



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

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Palomar Mountain Fire Break & Evacuation Project		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Palomar Mountain Sec. 14, T10S, R1E, SBBM	<b>COUNTY</b>	San Diego
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT ADDRESS</b>	Cheyenne Borello CAL FIRE – San Diego Unit 2249 Jamacha Road El Cajon, CA 92019-4301	<b>PHONE</b>	619-590-3123

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area is comprised of mixed conifer forests at an elevation of approximately 5600' within private lands in the local sphere of influence of the Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council (PMFSC). Communities that will benefit from this project include the Crestline/Birch Hill/Observation Point area.

The Palomar Mountain Fire Break & Evacuation Project focuses on 1) improving emergency resident evacuation from and firefighter access to the Crestline/Birch Hill/Observation Point area on the eastern crest of Palomar Mountain and 2) protecting critical infrastructure including water, power and communication that is essential in providing wildfire protection for Palomar Mountain. The project area includes approximately 12 acres, 4 miles of roadway/easement and which provides access to 187 habitable structures. The end product will produce a 15' x 15' clear opening for fire equipment access. No private parcels will be treated.

This project may involve hazardous tree felling, chipping of branches (onsite or haul away), brush removal and possible removal of logs from the site resulting from tree felling. Trees will either be climbed and cut into sections which will be lowered to the ground using ropes, cut from the ground, or cut utilizing bucket trucks. All branches will be lopped and/or chipped onsite. If tree logs need to be removed from the project site, then the logs will be cut into firewood size lengths and removed by hand to minimize ground disturbance. The goal is to provide a 15' x 15' clear opening for fire equipment access. All trees will be felled in the least ground-disturbing manner feasible. Slash created from the fuel abatement will be brought to an existing road and chipped. The chips will be broadcast back onto the soil surface. No equipment will be used off the existing road surface.

### 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

This project is consistent with Categorical Exemption 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land as identified in the CEQA Guidelines. After reviewing and approving an environmental analysis completed by a California Registered Professional Forester (RPF) #2505, Tim Morin, the Department has determined this project will have no significant impact on the environment. This determination is based on field assessments and an Environmental Review completed by the RPF that included a greenhouse gas emission calculation.

Field review by Tim Morin confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The RPF has concluded that no significant environmental impact 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, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, wildfire or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the RPF is kept on file at CAL FIRE's MVU Headquarters in San Diego.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Matthew Reischman 7/27/2021  
Matthew Reischman, Date  
Deputy Director of Resource Management  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection