



Tuolumne County Fire Department-Fire Prevention Division

Summer 2023

Tuolumne County Hazardous Vegetation Management Ordinance

Several major fires in Tuolumne County that have impacted our communities, and this increased fire activity requires an increase in preventive measures to reduce our community's risk from wildfire. It is important to protect lives, property, law enforcement and fire personnel during wildfires, and the County's Hazardous Vegetation Management Ordinance is one protective strategy. This informational brochure is to guide property owners.

Background

After studying fire prevention measures in other communities, working with local stakeholders and holding public meetings, the County Fire Safety Advisory Committee developed and the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors approved a Hazardous Vegetation Management Ordinance that exceeds CAL FIRE's defensible space laws under Public Resource Code (P.R.C) 4291. The Hazardous Vegetation Management Ordinance requires maintenance of the growth and/or accumulation of weeds, grasses, shrubs, brush, slash, tree limbs or other hazardous vegetation and combustible materials on **all parcels** within the unincorporated areas of the County.

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide for the removal of hazardous vegetation situated in the unincorporated areas of the county so as to reduce the potential for fire and to promote the safety and welfare of the community, including protection of lives, structures, private property, natural resources and the environment.

This ordinance has been approved and is now in effect, Tuolumne County Ordinance Code, Chapter 8.14. The county will prioritize educating the public on the ordinance during the time owners are making progress toward compliance. The County would like property owners to understand the requirements before imposing any costs or penalties for non-compliance. The County will work continually with



residents to educate them about the need for hazardous vegetation management, so our communities are safer. The vegetation ordinance will be enforced by the Tuolumne County Fire Chief or their designee based on county-wide fuels management policies. **The goal is to educate property owners in the summer/fall of 2023 and then start inspections and enforcement the following summer 2024.**

Does the Ordinance apply to my property?

The Ordinance applies to the reduction of the growth and/or accumulation of hazardous vegetation on all parcels within the unincorporated areas of Tuolumne County and to the maintenance of those parcels to prevent re-growth of hazardous vegetation.

What is required of property owners?

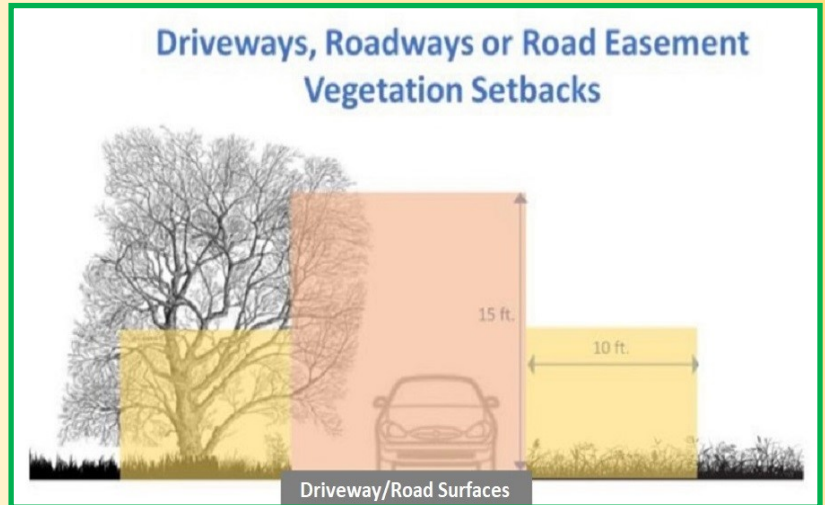
Hazardous Vegetation removal along roadways includes heavy fuels and are designed to prevent roadside sparks from becoming a devastating wildfire.

Clearance of Driveways, Roadways and Road Easements create safer routes for emergency personnel and residents. The ordinance is intended for private property owners not owners adjacent to publicly owned driveways, roadways and road easements.

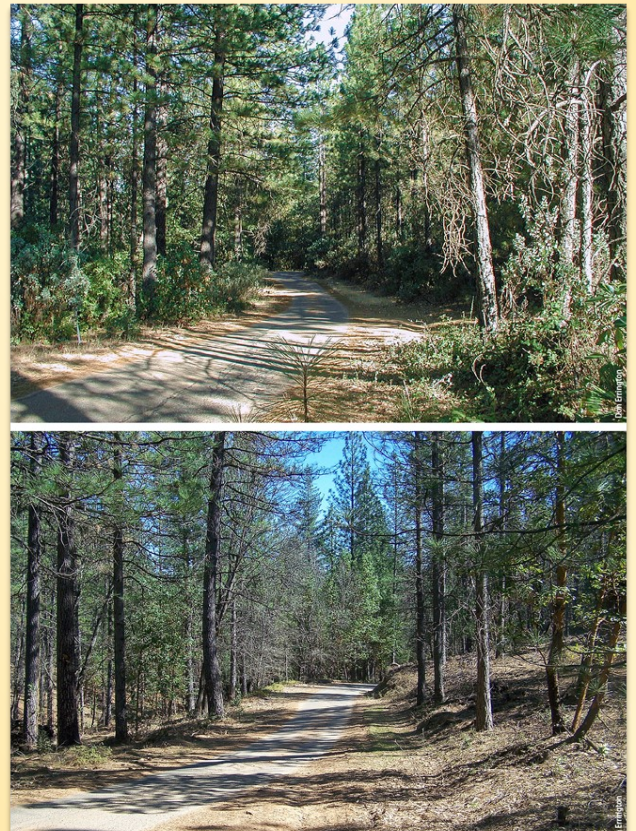
Property owners or the responsible person of any parcel must remove hazardous vegetation from driveways, roadways and road easements.

