

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

**CHAPTER 22 – FIRE SAFE REGULATION**

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**22.010 Purpose.**

Mono County is rural in nature, primarily consisting of mountainous and high-desert terrain. The communities and inhabited portions of the unincorporated area of Mono County are generally located within, or in close proximity to, mountainous areas, forest-covered land, brush-covered lands, grass-covered lands, and similar lands that are subject to wildfires. In order to minimize the threat of wildfire spreading to occupied structures, and to supplement the educational and enforcement activities of Cal Fire (formerly the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection), local educational efforts, and enforcement of, defensible space requirements are reasonable and necessary and will benefit the public health and safety.

**22.020 Intent.**

These fire safe regulations are intended to provide the same practical effect as the State Responsibility Area Fire Safe Regulations, Public Resources Code Section 4290, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) and roofing requirements as specified in Government Code Sections 51178.5 and 51189 and Health and Safety Code Sections 13108.5 and 13132.7. The regulations establish basic wildland fire protection standards in the State Responsibility Areas of Mono County for emergency access; signing and building numbering; private water supply reserves for fire use; roof covering standards; and vegetation modification.

**22.030 Scope.**

These regulations do not apply to existing structures (except as specified in Sections 22.130 and 22.140), roads, streets and private lanes or facilities. These regulations shall apply as appropriate to all construction within State Responsibility Areas approved after October 1, 1991. Affected activities include but are not limited to:

- A. Permitting or approval of new parcels, excluding lot line adjustments as specified in Government Code (GC) Section 66412(d),

- B. Application for a building permit for new construction, not relating to an existing structure (except as specified in Section 22.140 Roof Covering Standards),
- C. Application for a use permit,
- D. The siting of manufactured homes (manufactured homes are as defined by the National Fire Protection Association, National Fire Code, Section 501A, Standard for Fire Safety Criteria for Manufactured Home installations, Sites and Communities, Chapter 1, Section 1-2, Definitions, page 4, 1987 edition and Health and Safety Code Sections 18007, 18008, and 19971),
- E. Road construction, including construction of a road that does not currently exist, or extension of an existing road,

Exemption: Roads required as a condition of tentative parcel maps prior to the effective date of these regulations; roads for agricultural or mining use solely on one ownership; and roads used solely for the management and harvesting of wood products.

**22.040 Provisions for Application of these Regulations.**

This chapter shall be applied as follows:

- A. Mono County shall provide Cal Fire (formerly the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) with notice of applications for building permits, tentative parcel maps, and use permits for construction or development within State Responsibility Areas.
- B. The Battalion Chief of Cal Fire, or his designee, shall review and make fire protection recommendations on applicable construction or development permits or maps provided by Mono County.
- C. The applicable sections of this chapter shall become a condition of approval of any applicable construction or development permit or map. Applicants should also consult with the applicable local fire protection district for possible additional requirements.

**22.050 Inspection Authority.**

- A. Inspection shall be made pursuant to Section 1270.06 of the California Code of Regulations by the Battalion Chief of Cal Fire. Applicable fire districts or Mono County departments may provide inspection assistance through the building or development permit process.
- B. Reports of violations shall be provided to the Cal Fire Battalion Chief, who administers State Responsibility Area fire protection for Mono County.

**22.060 Inspections.**

The inspection authority may inspect for compliance with these regulations. When inspections are conducted, they should occur prior to: the issuance of the use permit; certificate of occupancy; the recordation of the parcel map or final map; the filing of a notice of completion; or the final inspection of any project or building permit.

**22.070 Exceptions to Standards.**

Upon request by the applicant, exceptions to standards within this chapter and mitigated practices may be allowed by the inspection authority, where the exception provides equal to or better than overall practical effect as these regulations toward providing defensible space.

**22.080 Requests for Exceptions.**

Requests for an exception shall be made in writing to the inspection authority by the applicant or the applicant's authorized representative. The request shall state the specific section(s) for which an exception is requested, material facts supporting the contention of the applicant, the details of the exception or mitigation measure proposed, and a map showing the proposed location and siting of the exception or mitigation measure.

