

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION - CalFire

THE PERMIT PLACE

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AGENCY OVERVIEW

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

California Department of Forestry

Office: Mendocino Ranger Unit, 17501 N. Highway 101, Willits, CA 95490
(707) 459-7414 FAX: (707) 459-3041

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday

Fire Hazard Safety Zone Maps:

To review the Fire Hazard Safety Zone Maps for Mendocino County:

California Department of Forestry

Mendocino Ranger Unit, 17501 N. Highway 101, Willits, CA 95490 (707) 459-7414

Mendocino County Planning & Building Services Department

501 Low Gap Road, Room 1440, Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 463-4281

To purchase standardized (3' x 4') or customized Fire Hazard Safety Zone Maps and digital data:

Teale Data Center, GIS Technology Center

P. O. Box 13436, Sacramento, CA 95813-4436

(916) 263-1767, FAX (916) 263-1346

HOW TO APPLY FOR FIRE SAFE REGULATIONS CLEARANCES

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

In the early 1980's, the California legislature adopted "Fire Safe" regulations in response to devastating fires on California's wildlands. "California, because of its unique combination of vegetation, topography, climate, and population, has one of the most severe wildfire problems in the world. Rugged terrain and highly flammable vegetation make the foothills and mountains of California especially unsafe for residential development unless adequate fire safety measures are taken." A Fire Hazard Severity Classification System based on fire weather, fuel loading and slope has been developed as a basis for identifying fire hazard in State Responsibility Areas (SRA) where the California Department of Forestry has primary responsibility for wild fire protection, and development of Fire Safe regulations, including construction of adequate road and water systems, enforcement of fire safe building codes, and land use planning and zoning to guide development in these areas.

Fire Safe Program Intent

The intent of the Fire Safe program is to minimize the loss of structures, lives and resources due to uncontrolled wildfires. Fire Safe combines the philosophy of self protection with the concept of defensible space. Self protection places some of the burden of fire protection on the homeowner, builder or developer, incorporating basic fire protection measures into the home or development as it is built. The concept of defensible space provides a reasonably safe location from which fire fighters can protect a structure, with a greater potential of saving the structure. Each home, subdivision and development in the State Responsibility Area should have built into its design adequate emergency equipment access, building and street identification and a reasonable water supply for fire suppression needs. Every homeowner, developer and local government planner should understand the importance of planning for fire protection, the need to clear flammable vegetation around structures (PRC 4291), and the benefits of greenbelts and fuel breaks in and around subdivisions and developments.

Who Needs A Fire Safe Regulations Clearance?²

Any person or public agency proposing development within "State Responsibility Areas (SRA)" designated by the California Board of Forestry may be subject to the Fire Safe Regulations adopted by the State Board of Forestry in Title 14 of the California Administrative Code. In Mendocino County, SRA's encompass most of Mendocino County, with the exception of urbanized portions of the cities and valley floors generally; maps may be reviewed at CalFire Headquarters and the Planning and Building Services Department. CalFire has authority to issuance fire safe clearances for land within Fire Districts, if the area is designated as an SRA. These regulations govern emergency access standards, signing and addressing, emergency water supply, fuel modification and defensible space. The following activities trigger or initiate the application of specific standards:

- **Subdivisions:** Road, gate, emergency water, fuel modification and defensible space standards
- **Building Permits for New Construction:** Road, gate, fuel modification, defensible space standards
- **Activities Requiring a Use Permit:** Road, gate, fuel modification, defensible space standards
- **Siting Mobilehomes and Manufactured Homes:** Road, gate, fuel modification, defensible space standards
-

² Adapted from "Homeowners Summary of Fire Prevention and Loss Reduction Laws," California Department of Forestry

- **Road Construction (excluding existing roads):** Road, gate, fuel modification, defensible space, signing and addressing standards. Roads for agricultural or mining use on one ownership, roads used solely for managing or harvesting wood products, or roads required as a condition of a parcel map approved prior to May 30, 1991 are exempt.

What should I do first?

