

## **Weed Abatement Frequently Asked Questions**

### **My home is in foreclosure, am I still responsible for the house and the property?**

**Yes/No-** Many banks during the foreclosure process have their own property preservation crews that will maintain the house, however your name still appears on the County Assessors Tax Record which is why you have received the notice, you still show as the legal owner. If you are in this situation please contact the Merced County Fire Department-Prevention Office, we will work with you and the bank to resolve any issues, communication here is the key.

### **Can I get an extension?**

**YES--**The Merced County Fire Marshal and only the Fire Marshal can grant a one –time 14- day extension for good cause, your request must be in writing, form available at our website: [www.co.merced.ca.us](http://www.co.merced.ca.us). **No extension will be granted after July 1<sup>st</sup>.**

### **I am an out of town owner, and rely on a contractor to maintain my parcel however he has not done it, am I still responsible?**

**Yes—**you cannot assume the necessary work has been completed by your contractor, if you are paying someone to take care of this, or relying on a share cropper to maintain your parcel, have them provide you with pictures when they complete the work, and contact the Merced County Fire Department Prevention office for final inspection.

### **I see a parcel that has weeds on it, can I report that?**

**Yes –**go to the nearest Merced County Fire Station and fill out a Hazard report, any report will be followed up by the Merced County Fire Prevention Office. You can also email us at: [Abatement@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:Abatement@co.merced.ca.us)

### **I live in the City of Merced can I report on my neighbors weeds?**

**Yes—**If you live within Merced City limits contact the Merced City Fire Prevention at (209) 385-6830.

### **It is June and I am afraid that if I disc or mow it will start a fire, should I still do the work?**

**Yes** –Take necessary precautions such as, disc or mow early in the morning when there is still some dew, have water handy for quick use, have an extra person to provide Fire Watch--- **Do not do any work in the heat of the day.**

**What are the requirements for weed abatement?**

Merced County Fire Department enforces the County ordinance 9.25 and its entirety.

**I have disc the weeds in May, but it rained and grew back a month later do I have to disc again?**

**Yes**— In Merced County weed abatement is not always a one- time event. A second disc or mowing may be necessary, it is the property owners responsibility to maintain abatement throughout the dry season. (Typically from April 1st-November 1st )

**My property is just an open field do I still need to follow County weed abatement ordinance?**

**Yes.**

**I never received a notice to clear the weeds on my property, can I still be fined and penalized?**

**Yes** – This notice may be sent by mail or otherwise delivered by a reliable method. The failure of any owner or responsible party to receive such a notice shall not affect the validity of any proceedings taken under this order, (Merced County Code Section 9.25.120).

**I have never had a notice to clear weeds before, is this a new ordinance?**

**No**—the ordinance with regards to weeds has been a Merced County Code for many years.

**I received notice that there are tires on my property to clean up but there aren't, why did I get this notice?**

The ordinance that Merced Fire Department cites 9.25 covers all of the following: rubber tires, abandoned vehicles, weeds, rubbish, and debris.

**Would a 12 feet disc be wide enough for a fire break?**

**No**—Property owners are required to maintain a 30 foot disc or 50 foot mowed fire break around all property lines and structures, per Merced County Ordinance.

**When does the Fire Department start inspecting properties for weeds?**

The local engine companies typically start in May with their first inspections and after 2-weeks a secondary inspections. After this time the Fire Prevention office staff will monitor parcels throughout the summer till November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**I received a 16-day notice for weed violation what should I do?**

First make sure you abate the weed problem within 16 days, if you have been cited in the past you will be invoiced for an administration fee of \$85.00. Starting on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of non-compliance fines/penalties can be assessed daily at a minimum of \$50.00 per day. After you have mitigated the weeds please call the Prevention office (209) 385-7344 x 4880 or email: [Abatement@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:Abatement@co.merced.ca.us) for final inspection.

**I received a 16 day notice to abate weeds but it is the wrong parcel, can I ignore this notice?**

NO---It is possible that your parcel was mis-identified, contact The Merced County Fire Prevention office (209) 385-7344 x 4880 or email: [Abatement@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:Abatement@co.merced.ca.us) to correct.

**I have a small pile of weeds, if I'm careful can I just burn it?**

NO---There are no burn days in Merced County during the dry season, for more information contact San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, (209) 557-6475 or visit their website: [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org)