



## East Contra Costa Fire Protection District

### Weed Abatement Standards

#### **Minimum Weed Abatement Standards.**

**Prohibition.** No person who has any ownership or possessory interest in or control of parcel of land shall allow to exist thereon any hazardous rubbish, weeds, trees, or other vegetation that constitutes a fire hazard. Destruction by burning within this jurisdiction is unlawful unless the written permission of the Fire Code Official is first obtained, and all other applicable permits are obtained from appropriate governing agencies or jurisdictions.

**Specific Requirements.** The Fire Code Official is authorized to enforce the minimum abatement standards for land in residential, rural and/or rural residential area, business, industrial areas, or land which is unused or vacant as outlined in this Section. The Fire Code Official is authorized to enforce additional or more stringent abatement on certain properties due to site-specific issues with terrain, regrowth, location, land use, or fire related history. The Fire Code Official is authorized to enter upon private property to do so, to the extent allowed by law.

**Parcels Five Acres or Less in Size.** All weeds must be maintained at a height of no more than 3 inches. Weeds and grasses must be mowed, with material mulched and scattered or raked and bagged, and removed from the parcel, or disked (see Section 321.4.2.10). All combustible rubbish or debris, including but not limited to: cardboard boxes, pallets, trash, wood rounds/chunks, rubble, etc., must be removed from the parcel. Parcels may require additional abatement during the season due to the regrowth of weeds and other flammable vegetation.

**Parcels Greater than Five Acres in Size.** All parcels greater than five acres in size must have 30-foot fuelbreaks and 15-foot crossbreaks (see Sections 321.4.2.8 and 321.4.2.9). Crossbreaks should divide the parcel into approximately 5-acre sections. Fence lines may require hand mowing/weed eating to ensure completion of fuelbreak. When terrain is too steep or rugged for a tractor, a hand mowed fuelbreak may be required. All cut material should be mulched and scattered or raked, bagged and removed from parcel.

**Fuelbreaks Along Roadways.** Fuelbreaks along roadways are required as part of the property line. Road right-of-ways shall be cleared to a minimum of 10 feet horizontally from the edge of driving surface and 13 feet 6 inches vertically.

**Active Pastureland.** Active pastureland shall be provided with 15-foot wide fuelbreaks and crossbreaks if a sufficient number of animals are present to steadily reduce height of grasses during the summer months to 3 inches or less by the end of August, irrespective of parcel size. If this requirement cannot be met, 30-foot fuelbreaks and crossbreaks shall be required.

**Active Cropland.** Active cropland shall be provided with 15-foot fuelbreaks or crossbreaks if the crop is to be harvested by mid-June. If there is to be a later harvest, 30-foot fuelbreaks shall be required.

**Orchards.** Orchards are to be maintained by complete abatement, including grasses under tree branches (see Section 321.4.2.7). This may require pruning of lower branches to allow equipment access.

**Tree Litter.** Tree litter (eucalyptus leaves and bark, coniferous needles, leaves, fallen branches, etc.) shall be removed from the base of trees, tree stems, and limbs within 10 feet of the ground and maintained throughout the fire season.

**321.3.2.8. 30-Foot Fuelbreaks.** 30-foot fuelbreaks, where required, shall be provided around all structures, combustible storage, trees, shrubs and brush, along ridgelines, fence lines, ditches, and along the sides of, but not in, creeks. Fuelbreaks and crossbreaks are a continuous strip of disked or dozed ground following as closely as possible to the property line, and along one side of all fence lines, ditches, and on top of all ridgelines. Remove from the property all debris, rubble, junk, piles of dirt, etc., which would obstruct or impede vehicles and/or equipment used for abatement work or fire suppression operations.

**Mowed Fuelbreaks.** Mowed fuelbreaks shall be 60 feet wide and mowed crossbreaks 30 feet wide due to ability of the remaining surface material to support a fire growth.

**Disking Quality.** All disking work, including fuelbreaks, shall be completed so that all weeds, grasses, crops and other vegetation or organic material, which could be expected to burn, shall be completely turned under to the point that there is not sufficient exposed fuel to maintain or allow the spread of fire.

**Abatement Procedures.** The Fire Code Official may order the abatement of the weeds and rubbish described in Sections 304.1.2 and 321, and recover related costs, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Health and Safety Code sections 14875- 14922, as may be amended from time to time.

**Alternate Mitigation.** In lieu of ordering abatement as provided in Section 321.5, the Fire Code Official of this jurisdiction may order the preparation of firebreaks/fuelbreaks around parcels of property where combustible weeds, crops, or brush are present. In determining the proper width for firebreaks/fuelbreaks, the Fire Code Official will consider the height of the growth, weather condition, topography, and the accessibility to the property for fire protection equipment. The procedure set forth in Section 321.5 for the abatement of weeds and rubbish shall apply to the preparation of firebreaks/fuelbreaks.

**Subsurface Fires.** It is the duty of each person, firm, corporation, or association not to permit a peat fire in or a fire involving combustible vegetable matters under the surface of the natural ground to remain upon the property. It is hereby declared that it is the duty of any person as herein defined to take all necessary precautions to extinguish any subsurface fire involving peat or vegetable material at the owner's own cost and expense.

**Liability in Relation to Fires.** The liability of all persons in relation to fires is governed by Health and Safety Codes sections 13000-13011, as may be amended from time to time.