

Santa Barbara City Fire Department - Standard Operating Procedures Prevention Operations	Code: P-VI-1
Fire Hazard Reduction Program / Vacant Lot Program	
Chpt: VI Fire Investigation and Enforcement Revised: 12/27/12 Pages: 2	

I. PURPOSE

Annual inspection program to ensure dry grasses and other vegetation does not pose a fire and/or life hazard on undeveloped lots.

II. REFERENCES

Santa Barbara City Municipal Code and the California Fire Code, 2010 Edition.

III. POLICY

The Fire Prevention Bureau shall annually mail Fire Hazard Reduction Program Letter and Vacant Lot Flier to owners of undeveloped (vacant) lots within the City on or about May 15th with a compliance date 30 days thereafter (June 15th) which coincides with the High Fire Hazard Area mailing.

IV. PROCEDURE

1. The Fire Prevention Administration Specialist shall mail Fire hazard Reduction Letter and Vacant Lot Flier on or around May 15th to owners of vacant lots within the City.
2. After June 15th the Fire Inspector responsible for the Fire Hazard Reduction Program shall inspect all of the listed parcels to ensure compliance has been achieved.
3. If the parcels have not been cleared the Fire Inspector will begin the enforcement procedure outlined in Chapter 8.08 of the Municipal Code.

V. ENFORCEMENT

1. Once the Fire Inspector has determined a parcel has not been cleared a Notice To Abate Fire Hazard letter will be sent requiring the owner to clear the lot to City standards within 30 days.
2. A reinspection will be conducted by the Fire Inspector on or after the 30 days. If the parcel is still not clear a Pre-Citation letter will be issued to the owner. Allow a minimum of 20 days for compliance per Municipal Code.
3. If the parcel has not been cleared by the Pre-Citation letter compliance date a Citation shall be issued and the matter filed with the City Attorney’s Office. The Fire Inspector shall coordinate with the Fire Inspector III to determine if the hazard warrants immediate action to hire a private contractor to clear the parcel and the parcel owner’s property be assessed per Municipal Code.

VI. ASSESSMENT

1. After the parcel has been cleared obtain an itemized receipt from the contractor within 2 days of the work being completed.
2. Coordinate with the Executive Secretary to be placed on the City Council Consent Calendar. Prepare a Council Agenda Report for charges incurred for the abatement and request Council to set a hearing date.

Fire Hazard Reduction Program / Vacant Lot Program

3. After the first hearing a notice shall be mailed via First Class mail to the owner of the parcel reporting the charges to the owner. In addition, publish in the newspaper's "Public Notice of Hearing" section. This must occur at least 10 days prior to the hearing date.
4. Once the City Council has approved the assessment contact the Finance Department to set payment and initiate the lien process.