

THE HEIGHT OF FIRE SEASON IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER...



Property owners have a **year-round** responsibility and obligation to maintain vegetation on their property in a condition that will not contribute to the spread of fire. Effective fire prevention measures can keep fires from starting and reduce hazards that threaten yours and your neighbors' property. 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** outline minimum vegetation management and fire hazard abatement requirements, and are the guidelines used by the Fire Department to determine compliance with City and State regulations.

ABOUT COMPLIANCE

Beginning June 15, 2006, 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, and is required by law to stay in compliance year-round.

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 by the time of the 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.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

- **Call our Hotline** for Vegetation Management to report a problem or ask questions at (510) 238-7388.
- **Watch for Signs**, billboards, news articles, and public service announcements regarding wildfire prevention.
- **Request a Speaker** or presentation on wildfire safety and defensible space for your neighborhood, school, or group. Please call to include us on your event agenda! (510) 238-7388
- **Join us Monthly** for our Citizens' Advisory Committee Meetings – 4th Thursdays at 7:00 p.m., 11500 Skyline Blvd., Oakland.
- **Visit our Website** at www.Oaklandnet.com/WildfirePrevention for tips, "DOs and DON'Ts," fire safe plant lists, and other resources.
- **Email us** with your questions and concerns at WildfirePrevention@Oaklandnet.com.
- **Join Volunteer efforts** on Earth Day, Creek to Bay Day, Wildfire Prevention Day and other events for fuel reduction activities and workshops, all listed on our website.

WILDFIRE PREVENTION ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

In 2003, Oakland voters approved the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District to fund fire prevention activities. Thanks to these funds, the City of Oakland is able to undertake the inspection of more than 25,000 parcels, vegetation management, a public education campaign, and other activities designed to reduce the threat of damaging wildfires.

Free weekly curbside pick up of green debris is included in your regular garbage service. Use the provided "green bins."

Free tree and brush chipping service is available on a limited basis to assist residents in reducing the fuel load on their property. The homeowner will:

- Call (510)238-7388 to request this service.
- Leave branches no greater than 4" in diameter.
- Stack in piles no greater than 4' by 4'.
- No more than 2 stacks per pick up.
- Plastic bags and piles of leaves cannot be picked up.
- Can request chips to be removed or left on property.

The chipping crew will call back to schedule the service.

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 by law to keep your property fire safe year-round.

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, check some of the websites listed in the "Helpful Websites" in this brochure.

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

Please call our hotline 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 and chimneys must have a spark arrester as defined in the Uniform Fire Code.

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

No, but trees and plants must be maintained and limbed, and free of weeds.

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.

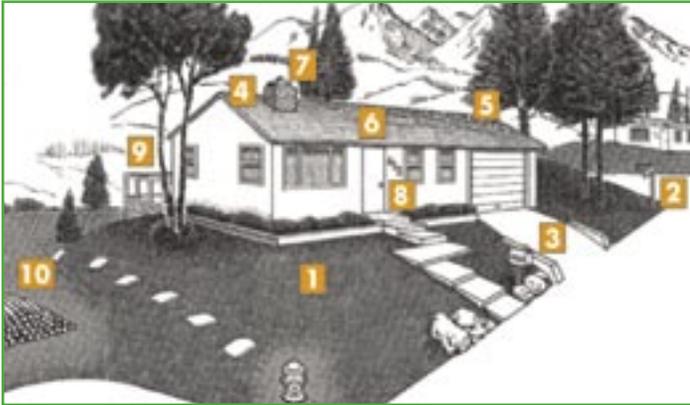
MORE QUESTIONS?

Call the Fire Prevention Vegetation Management Hotline at (510) 238-7388

Visit our website www.Oaklandnet.com/WildfirePrevention or email us at WildfirePrevention@Oaklandnet.com

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 affect your property, please call the Fire Prevention Bureau Hotline at (510) 238-7388 or email WildfirePrevention@Oaklandnet.com.



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 property slope, fuel load, and 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 structures 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 buildings/structures 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 un-maintained 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 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 Public Works Agency 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 may apply.

COST-EFFECTIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TIPS

Spare yourself the time and expense of clearing your property each year by landscaping in a low-maintenance, environmentally-friendly, and fire-resistant way. The following ideas 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.

EROSION CONTROL

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

PLANT 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.

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. Download flyers with native plant info at www.Oaklandnet.com/WildfirePrevention.

IS YOUR HOME FIRE SAFE? WHAT IS YOUR RISK?

Score Points: In Compliance = 1 Needs to Be Improved = 3 No = 5

1. Does your home have defensible space (10' to 30' to 100' or to street and/or property line)? ___
2. Have you removed the "fire ladder" (continuous path of vegetation) from your house to the street and/or to your neighbors? ___
3. Are your trees limbed up a minimum of 6'? ___
4. Are your weeds and grasses cut to 6"? ___
5. Is your garden landscape maintained year-round with regular watering, weeding and pruning to remove dead and dying material? ___
6. Are your roof and gutters free from overhanging branches and vines, and free from all debris? ___
7. Is all extra plant litter removed from your property? ___
8. Do you live on nearly flat terrain (not on a hill or slope)? ___
9. Is your roof made of fire-retardant materials? ___
10. Is the underneath area of all decks, porches, stairs, eaves vents, and overhangs clear of debris and screened in with 1/4" mesh? ___
11. Do you have spark arrestors on all chimneys and vents? ___
12. Are your house address numbers clearly visible from the street night and day? ___
13. Can you easily jog 360° around your entire house without restrictions, as a firefighter would need to do in an emergency? ___
14. Does your family have an emergency plan for when they are home and when they are not? ___
15. Does your family have two escape routes by foot and two by car? ___
16. Does your family practice its emergency preparedness plan from time to time? ___



Score your level of risk. The higher your score, the higher your risk. TOTAL = ___

More than 16 points means there are steps you can take to reduce your fire risk.

Visit www.Oaklandnet.com/WildfirePrevention for solution steps to reducing risk.



FIRE LOVES FUEL ...

It does not care if it is natural vegetation or part of a home.
It does not care if it is yours, ours, theirs, public, or private.

- Homeowners • Families • Neighborhoods • Businesses •
- Parks • Schools • City of Oakland •

Working Together for Fire Safety, Prevention, and Preparedness

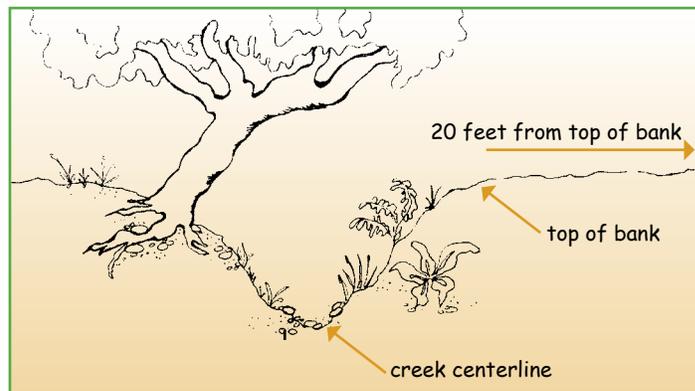


SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CREEKSIDE PROPERTIES

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 below 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.

TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ON CREEKSIDE PROPERTIES

1. Leave a 20-foot buffer of vegetation from the top of the creek bank. If top of bank cannot be identified, leave a 50-foot buffer from the centerline of the creek.
2. Outside of the vegetation buffer, leave a minimum of six inches of vegetation covering the rest of the site and don't cut larger shrubbery to less than three feet. Leave shrubbery "islands" on site in order to prevent erosion and landslides, and protect nesting habitat.
3. Err on the side of caution. If you don't know if a plant, tree, or area is sensitive, ask for a second opinion before you cut. Go to www.oaklandnet.com/pw/creeks to see a list of vegetation specialists.
4. Trim tree branches from the ground up (limbing up), leave tree canopy intact, and leave stumps and roots from cut down trees to prevent erosion.



5. Plant fire-appropriate, drought-tolerant, preferably native vegetation. For a list of recommended plant species, and a list of plants to avoid, go to www.Oaklandnet.com/WildfirePrevention.

For a complete list of creekside DOs and DON'Ts see our website www.oaklandnet.com/pw/creeks.

OTHER QUESTIONS? Call the **Clean Creek Hotline** at **238-6600** for more information.



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

IMPORTANT ANNUAL INSPECTION NOTICE

**General Compliance Standards
 from the Vegetation
 Management Program**

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Areas of Concern	City of Oakland	Number
Vegetation Management Hotline	Fire Prevention Bureau	(510) 238-7388
Chipping Service	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) 615-5566
Borrow Gardening Tools	Tool Lending Library	(510) 597-5089
Other Agencies		
Trees in Power Lines	PG&E	(510) 437-2829
Yard Trimmings Service	Waste Management of Alameda County	(510) 613-8710
Property Records	Alameda County Recorder	(510) 272-6362

HELPFUL WEBSITES

City of Oakland – Report a Problem	www.oaklandnet.com
Wildfire Prevention Assessment District	www.oaklandnet.com/wildfireprevention
City of Oakland Watershed Improvement Program	www.oaklandpw.com/creeks
Alameda County Website (for property info)	www.acgov.org
Websites with information about native and fire-resistant plants	
Wildfire Prevention Assessment District	www.oaklandnet.com/wildfireprevention/homeowners.htm
East Bay Municipal Utility District	www.ebmud.com/conserving_&_recycling/conservation_publications/firescape_booklet.pdf
Stop Waste.org	www.stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=395
City of Oakland Public Works Agency	www.oaklandpw.com/creeks/docs/fireplants.doc
Firewise	www.firewise.org