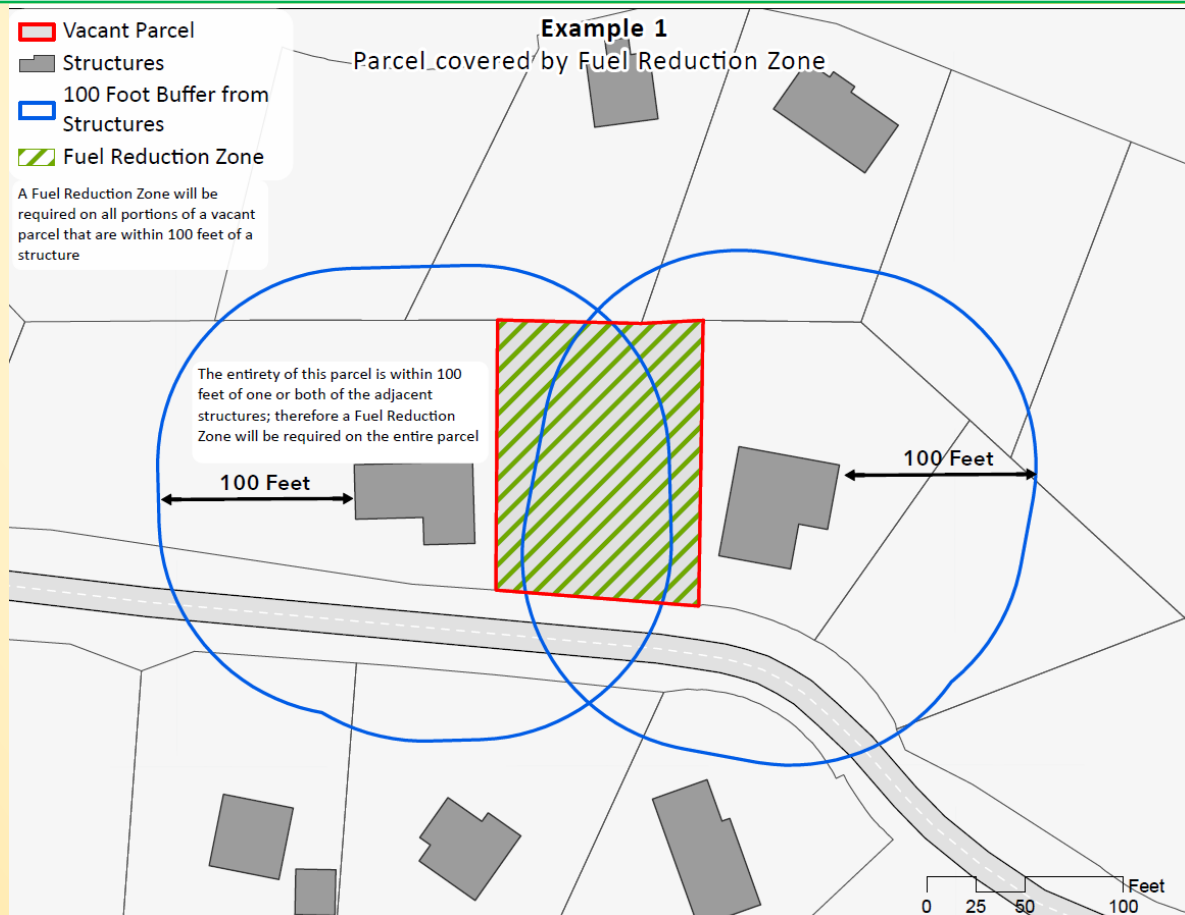
These are the minimum requirements:

1. Fifteen (15) feet of overhead clearance from the road surface; and
2. Ten (10) feet Reduced Fuel Zone from roadway edge.



These Reduced Fuel Zones will help prevent fire from spreading to your property.



