



THE TOWN OF
CORTE MADERA
MARIN COUNTY CALIFORNIA

CORTE MADERA NEIGHBORHOOD CHIPPER PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

WHY THIS PROGRAM?

This program is one of many ongoing efforts to build community disaster preparedness and resilience by increasing fire danger awareness, by reducing fuel loads, and by identifying and designating feasible evacuation routes thereby making our community safer.

The Town of Corte Madera is sponsoring green waste chipper days in particularly high-risk fire neighborhoods Town-wide on a descending priority basis.

HOW IS PRIORITY DETERMINED?

There are many hillside neighborhoods that are designated as High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones by CAL FIRE and the Town of Corte Madera, or Elevated Fire Risk Tier 2 area (designated in yellow) and Extreme Fire Risk Tier 3 area (designated in red) by PG&E's Community Wildfire Safety Program. Unmitigated fuel loads, prevailing wind patterns, steep terrain, inadequate ingress and egress, and older construction put everyone in the community at risk. It is key to our fire defense strategy to build defensible space on our ridgelines and borders first, and then move on to neighborhoods of lesser risk.

DOES IT COST TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM?

Under the program, residents are responsible only for the labor and costs associated with brush removal, cutting, stacking, and staging them in locations deemed suitable by the Town.

The Town in turn will utilize contract labor to chip the materials on designated and pre-approved chipper days and dispose of them accordingly.

HOW IS THE CHIPPER PROGRAM FUNDED?

This program is funded through Measure F (sales tax override).

IS THIS PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO OTHER COMMUNITIES?

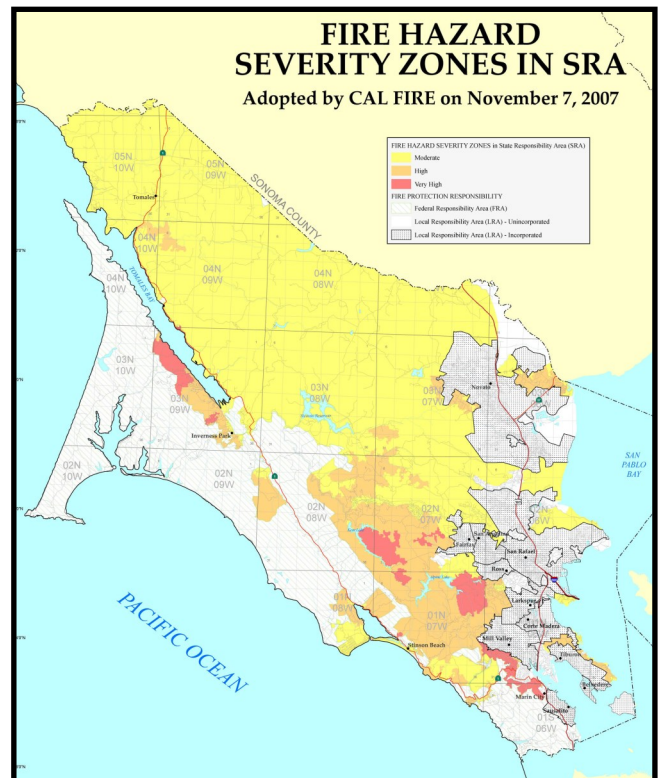
No. Measure F (the sales tax override) provides funding for investment only in the Town of Corte Madera.

IS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION VOLUNTARY?

Yes. However, the law requiring homeowners to maintain "Defensible Space" around their homes still applies.

WHAT VEGETATION SHOULD I BE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT?

Certain vegetation, including juniper, cypress, pampas/jubata grass, bamboo, acacia, French and Scotch broom, most conifer trees and eucalyptus are highly flammable and should be removed. If vegetation is replaced, property owners should choose only fire resistant species.



WHAT IS THE LAW?

The Fire Code and ordinances adopted by the Town designate specific zones that make up the 100' of Defensible Space required by law.

- **Noncombustible Zone (The Home): 0-5 Feet**

Hardening your home is critical and attention needs to be given to gaps/cracks/and openings being adequately sealed and or gaps closed. Cleaning-out gutters, choosing non-flammable patio furniture, using fire resistant materials closest to the house, and removing flammable vegetation and other fuels within 5 feet.

- **ZONE 1: 5 Feet to 30 Feet**

This zone extends out 30 feet from buildings, decks and other structures. Of import is to remove fire-prone plants and choose only fire resistant plants, and keeping them healthy and well irrigated; remove dead grasses, weeds, plants & foliage; trim trees to remove limbs 10' from the ground; remove branches that overhang your roof or within 10' of chimneys; move fire wood and lumber out of the zone; remove combustibles around and under decks and awnings; and clear vegetation around fences, sheds, outdoor furniture and play structures.



Fire prone plant species located within 30 feet, such as juniper, bamboo, pampas grasses, Italian cypress, and acacia should be removed.

- **ZONE 2: 30 Feet to 100 Feet (or to property line, whichever is nearer)**

Cut grasses and weeds to a maximum height of 4 inches. Provide horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees. Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs, and lower tree limbs. Remove all piles of dead vegetation to consist of leaves, needles, twigs, cones and small branches.

ROAD & DRIVEWAY CLEARANCE

- Property owners are responsible for vegetation adjacent to roads and driveways. Clear vegetation 14' overhead and 10' from sides of roads and driveways in the same manner as Defensible Space Zone 1, above. Maintain a minimum of 12' of unobstructed pavement for passage of vehicles and fire engines.

HOW IS THE LAW APPLIED?

- Annual Notice of Abatement to all homeowners no later than May 1
- Compliance Inspections begin on or after June 1
- Failure to comply with abatement requirements will result in a Wildfire Hazard Warning Notice requiring the Hazard to be abated within 15 days
- Residents who fail to comply will be noticed. The Town will hire subcontractors to abate the property to conform with the code. The bill for these services will be sent to the homeowner for payment.
- Failure to pay can result in a special assessment or lien against the property.
- For further questions you may contact Fire Marshal Ruben Martin of Central Marin Fire Department at rmartin@centralmarinfire.org.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON FIRE HAZARDOUS PLANTS? WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION ON FIRE RESISTANT PLANTS & TREES?

www.firesafemarin.org/plants

WHAT ARE THE GENERAL RULES OF THE PROGRAM?

- There is NO limit to the amount you can prepare for chipping or disposal
- The chipper days are limited to designated neighborhoods at pre-approved times
- No materials will be accepted after dark the day before your chipper date
- No logs larger than 6" diameter or shorter than 18" will be permitted
- Materials should be cut to lengths of 6-8 feet, no more than 4-6 inches in diameter
- Segregate invasive species (French broom, Scotch broom, Acacia). Those will be chipped separately and put in the landfill.
- All other limbs, branches, and brush will be in a second pile. The chipped material is available to anyone who would like to use it for mulch on a first-come, first-served basis. Unused materials will go to the recycling center for alternate distribution.
- Approved drop-off points will be designated by the Town. Do not place any materials anywhere other than the approved staging sites. That determination will be made by the Fire Marshal and Corte Madera Public Works Department in coordination with the Resilience Program Coordinator.
- Place the branches with the cut-ends facing the road, but not on the road. Please be as neat as you can as it makes the work go much faster.
- Follow the recommendations detailed on the description of Defensible space Zones.

WHERE CAN I GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

resiliencecoordinator@gmail.com

FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS FOR HOME LANDSCAPES

Selecting plants that may reduce your risk from wildfire

