



Summary of Fire Safety Standards

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

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Standards Summarized:

- California Code of Regulations, Title 14; section 1270 et seq (“SRA/VHFHSZ Fire Safe Regulations”)

Available online at: <https://casetext.com/regulation/california-code-of-regulations/title-14-natural-resources> or at the Planning and Building Services Department (707 Nevada Street, Susanville, CA 96130).

- Lassen County Code Chapter 9.16 (Fire Hazards)

Available online at: qcode.us/codes/lassencounty/ or at the Planning and Building Services Department (707 Nevada Street, Susanville, CA 96130).

Lassen County Fire Warden’s Office
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
697-345 Highway 36
Susanville, CA 96130
Office: (530) 257-4171

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to summarize certain building standards applicable to development on existing lots or parcels. There are additional standards detailed in the above regulations that are applicable to the subdivision of property that are not detailed in this document. Information regarding requirements for the subdivision of property can be found in the Department’s bulletins titled “Parcel Map Process” or “Subdivision Process,” available on the Department’s portion of the Lassen County website or at the public assistance counter.

This handout is not intended to cover all circumstances, conditions or regulations.

Building Permit Submittal requirement:

You will be required to submit a “Declaration,” acknowledging understanding of these standards for applicable building permit applications.

Enforcement Authority:

In accordance with County Code section 9.16.070, the Lassen County Fire Warden is authorized to enforce all provisions of the Lassen County Fire Safe Regulations (County Code Chapter 9.16 et seq) and the State SRA/VHFHSZ Fire Safe Regulations (California Code of Regulations Title 14, section 1270 et seq). The Lassen County Board of Supervisors has designated the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) Ranger in Lassen County as the Lassen County Fire Warden (Board Resolution Number 83/84-47). The state regulations apply if any inconsistency is identified between the state standards and County Code Chapter 9.16. That said, as of the date of this publication, no inconsistencies have been identified between the state standards and Lassen County’s requirements.

The Fire Warden enforces the County and State Fire Safe Regulations in close coordination with the Lassen County Department of Planning and Building Services, who is responsible for the

issuance of building permits in the unincorporated areas of Lassen County (all areas outside the City of Susanville, excluding certain state and federally managed property). In many instances, Lassen County performs certain inspections required pursuant to these standards on behalf of the Fire Warden.

Exceptions:

In accordance with Lassen County Code section 9.16.090 and section 1270.06 of the State Fire Safe Regulations, in some cases, the Fire Warden is authorized to approve “exceptions” to these standards. In addition, applicants and surrounding landowners have the right to appeal decisions (whether that be approval or disapproval) made by the Fire Warden to the Lassen County Planning Commission and then, ultimately, to the Lassen County Board of Supervisors.

Information regarding the process for the consideration of exceptions can be found in the Planning and Building Services bulletin titled “Fire Safe Regulations Exception Process,” available on the Department’s portion of the County web site or at the Department’s public assistance counter (707 Nevada Street, Suite 5, Susanville, CA).

STANDARDS:

This section of this document will summarize key requirements applicable to the issuance and/or completion of applicable building permits on existing parcels. Again, requirements for the submittal of an application to consider the subdivision of property can be found in the bulletins titled “Parcel Map Process” or “Subdivision Process,” in County Code Title 16 (Subdivisions), in County Code Title 18 (Zoning), in portions of the State and County Fire Safe Regulations not summarized in this handout, as well as other provisions of law and regulation.

Not all building permits require adherence to these standards (e.g. re-roof permits, certain electrical permits, certain plumbing permits and other over-the-counter permits). In general, the requirements detailed in this publication become applicable when building permits are submitted for new structures or for additions to existing structures. It is the responsibility of the applicant to understand the standards that apply to their particular application.

To the greatest degree possible, the Fire Warden and Department of Planning and Building Services will attempt to summarize the requirements applicable to a particular application on the “Declaration” that will be signed by the landowner, applicant, contractor or other applicable party prior to the issuance of any applicable building permit. However, if any discrepancy is identified between said Declaration and the requirements of the State and County Fire Safe Regulations, the requirements of the Fire Safe Regulations will apply.

Access:

Access standards are as follows and are detailed in section 9.16.120 of Lassen County Code and the corresponding sections of the State Fire Safe Regulations:

- Driveways shall be a minimum of 10 feet in width, with 14-foot horizontal clearance and 13.5 feet of vertical clearance.
- Driveways shall be designed and maintained to support at least 40,000 pounds.

- A driveway can serve no more than two parcels, with no more than two residences on each parcel. Any portion of an access that serves more than two parcels or four residences must meet the “road” requirements.
- A “road” must have either two 10-foot wide lanes or one 12-foot wide lane, if the road is a one-way road. This width does not include shoulders or striping. This is the minimum requirement. When initially approved, some roads may have more stringent requirements through the entitlement process and requirements detailed in Title 16 (Subdivisions) or Title 18 (Zoning).
- Roads shall be designed and maintained to support at least 70,000 pounds and provide an aggregate base.

Grades:

- The maximum grade allowed without approval of an exception is 16 percent, and a grade of no more than 20 percent may be allowed through approval of an exception (see the bulletin titled: “Fire Safe Regulations Exception Process”).

Turnarounds:

- Required on all driveways and dead-end roads.
- Minimum radius is 40-feet (not including parking); see Figure “A” and Figure “B” of Lassen County Code Section 9.16.160 (incorporated by reference).
- If a hammer-head “T” is used the top of the “T” shall be at least 60-feet.
- Driveways 150 to 800 feet long must have a turnout near the midpoint and driveways over 800 feet long shall have turnouts no further than 400 feet apart.

Setback:

Any proposed structure or addition, other than “Utility and Miscellaneous Group U” occupancies (see California Building Code section 312), must have a setback of at least 30 feet from all property lines and/or the center of a road. A reduced setback can be considered upon submittal of an exception request to the Fire Warden, but any such exception must, at a minimum, meet all applicable zoning and building setbacks.

Debris Removal and Public Resource Code section 4291 Defensible Space Requirements:

- All construction debris from buildings and road construction must be removed and disposed of properly.
- Defensible space around all structures must meet the minimum clearance requirements of Public Resources Code section 4291 (available upon request or at the following URL: <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes.xhtml>)

Access and Street Identification Requirements:

- All buildings must be issued an address by the Lassen County Surveyor, in accordance with Chapter 12.26 (House Numbering) of the Lassen County Code. Please note that the County Surveyor’s Office is a Division of the Planning and Building Service Department and is available at the phone number and address identified on the cover page of this bulletin.

- Addresses must be reflectorized and conform to the California Fire Code (available for review at the Planning and Building Services Department).

Residential Fire Protection Water Requirements:

For applications for building permits on existing parcels, County Code section 9.16.260 states “*Emergency water for wildfire protection shall be available, accessible, and maintained in quantities and locations specified in the statute and these regulations in order to attack a wildfire or defend property from a wildfire.*” Since circumstances vary in different areas of the County, applicants will need to consult with the Fire Warden and any applicable Fire Protection District before any construction is initiated.

Other standards, not summarized in this bulletin, describe requirements for the creation of new parcels, whether by Parcel Map or by Tentative/Subdivision Map. Water requirements for subdivision of property should be discussed with Planning and Building Services Department staff and with the Fire Warden (please see Lassen County Code section 9.16.280).

References:

The following documents are incorporated into this bulletin by reference and are available from the Lassen County Fire Warden or Department of Planning and Building Services upon request or at the online location indicated:

- Lassen County Code Chapter 9.16 (Fire Hazards) Available online at: qcode.us/codes/lassencounty/
- California Code of Regulations, Title 14; section 1270 et seq (“SRA/VHFHSZ Fire Safe Regulations”) Available online at: <https://casetext.com/regulation/california-code-of-regulations/title-14-natural-resources>