CalFire or Planning & Building Services staff can advise you whether a CalFire Fire Safe Regulations application is required for your project. A preliminary clearance from CalFire is required prior to submittal of most applications for new construction and development, excluding General Plan amendments and rezones. CalFire applications (State Fire Safe Regulations Application Form) are available from the CalFire office or the Planning & Building Services Department.

How do I apply for the Fire Safe Regulations clearances?

Submit the completed Fire Safe Regulations application to CalFire for Preliminary Clearance. The CalFire Preliminary Clearance is then submitted to the County with the application for development.

How long does it take to process the Fire Safe Regulations application?

Allow two weeks or longer, due to the CalFire staff responsibilities to provide fire protection as well as perform administrative duties.

What happens after I apply?

- **Application Filing.** The application will be assigned to a project coordinator who will review it for completeness. If it is not “deemed complete,” you will be notified of additional information or modifications required.
- **Staff Review.** The staff coordinator may site view the project site. Staff will evaluate application based on the Fire Safe Regulations adopted by the State Board of Forestry.
- **Staff Decision:** The staff coordinator will fill out a Preliminary Clearance checklist with the CalFire Fire Safe standards that apply to your project. If the project changes substantially during County review of your development, then CalFire may re-review and modify the Preliminary Clearance. After the project has been constructed, you will be required to obtain a Final Inspection.

What happens after my application is approved?

The application process has two steps. You must comply with the requirements of the Preliminary Clearance when constructing and operating your project. After the project has been constructed, but prior to occupancy or use, you must obtain a Final Inspection and Occupancy Permit.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS- FIRE SAFE REGULATIONS PERMIT PROCESS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

1. Why is CalFire involved in my building permit, subdivision permit or use permit?

Under Public Resources Code 4290, if specified development takes place on State Responsibility Areas (SRA) then it is mandated by law that CalFire respond to and make requirements of that application.

2. Why does CalFire care what I build?

CalFire doesn't care what you build, only that it meets the Fire Safe Regulations. We are concerned with where you build in relationship to wildland fuels and that proper access and signing and emergency water are available to fire fighters in case of a wildland fire.

3. Why can't I get this done at the County Building Department?

Mendocino County has not adopted an ordinance that is at least equal to the "State Fire Safe Regulations." Therefore, the administration and enforcement of those regulations lie with CalFire.

4. Why do I have to come to Howard Forest Headquarters?

The review of plans along with the on-site final inspections are performed by the CalFire Fire Prevention Section. That section consists of two people who also do Fire Prevention Education programs, Fire Investigation, Public/Media Relations and Law Enforcement out of this location.

5. Why can't I get this done over the counter?

As much as we would like, we cannot provide same day service. Our other emergency duties make appointment scheduling somewhat difficult. We can't always be sure we are going to be here, which may cause an even bigger inconvenience.

6. My property is in a Fire District—do I need a CalFire clearance?

All property within the State Responsibility Areas must comply with fire safe requirements, even if within a local Fire District.

7. CalFire used to go to Fort Bragg for appointments. What happened?

In looking at the time spent traveling to and from Fort Bragg to see 4-5 applicants, it was decided that CalFire could serve more people in that time frame by having applications dropped off or mailed to our office.

8. Why does it seem you are never in when I call?

Mendocino County covers a lot of area. We have two people to perform this function as well as many other duties. We try to return all calls by the next day and process all plans by the end of the week.

9. What is the cost?

There is NO cost for CalFire review and comment.

10. Will you need to come to the project site first?

CalFire does not need to visit the site first, unless questions cannot be satisfied over the phone or based on your application information.

11. How long does it take to receive a "Preliminary Clearance?"

Allow 2 weeks as a minimum. Emergency activity may increase that time frame.

12. What can I do to speed things up?

Read the application instructions. Fill out the application thoroughly and neatly. For single family residences, use the graph paper provided for the plot plan or provide an accurate, detailed plan. For minor or major subdivisions, provide tentative parcel maps.

13. What will I receive from CalFire?

You will receive your original application, along with a "Preliminary Clearance." After photocopying both, turn the originals into the County.