**22.090 Appeals.**

Where an exception is not granted by the inspection authority, the applicant may appeal such denial to the Mono County Planning Commission in accordance with Chapter 47, Appeals. Prior to the appeal hearing, the inspection authority shall be consulted and shall provide to the Planning Commission documentation outlining the effects of the requested exception on wildland fire protection.

If an appeal is granted, the Planning Commission shall make findings that the decision meets the intent of providing defensible space consistent with these regulations. Such findings shall include a statement of reasons for the decision. A written copy of these findings shall be provided to Cal Fire (formerly the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) Ranger Unit headquarters that administers State Responsibility Area fire protection in Mono County.

**22.091 Definitions.**

**"Accessory building"** means any building used as an accessory to residential, commercial, recreational, industrial, or educational purposes as defined in the California Building Code, 1989 Amendments, Chapter 11, Group M, Division 1, Occupancy that requires a building permit.

**"Agriculture"** means land used for agricultural purposes as defined in land use designations of the Mono County General Plan Land Use Element.

**"Building"** means any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy that is defined in the California Building Code. For the purposes of this chapter, building includes mobile homes and manufactured homes, churches, and day care facilities.

**"Cal Fire"** is the former California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

**"Dead-end road"** means a road that has only one point of vehicular ingress/egress, including cul-de-sacs and looped roads.

**"Defensible space"** means the area within the perimeter of a parcel, development, neighborhood or community where basic wildland fire protection practices and measures are implemented, providing the key point of defense from an approaching wildfire or defense against encroaching wildfires or escaping structure fires. The perimeter as used in this regulation is the area encompassing the parcel or parcels proposed for construction and/or development, excluding the physical structure itself. The area is characterized by the establishment and maintenance of emergency vehicle access, emergency water reserves, street names and building identification, and fuel modification measures.

**"Development"** means as defined in Section 66418.1 of the California Government Code.

**"Battalion Chief"** replaces the director of the former California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection or his/her designee.

**"Driveway"** means a vehicular access that serves no more than two buildings, with no more than three dwelling units on a single parcel, and any number of accessory buildings.

**"Dwelling unit"** means any building or portion thereof that contains living facilities, including provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking and/or sanitation for not more than one family.

**"Exception"** means an alternative to the specified standard requested by the applicant that may be necessary due to health, safety, environmental conditions, physical site limitations or other limiting conditions such as recorded historical sites, that provides mitigation of the problem.

**"Firebreak"** shall mean an area of land within 30 feet of an occupied dwelling or structure or to the property line, whichever is closer, in which all flammable vegetation or other combustible growth has been removed. The creation of a firebreak shall not require the removal of single specimens of trees or other vegetation that is well-pruned and maintained so as to effectively manage fuels and not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from other nearby vegetation to any dwelling or structure.

**"Fire valve"** see hydrant.

**"Fuel modification area"** means an area where the volume of flammable vegetation has been reduced, providing reduces fire intensity and duration.

**"Greenbelts"** means a facility or land use, designed for other than fire protection, which will slow or resist the spread of a wildfire. Includes parking lots, irrigated or landscaped areas, golf courses, parks, playgrounds, maintained vineyards, orchards or annual crops that do not cure in the field

**"Hammerhead/T"** means a roadway that provides a "T" shaped, three-point turnaround space for emergency equipment, being no narrower than the road that serves it.

**"Hydrant"** means a valved connection on a water supply/storage system, having at least one 2-1/2 inch outlet, with male American National Fire Hose Screw Threads (NH) used to supply fire apparatus and hoses with water.

**"Local Jurisdiction"** means a County/Town agency or department that issues or approves building permits, use permits, tentative maps or tentative parcel maps, or has authority to regulate development and construction activity.

**"Occupancy"** means the purpose for which a building, or part thereof, is used or intended to be used.

**"One-way road"** means a minimum of one traffic lane width designed for traffic flow in one direction only.

**"Roads, streets, private lanes"** means vehicular access to more than one parcel; access to any industrial or commercial occupancy; or vehicular access to a single parcel with more than two buildings or four or more dwelling units.

**"Roadway"** means any surface designed, improved, or ordinarily used for vehicle travel.

**"Roadway structures"** means bridges, culverts, and other appurtenance structures that supplement the roadway bed or shoulders.

