

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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Thank you for being proactive in the management of your property by removing dead and dying trees. The following information and resources are being provided to you with the letter acknowledging acceptance of the 1038(k) exemption you submitted. It concerns the current forest health situation, what you can do to protect your trees, what to do with the woody material that is generated from your activities and finally types of assistance available to replace the dead and dying trees that have been removed.

Note: A compilation of some of the material that follows can be accessed at the following internet address: <http://Prepareforbarkbeetle.org>

CURRENT FOREST HEALTH SITUATION

Large numbers of trees are dying due to four consecutive years of drought that have weakened trees and left millions of acres of forestland highly susceptible to bark beetle attacks. The drought stress is exacerbated in forests with too many trees competing for limited resources, especially water. Tree losses due to drought stress and bark beetle attacks are expected to increase until precipitation levels return to normal or above normal for one to multiple years.

In response to the increasing drought related tree mortality, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection adopted emergency regulations to streamline the process for engaging in the cutting or removal of dead or dying trees in order to capture mortality and to address the hazards of falling bark beetle-killed trees and the fuel conditions being made worse by the tree mortality.

Identifying Dead and Dying Conifers on Private Lands in California is described in CAL FIRE Tree Note # 30 which can be accessed at the following internet address:
<http://calfire.ca.gov/foreststeward/pdf/treenote30.pdf>

A slide show, prepared by CAL FIRE, on drought related forest conditions may be accessed on YouTube at the following internet address: <https://youtu.be/Jjuh4Z1cIDE>

Another resource that includes drought related forest conditions is the 2014 California Forest Pest Conditions, which can be accessed at the following internet address:
http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/PDF/2014_california_forest_pest_conditions_report.pdf

Also, CAL FIRE's forest pest specialists are available to provide technical assistance, regarding forest health, to private forest landowners. A list of CAL FIRE's forest pest specialists can be accessed at the following internet address:
http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_pestmanagement.php

It is important to point out that the drought has affected areas throughout California but at different levels and intensities. Tree mortality in the Southern part of the State and in the Sierra-Cascade is more pronounced as compared to tree mortality on the Coast.

The Board's mission is to lead California in developing policies and programs that serve the public interest in environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable management of forest and rangelands, and a fire protection system that protects and serves the people of the state.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOUR TREES

Once bark beetles have successfully attacked a tree there is generally nothing you can do to save it. There are no chemical insecticides registered or recommended for killing bark beetles under the bark of infested trees. While some trees do survive bark beetle attack, the vast majority are killed. Additional tree mortality in the immediate area may be reduced if trees are removed while still infested. This particularly applies to Jeffrey or lodgepole pines. However, by the time trees develop red-brown needles, most bark beetles have emerged and it is too late to impact beetle populations through removal. Other beetles and larvae may be observed in dead trees and logs but they are generally beneficial wood decomposers-not tree killers.

It is possible to protect un-infested high value individual trees using preventive insecticide sprays on the bark applied with ground-based equipment. However, it is important that people use the most current and accurate information before taking any actions.

The 2015 Forest Health Alert Drought and bark beetle-caused tree mortality in California provides current and accurate information on what you can do to protect your trees in the short-term and may be accessed at the following link: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3839507.pdf

In the long-term, the impacts of future droughts can be reduced by improving the health of the forests through proper forest management including thinning of overcrowded stands of trees. Thinning is a forest treatment where live vegetation (e.g. trees, woody vegetation, etc.) is selectively removed to improve the growing conditions for the residual trees to create a healthy, resilient forest that can withstand many kinds of disturbance, including drought, bark beetle outbreaks and wildfires. Residual trees should be healthy, vigorous and well-spaced. Increasing the health, size and species diversity of the trees in your forest will enhance stand resistance to bark beetle attacks and other disturbances such as fire, drought and disease. In a drought-prone area, trees that are more drought-tolerant, such as pines, should be retained. Operationally, during thinning, injuries to trees, such as knocking off bark, compacting/excavating soil near trees or disturbing the root system should be avoided.

It is recommended that landowners consider consulting with a Registered Professional forester (RPF) when it comes to the available options. For the Drought Mortality Exemption, an RPF is required when timber operations on a cumulative harvest area exceeds twenty (20) acres. An RPF can also assist in the development of an appropriate forest management plan to maintain a healthy, resilient forest, and provide professional advice on markets, operators, hazard reduction, reforestation and cost share assistance programs. A list of consulting Registered Professional Foresters in California who wish to have their names on a public list may be accessed at the following internet address: http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov/professional_foresters_registration/locate_a_rpf_or_crm_registered_professional_forester/rpf_consulting_list.pdf