14. When will you be involved after the issuance of a "Preliminary Clearance" from your office?

At least two weeks before you are ready for a "Final Inspection for Occupancy" from the County, ask CalFire to perform our inspection. CalFire will mail the original Final Clearance to the County and you will receive a copy in the mail. The Final Clearance is based on the requirements spelled out in the Preliminary Clearance.

FIRE SAFE STANDARDS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

ROAD STANDARDS: CCR 1273/PRC 4290¹

- Two 9 foot traffic lanes (18 foot wide road surface)
- Minimum 40,000 lb. load capability (California Vehicle Code)
- Maximum grade 16 %
- Minimum vertical 15 foot clearance
- Minimum curve radius 50 feet

- Turnarounds shall be a minimum 40 foot radius or 60 foot hammerhead "T"
- Turnouts shall be a minimum 10 feet wide and 30 feet long, with a 25 foot taper at each end

- One-way roads shall be a minimum 10 feet wide, serve a maximum of 10 dwelling units and not exceed 2640 feet in length, and connect to a two-lane road at each end

- Dead-End Roads shall not exceed:
 - ◇ 800 feet for parcels zoned for less than 1 acre
 - ◇ 1320 feet for parcels zoned for 1 acre to 4.99 acres
 - ◇ 2640 feet for parcels zoned for 5 acres to 19.99 acres
 - ◇ 5280 foot for parcels zoned for 20 acres or larger
 - ◇ Turnarounds required every 1320 feet and at terminus

- Roads shall be named or numbered (non-duplicating in County) with approved signs posted at each intersection:
 - ◇ Minimum 3 inch letter height, 3/8 inch stroke
 - ◇ Reflectorized and contrasting with background color
 - ◇ Visible for 100 feet from both travel directions

BRIDGES: CCR1273.07/PRC 4290

- Minimum 40,000 pound load capability (California Vehicle Code) minimum 15 foot vertical clearance
- Appropriate signing including: weight limits, vertical clearance limitations, one-way road and single lane conditions shall reflect the capability of each bridge
- One lane bridges (if approved) shall provide an unobstructed visibility from one end to the other and turnouts at both ends

DRIVEWAY STANDARDS: CCR 1273.10/PRC 4290

- Minimum 10 foot width
- Minimum 15 foot vertical clearance
- Maximum 16 foot grade; up to 20% if paved
- Minimum 50 foot inside radius
- Driveways longer than 150 feet, but less than 800 feet require a turnout near the midpoint
- Turnout constructed every 400 feet if driveway exceeds 800 feet
- 40 ft. radius or 60 ft. hammerhead "t" turnaround required at building site for driveways longer than 300 feet and must be within 50 feet of building

¹ CCR means California Code of Regulations; PRC means Public Resources Code

- Address shall be posted at driveway entrance and shall be:
 - ◊ Posted at the beginning of construction and maintained thereafter.
 - ◊ Visible from both directions of travel
 - ◊ Sequential numbering issued by the county will be utilized
 - ◊ Minimum 3 inch letter height, 3/8 inch stroke
 - ◊ Reflectorized, contrasting with background color of the sign
 - ◊ Multiple addresses shall be on a single post

GATE ENTRANCES: CCR 1273.11/PRC 4290

- Gate entrances shall be at least 2 feet wider than width of the traffic lane(s) serving that gate.
- All gates providing access from a road to a driveway shall be located at least 30 feet from the roadway and open to allow a vehicle to stop without obstructing traffic on that road.
- Where a one-way road with a single traffic lane provides access to a gated entrance, a 40 foot turning radius shall be used.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE STANDARDS: CCR 1276.01/PRC 4290

- **Setback for structure Defensible Space**
 - ◊ All parcels 1 acre and larger shall provide a minimum 30 foot setback for buildings and accessory buildings from all property lines and/or the center of a road.
 - ◊ For parcels less than 1 acre, local jurisdictions shall provide for same practical effect

MAINTENANCE OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE: CCR 1272.00/PRC 4290

- Ensure the continued maintenance of properties in conformance with these standards.
- Ensure the availability, access and utilization of the defensible space as provided by these standards.
- Ensure for the annual maintenance of the defensible space as described in P.R.C. 4291.

EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY STANDARDS: CCR 1275/PRC 4290

As approved by the Inspection Authority, shall meet or exceed either:

- PUC Revised General Order #103, Sec. VIII or other applicable sections
- NFPA Standard 1231, or
- ISO Rural Class 8 Standard
- The local jurisdiction may require more, as these are minimum standards

Fire Hydrant (As required):

- Shall be 18 inches above grade
- Minimum 8 feet from flammable vegetation
- Minimum 4 feet and maximum 12 feet from roadway
- Minimum 50 feet and maximum 1/2 mile from building it serves
- 2 -1/2 inch or 4-1/2 inch male N.H. male fitting
- Suitable Crash Protection if Required by Local jurisdiction
- Located where fire apparatus using it will not block roadway
- Identified with a 3 in. reflectorized blue dot on driveway address sign, or placed within 3 feet of hydrant or using highway marker as specified by State Fire Marshal.

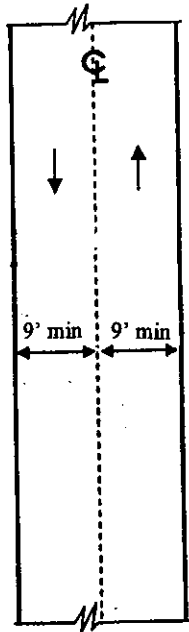
ROOFING

- Class A roof required

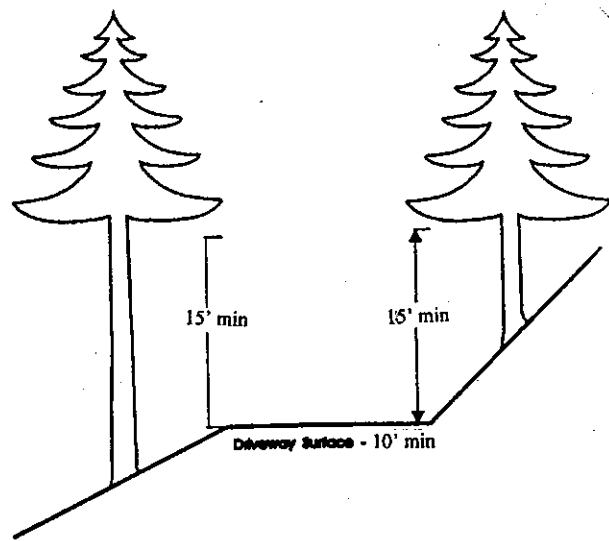
EXCEPTIONS: CCR 1270.07/PRC 4290

- CALFIRE may grant exceptions to standards and incorporate mitigation measures into the project.

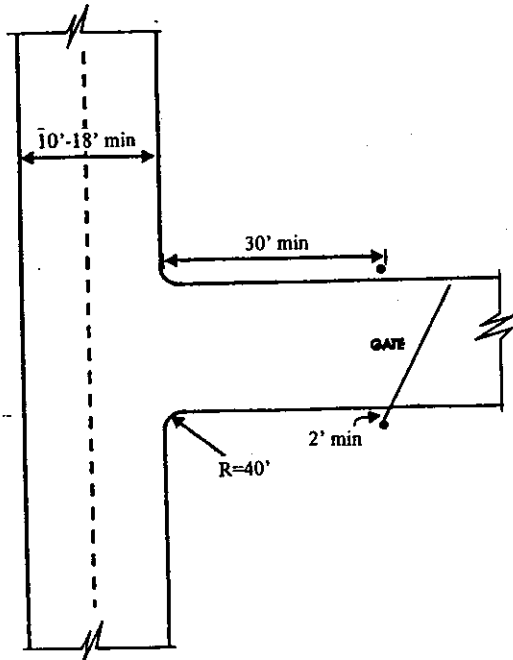
FIRE SAFE STANDARDS- GATES, ROADWAY WIDTHS & VERTICAL CLEARANCE
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION



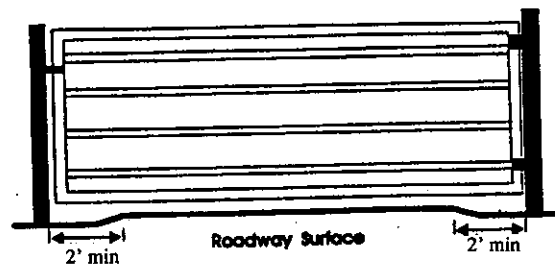
TWO-LANE ROAD



DRIVEWAY

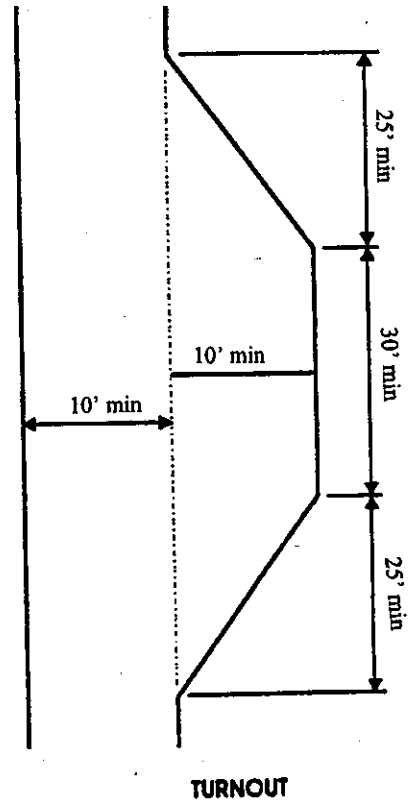
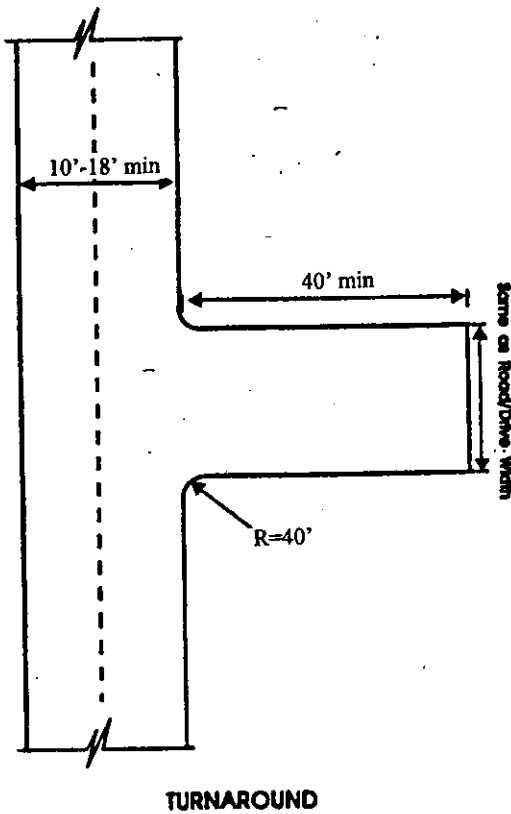
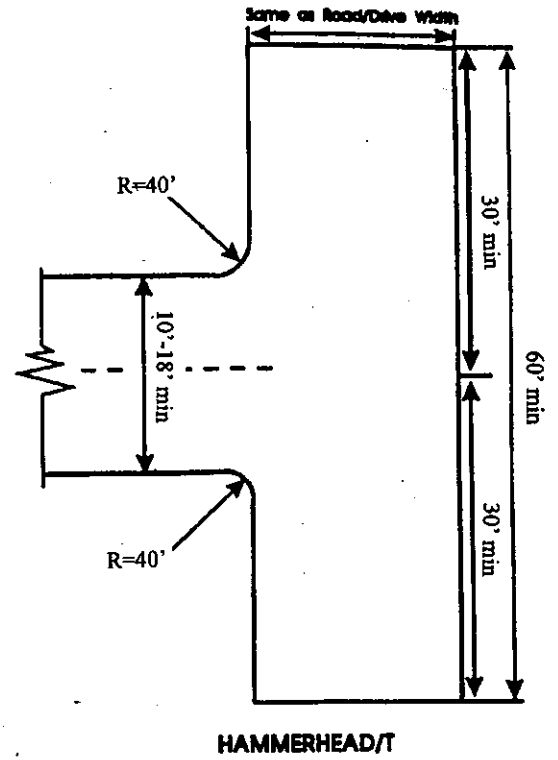
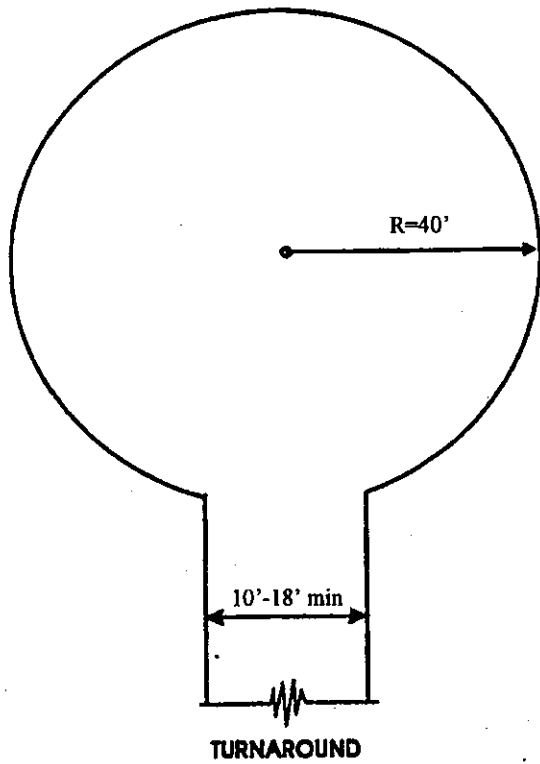


GATED ENTRANCES

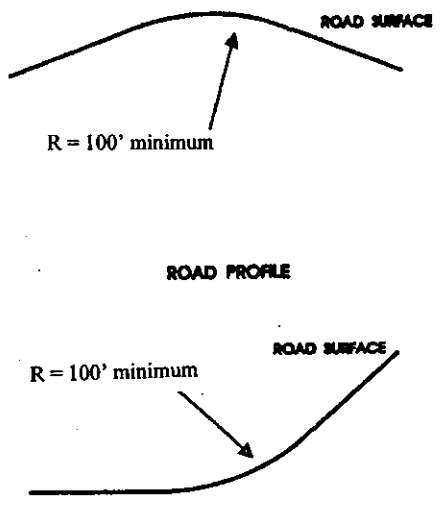


GATES

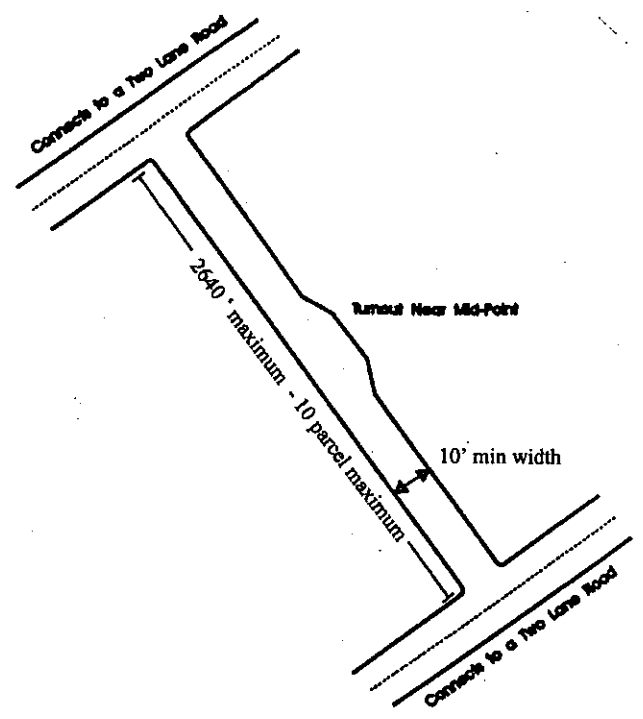
FIRE SAFE STANDARDS- TURNOUTS AND TURNAROUNDS
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION



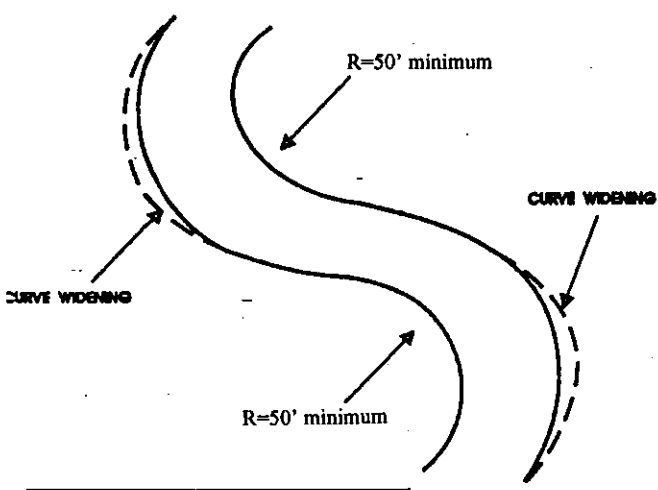
FIRE SAFE STANDARDS- CURVES, ADDRESSES AND ONE-WAY ROADS
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION



CHANGE OF GRADE (Vertical Curves)

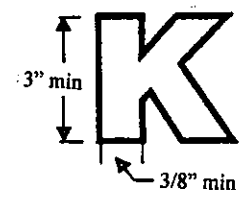
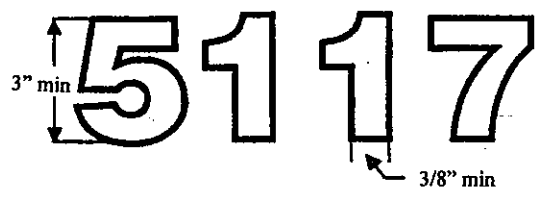


ONE-WAY ROAD



Curve Widening
 Radius 50' - 100' = Add 2' Width
 Radius 100' - 200' = Add 4' Width

CURVES & CURVE WIDENING



LETTERS & NUMBERS

FIRE SAFE REGULATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS LESS THAN 30' FROM PROPERTY LINE, ON PARCELS LESS THAN ONE ACRE

If you are constructing a building* closer than 30 feet from any property line on a parcel less than one acre in size, you must comply with one of the following:

- Class A rated roof and recorded easement to allow vegetation modification/clearances within 30 feet; or
- Class A rated roof and community water system that meets the water storage and hydrant requirements of Public resources Code 4290 (Fire Safe regulations); or
- Class A rated roof and fire resistive construction as defined below** on any wall which is less than 30 feet from a property line which is not perpendicular to the property line.

Definitions:

- * Accessory structures located at least 6 feet from another structure are exempt from these regulations.
- ** Fire resistive construction means construction designed to resist the migration of fire and the effects of thermal radiation and convection of hot gases. For purposes of determining the same practical effect pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Section 1276.01(b) fire resistive construction shall be limited to the following:
 - (a) Structural part: Any assembly approved in Table 43-A of the Uniform Building Code as one hour fire resistive (applies typically to steel buildings).
 - (b) Walls and partitions: Any assembly approved in Table 43-A of the Uniform Building Code of the Fire Resistive Design Manual as one hour fire resistive. All openings shall be protected with:
 - (1) Twenty minute assemblies, or
 - (2) Fixed glazing of wire glass, or
 - (3) Fixed dual glazing with permanent metal sun screens, or
 - (4) Shutter system using ¾ inch plywood or equivalent.
 - (c) Doors. Exterior doors shall be 20 minute or greater rated assemblies, or solid core with no portion less than 3/8 inch in thickness.