large landlocked rear lots may contact the Office of the Fire Marshal regarding appropriate abatement requirements prior to compliance date.
- Maintain all weeds and other vegetation at a height of no more than 3 inches.
- This requirement may not apply to the maintenance of trees; ornamental shrubbery or plants that are used as ground cover provided they do not provide a ready fuel supply to augment the spread or intensity of a fire.
- Trees must be limbed up to provide 6 feet of vertical clearance from the ground.
- Single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, or similar plants that are used as ground cover may be exempt if they do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from the native growth to any dwelling or structure.

### **Parcels Greater than 3 Acres in Size:**

- Shall be provided with 30-foot firebreaks and crossbreaks. Crossbreaks should divide the parcel into approximately 5-acre sections (firebreaks and crossbreaks are a continuous strip of disced or dozed ground, following as closely as possible to the property line and along on side of all fence lines, ditches, and on top of all ridges). When terrain is too steep or rugged for a tractor, a hand-mowed firebreak may be required.
- Residential structures shall have a defensible space around the entire perimeter of the structure abated a minimum distance 100 feet or to property line whichever is nearer.
- Firebreaks along roadways are required as part of the property line. Road right of ways shall be cleared for a minimum of 3 feet from the edge of black top.
- Active pastureland shall be provided with 15-foot wide firebreaks and crossbreaks if a sufficient number of animals are present to steadily reduce height of grass during the summer months to 3 inches or less by the end of August. If not active, a 30-foot width is required.
- Active cropland shall be provided with 15-foot firebreaks or crossbreaks if the crop is to be harvested by mid-June. If later harvest, a 30 foot width is required.
- Orchards are to be maintained by complete abatement, including grass under the tree branches. This may require pruning of lower branches to allow equipment access.