**“Reduced-Fuel Zone”** shall mean an area between 30 and 100 feet of an occupied dwelling or occupied structure or to the property line, whichever is closer, in which all brush, flammable vegetation or combustible growth has been removed. The creation of a reduced fuel zone shall not require the removal of single specimens of trees or other vegetation that is well-pruned and maintained so as to effectively manage fuels and not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from other nearby vegetation to a dwelling or structure. Grass and other vegetation located more than 30 feet from the dwelling or structure and less than 18 inches in height above the ground may be maintained where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.

**“Same Practical Effect”** means as used in this chapter, means an exception or alternative with the capability of applying accepted wildland fire suppression strategies and tactics, and provisions for fire fighter safety, including:

1. Access for emergency wildland fire equipment,
2. Safe civilian evacuation,
3. Signing that avoids delays in emergency equipment response,
4. Available and accessible water to effectively attack wildfire or defend a structure from wildfire, and
5. Fuel modification sufficient for civilian and fire fighter safety.

**“Shoulder”** means roadbed or surface adjacent to the traffic lane.

**“State Board of Forestry (SBOF)”** means a nine-member board, appointed by the Governor, which is responsible for developing the general forest policy of the state, for determining the guidance policies of Cal Fire (formerly the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection), and for representing the State's interest in federal land in California.

**“State Responsibility Area (SRA)”** means as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4126-4127: and the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Article 1, Sections 1220-1220.5.

**“Structure”** means that which is built or constructed, an edifice or building of any kind, or any piece of work artificially built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner.

**“Subdivision”** means as defined in Section 66444 of the Government Code.

**“Traffic lane”** means the portion of a roadway that provides a single line of vehicle travel.

**“Turnaround”** means a roadway, unobstructed by parking that allows for a safe opposite change of direction for emergency equipment. Design of such area may be a hammerhead/T or terminus bulb.

**“Turnout”** means a widening in a roadway to allow vehicles to pass.

**“Vertical clearance”** means the minimum specified height of a bridge or overhead projection above the roadway.

**“Wildfire”** is as defined in Public Resources Code Sections 4103 and 4104.

**22.092. Distance Measurements.**

All specified or referenced distances are measured along the ground, unless otherwise stated.

**22.100. Maintenance of Defensible Space Measures.**

To ensure continued maintenance of properties in conformance to these standards and measures and to assure continued availability, access, and utilization of the defensible space provided for in these standards during a wildfire, provisions for annual maintenance shall be included in the development plans and/or shall be provided as a condition of the permit, parcel or map approval.

**22.110 Emergency Access.**

Road and street networks, whether public or private, unless exempted under Section 22.020(e), shall provide for safe access for emergency wildland fire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently, and shall provide unobstructed traffic circulation during a wildfire emergency consistent with this section.

A. Road Width.

All roads shall be constructed to provide a minimum of two nine-foot traffic lanes providing two-way traffic flow, unless other standards are provided in this chapter, or additional requirements are mandated by local jurisdictions or county subdivision requirements.

B. Roadway Surface.

The surface shall provide unobstructed access to conventional-drive vehicles, including sedans and fire engines. Surfaces should be established in conformance to local ordinances, and be capable of supporting a 40,000- pound load.

C. Roadway Grades.

The grade for all roads, streets, private lanes and driveways shall not exceed 16 percent.

D. Roadway Radius.

1. No roadway shall have a horizontal inside radius of curvature of less than 50 feet and additional surface width of 4 feet shall be added to curves of 50-100 feet radius; 2 feet to those from 100-200 feet.
2. The length of vertical curves in roadways, exclusive of gutters, ditches, and drainage structures designed to hold or divert water, shall be not less than 100 feet.

E. Roadway Turnarounds.

Turnarounds are required on driveways and dead-end roads as specified in this article. The minimum turning radius for a turnaround shall be 40 feet from the center line of the road. If a hammerhead/T is used, the top of the "T" shall be a minimum of 60 feet in length.

F. Roadway Turnouts.

Turnouts shall be a minimum of 10 feet wide and 30' long with a minimum 25-foot taper on each end.

G. Roadway Structures.

1. All driveway, road, street, and private lane roadway structures shall be constructed to carry at least the maximum load and provide the minimum

vertical clearance as required by Vehicle Code Sections 35550, 35750, and 35250.

