



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT Forest Practice

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) enforces the laws that regulate timber harvesting on non-federal timberlands in California. These laws are found in the Forest Practice Act (FPA), from the Public Resources Code (PRC) and California Code of Regulations (CCR) as Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) Forest Practice Rules (Rules). The FPA and Rules are in place to ensure timber harvest operations are conducted to achieve long-term, maximum sustained production of high-quality forest products, while protecting soil, air, fish and wildlife, and water resources. Other environmental laws such as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Porter Cologne Water Quality Act, and the California Endangered Species Act, are also enforced to protect these resources.



CAL FIRE is the lead agency to review and ensure timber operations for commercial purposes, including timberland conversion, are in compliance with Board rules for timber harvesting projects of any size. Other responsible agencies involved in review include the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and the California Geological Survey. A Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) is the enforceable document submitted by a landowner to CAL FIRE outlining logging operations and providing protection measures for natural and cultural resources. The THP describes what trees the landowner intends to harvest, how they will

be harvested, and what steps will be taken to prevent damage to the environment. THPs are prepared by Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) who are licensed to prepare these complicated, detailed Plans. CAL FIRE reviews and approves approximately 200 THPs each year which range from about 200 pages to more than 800 pages. Additionally, thousands of ministerial permits called Notices of Exemption and Notices of Emergency are also reviewed and operated on annually for utility rights-of-way, timberland conversions, protection from forest fires, and emergency timber operations. Timber operations for commercial purposes, including timberland conversion, must be performed by a Licensed Timber Operator (LTO).

CAL FIRE does not have the authority to deny a THP that is in compliance with state and federal laws simply because the Plan is unpopular with the public. THPs that do not comply with the FPA and Rules can be returned to the Plan Submitter, revised, and approved after the RPF and landowner agree to make the changes necessary to bring the Plan into compliance. CAL FIRE inspects timber operations with field visits and can shut down operations or require corrective work to ensure protection of the environment. Criminal or civil prosecution can be pursued with fines against RPFs, LTOs, and landowners if illegal operations are found.



August 2022