

IMPORTANT
Annual Inspection Notice
General Compliance Standards from the
Vegetation Management Program

The height of fire season is just around the corner. Property owners have a YEAR-ROUND responsibility and obligation to maintain the vegetation on their property in a condition that will not contribute to the spread of a fire. Effective fire prevention measures can keep fires from starting, and reduce hazards that could threaten your property and your neighbors' property should a wildfire occur.

Inside, find information about the Oakland Fire Department's Vegetation Management Program to assist you in complying with property maintenance regulations designed to protect Oakland from the threat of wildfire. The **General Compliance Standards** on the next page outline *minimum* vegetation management and fire hazard abatement requirements, and are the guidelines used by the Fire Department to determine compliance with City regulations.

New Fire Assessment District
In 2003, Oakland voters approved a new Fire Assessment District to fund fire prevention activities. Thanks to these new funds, the City of Oakland will be able to undertake high quality inspection and public education campaigns and other activities designed to prevent costly and damaging wildfires. The Vegetation Management Program will be able to target problem areas for environmentally-sensitive fire prevention activities that diminish the threat of fire while maintaining hillside and creekside habitat values and preventing erosion, keeping our waterways, lakes, and bay clean.

About Compliance

Beginning June 15, of each year, the Oakland Fire Prevention Bureau will begin inspecting properties to determine compliance with the regulations outlined in the **General Compliance Standards**. **Your property must be in compliance with these standards by June 15 of this year.**

If your property is not in compliance with the Uniform Fire Code 1103.2.4 at the time of the initial inspection, you will be issued an official **Notice of Violation**, and your property will be reinspected. Properties that are not in compliance on or after reinspection will be assessed a \$200 reinspection fee, and the City will immediately initiate action to have the property brought into compliance. A tax lien will be placed on the property in an amount equal to the cost of the work performed, plus the \$200 reinspection fee and administrative fees, if not previously paid. ***No extensions will be granted.***

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Fire Prevention Bureau
Oakland Fire Department
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3341
Oakland, CA 94612-2032

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

| Areas of Concern | City of Oakland | Number |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Vegetation Management Program | Fire Prevention Bureau | (510) 238-7388 |
| Tree Removal Permits | Tree Assessments | (510) 615-5850 |
| Creekside Property Regulations | Clean Creek Hotline | (510) 238-6600 |
| Report Illegal Dumping (Private Property) | Code Enforcement | (510) 238-3381 |
| Report Illegal Dumping (Public Property) | Litter Enforcement | (510) 434-5101 |
| Borrow Gardening Tools | Tool Lending Library | (510) 597-5089 |
| | Other Agencies | |
| Trees in Power Lines | PG&E | (510) 437-2829 |
| Yard Trimmings Recycling Service | Waste Management of Alameda County | (510) 613-8170 |
| Property Records | Alameda County Recorder | (510) 272-6362 |

HELPFUL WEBSITES

| | |
|--|---|
| City of Oakland Fire Department | www.oaklandnet.com/oakweb/fire |
| City of Oakland Watershed Improvement Program | www.oaklandpw.com/creeks |
| Alameda County Website (for property info) | www.acgov.org |
| Websites/web pages with information about native and fire-resistant plants | |
| | http://stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=395 |
| | http://www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/docs/fireplants.doc |
| | www.firewise.org |

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Am I required to maintain my property year round?

Yes. Though inspections are generally in the spring and summer, you are required to keep your property fire-safe year-round.

Should ivy climbing on my house and trees be removed?

Yes. Ivy and other vines act as a fire ladder and make your home vulnerable to fire.

How can I avoid the erosion from vegetation removal?

Especially on slopes, don't remove all vegetation—roots, grasses, shrubs and trees keep slopes stable.

Can you recommend some fire resistant plants?

Yes. For a guide to *Fire Wise Native Plants*, go to www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/living.htm and/or check some of the websites listed in the "Helpful Websites" section of this brochure.

I sold this property, so what do I do with this notice?

Please call our office at (510) 238-7388 and the County Recorder's office at (510) 272-6362 to correct the records

I don't use my fireplace. Do I still need a spark arrester?

Yes. All working fireplaces must have a spark arrester as defined in the Uniform Fire Code.

Does the required 30-foot clearance include ornamental plants and trees and native plants?

No, but trees and plants must be maintained and limbed.

My property includes a creek or stream. Are there any special fire abatement requirements?

Yes. Vegetation management on creekside property must protect habitat and not impair water quality. Go to www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/living.htm to download *Recommendations for Ecologically Sensitive Fire Abatement Vegetation Management Practices* and *Firewise Native Plants*. You may need to get a Creek Protection Permit for maintenance activities on your property. For more information, call the City of Oakland Clean Creek Hotline at (510) 238-6600.

