



# Report on Exemption and Emergency Timber Harvest Notice Usage

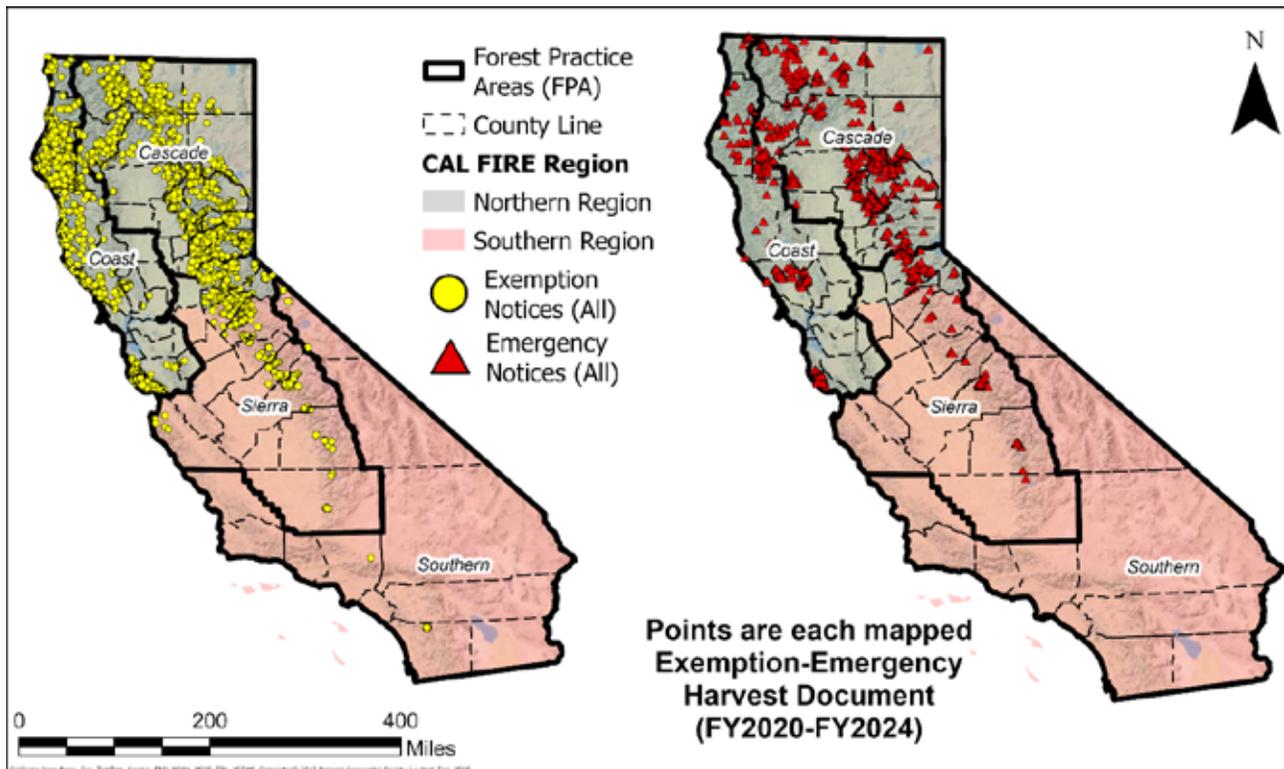
Fiscal Years 2020 to 2024

# Reporting on CAL FIRE Emergency and Exemption Notice Usage, Inspections, and Forest Practice Rule Violations FY 2020-2024



## Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Exemption and Emergency Notice Usage.....	4
Individual Exemption Notice Type Usage .....	8
Individual Emergency Notice Type Usage .....	13
Exemption and Emergency Notice Inspections and Violations.....	14
Exemption and Emergency Notice vs Discretionary THP-NTMP Usage .....	17
Discussion.....	20
Appendix 1 .....	22



**Figure 1:** Exemption and Emergency Notices, displayed as points, FY 2020 through FY 2024, in the State of California. Yellow dots (left map) represent Exemption Notices of all types (non-discretionary, ministerial timber harvests for forest thinning, structure defensible space, drought/insect mortality-related timber harvesting, utility rights-of-way, etc.). Red triangles (right map) represent Emergency Notices of all types (post-fire salvage, drought mortality, fuel hazard reduction, etc.). Also shown are county lines (dashed black lines), Forest Practice Areas (“FPA”s, solid black lines), and CAL FIRE Regions (light gray for Northern, light red for Southern).

## Executive Summary

Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 4589 requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) to report on trends in use of, and compliance metrics, for Exemption and Emergency Notices, which are ministerial or “non-discretionary” timber harvest permits that do not have the same discretionary multi-agency review process as Timber Harvest Plans and Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans. This document reports these metrics by fiscal year (FY) and by Notice type over a five-year timeframe from FY 2020 through 2024. In general, there has been a decreasing trend in the number of accepted Notices, with some variation in certain Exemptions and for post-fire Emergency Notices, and a general decreasing amount of acreage under Notices, with some variability that was largely driven by wildfire impacts. These trends have largely all held true in various geographic Forest Practice Areas (FPAs) across the State. Exemptions less than 100 acres in reported size accounted for 65% of all Exemption Notices, but only 0.5% of all reported Exemption acreage, while 97% of reported Exemption acreage was found on only 8% of all Exemption Notices.

Emergency Notices were dominated by post-fire salvage emergency harvests (84%), which also accounted for the majority of acreage reportedly harvested under an emergency condition (89%). Post-fire Emergency Notices largely declined the past four fiscal years before increasing again in FY 2024 in response to wildfire impacts such as the 2024 Park Fire, while other types of Emergencies showed variability and a general decrease. Forest Practice Rule compliance inspections on Exemption and Emergency Notices decreased in Forest Practice Inspector hours, as well as the percentage of Notices with an inspection. The incidence of Forest Practice Rule violations found on Notices decreased in number and percentage each fiscal year, although there is some variability in this result by individual Exemption or Emergency Notice type. No more than 3% of Emergency or Exemption Notices received a violation in a given fiscal year. In general, discretionary Timber Harvest Plan and Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans also decreased in number and acreage the past five fiscal years, showing a general decline in timber harvesting in California. The variables affecting trends in use of Exemptions and Emergency Notice are complex in nature and discussed herein.

To date, multiple reports<sup>1</sup> by the CAL FIRE Forest Practice Science and Monitoring Program (formerly the Watershed Protection Program) on the effectiveness of various Exemption and Emergency Notice types have been completed. Additionally, a CAL FIRE [California Forestry Report](#)<sup>2</sup> was produced in 2025, focusing on post-fire salvage logging on Emergency Notices. Together, these reports have helped inform discussions

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/natural-resource-management/forest-practice>, see “Publications”

<sup>2</sup> [forestryreport8\\_postfireemergencynoticemonitoring\\_final.pdf](#)

of Forest Practice Rule changes with the BOF and others, and helped inform the public, private and State timberland owners, and members of the timber industry on findings, trends, and the best available science to support Forest Practice Rule outcomes.

## Introduction

SB 901 (Dodd, Ch. 626, Stats. 2018) and Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 4589 and preceding legislation mandates a yearly report from CAL FIRE on Exemption and Emergency Notices for ministerial permitting of timber operations on non-federal, private and State timberlands in California. SB 901 states in part that

“Existing law requires the department and the state forestry board...to review and submit a report to the Legislature on the trends in the use of, compliance with, and effectiveness of, timber harvest exemptions and emergency notice provisions, as provided. Existing law requires the report to include an analysis of any barriers for small forest owners presented by the exemptions...to annually submit a report to the Legislature that also includes information on the number and type of violations and enforcement actions taken on each notice of exemption and emergency notice, among other things.”

