



## **GUIDELINE 425 PROTECTED TREE CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Purpose:**

Questions arise about clearance requirements for protected trees in defensible space zones, and along access roads and driveways. This guideline is intended to provide information on what clearance work can be completed on protected trees, and when a permit may be required.

Defensible space zones extend 100 feet out from buildings. Several clearance requirements apply to trees within the defensible space zone that includes ground clearance, separation and spacing between trees, clearance from roofs and eaves, clearance from chimneys and stovepipes. Ref: VCFC Chapter 49, PRC 4291, GC 51182.

The full width of fire apparatus access roads, including driveways, shall be kept free of vegetation obstructions and shall have a vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches (4.15 m). Ref: VCFC Section 4907.9, VCFD Ordinance 29 Section 4.2.6; CCR Title 14.

### **Requirements:**

General requirements for all trees, including protected trees:

1. Trees must be limbed up off the ground 6 feet or 1/3 the height of the tree, whichever is less.
2. Dead branches must be removed and cleared.
3. There must be 3 feet of clearance above roofs, to the side and underneath roof and eave projections.
4. There must be 10 feet of vertical and horizontal clearance from chimneys and stovepipes.
5. There must be 13 feet 6 inches of vertical clearance along any fire apparatus access road, including driveways.
6. Additional requirements and limitations may be imposed by the Fire Department based upon site inspection and risk analysis of the property and area.

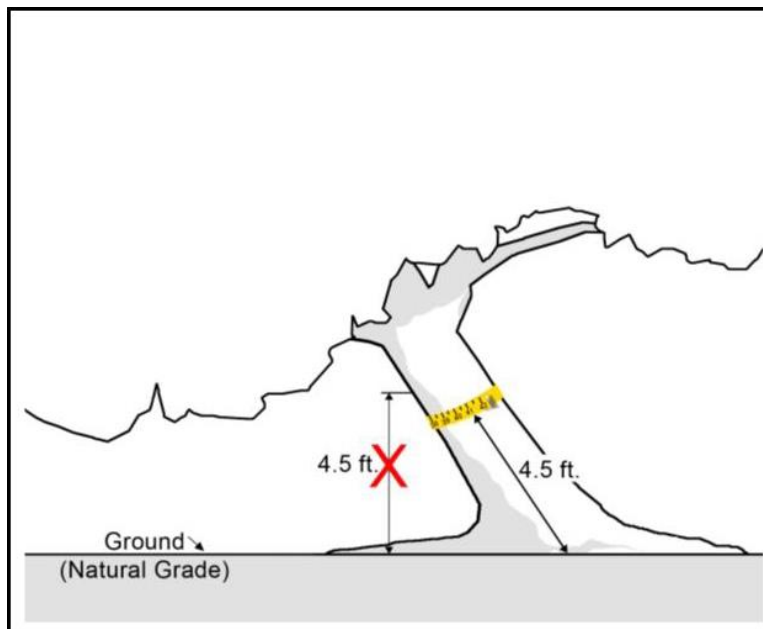
These requirements are included in the Fire Department's Fire Hazard Reduction Program, which can be found at <https://vcfd.org/fire-hazard-reduction-program-fhrp/>

### **Permits:**

The County of Ventura and most incorporated cities may require protected tree permits based upon the work being performed. All full tree removals will require a permit. Most use girth (circumference) as the measurement to determine permit requirements. If a permit is required, provide a copy of the Fire Department Notice with the tree permit application.

## How do I measure a tree's girth?

Circumference or Girth is a measurement of the distance around the trunk of a tree, generally measured at 4.5' above the ground. Circumference = diameter x 3.1416. Diameter = circumference / 3.1416.



## Unincorporated Areas Only:

<https://vcrma.org/docs/images/pdf/planning/tree-permits/Tree-FAQs.pdf>

From the FAQ:

- Pruning a protected tree for required fire brush clearance purposes does not require a tree permit.
- Removing a protected tree for fire brush clearance requires a ministerial tree permit.

## Incorporated Cities:

Please refer to each city for current information.

## Additional Information:

Please contact the FHRP unit at [fhrp@ventura.org](mailto:fhrp@ventura.org) or (805) 389-9759 if you have any questions regarding these items or visit our website [vcfd.org](http://vcfd.org) or [vcfhrp.org](http://vcfhrp.org) for additional information regarding fire hazard clearance requirements.