Where are my address numbers required to be?

Your address numbers must be posted on the building and visible from the street.

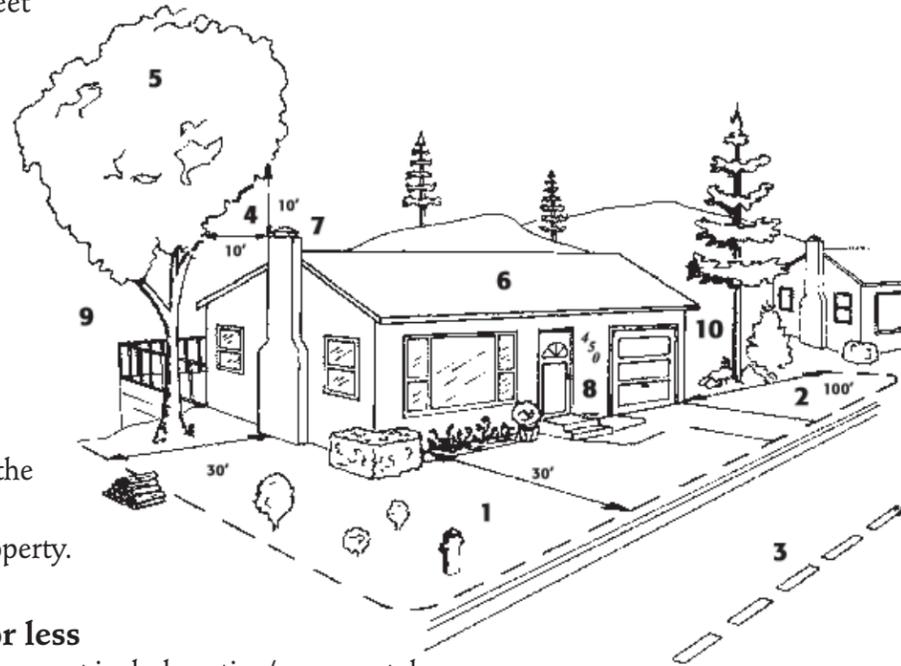
More questions? Call the Fire Prevention Bureau at (510) 238-7388.

GENERAL COMPLIANCE STANDARDS

The standards listed below for developed and vacant lots are enforced by the Fire Department year-round pursuant to the Fire Code 1103.2.4. You can be cited at any time for non-compliance. If you have any questions about these standards or how they effect your property, please call the Fire Prevention Bureau at (510) 238-7388.

Standards for Developed Lots (lots with a building/structure)

- 1 Keep a 30-foot defensible space around all buildings/structures.
- 2 Additional defensible space outward to 100 feet from all buildings and surrounding, neighboring structures may be required depending on the property slope, fuel load and/or fuel type.
- 3 Keep a 10-foot minimum clearance next to the roadside; more may be required.
- 4 Remove all portions of trees within 10 feet of chimney and/or stovepipe outlets.
- 5 Keep trees adjacent to or overhanging a structure free of dead/dying wood.
- 6 Keep roofs free of leaves, needles, or other dead/dying wood.
- 7 Install a spark arrester on chimney and/or stove pipe outlets.
- 8 Provide street address numbers on the building/structure that are clearly visible from the roadside, minimum height: two inches.
- 9 Remove all tree limbs within six feet of the ground.
- 10 Remove dead/dying vegetation from property.



Defensible Space

Regulations require you to remove fuel (overgrown or dead/dying vegetation) from the space between the structures on your property and any unmaintained vegetation. Without defensible space, your property is at much greater risk of loss in the event of a fire.

Standards for Vacant Lots 1/2 acre or less

- Clear entire lot of flammable vegetation (may not include native/ornamental plants) to a height of six inches or less. But, to prevent erosion, do not leave the ground bare.
- Keep a 10-foot minimum clearance next to the roadside (more may be required).
- Remove dead/dying vegetation from property.
- Remove all tree limbs within six feet of the ground.

Standards for Vacant Lots greater than 1/2 acre

- Provide a minimum clear width of 30 feet around property line perimeter.
- Additional defensible space outward to 100 feet along the perimeter of vacant lots adjacent to neighboring structures may be required depending on the property slope, fuel load and/or type.

Tree Preservation/Removal Permits

Permits (\$45) are required to remove any oak tree over four inches in diameter, and any other protected tree over nine inches in diameter with the exception of eucalyptus, which may be removed without a permit. If you are considering removing eucalyptus trees, be aware of the potential erosion and habitat impacts of tree removal. In some cases, tree removal may not be recommended. For a Tree Removal Permit, call Oakland Parks and Recreation at (510) 615-5850. If you wish to remove a tree due to a construction project rather than as part of fire abatement compliance, you must contact Oakland's Zoning Department at (510) 238-3911. Additional requirements and fees apply.