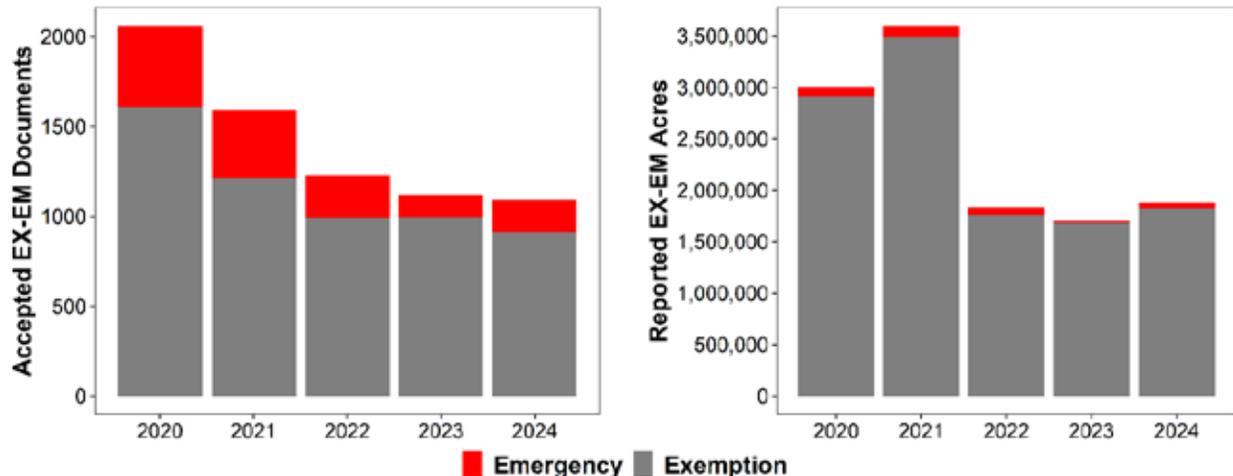
Exemption and Emergency (EX-EM) Notices are ministerial, or non-discretionary, in how they are processed by CAL FIRE, unlike Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) and Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans (NTMPs) that are discretionary in review and approval. THPs and NTMPs are part of the multi-agency (CAL FIRE, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, California Geological Survey) Plan review process, with a field-based pre-harvest inspection (PHI) and public input that leads to “approval”, while EX-EM Notices require only procedural elements to be completed and are then “accepted” once those requirements are satisfied, with no PHI or discretionary review from other agencies. Exemption and Emergency Notices do not allow for in-lieu practices (i.e., not permitted under the Forest Practice Rules [FPRs]) and are constrained in nature by the specific Notice type (e.g., project acreage limits, small diameter tree thinning only, harvesting in proximity to residences for defensible space, salvage of dead and dying trees only, etc.) Since 2018, CAL FIRE has completed a total of eight reports on a variety of individual and aggregated EX-EM Notice types, with a ninth report currently in development (**Appendix 1, Table 14**). In addition to CAL FIRE, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, State Water Resources Control Board, California Geological Survey, and State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection have also participated in the field data collection efforts that underpin the monitoring reports.

## Exemption and Emergency Notice Usage

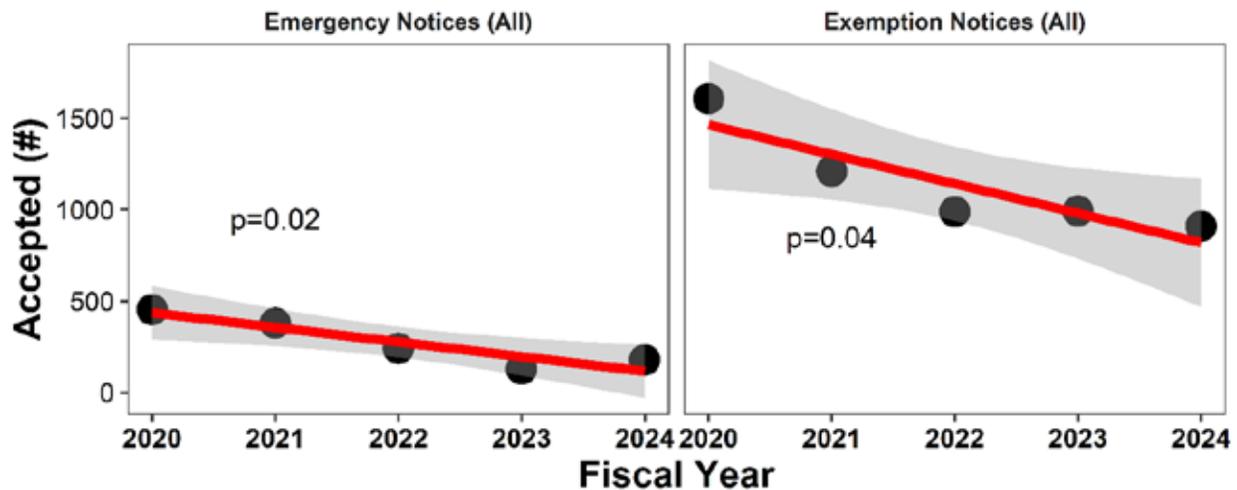
Exemption and Emergency Notice timber harvest documents for the past five fiscal years were primarily submitted in the Cascade Forest Practice Area (FPA) of northern interior California, accounting for 54% of all EX-EM Notices. Thirty-one percent (31%) were submitted in the Coast FPA of California (central and northern coast areas), 13% in the southern Sierra FPA, and 1% in the Southern FPA encompassing southern California (**Figure 1**).

In the past five fiscal years, 81% of EX-EM Notices have been Exemptions, while Emergency Notices accounted for 19% (**Table 1, Figure 2**). The overwhelming majority (97%) of reported acres on EX-EM Notices were for Exemptions (**Figure 2**). This is inclusive of “property-wide” type Exemptions, or those that had no acreage limitation under the Forest Practice Rules (see **Individual Exemption Notice Type Usage**).

The proportion and number of EX-EM harvest documents that were Emergency Notices were highest in FY 2020 (22%) and FY 2021 (24%), due to the 2020 and 2021 wildfire seasons and impacts to private timber. Emergency Notice submissions declined to 11% through FY 2023, before increasing again to 16% in FY 2024; the overall five-fiscal year trend in numbers is downward and significant (**Table 1, Figure 3**). Emergency Notices were in the greatest proportion and number each fiscal year in the Cascade FPA, or northern interior of California (**Table 1**). Emergency Notice numbers generally decreased in each FPA over the past five fiscal years, with the exception of the Cascade FPA (**Table 1, Figure 4**). The Coast FPA went from a high of 171 Emergencies in FY 2020, to only 26 in FY 2024, of which many were not related to wildfires (**Table 1, Figure 4**, and see **Individual Emergency Notice Type Usage**). There were no Emergency Notices in the Southern FPA in the past five fiscal years. Emergency Notices are strongly influenced by wildfire impacts to private timberland, with post-fire salvage timber harvests under Emergency Notices representing the largest proportion (see **Individual Emergency Notice Type Usage** for more).



**Figure 2:** Total accepted Exemption and Emergency Notice documents and total reported acres on accepted Notices by fiscal year. Bar color indicates the type of non-discretionary document. Note the different y-axis for the number of documents and reported acres.



**Figure 3:** Linear trendline (red) for the last five fiscal years 2020 through 2024 for all accepted Emergency Notices (left) and all accepted Exemption Notices (right). Each panel includes the p-value indicating the downward trends were both significant. Gray shading indicates the 95% confidence limits.

