



State of California
 The Natural Resources Agency
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Newell Drive Roadside Fuelbreak		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Rancho Shoquel Augmentation and Rancho Aptos Laurel, California, T11S, R1E, MDBM	COUNTY	Santa Cruz
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Sarah Collamer		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will utilize hand crews to create a shaded fuel break along portions of Newell Drive and Redwood Drive in the Aptos area of Santa Cruz County. The project area consists of 9.6 acres in forest and shrub dominated areas. The project width will vary depending on terrain and fuel loads, extending up to approximately 30 feet from the edge of both sides of the aforementioned roads. Several roadside areas will not be treated due to structures, steep slopes, cut banks, light fuels or landowner requirements. The objectives will be to disrupt the horizontal continuity of surface fuels, vertical continuity resulting from ladder fuels, and increase shrub and understory crown spacing. Forested areas will be treated with a "thin from below" approach reducing surface and ladder fuels and increasing understory crown spacing by removing a majority of trees up to 10 inches DBH. Material that is too large to be chipped will be delimited and left on site. We do not anticipate a large amount of such material. The lower limbs of "leave" trees will be pruned to a height of 6 – 8 feet. Shrub dominated areas will be treated with a residual mosaic approach, leaving scattered shrubs and islands of intact formation comprising approximately 30% of the original cover, with an average spacing of 10 – 15 feet apart. Cut material will generally be chipped and spread uniformly on site. Invasive species treated having mature seed will not be scattered or chipped and spread on-site; instead it will be hauled off-site and disposed of properly or cut and laid within existing areas of infestation, lopped to a height of 12 inches or less.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption** Type/Section: Class 4 §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption** (state code section):
- Ministerial** (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency** (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project** (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f).

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Headquarters, 6059 Highway 9, Felton, CA 95018.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING



 Duane Shintaku, Deputy Director Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection