

Ready, Set, Go!

Protect your property against wildfire danger

If you live next to a natural area, the Wildland Urban Interface, you must provide firefighters with the defensible space they need to protect your home. The buffer you create by removing weeds, brush and other vegetation helps to keep the fire away from your home and reduces the risks from flying embers.

A home within one mile of a natural area is at risk of flying embers. Wind-driven embers can attack your home. You and your home must be prepared well before a fire occurs. Ember fires can destroy homes or neighborhoods far from the actual flame front of the wildfire.

Defensible space is the required space between a structure and the wildland area that, under normal conditions, creates a sufficient buffer to slow or halt the spread of wildfire to a structure. It protects the home from igniting due to direct flame or radiant heat. Defensible space is essential for structure survivability during wildfire conditions and for the protection to firefighters defending your home.

Take these important steps:

- Remove all dead or dying vegetation.
- Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet from structures and other trees.
- Remove leaf litter (dry leaves/pine needles) from yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Relocate woodpiles or other combustible materials into Zone Two.
- Remove combustible material and vegetation from around and under decks.
- Remove or prune vegetation near windows.
- Remove “ladder fuels” (low-level vegetation that allows the fire to spread from the ground to the tree canopy). Create a separation between low-level vegetation and non-vegetative materials such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing set, etc., from tree branches. This can be done by reducing the height of low-level vegetation and/or trimming low tree branches.
- Remove “ladder fuels.”
- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of four inches.
- Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Loose surface litter, normally consisting of fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches, shall be permitted to a depth of three inches if erosion control is an issue.



For more
information, visit
www.calfire.ca.gov

How Do I Remove Property Left Behind?

When tenants fail to remove all of their belongings after vacating

Disposing of a tenant's personal property after the tenant has vacated the unit can be a complex matter. When tenants fail to remove all of their personal property from units after vacating, it places the burden on the landlord to properly dispose of any remaining personal items. A landlord's removal of a tenant's personal property depends on the landlord's reasonable belief whether the property is "lost" or "abandoned." The landlord may also surrender the property to the tenant, which is a process initiated by the vacating tenant. California law provides for different rules for each method of removal.

Lost property

The landlord should first try to return the property to the tenant, if possible. If the landlord is unable to return the property, she or he should take the property to a local law enforcement agency if it is worth more than \$100 dollars. The local law enforcement agency may accept or reject property. If it rejects the property, the landlord should request its decision in writing for his or her own records. If the property is not accepted by the law enforcement agency, it is no longer considered lost and may be treated as if it were abandoned.

Abandoned property

The landlord should send the vacating tenant a Notice of Right to Reclaim Abandoned Property, which includes a description of the property, notice of storage costs, location to claim property and date by which property must be claimed. The landlord should serve the notice on the tenant. The landlord should safely store the vacating tenant's belongings until the deadline for retrieval. Once the vacating tenant pays the reasonable storage costs, the landlord should return the property. The landlord's ability to charge storage costs may be prohibited under certain circumstances. If the vacating tenant does not claim

the property by the deadline, the landlord must initiate a public sale of the property if it is worth \$700 dollars or more.

Surrender of property by landlord

As previously stated, the tenant initiates this process by submitting a written request to the landlord for return of his or her property within 18 days of vacating. The tenant's notice to the landlord should include a description of the requested property and a mailing address for the tenant. The landlord should serve the tenant a written demand within five days of receipt of the notice for reasonable costs of storage and removal. The landlord's demand should itemize the charges. The tenant should claim and remove the property within three days of payment to the landlord.

Whether the removal of personal property is initiated by the landlord or the vacating tenant, it is imperative that a landlord comply with the above rules that are required by law to avoid exposure to civil and/or criminal penalty.

Legal Disclaimer: This article offers general information and does not constitute legal advice. For legal advice concerning a specific matter, please contact The Law Office of Latisha McCray.



Latisha McCray

If you have any questions about unclaimed tenant property or other landlord-tenant matter, please contact Latisha McCray at 510-860-5330 or email lmccray@latishamccrayesq.com

Monique Broussard's Tips

Importance of owner conducted move-in inspection

One of the most common sources of resident/landlord disputes is the disposition of the resident's security deposit. Many of these potential problems can be resolved by using a move-in checklist before the resident takes possession of the rental. This is an excellent tool to protect you and your resident when the resident moves out.

The move-in inspection checklist is just as important as your lease or rental agreement and should be completed together prior to or at the time of move-in. If you are unable to complete the checklist together, then ask that all adults review and sign the form as soon as possible upon move-in. Be sure to give the resident a copy of the completed and signed form for their records.

It is important to update the checklist anytime you replace, upgrade or make improvements in the unit and have the resident initial the change.

Clearly documenting the good condition of the residence as well as all damaged and sub-standard items will help to refresh your memory and the residents at move-out.

Once the tenant gives or is given a notice to vacate, a move-out inspection should be scheduled. At this time you will complete the move-out checklist. This will help determine if there have been damages caused beyond normal wear and tear.

Taking these steps will reduce time, money, headaches, and litigation with security deposits disputes.



Need to report a change, request a rent increase, or list a new unit?

Please contact Monique Broussard at 415-491-2567 or mbroussard@marinhousing.org or landlord@marinhousing.org

Bed Bug Notification

A new California law

A new California law pertaining to bed bugs may apply to our landlords, even if your unit(s) has never had any bed bugs. Please carefully review California Civil Code Sections 1954.600 – 1954.605, which requires, among other things, landlords to provide a notice to all tenants.

Additional information can be found at: www.cdph.ca.gov – under the A-Z Index, select **Bed Bugs**. Below the general information there are clickable links to PDF files, including one entitled: *Guidance for Property Owners and Tenants on the Control and Prevention of Bed Bugs Infestations in California* Updated September 2017.





Landlord Portal

At your service

If you are a participating owner or agent please visit MarinHousingPortal.org, to access the following:

- Payment history for 18 months
- Letters mailed to owners
- Inspection reports
- 1099s

If you are having issues with the portal or need a username, please contact Landlord@marinhousing.org or 415-491-2579.



Any Questions For Our Team?

Here is our contact information:



4020 Civic Center Dr.
San Rafael, CA 94903

Office hours:
Monday–Friday
10:00 am–4:30 pm

Management

D'Jon Scott-Miller, Program Manager	415-491-2579	dscott-miller@marinhousing.org
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Accounting

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Eligibility Workers

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Administrative Staff

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Inspections

Nan McKay and Associates	415-684-9260	inspections@marinhousing.org
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