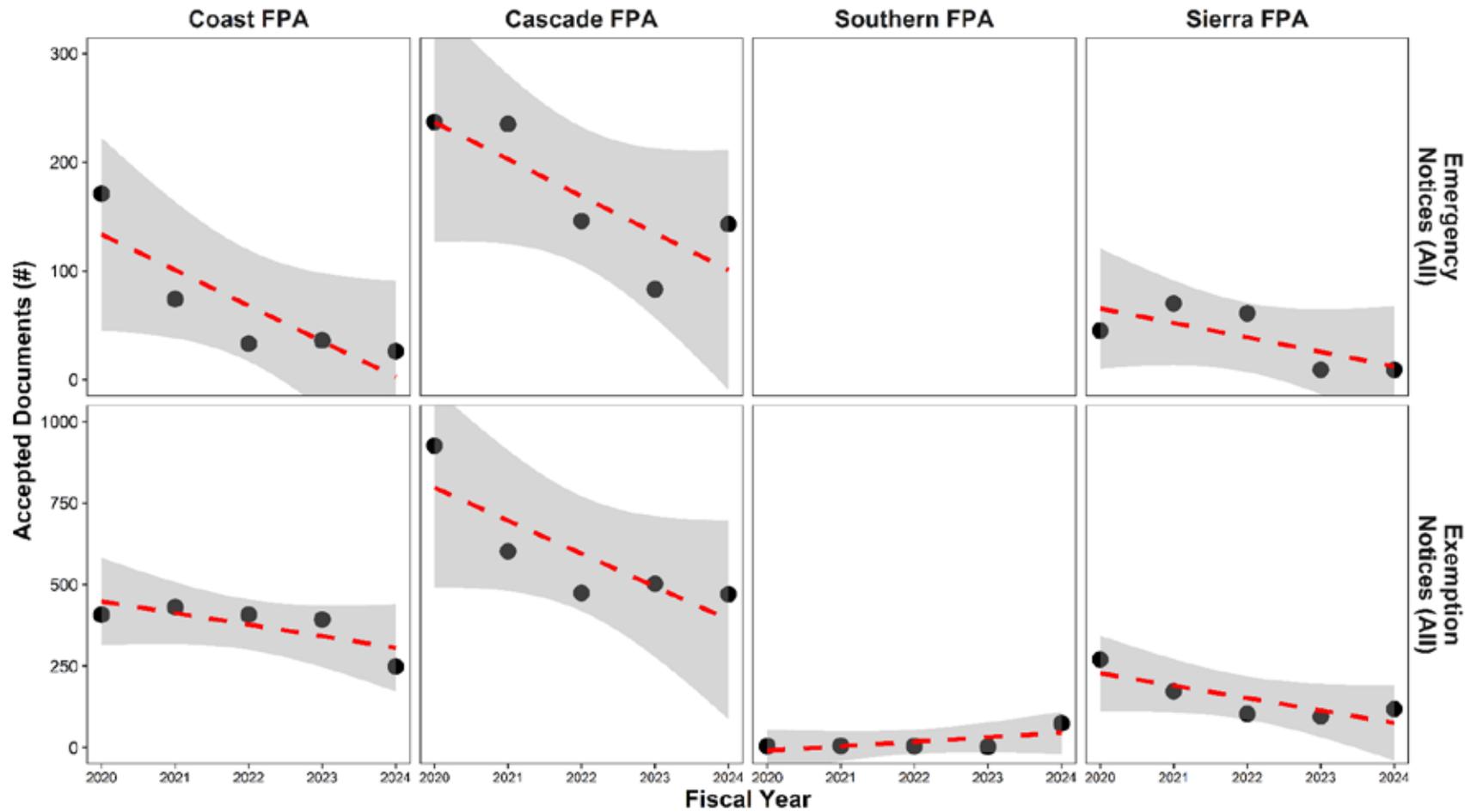
For Exemption Notices, the past five fiscal years have shown a significant downward trend in the number of accepted Notices, from a high of 1,607 Exemptions in FY 2020, to a low of 910 in FY 2024 (**Table 1, Figure 3**). Reported acreage under Exemptions actually peaked in FY 2021, before decreasing by over 1,000,000 acres (**Table 1, Figure 2**), due in part to a reduction in usage of large Public/Private Utility Right-of-Way Exemption Notices (see **Individual Exemption Notice Type Usage**). Similar to Emergency Notices, Exemption Notices were in the greatest proportion in the Cascade FPA each fiscal year, followed by the Coast FPA (**Table 1, Figure 4**).

The Southern FPA showed an increase in the number of Exemptions (**Figure 4**), from 15 total Notices in FY 2020-2023, composed mainly of 10% Dead, Dying, Diseased,

Forest Fire Prevention (now the Forest Resilience Exemption), and Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemptions, to a marked increase in FY 2024 of 74 Exemption Notices. This increase appears to have been driven by submission of Public/Private Utility Right-of-Way Exemption Notices in San Bernardino and Mono counties (see **Individual Exemption Notice Type Usage** for more).

**Table 1:** Proportion and number of non-discretionary documents accepted as Exemptions or Emergencies by fiscal year and for the past five fiscal years total, and by Forest Practice Area for Exemptions and Emergency Notices, respectively. Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding. Metrics do not include subsequently withdrawn or unharvested Notices.

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2020-2024
Exemption	78% / 1,607	76% / 1,209	80% / 988	89% / 992	84% / 910	81% / 5,706
Emergency	22% / 453	24% / 379	20% / 240	11% / 128	16% / 178	19% / 1,378
<b>Exemption</b>						
Coast FPA	25% / 407	36% / 430	41% / 407	40% / 393	27% / 248	33% / 1,885
Cascade FPA	58% / 926	50% / 602	48% / 474	51% / 502	52% / 470	52% / 2,974
Southern FPA	<1% / 4	<1% / 5	<1% / 4	<1% / 2	8% / 74	2% / 89
Sierra FPA	17% / 270	14% / 172	10% / 103	10% / 95	13% / 118	13% / 758
<b>Emergency</b>						
Coast FPA	38% / 171	20% / 74	14% / 33	28% / 36	15% / 26	25% / 340
Cascade FPA	52% / 237	62% / 235	61% / 146	65% / 83	80% / 143	61% / 844
Southern FPA	0% / 0	0% / 0	0% / 0	0% / 0	0% / 0	0% / 0
Sierra FPA	10% / 45	18% / 70	25% / 61	7% / 9	5% / 9	14% / 194



**Figure 4:** Linear trendlines (red dashed lines) for the past five fiscal years 2020 through 2024 for all accepted Emergency Notices (top row) and all accepted Exemption Notices (bottom row) for each Forest Practice Area. Gray shading indicates the 95% confidence limits. Emergency and Exemption rows have different y-axes for clarity.

