



## Hazardous Vegetation & Rubbish Abatement Program

### 30-DAY VIOLATION NOTICE

**Code Case Number:**

**Date:**

**READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY, IT IS THE ONLY ONE YOU WILL RECEIVE!  
Hazardous Vegetation and/or Rubbish Abatement Required to Avoid Fees and  
Penalties**

Dear Property Owner:

On **{{open\_date}}**, the City of Lake Elsinore conducted an inspection of the property, described by the Riverside County Assessor's Office as APN: **{{apn}}**. During that inspection, the property was found to be in violation of the City's Hazardous Vegetation and Rubbish Abatement Program. Pursuant to Section 8.18 of the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code, the following violations were noted:

**Violation(s):**

**{{code\_violations\_list}}**

**Please be advised that your property must be cleared of all violations no later than 30 calendar days following the issuance of this notice.**

The City will perform a follow-up inspection 30 days from the date listed above to check for compliance. **If the property noted fails to achieve full compliance by that time, the City will have the property cleared by a City contractor and you will be billed for all associated abatement costs, as well as administrative fees.**

Hazardous vegetation or rubbish can create serious health, fire and/or safety concerns. The City's Hazardous Vegetation and Rubbish Abatement Standards for maintenance, prevention, and abatement of weeds and rubbish are enclosed. If your property is considered habitat/conservation land, the abatement standards are different and must be strictly followed. **Please read all enclosures carefully.**

For questions, please contact the City at (951) 674-3124 ext. 227. If you dispute this notice, you must submit a written appeal to [WeedAbatement@Lake-Elsinore.org](mailto:WeedAbatement@Lake-Elsinore.org) within 15 days of the date of this notice. The appeal shall state the reasons why this notice is incorrect. A hearing on the appeal shall be conducted pursuant to Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Section 8.18.040. The City urges you to take action and thanks you for your prompt attention to this important health and safety concern.

## CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE HAZARDOUS VEGETATION & RUBBISH ABATEMENT STANDARDS

The mission of the City of Lake Elsinore's Hazardous Vegetation and Rubbish Abatement Program is for the removal of combustible fuel such as weeds, brush, dead trees, debris, fill dirt and rubbish from all unimproved, vacant parcels within the city limits. **These guidelines shall apply to all vacant and unimproved parcels on a year-round basis.**

### **All Vacant Parcels**

- All weeds, grass, brush, or other combustible vegetation shall be **completely cleared** on all parcels that are **less than five (5) acres** in size. This includes any alley, parkway strips, or unimproved public easements abutting the property. Grading shall not take place without appropriate permits.
- All weeds must be cut to a **maximum of three inches (3")** in height on all parcels. All clippings shall either be mulched to a depth no greater than three inches (3") or removed.
- Remove from trees any dead or overgrown branches within eight feet (8') from the ground.
- Trees overhanging sidewalks must be trimmed so no branches are hanging below twelve feet (12'). Trees overhanging roadways/driveways must be trimmed so that no branches are hanging below thirteen and a half feet (13' 6").
- All rubbish, trash, trimmings, litter, tires and combustible waste material including palm fronds **must be removed** from the property and taken to an approved refuse disposal facility.

### **Parcels Over Five (5) Acres**

- Firebreaks must be a **continuous 100-foot wide strip of land**, which is clear of all combustible weeds, grass, stubble, rubbish, or other material which would allow for the travel of fire.
- On larger parcels cross cuts must be used so that no unabated areas exceed five (5) acres including any alley, parkway strip, or unimproved public easement abutting the parcel. Grading shall not take place without the appropriate permits.
- Provide 100-foot wide firebreaks along each side of all roadways, fences, property lines, ditches and creeks.
- Where trees are located within any firebreak any dead or overgrown branches within eight feet (8') from the ground.

### **Parcels That Contain or May Contain Habitat**

- Parcels known to contain or that the parcel owner believes may contain habitat or rare, threatened or endangered plant species, shall contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife **at least ten (10) days in advance** of clearing. If the parcel owner is aware of any federally or state listed species then the appropriate wildlife agency shall be contacted prior to clearance. It is possible that a permit may be required from the appropriate agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) prior to clearance.
- Where fuel modification plans have been approved by the Fire Department, these plans must be implemented in addition to these abatement standards.
- When parcels are adjacent to roadways, a ten-foot (10') firebreak must be maintained along the full roadway length.