COST-EFFECTIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TIPS

Spare yourself the time and expense of clearing your lot each year by landscaping in a low-maintenance, environmentally-friendly, and fire-resistant way. The following ideas, if implemented, can: save you money on landscaping (and re-landscaping); reduce your water bill; prevent erosion and topsoil runoff; and maintain habitat and water quality for the flora and fauna native to Oakland and the East Bay hills.

Spacing

- Group types of plants together based on similar height/water requirements.
- Space trees 10 feet apart.

Plant Type Selection and Maintenance

- Favor native, fire resistant, and drought tolerant plants.
- Remove/do not plant highly flammable plants.
- For a list of appropriate species to plant—and which flammable species to remove—go to www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/living.htm.

Irrigation

- Choose native vegetation which generally requires little or no irrigation after the first two years.
- Install drip irrigation for more efficient water use.

Erosion Control

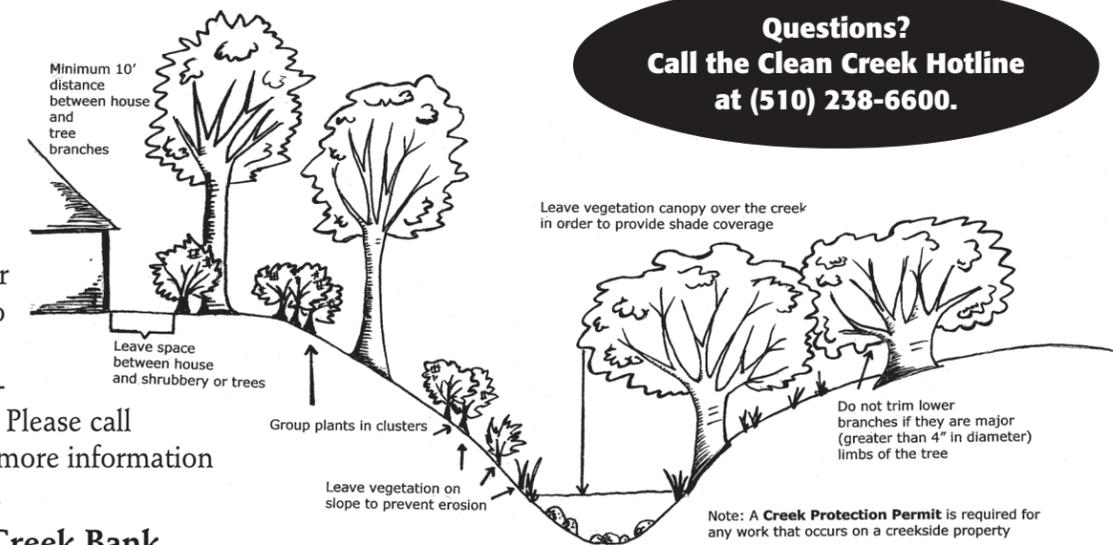
- Do not remove all vegetation from property or in the rainy season.
- Do only selective removal or trimming on sloped properties.

Flammable Plants

You may be surprised to learn that some of the most common landscaping plants, such as juniper, Scotch broom, Algerian ivy, bamboo, and pampas grass, are highly flammable. Some native plants, too, are considered highly flammable. It is important to retain native plants whenever possible: in some cases these plants are endangered and it could be a violation of federal law to remove them. For more information, download flyers with native plant info at www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/living.htm.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CREEKSIDE PROPERTIES

The City of Oakland Creek Protection Ordinance regulates activity in creekside areas to protect water quality and habitat. Generally, creekside property owners must obtain a creek protection permit prior to any work on their property; however, if the guidelines pictured (right) are followed, no permit may be necessary. Following are some issues for creekside property owners to consider while they comply with the Vegetation Management Program requirements. Please call the Clean Creek Hotline for more information or if you have any questions.



Questions?
Call the Clean Creek Hotline
at (510) 238-6600.

Planting on a Slope or Creek Bank

- You do not need to completely clear a slope or creek bank of vegetation to make it fire safe and comply with the Fire Code.
- Removing plants from sloped land can cause erosion and landslides; when a hillside erodes, sediment running into a creek can cause severe water quality problems.

Know Your Plants

- Don't mistakenly remove a valuable—or federally protected—native plant. For help identifying plants, call the Clean Creek Hotline.

Trees

- Trim trees from the ground up to ensure that a canopy still shades the creek, cooling the water and fostering healthy habitat and water quality.