2. Appropriate signing, including but not limited to weight or vertical clearance limitations, one-way road or single lane conditions, shall reflect the capability of each bridge.
3. A bridge with only one traffic lane may be authorized by the local jurisdiction; however, it shall provide for unobstructed visibility from one end to the other and turnouts at both ends.

H. One-Way Roads.

All one-way roads shall be constructed to provide a minimum of one 10-foot traffic lane. The County/Town may approve one-way roads. All one-way roads shall connect to a two-lane roadway at both ends, and shall provide access to an area currently designated for no more than 10 dwelling units. In no case shall it exceed 2,640 feet in length. A turnout shall be placed and constructed at approximately the midpoint of each one-way road.

I. Dead-End Roads.

1. The maximum length of a dead-end road, including all dead-end roads accessed from that dead-end road, shall not exceed the following cumulative lengths, regardless of the number of parcels served:

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| a. parcels designated for less than one acre        | 800 feet   |
| b. parcels designated for one acre to 4.99 acres    | 1,320 feet |
| c. parcels designated for five acres to 19.99 acres | 2,640 feet |
| d. parcels designated for 20 acres or larger        | 5,280 feet |

All lengths shall be measured from the edge of the roadway surface at the intersection that begins the road to the end of the road surface at its farthest point. Where a dead-end road crosses areas of differing parcel sizes, requiring different length limits, the shortest allowable length shall apply.

2. Where parcels are designated five acres or larger, turnarounds shall be provided at a maximum of 1,320-foot intervals.
3. Each dead-end road shall have a turnaround constructed at its terminus.

J. Driveways.

All driveways shall provide a minimum 10-foot traffic lane and unobstructed vertical clearance of 15 feet along its entire length.

1. Driveways exceeding 150 feet in length, but less than 800 feet in length, shall provide a turnout near the midpoint of the driveway. Where the driveway exceeds 800 feet, turnouts shall be provided no more than 400 feet apart.
2. A turnaround shall be provided at all building sites on driveways over 300 feet in length, and shall be within 50 feet of the building.

K. Gate Entrances.



1. Gate entrances shall be at least two feet wider than the width of the traffic lane(s) serving that gate.
2. All gates providing access from a road to a driveway shall be located at least 30 feet from the roadway and shall open to allow a vehicle to stop without obstructing traffic on that road.
3. Where a one-way road with a single traffic lane provides access to a gated entrance, a 40-foot turning radius shall be used.

**22.120 Signing and Building Numbering.**

To facilitate locating a fire and to avoid delays in response, all new and existing or approved roads, streets, and buildings shall be designated by names or numbers, posted on signs clearly visible in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property and legible from the roadway. This section shall not restrict the size of letters or numbers appearing on street signs for other purposes.

- A. Streets and roads shall be identified with approved signs. Temporary signs shall be installed at each street intersection when construction of new roadways allows passage by vehicles. Signs shall be of an approved size, weather resistant and be maintained until replaced by permanent signs.
- B. Size of Letters, Numbers and Symbols for Street and Road Signs.  
Size of letters, numbers, and symbols for street and road signs shall be a minimum of 4-inch letter height, 1/2-inch stroke, reflectorized, contrasting with the background color of the sign.
- C. Visibility and Legibility of Street and Road Signs  
Road, street and private lane signs required by this chapter shall be installed prior to final acceptance by the County/Town of road improvements.
- D. Addresses for Buildings  
All buildings shall be issued an address by the County/Town that conforms to the County/Town overall address system. Accessory buildings will not be required to have a separate address; however, each dwelling unit within a building shall be separately identified.
- E. Size of Letters, Numbers and Symbols for Addresses  
Size of letters and symbols for addresses shall be a minimum 4-inch letter height, 1/2-inch stroke, reflectorized, contrasting with the background color of the sign. Address numbers shall be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters.
- F. Installation, Location and Visibility of Addresses
  1. All buildings shall have a permanently posted address, which shall be placed at each driveway entrance and visible from both directions of travel along the road. In all cases, the address shall be posted at the beginning of construction and shall be maintained thereafter, and the address shall be visible and legible from the road on which the address is located fronting the property.
  2. Address signs along one-way roads shall be visible from both the intended direction of travel and opposite direction.
  3. Where multiple addresses are required at a single driveway, they shall be mounted on a single post.



4. Where a roadway provides access solely to a single commercial or industrial business, the address sign shall be placed at the nearest intersection providing access to that site.

- G. Numbering standards herein are minimum and may be greater as approved by the Mono County Building Division for buildings or Department of Public Works for streets and roadways.

**22.130 Emergency Water Standards.**

Emergency water for wildfire protection shall be available and accessible in quantities and locations specified in the statute and these regulations, in order to attack a wildfire or defend property from a wildfire. Such emergency water may be provided in a fire agency mobile water tender, or naturally occurring water source provided that source contains a minimum of 2,500 gallons of available water year round and, in the Wheeler Crest and Long Valley fire protection districts, has access acceptable to the fire district, or man-made containment structure with required fire department connections, as long as the specified quantity is immediately available.

A. Application

The provisions of this article shall apply when new parcels are approved after October 1, 1991, by a county/town or when any existing parcel is developed within the Long Valley or Wheeler Crest fire protection districts regardless when the parcel was created. The emergency water system shall be available on site prior to the completion of road construction, where a community water system is approved, or prior to the completion of building construction, where an individual system is approved.

For the purposes of this section, “developed” shall not apply to accessory buildings for, or additions to, existing residential structures.

B. General Standards

Water systems that meet or exceed the standards specified in Public Utilities Commission of California (PUC) revised General Order #103, Adopted June 12, 1956 (Corrected September 7, 1983, Decision 83-09-001), Section VIII Fire Protection Standards and other applicable sections relating to fire protection water delivery systems, static water systems equaling or exceeding the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1231, "Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting," 1989 Edition, or, in all areas except Long Valley and Wheeler Crest fire protection districts, a mobile water system that meets the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rural Class 8, 2nd Edition 3-80, standard shall be accepted as meeting the requirements of this article. These documents are available at CAL FIRE Ranger Unit Headquarters.

Nothing in this article prohibits the combined storage of emergency wildfire and structural fire-fighting water supplies unless so prohibited by local ordinance or specified by the local fire agency.

Freeze protection shall be provided as required by the California Plumbing Code and NFPA 13.

C. Hydrant/Fire Valve

1. The hydrant or fire valve shall be 18 inches above grade, 8 feet from flammable vegetation, no closer than 4 feet nor farther than 12 feet from a roadway, and in a location where fire apparatus using it will not block the roadway.

The hydrant or other off-site fire department connection serving any building shall be:

- a. Not less than 50 feet nor more than ½-mile by road from the building it is to serve. In the Long Valley and Wheeler Crest fire protection districts, the distance shall be not less than 50 feet or more than 1,000 feet by road from the building it is to serve.
  - b. Located at a turnout or turnaround along the driveway to that building or along the road that intersects with that driveway.
2. The hydrant head or fire valve shall be brass with 2-1/2 inch National Hose male thread with cap for pressure and gravity flow systems and 4-1/2-inch draft systems. Such hydrants shall be wet or dry barrel as required by the delivery system. They shall have suitable crash protection as required by the local jurisdiction.

**D. Signing of Water Sources**

Each hydrant/fire valve or access to water shall be identified as follows:

1. If located along a driveway, a reflectorized blue marker, with a minimum dimension of 3 inches shall be located on the driveway address sign and mounted on a fire-retardant post, or
2. If located along a street or road,
  - a. A reflectorized blue marker, with a minimum dimension of 3 inches, shall be mounted on a fire-retardant post. The sign post shall be within 3 feet of said hydrant/fire valve, with the sign no less than 3 feet nor greater than five feet above ground, in a horizontal position and visible from the driveway, or
  - b. As specified in the State Fire Marshal's Guidelines for Fire Hydrant Markings Along State Highways and Freeways, May 1988.

**E. Maintenance**

Ongoing maintenance of required water supply(s) shall be the responsibility of the property owner.

**22.140 Roof Covering Standards**

- A. Class A roof covering(s) as defined in the California Building Code, shall apply for every new building(s) and all reroofing of existing building(s) and shall be verified by field inspection.
1. The installer of the roof covering shall provide certification of the roof covering classification to the building owner and, when requested, to the Mono County Building Division. The installer shall also install the roof covering in accordance with the manufacturer's listing.
  2. The roofing material shall have passed a minimum 10-year accelerated weather test approved by a testing laboratory recognized by the State Fire Marshal.
  3. This section shall not apply to any building or facility designated as an historic building, as defined in Section 18955.