**Any vacant parcels that are not fully compliant with these standards including partially cleared parcels will be abated by the City at a significantly higher cost than hiring a private contractor.**

**Parcel owners are required to comply with these abatement standards throughout the year.**

**All appeals must be made in writing.**

*If you have any questions, please contact the City of Lake Elsinore at (951) 674-3124 or visit [www.Lake-Elsinore.org/hazardousvegetation](http://www.Lake-Elsinore.org/hazardousvegetation) for additional information.*

## **Hazardous Vegetation & Rubbish Abatement Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why did I receive a notice for my vacant, unimproved property?**

The mission of the City of Lake Elsinore's Hazardous Vegetation and Rubbish Abatement Program is for the removal of combustible fuel such as weeds, brush, dead trees, debris, fill dirt and rubbish from all unimproved, vacant parcels within the city limits. Recently, your vacant, unimproved property was inspected for hazardous vegetation and/or rubbish and was identified as a property that contains vegetation and/or rubbish that can create health, fire and/or safety issues within the City. This notice is an annual courtesy reminder, sent by the City's Fire Marshal, to property owners of vacant parcels within the City urging them to clear any vegetation and/or rubbish on your property within 30 days of the date of the notice. Please see the attached Hazardous Vegetation & Rubbish Abatement Standards for additional information. Properties not in compliance with Chapter 8.18 of the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code (LEMC) will be issued an official Notice of Violation and a fee may be imposed for non-compliance.

### **I already cleared my property. Why am I still receiving this notice?**

As part of the City's program and procedures, all vacant properties are being inspected individually for hazardous vegetation and/or rubbish. The date of this inspection is noted in the third paragraph of the notice. If you have cleared your property since the inspection date, you may disregard this notice. If it was cleared prior to the inspection, please refer to the attached Hazardous Vegetation & Rubbish Abatement Standards for additional information on the expectations for vacant, unimproved properties in the City.

### **There is debris and garbage on my property, and I didn't put it there – why am I responsible?**

If you are the property owner, then you are exclusively responsible for maintaining the condition of that property per Chapter 8.18 of the LEMC.

### **I no longer own the property, why was I sent this notice?**

Unfortunately, at times property owner records are not always up to date. Notices are sent to the last known owner on Riverside County's assessment roll. If you are no longer the owner, please contact the County of Riverside Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder at 951-955-6200.

### **Where can I find a weed abatement contractor?**

We suggest tree services, mowing services or weed control services, which are listed in various yellow pages under these headings. We recommend getting three bids and making sure contractors are licensed and provide proof of Workers Compensation and General Liability Insurance.

### **Do I have the right to an appeal hearing?**

Yes. If you protest the code as it pertains to your parcel or if you want to request an exemption from clearing the property at this time, you must submit the appeal in writing to [WeedAbatement@Lake-Elsinore.org](mailto:WeedAbatement@Lake-Elsinore.org). Parcels cannot arbitrarily be exempted.

### **What will happen if I do nothing to the property and don't request an appeal hearing?**

The property **will be cleared** by a City contractor and the property owner **will be billed for all costs** including an administrative fee for the abatement of the property per LEMC Chapter 8.18.

### **How do I know if a plant species is native?**

Generally, if it is irrigated and living it is ornamental, if it is not irrigated and living it is native.

### **My neighbor has combustible vegetation within 100' of my house. Can I clear their property?**

It is always best to contact the property owner to request permission to clear an adjacent property. If unsuccessful, please contact [WeedAbatement@Lake-Elsinore.org](mailto:WeedAbatement@Lake-Elsinore.org) and provide an address, the nature of the concern, a photograph (if possible) and contact information, so that we may contact you if we have additional questions.

### **What roads are subject to the 10' clearance of combustible native habitat requirements on either side?**

Any road or driveway that provides access to a structure is defined as a roadway and subject to these clearing requirements.

### **What does it mean to maintain horizontal clearance of vegetation alongside a roadway?**

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Any road or driveway that provides access to a structure is defined as a roadway and subject to these clearing requirements.

**What does it mean to maintain horizontal clearance of vegetation alongside a roadway?**

Any road must be maintained to its improved (graded or paved) width; nothing may encroach upon the roadway or driveway that reduces its original width.

**What roads are subject to the 13' 6" vertical clearance requirements and what is included in this requirement?**

All roads and driveways as defined above. This pertains to any and all obstructions within 13' 6" of the ground that are directly overhead of the roadway surface.

**How do I cut vegetation on hillsides when it exists to prevent erosion?**

The use of any cutting or trimming method that leaves the root structure intact is highly recommended. Usually by maintaining the vegetation 2 to 3 inches above the ground.

**Can I burn vegetation?**

No. Open burning for weed abatement and fire clearance is prohibited by the Air Quality Management District and the City.

**Can I pile cut vegetation on site?**

No. All cut vegetation must be removed, crushed and buried, or mulched and spread. If material is mulched, it must be spread to a depth no greater than three inches (3").

**What does it mean to remove limbs within 8' of the ground?**

Remove any branches that are within 8' of the ground and any ground litter under trees. It **does not** mean to cut trees to 8' tall.

**What if my trees are not over 8' tall do I have to trim them?**

Yes, though they only are required to be trimmed from the ground up to 1/3 of the height of the tree. Example: If a tree is 12 feet tall it would only be required to be trimmed 4 feet.

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