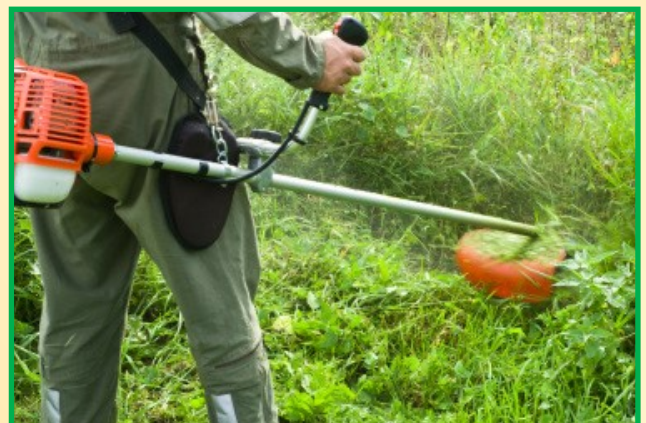


A Reduced Fuel Zone is required for unimproved parcels (vacant lot) within 100 feet of a building, dwelling, and/or structure on an adjacent parcel.

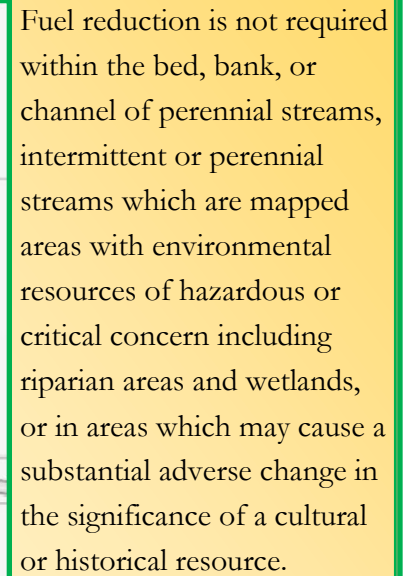
What is a Reduced Fuel Zone? A reduced fuel zone is the area wherein the arrangement of trees, shrubs and other fuel sources is spaced in such a way that makes it difficult for fire to transfer from one fuel source to another. **This does not mean cutting down all trees and shrubs** or creating a bare ring of earth across the property, nor does it require the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

The following examples are part of the reduced fuel zone:

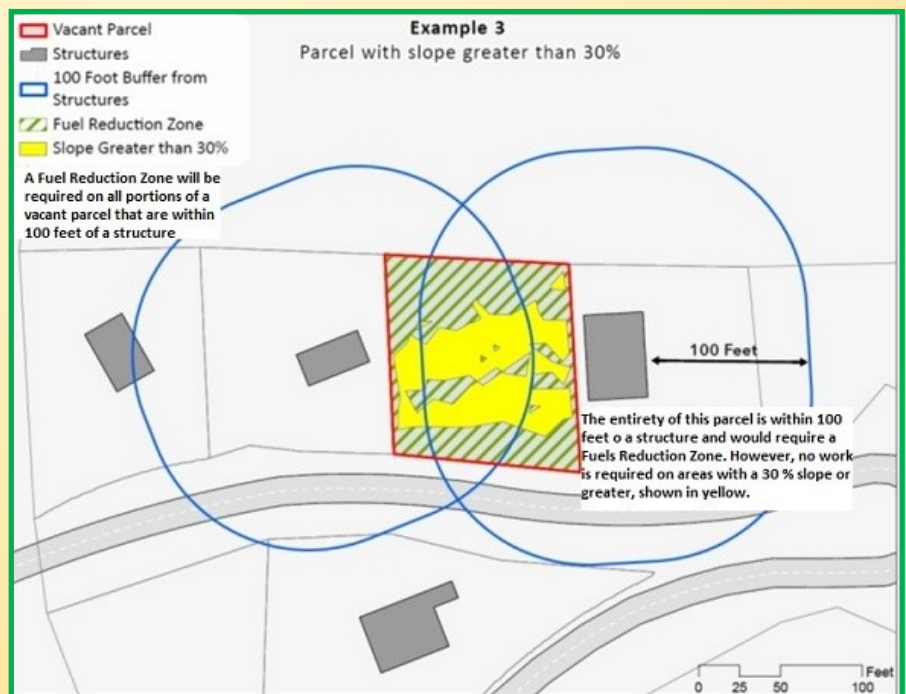
- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches
- Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical space between grass, shrubs and trees.
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones and small branches. They may be permitted to a depth of 3 inches on the ground.
- Remove standing dead vegetation, including trees and shrubs.
- All exposed wood piles must have a minimum of 10 feet clearance, down to bare mineral soil in all directions.
- All propane tanks must have a 10 feet clearance to bare mineral soil and no flammable hazardous vegetation for an additional 10 feet around their exterior.



The Tuolumne County Vegetation Management Ordinance does not require the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees: crops, productive vineyards or orchards; or marketable timber; however, it may impose mowing or livestock presence on grasslands, or fire-safe management of crops and forests.



Fuel reduction is not required on slopes greater than thirty percent (30 %) in grade, as to not result in ground disturbance resulting in sediment delivery to watercourses.



**Should you have any questions,
please contact :**

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You may also view the full version of the Vegetation Ordinance by using this QR code

Or visiting this website:

<https://tinyurl.com/VegOrd>

