

## TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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# NEWS ADVISORY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **TRPA, FIRE CHIEFS IN AGREEMENT ON FIRE SAFETY RULES**

**STATELINE, NV** – The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and area fire chiefs have reached agreement on eight of nine issues brought forward to TRPA by the fire chiefs to help improve fire safety around the Tahoe Basin, TRPA announced today.

With the endorsement of the Catastrophic Wildfire Prevention Committee of the TRPA Governing Board, the agreement will be outlined at a meeting of the California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission tomorrow, Friday, October 12, near Tahoe City.

The chiefs recommended the changes last month in a joint letter to the commission outlining specific areas in which changes to TRPA practices or ordinances might be needed to be more consistent with fire safety standards. In a meeting Oct. 5, TRPA and fire agencies swiftly reached agreement on most points. In most instances, no changes to TRPA rules will be necessary to satisfy the concerns.

“By cooperating and working hard to address these issues swiftly, TRPA and Tahoe Basin fire professionals were able to settle most of the concerns in the space of a few hours,” said, Mike Vollmer, TRPA Vegetation Program Manager. “In most cases, we determined no changes to TRPA ordinances would

be necessary for the fire professionals to enforce defensible space regulations. We intend to settle any remaining questions swiftly as well.”

Agreements include:

- Raising from 6 to 14 inches diameter the size of a tree that can be removed without a permit within the defensible space zone for fire protection. (Ordinance change needed).
- Including fire agency review of emergency vehicle access plans to properties and therefore addressing land coverage issues before they become problematic for property owners. (No ordinance change needed).
- Maintaining the current practice of installing a 5-foot non-combustible “moat” around structures as one option during the implementation of best management practices. Currently, gravel and rock infiltration trenches around foundations are not counted toward allowable land coverage. (No ordinance change needed).
- Allowing 100 feet of defensible space around homes and 300 feet on steep slopes. (No ordinance change needed--TRPA has no conflicting regulations).
- Requiring further discussion are questions surrounding the use of pine needles for erosion control in the 5 to 30-foot-zone around homes when creating defensible space for fire protection. TRPA includes the use of pine needles among the acceptable erosion control options in this zone. “We are confident that this one remaining issue will be resolved with the help of a technical advisory group including representatives of the fire agencies, erosion control experts and TRPA multi-disciplinary staff,” Vollmer said. “Options other than pine needles and wood chips are available for homeowners who manage erosion on their properties and we’re confident we can iron out the details by working together.”

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