



State of California  
The Resources Agency  
Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Fire Safe Council East Orange County Canyons and Santiago Canyon Estates, Fuel Modification		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	The SW portion of Section 33 in Township 5 South and Range 7 West	<b>COUNTY</b>	Orange
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	CAL FIRE		
<b>CONTACT</b>	David Erickson, Wildland Resource Planner	<b>PHONE</b>	(949) 447-6718
<b>ADDRESS</b>	1 Fire Authority, Irvine, CA 92602		

### Project Description

The proposed project would consist of maintaining 17 acres of fuel management zones B and C within the Santiago Canyon Estates Subdivision to create defensible space and reduce fire risk surrounding the development. Widths of both Zone B and C vary between 20- 100 feet each, but a maximum combined width is 170 feet. Work will consist of removal of invasive exotic plants and selected highly flammable shrubs, and trimming of lower branches of trees and tall shrubs in Zone C. Landscape plants and annual invasive grass and weeds will be trimmed in Zone B for a combined maximum width of 170 feet. The result would be 50% canopy cover (including shrub cover) and a height of 4 inches of annual grass and herbaceous weeds. Undesirable shrubs will be cut to grade, leaving roots to re-grow and continue to stabilize slopes. A skid-steer masticator will cut shrubs in selected areas of Zone C; hand crews will remove the vegetation in the remaining area. Plant material will be mulched on-site to further reduce erosion. Material cut by hand will be transported to a green waste recycling facility or landfill if not recyclable.

The Santiago Canyon Homeowner Association sends newsletters to homeowners regarding the importance of this work as part of its continuing program of fuel hazard reduction.

This area consists of landscaped slopes and previously modified natural vegetation. The elevation ranges from approximately 1,200 to 1,500 feet. There are 58 habitable structures in the State Responsibility Area served by the FSCEOCC covering approximately 2,660 acres. It is anticipated that approximately 17 acres will be treated. This project will take place as soon as the NOE is approved and outside of bird breeding season.

### EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 Categorical Exemption (Minor Alterations to Land), 15304
- 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))

This project meets the requirements of Class 4 Categorical Exemption (Minor Alterations to Land), 15304. Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. This project as proposed consists of chipping and does not remove healthy, mature, or scenic trees. The chipping activities are best described as minor in scope.

Carol Rice, Certified Senior Fire Manager, confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a "Notice of Exemption" for this project. No significant environmental impacts would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the OCFA is kept on file with the Pre-Fire Management Section at OCFA's Regional Fire Operations Training Center, 1 Fire Authority Rd., Irvine, CA 92602.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

*Matthew Reischman*

1/12/2021

Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection