



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Highway 35 Escape Route		
PROJECT LOCATION	USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle: Castle Rock Ridge T9S, R2W, portions of Sec. 26, 35, and 36, T10S, R2W, portions of Sec. 1 and 12, and T10S, R1W, portions of Sec. 7 Coordinates of northern end of the treatment area: 37.2054709 N, -122.0482816 W Coordinates of southern end of the treatment area: 37.1656609 N, -122.0159020 W	COUNTY	Santa Clara and Santa Cruz
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Ed Orre	PHONE	(408) 206-3704
ADDRESS	Santa Clara Unit 15670 Monterey Rd. Morgan Hill CA, 95037		

This project is located along Highway 35 between Black Road and Bear Creek Road in Los Gatos, California between Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties. The treatment would begin at the intersection of Black Road and Highway 35 then continue to the 3-way intersection of Summit Road, Bear Creek Road, and Highway 35. Ladder fuel reduction will occur predominately on the county road right-of-way up to 30 feet from the edge of the road or road turnouts. Hand crews will utilize chainsaws and/or other various hand mechanized or hand tools to remove understory vegetation, dead or downed material, prune trees and woody vegetation, and remove hazard trees and small diameter trees (less than 6 inches in diameter). Mechanical mastication treatments may also be utilized operating only from existing roads and turnouts and shall not operate in Watercourse or Lake Protection Zones. Mowers and chippers shall also be limited to operating on existing roads and established turn outs. All chipped material shall be scattered in the treated area and should not reach a depth of more than 6 inches.

Where landowner permission is obtained, treatment may occur up to 150 feet from the edge of the road or road turnouts through handwork and chipping treatment methods. The total possible treatment acreage for this project area (0-150') is 180 acres. The treatment activities will improve safety, visibility, and reduce potential ignition sources along the road.

Project implementation will serve to enhance fire resiliency by reducing ladder fuels, creating shaded fuel breaks, reducing invasive species, and improving escape routes. In addition, this project will add to Santa Clara County's developing shaded fuel break system and provide opportunities to protect or manage watersheds from future wildfires. Additionally, reducing competition in the understory and treating hazard trees where feasible will create a healthier and more vigorous forest in these locations increasing forest resiliency and preparing these areas for future changing climate conditions.

EXEMPTION STATUS

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

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

CAL FIRE staff, Steve R. Auten, RPF, and Assistant Forester, Shelby Kranich, have reviewed the project and conclude that no exceptions stated in CCR 15300.2 apply to this project that would prevent the use of a "Notice of Exemption". No significant environmental impacts would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, 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 Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE's Santa Clara Unit Headquarters, 15670 Monterey Rd. Morgan Hill CA, 95037.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Matthew Reischman 6/25/2021
Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection