

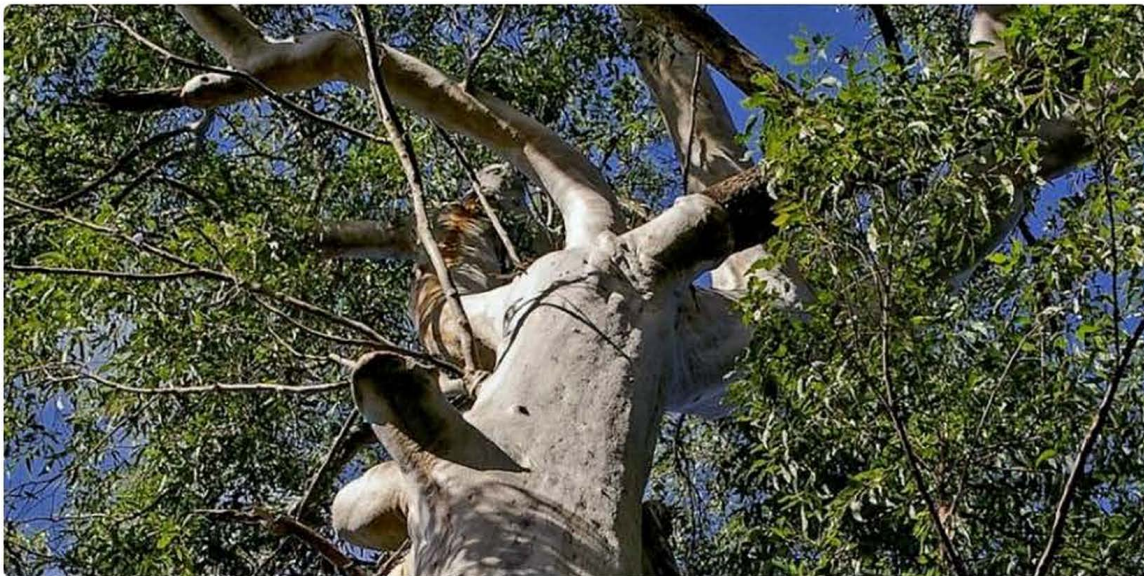
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### Planning and Building



## Permit Exemption for Hazardous Trees – Extended to July 1, 2026

### Only applicable to the Coastal Zone

July 1, 2025

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In advance of fire season and drought conditions, the Director of Planning and Building, in consultation with the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit and the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, has issued a

[Notice Regarding Permit Exemption for Tree Removal](#) and a [based on a request from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#). As described in the notice, the County has waived permit requirements and fees for the responsible removal of hazardous trees that present a significant fire hazard risk and a hazard to life and personal property, as demonstrated by meeting the criteria and requirements listed below.

## Criteria

1. The tree(s) are located within the unincorporated areas of the County of San Mateo (areas outside of any city limits).
2. The tree(s) are of the following species: Eucalyptus, pines, acacia, tan oak, and bay trees. If assistance is needed in determining whether a tree is of a species that is included in this exemption, please contact the Resource Conservation District at [fire@sanmateoRCD.org](mailto:fire@sanmateoRCD.org) and send them a photo of the tree(s).
3. Tree(s) are located: (1) within 100 feet of any habitable structure (including structures on properties adjacent to the property with the subject tree) or (2) within 30 feet of a public or private road necessary for emergency evacuations.
4. Such tree(s) meeting the above criteria must be removed during the period of July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026. No notice to the County is required.

## Requirements for Tree Removal Work

1. Person(s) who remove such tree(s) must have written permission from the owner of the property(ies) on which the tree trunk is located.
2. Person(s) who remove such tree(s) shall be responsible for ensuring that all associated debris is chipped and retained on site and/or properly disposed of.
3. Person(s) who remove such tree(s) shall be responsible for minimizing erosion and sedimentation. The following erosion control measures are recommended:
  - a. Seed area of disturbance or use the chipped wood as chipped mulch over the area of disturbed soil. Make sure to keep much away from foundations to deter termites and other pests.
  - b. [Staked fiber rolls](#) may be used around the area of disturbance.
  - c. Maintain erosion control measures continuously between October 1 and April 30.
  - d. Additional Erosion Control Options for Sloped Lots:
    - i. Keep tree roots in place on a hillside.
    - ii. Inspect your downspouts. Check and redirect water flow. Check to see where your downspouts and surface runoff flow. Direct downspouts so water flows away from the slope. Disperse water onto lawns or landscaped areas as far from the slope as possible.
    - iii. Redirect runoff with a flexible pipe. Consider using flexible piping to transport down-spout runoff away from the slope. Consider using a dispersement tray at



the end of the pipe to distribute the water over a larger area instead of concentrating it at one point. This can help deter erosion or pooling of water elsewhere in the yard. **Note:** It is illegal to discharge stormwater onto a property you do not own, including public property and storm drains. Ensure the stormwater stays on your property.

- iv. Install weed barriers using highly-permeable landscape fabric across the slope face to ensure runoff can soak into the ground. If multiple rows are needed, place the first layer at the top of the slope and overlap the next row of fabric on top of the previous layer to allow water to flow under the downhill layers. This will prevent water saturation from concentrating at any one point.
- v. Plant new trees using native, non-invasive species.
- vi. Biodegradable Straw Blankets on low to medium slopes (3:1 or 2:1) or biodegradable Jute Netting (up to 2:1 slope) to slow runoff and reduce erosion.
- vii. If reseeding, use a native grass mix.

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The San Mateo County Significant Tree Regulations (“Regulations”) generally require that a property owner secure a permit before removing a “significant tree,” which is defined as any tree with a trunk that has a circumference of thirty-eight inches (38”) or more when measured at four and one-half feet (4 1/2”) vertically above the ground. However, Section 12,020.1(c) of these Regulations provides an exemption from the requirement to secure a permit to remove a significant tree when a specified official, including the Community Development Director or an Officer of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, determines removal is necessary to “remove a hazard to life and personal property...”.

Property owners **must** still apply for a permit before removing “[significant](#)” redwood, Douglas fir, oaks (other than tan oaks), maples, buckeyes, and other trees not covered by the exemption.

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## Supporting Documents

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PDF

[Hazardous Tree Removal Permit Exemption Notice 2024-25](#)

320.19 KB

PDF

[Request from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2024-25](#)

225.88 KB

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