

*To contact a CAL FIRE service forester, University Extension representative, or registered professional forester in your area, click [here](#)

Tree Mortality Task Force ‘Frequently Asked Questions’

How was the Task Force assembled?

As part of the Governor’s actions to protect communities against unprecedented tree die off, he directed CAL FIRE and the Office of Emergency Services to convene a Task Force on Tree Mortality comprised of state and federal agencies, local governments and utilities that will coordinate emergency protective actions and monitor ongoing conditions.

Who is on the Task Force?

<http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/about>

What are the opportunities for stakeholder engagement with the Task Force?

Via regular meetings of the entire Task Force as well as engagement with multiple workgroups:

Forest Health & Resilience
Monitoring & Mapping
Prescribed Fire
Public Outreach
Regulations
Resource Allocation
Utilization- Bioenergy
Utilization- Market Development

Does the proclamation apply to private land?

Dead tree removal efforts will be focused on all landscapes. Priority will be given to addressing hazards along utility corridors, public road and evacuation routes.

What is considered “affected counties”?

Affected Counties encompasses all areas of the state with the highest incident of bark beetle and drought related tree mortality. The initial focus will be in the southern Sierra Nevadas, in and around Madera, Mariposa, Tulare, Tuolumne, Kern, and Fresno Counties. However, the impacts of the drought and trees that succumb to bark beetle attack are expected to expand north and south of the Sierras, and into other forested areas of the state.

What other environmental or permitting requirements are suspended through the proclamation?

The suspension of CEQA applies to proclamation items 1, 2 and 5 through 8 but does not absolve the state agencies listed in those items from other laws designed to protect the environment (e.g. Forest Practice Act, Water Code, Endangered Species Act, Air Quality restrictions). The intent of the suspension is to address the need for expediency without compromising environmental protection

Funding

What funding is available for individual homeowners to take down dead trees?

No special monies were appropriated in conjunction with the Governor's October 30, 2015 Proclamation to assist private landowners. However state and local agencies are meeting as part of the Governor's Tree Mortality Task Force to coordinate and leverage use of their existing operating dollars for this fiscal year. Furthermore, Governor Brown has written USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to encourage active partnership with the State in addressing the tree mortality problem.

What funding is available for communities to address dead trees?

State, Federal and Local agencies will use their existing authorities to direct funds toward the impacted communities. Examples include State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fee, California Disaster Assistance Act, Green House Gas Reduction Fund, and other U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service program funds.

What funding is available for hauling away waste wood?

The USDA administers BCAP (Biomass Crop Assistance Program) designed to provide cost-share assistance to private landowners wishing to offset transportation cost of delivering their wood waste to biomass/bioenergy facilities. Other opportunities may be funded for state grants in the budget year.

Can California Disaster Assistance Act funding be used to remove individual homeowners' trees?

No, private landowners can only be reimbursed under CDAA for providing essential services including but not limited to food, water, and shelter. Removal of bark beetle killed trees is not deemed an essential service that qualifies for private party reimbursement under CDAA. The use of CDAA funds will be prioritized to treat the most appropriate, greatest need areas identified by the Task Force.

Can money from the Executive Order be used on tribal land? If so, what will the process be?

No monies were appropriated in conjunction with the Governor's Emergency Proclamation.

Are Community Water Systems eligible for the California Disaster Assistance Act? More specifically, what funding is available for Community Water Systems that provide the sole source of water to homes?

Answer from OES pending

Removing Dead Trees

Q. What environmental requirements are there for removing dead trees?

There are several state laws governing the removal of dead trees. If private landowners do not sell, barter or trade the value of their trees for services rendered, no harvesting permits or notices are required. If commercial harvesting does occur on private timberland, the landowners must obtain the appropriate timber harvesting permit from CAL FIRE. Preparation of a timber harvesting plan must involve a registered professional forester (RPF).

For more information: <http://tinyurl.com/PermittingGuide>

Are there any exemptions for removing dead trees?

The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection adopted regulations this past year allowing timberland owners to submit an Exemption Notice to remove their dead trees (See Title 14, Calif. Code of Regulation, Section 1038(k)). The Exemption allows the commercial harvesting of bark beetle killed trees, but still requires the application of the State's operational forest practice rules, and that the work be conducted by a licensed timber operator (logger).

For more information: <http://tinyurl.com/PermittingGuide>

Is there a volume limitation on the amount of dead trees that can be removed from a property?

There is no volume limitation on dead trees.

Does BIA Forestry have to sign off on any tree removal from Tribal lands?

Answer from BIA pending

With regard to registration with the Department of Industrial Relations, is registration going to be required for licensed timber operators/tree removal companies? If so, is there a way to get an exemption from this?

Answer from Dept. of Industrial Relations

Is tree removal considered construction and therefore a public works project is being performed?

Each County may have special provisions in place that apply to the removal of trees within their jurisdiction; however, the removal of commercial species from timberland for commercial purposes pursuant to the State's forest practice regulations does not define such work as a public work project.

Using removed wood

Are there restrictions on the usage of wood from trees that have died from bark beetle infestation?

If the tree is dead due to bark beetle infestation, no, there are no restrictions on the use of the wood.

For more information: www.PrepareForBarkBeetle.org

Is the wood from trees that have died due to bark beetle infestation safe to use as mulch around a home?

Yes

For more information: www.PrepareForBarkBeetle.org