California State Law requires that any person who cuts and removes forest trees in order to sell the logs, on forest covered lands, must be a Licensed Timber Operator. More information about the LTO program and a list of LTOs may be accessed at the following internet address: http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_forestpractice_ltos.php

CAL FIREs Forestry Assistance Specialists may be contacted for details on proper thinning methods, planning options and assistance. A list of CAL FIREs Forestry Assistance Specialists may be accessed at the following internet address: http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/ForestAdvisorList.pdf

When conducting a thinning operation or other forest treatment, it is best to do that within the framework of an established forest management plan for the property. For a list of options to manage your forest beyond the scope of this exemption, A Landowner's Guide to Permitting Options when Harvesting Timber for Fuel Hazard Reduction can be accessed at the following internet address:
http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_fuelhazardreduction.php

The California Fire Science Consortium provides peer reviewed scientific information about managing forests for fire resiliency. You can review research publications at the following internet address:
<http://www.cafiresci.org/>

As a final point, in the long-term, thinning is the least costly approach to avoid large scale tree mortality. Thinning allows landowners, land managers, not bark beetles, to determine what the residual forest will look like.

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THE WOODY MATERIAL THAT IS GENERATED FROM YOUR ACTIVITIES

The best option to manage the woody material that has been cut is to transport it to a forest products or biomass power facility.

A list/map of facilities in California that may accept woody material may be accessed at the following internet address:
http://ucanr.edu/sites/WoodyBiomass/Technical_Assistance/California_Biomass_Power_Plants

However, several of these facilities are currently over stocked and are not accepting material. Furthermore, in some areas of the State there are no facilities within a reasonable distance to haul the material. It is recommended that you contact the facility in advance to confirm it will accept material.

At a minimum, treatment of material described in the 2015 California Forest Practices Rules (FPRs) is required. These can be found at the following internet address, or a hard copy can be purchased from the local CAL FIRE Unit:
http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/2015%20FP%20Rulebook_with%20TRA%20No%201_Final.pdf

The section in the FPRs on Hazard Reduction standards for the treatment of material to reduce fire and pest safety hazards is found on pages 104 to 108 (in the California Forest Practice Rules. Specifically, beginning on page 104, are the standards for the Treatment of Slash to Reduce Fire Hazard and beginning on page 107, the standards to minimize the build-up of destructive insect populations or the spread of forest diseases are described. Slash is the branches or limbs left on the ground as a result of operations. *Note: All operational provisions of the Forest Practice Rules apply to this exemption so please review them carefully to ensure all of the operational rules are being followed and to avoid violations.*

Treating fresh green slash is especially important to avoid creating more habitat for beetle development. However, since this exemption is only for the removal of dead and dying trees, the amount of green slash will be limited. However, if green slash is generated from the harvest of dying trees, it is important to limit the build-up of green slash, so the likelihood of pine engraver beetles, Ips and other beetles, which can brood in green slash and which kill residual standing pine trees, is minimized. CAL FIRE Tree Note #3 discusses several techniques that may be used by forest landowners to reduce tree mortality by

reducing local bark beetle breeding sites and may be accessed at the following internet address:
<http://calfire.ca.gov/foreststeward/pdf/treenote3.pdf>

It is also important to avoid transporting infested material to uninfested areas.

When conditions are conducive to burning, burning material may be an option. However, burn bans are now in effect for all State Responsibility Areas. As drought conditions continue to increase fire danger across the State, CAL FIRE has suspended all burn permits for outdoor residential burning of dead vegetation like branches and leaves within the State Responsibility Area. However, if burning becomes an option once conditions for burning have improved, check with the local CAL FIRE Unit and the local Air District for daily burn conditions and status. More information can be found at the following internet address: http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_protection/fire_protection_burnpermits.php.

A directory of the local Air Districts can be accessed at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/capcoa/roster.htm>. Additional information on preparing for and preventing wildfires can be accessed at: www.ReadyForWildfire.org

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO REPLACE THE DEAD AND DYING TREES THAT HAVE BEEN REMOVED

Restoring post-outbreak areas is also critical. This may include planting, thinning, and fuel hazard reduction.

CAL FIREs Forestry Assistance Specialists may be contacted to provide appropriate resources. The California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP), in particular, may be helpful in this regard. CFIP provides technical assistance and cost share assistance to private forest landowners for activities that include management planning, site preparation, tree purchase and planting, timber stand improvement, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, and land conservation practices for ownerships containing up to 5,000 acres of forest land. More information about the program may be accessed at the following internet address:
http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_forestryassistance_cfip.php

Information on reforestation and obtaining seedlings in California may be accessed at the following internet address:
http://calfire.ca.gov/Grants/downloads/USFS_Seedling_Protocol.pdf

Finally, the El Dorado County Resource Conservation District facilitates online seedling sales. More information can be accessed at:
<http://eldoradorcd.org/>

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