

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

Supplemental Statement of Reasons

[Published ___]

“SRA Fire Safe Regulations, 2014”

Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (14 CCR) Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Subchapter 2, Articles 2-5

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) intends this Supplemental Statement of Reasons to provide additional information regarding the clarity and necessity (problem, purpose and rationale) of the sections (for which this information was not originally provided) in the “SRA Fire Safe Regulations, 2014” rule package currently in the regular rulemaking process.

§1273.02 Roadway Surface is amended to provide flexibility to communities designing road surfaces. It was amended to meet the needs associated with heavier fire apparatus that travel in the areas in which this regulation applies. This section requires a roadway designed and maintained to support fire apparatus weighing at least 75,000 pounds and provide an aggregate base. This requirement is in line with the California Vehicle Code, which will reduce confusion and improve compliance by the public.

§1273.07 Roadway Structures is amended to provide the requirements for bridge(s) or an elevated surface on roads used by fire apparatus. These amendments are provided in order to ensure these structures are constructed to meet the needs of the size and weight of modern fire apparatus and to ensure that the capabilities of these structures (one lane, weight limits, vertical clearance limits, etc) are clearly communicated to drivers to avoid accidents. These standards are amended to be in line with commonly known and used standards from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in order to establish consistency across jurisdictions and improve compliance. AASHTO HB-17 is also incorporated into the California Fire Code, Section 503 Fire Apparatus Access Roads, and it is incorporated here to avoid confusion and improve compliance by the public.

§1273.08 One Way Roads is amended to provide clarity regarding the standards for one way roads. Field reports indicate that there was confusion in interpreting and implementing this standard as it existed previously. One way roads were being designed that provided for a 10 foot lane *including* shoulders, whereas the regulation intended to provide for a 10 foot lane *excluding* shoulders. The language of this regulation has been changed to clarify that shoulders are excluded from the width measurement of the traffic lane, and to increase the size of the traffic lane from 10 to 12 feet to meet the needs of modern fire apparatus. This will allow fire equipment and civilian vehicles to pass through one way roads safely.

§1273.10 Driveways

Pursuant to PRC § 4290(a)(1), the Board is obligated to develop road standards for fire equipment access. This section has been amended to require horizontal clearance, in addition to the vertical clearance previously required, and to provide clarity to the existing rule. Clearance is essential for fire equipment access and means both vegetation and other obstructions.

§1273.11 Gate Entrances is amended to provide width, clearance, distance, and emergency operation standards for gated entrances. Horizontal and vertical clearance requirements were added to the standard so that as a vehicle passes through a public roadway, a gated area, and then a private driveway, there is consistent vegetation clearance that would allow for safe passage of fire equipment apparatus. Minimum requirements for security gates were added to ensure that the security gates had a means of emergency operation approved by the local authority having jurisdiction; however, the requirement allows local jurisdictions to set individual requirements for approved means of emergency operations.

§1274.01 Size of Letters, Numbers and Symbols for Street and Roads Signs is amended to conform with the requirements in the California Fire Code, Section 505 Premise Identification. The size of letters, numbers, and symbols has been changed from a minimum 3 inch height and 3/8 inch stroke to a minimum 4 inch height and .5 inch stroke. By aligning these two standards, this regulation ensures that the letters, numbers, and symbols on street and road signs are visible and legible to emergency responders and others.

§1274.09 Size of Letters, Numbers and Symbols for Addresses is amended to conform with the requirements in the California Fire Code, Section 505 Premise Identification. The size of letters, numbers, and symbols has been changed from a minimum 3 inch height and 3/8 inch stroke to a minimum 4 inch height and .5 inch stroke. This rule also requires the address be posted on a monument, pole, or other sign if it cannot be viewed from a public way. Aligning these two standards will reduce confusion during implementation and ensure that letters, numbers, and symbols on addresses are visible and legible to emergency responders and others.

§1275.00 Intent is amended to move the second sentence of the existing regulation to a more appropriate section. It was also amended to require the maintenance of water in specified quantities and locations, in addition to the water's availability and accessibility, in order to clarify the original intent of the regulation. This addition is necessitated by misinterpretations while implementing this standard. The regulation was intended to provide for emergency water available and ready to use during the life of a project, and not just the construction and inspection phases, and adding "and maintained" to this regulation clarifies that intention.

§1275.01 Application is amended to clarify when the standards for emergency water supply must be met during the development process. The original standard was confusing and resulted in mixed levels of compliance by the public. The new standard specifies that this standard applies when new parcels are approved in the tentative and parcel map process by the local jurisdiction having authority, and that water supply must be available and made serviceable prior to and during construction except when alternatives are approved by the local jurisdiction. The existing standard was unclear regarding those issues and this new regulation text clarifies that information.

§1275.10 General Standards is amended to clarify the water supply requirements, provide flexibility to local jurisdictions, and is the new location of the sentence struck from 14 CCR §1275.00 “Intent” regarding how emergency water may be provided. This section incorporates the National Fire Protection 1142 “Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting,” 2012 edition, and the California Fire Code Section 507 Fire Protection Water Supplies because they are known and common standards available for review online, for free, that will improve compliance and assist the public in understanding the requirements of the regulation. This section was amended to modernize the water supply requirements and provide flexible alternatives to project proponents.

§1276.00 Intent is amended to better address the need for regulations that implement the Public Resources Code 4290 requirement that the Board adopt regulations creating “road standards for fire equipment access.” Pursuant to PRC § 4290(a)(1), the Board is obligated to develop road standards for fire equipment access. This section has been amended to specifically include structures and roads (including driveways) because reducing the volume and density of flammable vegetation around structures and roads (including driveways) enables fire equipment safe passage from public roadways to driveways to structure, which ultimately facilitates structure defense and protection of life. Clearance is used to mean both vegetation and other obstructions. The amendments to this Intent section are an attempt to make that clearer.

§1276.03 Greenbelts is amended to ensure that land use decisions, such as greenbelts, are consistent with additional fire protection and land use plans in a community. The cited documents, CAL FIRE Unit Management Plans and Contract County Fire Plans, are plans updated regularly to consider aspects of fire protection planning such as the siting of greenbelts in a community. The change to this regulation is to ensure that those pre-plans are referenced during subdivision planning and development.

§1276.04 Driveways is adopted to ensure the safety of those traveling between the public roadway and any structures. Horizontal fuel reduction standards exist for roadways, roadway structures, and buildings, and requiring similar fuel reduction to a degree equivalent to that around buildings continues to support the goal of safe ingress and egress in areas of high fire risk. This standard creates a safe route for modern fire apparatus to travel from the public roadway through a private driveway to reach a home that they may be able to defend during a wildfire. The rule also allows civilian vehicles to evacuate safely simultaneously.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE (pursuant to 1 CCR § 20(c)(1))

The two documents that are incorporated by reference (see below) in these regulations (specifically referenced in 14 CCR §§ 1273.07 and 1275.10) were selected, among all the other standards out there, because of their common use and common recognition of them.

American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials Standard Specifications for Highway Bridges, 17th Edition, published 2002 (known as AASHTO HB-17)

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1142, "Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting," 2012 Edition