

Brush/Weed Abatement: City of San Diego  
Fire-Rescue Department (619) 533-4444

Permitting (619) 553-4444.

- Property restrictions (easements, permits, deed or title): County Recorder (619) 237-0502.
- Obtaining permits for brush management on private property with restrictions: City of San Diego Development Services Department (619) 446-5000.
- Brush management on City-owned open space land: City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, Brush Management Section (619) 685-1350.
- See Bulletin #2: Use of Goats for Brush Management for an alternative way to thin brush.

\* *Authority: City of San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 4, Sections 142.0402, 142.0403, 142.0412.*



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## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO Brush Management Regulations

### BULLETIN #1: BRUSH MANAGEMENT GUIDE

The City of San Diego has over 900 linear miles of wildland-urban interface, where the back yards of homes meet the natural vegetation in canyons and other open space areas. Years of drought have increased the flammability of vegetation. During certain times of the year, vegetation can pose a wildfire risk and requires proper management to prevent future tragedies. This Bulletin describes actions you and your family should take to reduce your chances of being affected if a wildfire ever occurs near you.

#### SAN DIEGO'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT

San Diego's semi-arid natural environment contains drought tolerant brush called coastal sage scrub or chaparral, which is home to many rare and endangered plants and animals. In fact, San Diego has more sensitive species than anywhere in the continental United States. Dangerous wildfires can occur in this environment. Fire becomes a potential problem where there are homes located next to dense stands of native or naturalized vegetation. But, you can create a defensible space around your home that can slow the fire down, giving firefighters crucial time and space to protect your home.

#### CREATING "DEFENSIBLE SPACE"

Defensible Space is the landscape between your house and the potential fuel source (dense stands of native or naturalized vegetation) that is your responsibility as a homeowner to maintain to reduce fire risk. The City's Municipal Code\* regulates brush management and creates two Brush Management Zones with different requirements. The Code was amended in October 2005 to make these Zones total 100 feet of defensible space from the structure. (However, your property may be governed by a previous entitlement requiring different zone widths. If in doubt, check with the Fire-Rescue Department or Development Services Department *before* you begin your work!)

**Brush Management Zone 1 typically extends 35 feet out from the structure towards the flammable vegetation on the level portion of your property.**

##### ZONE 1:

- ✓ Generally must be permanently irrigated to maintain succulent growth.
- ✓ Shall consist primarily of low-growing plant material, less than 4 feet in height with the exception of trees. Plants shall be low-fuel and fire-resistant.
- ✓ All portions of trees which extend within ten feet of the outlet of any chimney must be removed.
- ✓ Trees adjacent to or overhanging any building must be free of dead wood.
- ✓ Roof and rain gutters of any structure must be free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.
- ✓ Buildings or conditions legally in existence at the time of the adoption of the Brush Management Regulations as amended in 2005 (including habitable structures, accessory buildings, and other structures such as fences, gazebos, and decks) are allowed to have their use or occupancy continued. However, such use or occupancy must not constitute a distinct danger to life or property. New construction of non-habitable structures such as fences, gazebos, and decks must be non-combustible and/or have a minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating.
- ✓ Irrigation from Zone 1 must not run onto Zone 2 as it encourages growth of flammable vegetation.

**Brush Management Zone 2 is the remaining 65 feet that extends beyond Zone 1 and is usually comprised of native and/or naturalized vegetation.**

##### ZONE 2:

- ✓ Can have NO permanent irrigation.
- ✓ Must be thinned and pruned on a seasonal basis to reduce the fuel-load of vegetation greater than 24 inches in height without harming native plants, soil or habitats, as described on the reverse side of this Bulletin.