



About Weed & Brush Abatement

In Saratoga, there are two programs that help protect Saratoga from wildfire by requiring defensible space and reducing vegetation and other debris that can fuel a fire:

- **Weed Abatement Program**, managed by the City of Saratoga in partnership with the Santa Clara Department of Agriculture via contract, applies to all properties in the City of Saratoga.
- **Brush Abatement Program**, managed by the Santa Clara County Fire Department, applies to all properties in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area.

Weed Abatement Program List

The **Weed Abatement Program List** is a list of properties that have been previously identified as out of compliance with program requirements. Only properties on the list as of January 31 will be subject to fees and nuisance declarations under the **Weed Abatement Program** during that year.

Non-compliant properties identified based on complaints or observations in the field will be inspected by the City for compliance with the City Code. If the property is found non-compliant and conditions are not corrected within the deadline set by the Code Compliance Officer, in addition to any other remedies imposed by the City, the property will be added to the **Weed Abatement Program List** for the following calendar year.

Properties that fail to meet **Brush Abatement** requirements by the deadline set by the Santa Clara County Fire Department and included in an abatement order approved by the City Council will also be added to the **Weed Abatement Program List** for the following calendar year.

Properties will be removed from the list after achieving 3 consecutive years of compliance or by action of the City Council.

Deadlines & Extensions

The **Weed Abatement Program** deadline is April 15. Property owners may submit a request to extend the **Weed Abatement Program** compliance deadline no later than 3 business days before the deadline. Contact the City's Code Compliance Officer at 408.868.1230 or tgonzalez@saratoga.ca.us to request an extension.

Brush Abatement Program inspections begin in April and if properties fail to meet program requirements by June, properties will be submitted to the City to be considered as part of the nuisance declaration and abatement order hearing in June. For information about the **Brush Abatement Program**, call 408.378.4010.

Program Fees & Billing

Most fees are established by the Santa Clara County Department of Agriculture. Bills are issued by the City. Unpaid bills will be assessed on subject properties and appear on the following calendar year's property tax roll.

Weed Abatement Program Fees

Inspection Fee - \$84: Charged to all properties that fail inspection. The fee covers costs associated with data entry, file preparation, noticing, boundary determination, and overhead. The fee is only charged if a property fails initial inspection.

Administrative Fee - \$466: Charged to all properties that fail the initial inspection.

Weed Abatement & Brush Abatement Program Fees

Contract Work Fee - \$809: Charged to properties if weed/brush removal is done by the County's contractor. This fee is in addition to the costs to remove weeds/brush.

County Contractor Weed Abatement Work: Prices vary depending on work type, which includes disc work, handwork, flail mowing, loader work, dump truck, brush work, debris removal, and dump fee.

City Administrative Fee - \$150: Charged to properties if the owner fails to pay weed/brush abatement program fees by the deadline and an assessment is placed on the property.

Hearings & Objections

Separate City Council hearings are held prior to nuisance declaration/abatement order and assessment of fees on subject properties (dates shown on the next page). Property owners may object to the City's actions by appearing at these hearings or by writing to the City Council in advance of the hearing.

More Information

Tony Gonzalez, Code Compliance Officer
tgonzalez@saratoga.ca.us | 408.868.1230

REQUIREMENTS

	WEED	BRUSH
Post clearly visible house address with numbers that are at least 4 inches high on a contrasting background		✓
Keep flammable vegetation 6 inches or less (excluding ornamental vegetation), including the right-of-way next to roadways	✓	
Remove dead leaves/branches from landscaping	✓	✓
Keep driveway (10 feet wide by 13.6 feet tall) clear of debris and vegetation	✓	
Keep tree limbs at least 10 feet away from chimneys or stovepipes	✓	✓
Remove pine needles and leaves from roofs, eaves, and gutters	✓	✓
Remove combustible debris, like trash, wood, and dead vegetation (does not include stacks of firewood and neatly piled yard waste)	✓	
Remove tree branches and vegetation under eaves	✓	
Clear flammable vegetation (like dry weeds) 30 feet around all structures	✓	✓
Cover chimney outlets or flues with a one-half inch mesh spark arrester		✓
Properties Equal to or Greater than 1 Acre:		
Clear flammable vegetation 30 feet from property lines	✓	
Properties Greater than 5 Acres:		
Divide property into segments of 5 acres or less with 30 foot fuel breaks cleared of flammable vegetation	✓	
Properties in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone:		
Create 100 feet of defensible space by clearing flammable vegetation 30 feet around structures and a reduced fuel zone for the remaining 70 feet or to the property line		✓

WEED ABATEMENT 2021 TIMELINE

APR 12	DEADLINE TO REQUEST EXTENSION
APR 15	COMPLIANCE DEADLINE
JUNE 16	NUISANCE DECLARATION & ABATEMENT ORDER HEARING
	<p>City Council public hearing to consider a resolution declaring non-compliant properties as a public nuisance and authorizing removal of weeds/public nuisance. Notice of hearing and non-compliance will be mailed at least 10 days prior to the hearing.</p> <p>Owners may request that the City Council remove their property from the nuisance declaration and abatement order.</p> <p>After the hearing, the County contractor will begin abatement work. If work is performed by the County contractor, the property owner will be responsible for the Contract Work Fee and actual cost of work. The property owner will not be subject to the Contract Work Fee or cost of work if the property is compliant when the County contractor arrives.</p>
DEC	WEED ABATEMENT BILLS
	<p>Timing is approximate. Bills may be issued earlier or later.</p>
FEB	ASSESSMENT PUBLIC HEARING
	<p>City Council hearing to consider a resolution confirming assessments on properties for unpaid bills. Owners may request that the City Council remove their property from the assessment list.</p> <p>Timing is approximate. Hearing may be later if bills are issued after December.</p>

What is defensible space? Defensible space is a buffer created around structures by removing plants, grass, weeds, and other flammable materials. It is one of the most effective tools in stopping the spread of wildfires and improving your home's chance of surviving.

How do I find a contractor? A list of contractors that perform weed and brush abatement work is provided as a convenience on the City's website at www.saratoga.ca.us/weed_brush.

How can I get help? The City offers a variety of resources to property owners in high fire hazard zones. This includes free chipping, home ignition zone inspections, and support to become a Firewise Community to work with your neighbors to reduce wildfire risk for the whole community. Visit the City website at www.saratoga.ca.us/fire for more information.