



RANCHO SANTA FE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

18027 Calle Ambiente / P.O. Box 410, Rancho Santa Fe, California 92067

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CONTACT: Julie Taber
Public Information Officer
Office: (858) 756-6008
Mobile: (858) 775-7608

PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif. — Summer is rapidly approaching, bringing with it dry, warm weather. To prepare for the upcoming fire season, the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD) would like to remind residents and property owners about the Fire District's weed abatement program. This program is designed to keep the residents living in within the Fire District safe by ensuring that yards and larger parcels are cleared of combustible weeds and debris.

This year in addition to RSFFPD's weed abatement notices, Cal Fire will be issuing weed abatement notices that enforce the 100-foot defensible space requirements set forth by the Public Resources Code in all state responsibility areas. Individual property owners may be receiving a second notice shortly from Cal Fire.

The notice you received from the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District has more stringent requirements than Cal Fire. Residents will be responsible for meeting the local ordinance adopted by The Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, which requires the first 50 feet from the structure to be cleared of all native vegetation, the only planting material allowed in this zone is ornamental irrigated vegetation. Tree branches should be pruned back at least 10 feet from all structures. Trees should be limbed up 6-10 feet above the tallest shrubs planted underneath them.

The area between 51-100 feet from the building should have all of the dead and dying vegetation removed, and the native vegetation thinned by 50%. Weeds and annual grasses shall be mowed to a height of 4" to 6". Any chipping or mulching that is done on site should be spread not to exceed 6" in height. No mulch should be located within 12" of a structure.

When and how one goes about removing dead or dying vegetation is also important. When done under the wrong circumstances, mowing or cutting grass and vegetation can actually start a wildfire. Here are some tips maintaining vegetation on your property while minimizing the risk of sparking a fire:

- Complete mowing and weed whipping before 10:00 am, especially if it is a hot or windy day.

- Do not use a lawn mower on dry vegetation. Use a weed whipper instead.
- Before you begin, remove all rocks from the area as a blade striking a rock can create a spark and cause a fire.
- Spark arresters are required for all portable gasoline powered equipment.
- Make sure the exhaust system, spark arresters, and mower are working correctly.
- Keep the mower, including the engine, free of dust, oil, carbon build up, and other flammable materials.
- Have a garden hose or fire extinguisher on hand at all times and know how to use it. Keep a cell phone nearby as well in case of an emergency.
- Double check that equipment has not been recalled. Certain Kobalt and Greenworks cordless electric lawn mowers were recently recalled and other similar equipment may have been recalled since it was purchased.

The state has the ability to charge homeowners for cost recovery on fire responses due to negligence. So please be cognizant of the guidelines above when you are clearing brush and have a water fire extinguisher with you at all times. If a fire does start, call 9-1-1 immediately and use the hose or extinguisher to put out the flames if it is safe to do so.

The mission of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District is "To serve the public through the protection of life, environment and property from fire and other emergencies through prevention, preparedness, education, and response." Formed in 1946, the Fire District now spans approximately 50-square miles and protects over 32,000 citizens. The Fire District currently operates out of six fire stations and serves the communities within and surrounding Rancho Santa Fe, Fairbanks Ranch, 4S-Ranch, Elfin Forest, and Harmony Grove.

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