

LAKE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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Vegetation Abatement

Every year Lake County Fire Protection District residents are tasked with removing vegetation from their property. Adequate clearance of vegetation and debris acts as a barrier to slow or halt the progress of fire that would otherwise engulf your property. It also helps ensure the safety of firefighters defending your home. Defensible space is the first line of defense for your home against wildfire. To assist our citizens, we have compiled the following information regarding vegetation abatement, minimum standards, burn season time frames and requirements, and fire district authority.

California Fire Code (CFC) Authority:

CFC 304.1.2 for vegetation states that weeds, grass, vines, or other growth that is capable of igniting and endangering property shall be cut down and removed by the owner or occupant of the premises. Vegetation clearance requirements in wildland-urban interface areas shall be in accordance with CFC Chapter 49. Below are some ways to achieve this.

- **Zone 0 (within 5 ft): The first five feet from your home is the most important.**

Keeping the area closest to buildings, structures, and decks clear will prevent embers from igniting materials that can spread the fire to your home.

Why? The majority of homes lost to wildfire are ignited by flying embers. Embers can travel miles ahead of the active front of wildfires.

What to do:

1. Use hardscapes like gravel, pavers, or concrete. No combustible bark or mulch.
 2. Remove all dead and dying plants, weeds, and debris (leaves, needles, etc.) from your roof, gutter, deck, porch, stairways, and under any areas of your home.
 3. Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet.
 4. Limit combustible items (like outdoor furniture and planters) on top of decks.
 5. Relocate firewood and lumber
 6. Replace combustible fencing, gates, and arbors attached to the home with noncombustible alternatives.
 7. Consider relocating garbage and recycling containers outside this zone.
 8. Consider relocating boats, RVs, vehicles, and other combustible items outside this zone.
- **Zone 1 (within 30 ft): Regularly clear dead or dry vegetation and create space between trees.** During times of drought when watering is limited, pay special attention to clearing dead or dying material.

Why? Removing dead plants and creating space between trees and shrubs creates a buffer for your property and reduces potential fuel for fire.

What to do:

1. Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds.
 2. Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles.
 3. Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- **Zone 2 (within 100 ft) Create a separation between trees, shrubs, and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.** Continue reducing potential fuel within 100 feet of the property line.

Why? 100 feet of defensible space is required by law per the Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291.

What to do:

1. Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of four inches.
2. Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees. (See attached diagram)
3. Create vertical space between grass, shrubs, and trees. (See attached diagram)
4. Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of three inches.
5. Keep 10 feet of clearance around exposed wood piles. The area of clearance must be cleared down to bare mineral soil in all directions.
6. Clear areas around outbuildings and propane tanks. Keep 10 feet of clearance down to bare mineral soil and no flammable vegetation for an additional 10 feet around their exterior of the outbuildings and propane tanks.

Tips for clearing in dry conditions:

1. Mow before 10 a.m. and never on a hot or windy day.
2. String trimmers (weed eaters) are safer than lawnmowers for clearing vegetation.
3. When watering less during times of drought, be sure to remove all dead or dying vegetation.

Vacant Lots:

Vacant lots or unimproved parcels, must be kept in compliance with the County's Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance No. 3082 Section 2.

Burn ban and burn season:

The statewide burn ban takes effect May 1st of each year. Lake County Fire Protection District begins doing vegetation inspections throughout the district at that time. If parcels are found to be out of compliance, notices are sent to property owners with information regarding what is out of compliance and how to remedy it.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information above, please contact our office at 707-994-2170.

MINIMUM VERTICAL CLEARANCE



MINIMUM HORIZONTAL CLEARANCE

SHRUBS

TREES

