

Legal Notice

PROPOSED WEED ABATEMENT PROCESS FOR VACANT LOTS
PUBLIC HEARING

Who: All Owners of Vacant lots
What: Public Hearing - Weed Abatement Process for Vacant Lots
When: Thursday, February 25, 2016
Where: Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA
Time: 10:15 a.m.

The City Council will consider adopting a resolution on February 25, 2016, which outlines the weed abatement process for vacant lots. If you are a property owner of a vacant and unimproved lot, you are welcome to attend the public hearing if you have any concerns about the proposed process. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Council will adopt the policy and standards which the City will be using. Property owners will be responsible for meeting the standards set for them by the City Council.

In general, the policy and process that the Council will consider states that property owners of vacant and unimproved lots have a year-round obligation to keep their lots clean. This year the City will be strictly enforcing the standards. On April 15, 2016, the City will begin inspecting all vacant lots. If a lot is not cleaned properly (weeds, trash, debris, and other combustible material have not been completely removed), the City will, without further notice to the property owner, issue a citation for the violations(s). Citations can range from \$200 to \$800. In **addition**, the City may hire a contractor to abate the violations. The property owner will then be billed for the cost of this cleanup plus the City's administration fee of \$100 per hour minimum. These costs average \$500 to \$1000 per incident. If the property owner fails to timely make a payment of the costs listed in the Notice of Costs, the Department may do any or all of the following things: collect the costs as a personal obligation either through a collection agency or the City Attorney's Office, refer the costs to the County Tax Assessor as a special tax assessment to be collected with the property taxes, and or attach a lien on the property.

There are three options available to property owners who wish to see if their vacant lot is on the City's list:

1. A list of all the Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) has been posted on the City's Website at www.fresno.gov;
or
2. A list of APNs is on file at the City Clerk's Office, 2600 Fresno Street, Second Floor, Room 2133, Fresno, CA 93721;
or
3. Property owners may call the Development & Resource Department, Code Enforcement Division at 621-8400, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., to ask staff to look up their APN.

The Abatement Standards are shown below:

WEED ABATEMENT STANDARDS

The following are minimum abatement standards. **The City of Fresno may require additional or more stringent abatement on certain properties because of special problems with terrain, land use, growth, location or the fire history of the property.** These standards apply to all weeds, grass or other vegetation that is normally dry during the year, particularly in the summer, and all combustible rubbish. **These standards shall apply to all vacant and unimproved lots throughout the year.**

1. ALL PROPERTIES (including any alley, sidewalk, park strip or unimproved public easement abutting the property).
 - A. Remove all rubbish, trash, trimmings, litter, tires and combustible waste material.
 - B. Disc all weeds, grass, brush or other combustible vegetation according to the discing standards set forth below.
 - C. Remove all grass and other cuttings after mowing, hoeing or cutting.
 - D. Remove all sagebrush, chaparral, tumbleweeds and any other brush or weeds which attain such large growth as to become, when dry, a fire menace to adjacent improved property. Tumbleweeds shall be removed from the property on year-round basis.
2. PARCELS OVER FIVE (5) ACRES, CROP LANDS UTILIZED FOR LEGITIMATE AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS, OR PASTURE LANDS (with sufficient livestock)

- A. In lieu of discing the entire parcel, firebreaks may be provided in such a manner that no single fire area shall exceed five (5) acres. **Firebreaks shall be a continuous strip of land which is clear of all combustible weeds, grass, stubble, rubbish or other material which would allow the travel of fire. Firebreaks may include fire-resistive vegetation, such as irrigated crops, ice plant, green ivy and other live plants recognized by the City of Fresno as being fire resistive.**
 - B. Provide 30 foot wide firebreaks around all combustible structures and storage.
 - C. Provide 30 foot wide firebreaks along each side of all roads accessible to the public and around all brush areas.
 - D. Provide 15 foot wide firebreaks along each side of all fence (property) line, ditches and creeks. Any parcel which is adjacent to developed property must have 30 foot wide firebreaks along the fence (property) lines.
 - E. Graded fire roads (not less than 15 feet in width) may be done in lieu of 15 feet of width of disced firebreaks where specifically approved by the City of Fresno.
 - F. Abandoned orchards, vineyards, etc. shall be completely abated. **No firebreaks shall be allowed.**
 - G. Non-irrigated pasture land being used for grazing must have 30 foot wide firebreaks with substantial cross-discing.
3. DISCING STANDARDS
- A. All discing work shall be completed so that all weeds, grass, crops or other vegetation or organic material which could be expected to burn shall be substantially turned over so there is insufficient fuel to sustain or allow the spread of fire. Handwork, including mowing, weed-eating or hoeing, may be utilized for the removal of weeds along fence lines where discing may not be possible, so that these areas are free and clear of growth and dead vegetation.

Please note that, should a fire occur due to the lack of weed and debris removal, the Fire Department may charge you for the firefighting costs the City incurs. We encourage you to make arrangements to clean your lot privately, as your costs are likely to be lower.