**22.150 Defensible Space and Fire Hazards Reduction.**

A. Requirements

1. Property shall be maintained in accordance with the defensible space requirements contained in Government Code section 51182 (unless exempted by Government Code section 51183 or 51184) and Public Resources Code section 4291, as applicable.
2. The existence or maintenance of any of the following conditions is prohibited:
  - a. Tree branches within 10 feet of a chimney outlet or stovepipe outlet;
  - b. Dead or dying tree branches adjacent to or overhanging a building;
  - c. Leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth on the roof of any structure;
  - d. Flammable vegetation or other combustible growth within 30 feet of an occupied dwelling or structure which prevents the creation of a Firebreak;
  - e. Brush, flammable vegetation, or combustible vegetation located between 30 and 100 feet of an occupied dwelling or structure which prevents the creation of a Reduced Fuel Zone; or
  - f. Brush or other flammable material within 10 feet of a propane tank.
3. No person shall be required to maintain any clearing on any land if that person does not have the legal right to maintain the clearing, nor is any person required to enter upon or damage property that is owned by another person without the consent of that person.
4. The prohibitions contained in paragraph 3 shall not apply to land or water area located outside of a State Responsibility Area that are acquired or managed for one or more of the following purposes or uses:
  - a. Habitat for endangered or threatened species, or any species that is a candidate for listing as an endangered or threatened species by the state or federal government.
  - b. Lands kept in a predominantly natural state as habitat for wildlife, plant, or animal communities.
  - c. Open-space lands that are environmentally sensitive parklands.
  - d. Other lands having scenic values, as declared by the local agency or by state or federal law.

B. Local Enforcement

1. Any County personnel performing health and safety functions, including but not limited to, paramedics, building inspectors, and code compliance officers, may be trained and assigned to conduct general property inspections to determine compliance with the provisions of 22.150, provide educational materials and instruction concerning defensible space requirements to owners and occupiers of structures, and to issue correction notices to owners and occupiers of structures to gain compliance with the provisions of 22.150. Any duly designated person assigned by a local fire protection

district may be trained and assigned to conduct general property inspections to determine compliance with the provisions of 22.150, provide educational materials and instruction concerning defensible space requirements to owners and occupiers of structures, and to issue correction notices to owners and occupiers of structures to gain compliance with the provisions of 22.150.

2. If an owner or occupier of a structure fails to comply with a correction notice issued to them, the person or entity that issued the correction notice may follow up the correction notice with a second correction notice that shall include a warning that the failure to make the necessary corrections may result in enforcement action pursuant to Chapter 1.12 of the Mono County Code or any other enforcement action or remedy allowed by law.
3. Mono County Code Compliance Officers may take any necessary enforcement action upon receipt of a second correction notice. The proposed enforcement action shall take into consideration the degree of the danger posed by the lack of compliance with the defensible space requirements.
4. Forms may be created for use by County personnel and fire protection district personnel in implementing this section.
5. The provisions in this section are intended solely to supplement, and not supersede, replace, or modify the enforcement provisions set forth in Public Resource Code Section 4291.

C. Applicability

1. Defensible space requirements shall apply to existing structures and shall be required for the following applications for which approval has not been granted as of the effective date of this chapter:
  - a. Applications for building permits as provided in Mono County Code Chapter 15.04.
  - b. Applications for tentative subdivision final and parcel maps.
  - c. Applications for use permits when applicable.

D. Exceptions and Modifications

1. An exception to, or modification of, the regulations set forth 22.150 may be authorized whenever a finding is made by [the Community Development Director] that the exception or modification provides an overall practical effect of creating defensible space and/or where site-specific conditions, including previously required development mitigation conditions to preserve wildlife or botanical habitat preservation have been required. When considering such site-specific exemptions or modifications, the [Community Development Director] may consult with experts in the fields of wildfire protection and wildlife and botanical habitat preservation in reaching an appropriate level of modification. When an exception is requested for a site that is located within an established community, the [Community Development Director] may consult with the designated representative of the local fire protection district in determining the requested exception or modification.