## Individual Exemption Notice Type Usage

The proportion of Exemption documents by fiscal year decreased by both number and reported acres, while the greatest proportion of Exemption Notices were submitted and accepted in FY 2020 (**Table 1, Table 2**). The greatest proportion of Exemption reported acres were in FY 2020 and FY 2021 (**Table 1, Table 2**).

**Table 2:** The proportion of 5-year total Exemption Notices from FY 2020 through FY 2024 by document count and reported acres. Rows may not add to 100% due to rounding.

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Exemptions Accepted	28%	21%	17%	17%	16%
Exemption Reported Acres	25%	30%	15%	14%	16%

The majority (63%) of Exemptions were less than 100 acres in reported size, with 19% one acre or less and 44% 1.1 to 100 acres (**Table 3, Table 4, Table 5**). However, those same Exemptions only accounted for less than 1% of the total reported acreage under Exemption Notice. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of reported acreage under Exemption was only 3% of all Exemption Notices. Notices over 10,000 acres in reported size were attributed to ownership-wide type of Notice submissions, i.e., using property boundaries as opposed to true harvest areas, or covering entire wildfire-impacted areas in which community post-fire recovery and cleanup occurred (**Table 3, Table 4, Table 5**).

**Table 3:** The proportion and number of Exemptions by size class and proportion reported acres by size class for all accepted Exemptions between FY 2020 and FY 2024.

Exemption Reported Size Class	% / # of Exemptions	% / # of Reported Exemption Acres
1 Acre or Less	19% / 1,361	0.01% / 906
1.1 to 100 Acres	44% / 3,083	0.4% / 49,797
100 to 1,000 Acres	11% / 756	2% / 248,599
1,000 to 10,000 Acres	5% / 330	10% / 1,184,917
Over 10,000 Acres	3% / 176	87% / 10,182,423

On Exemptions for timber harvests that are limited in size by the Forest Practice Rules and/or realistic functional project size, the majority of acreage was under the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption (65% for FY 2020-2024); this exemption type has been recently modified by the Legislature and renamed the Forest Resilience Exemption, approved in FY 2025 (**Table 4, Table 5, Figure 5**). The number of Forest Fire Prevention Exemptions in FY 2024 was the lowest in the past five fiscal years, showing a decrease in usage and area (**Figure 5**). The same held true for the most used Exemptions - the Structure Protection (0-150 Foot) and Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemptions, where numbers and acreage dropped from a high in FY 2020 to a low in FY 2024 (**Table 4, Table 5, Figure 5**). Of note, Forest Practice Rule violations for unpermitted timberland

conversions have ranged between a high of 103 (FY 2021) and low of 52 and 57 (FY 2023 and FY 2024) in number.

Also of note, the California Black and Oregon White Oak Woodland and Associated Grassland Restoration Exemption is the only Notice type that has increased in usage and reported acreage treated in the past five fiscal years (**Table 4, Table 5, Figure 5**).

Exemption types that do not have a maximum acreage constraint showed a decrease in both number and reported acreage before increasing in FY 2024 in acreage only. There were nearly 3,000,000 acres under these Exemptions in FY 2020, however that number decreased to just over 1,800,000 acres in FY 2024 (**Table 4, Figure 5**). The Dead, Dying, Diseased Trees Exemption has shown decreasing numbers and variable but decreasing acreage, while the Utility Right-of-Way Exemption acreage was significant in FY 2020 and FY 2021 due in part to usage in community post-fire recovery and utility work, and then increased in reported acreage in FY 2024 due once again to community post-fire recovery usage (**Table 4, Figure 5**). Utility company usage of the Right-of-Way Exemption declined after the 2020 calendar year.

The increase in the Southern FPA to a high of 71 Utility Right-of-Way Exemptions in FY 2024 was driven largely in part by usage in San Bernardino and Mono counties. Prior to the uptick in FY 2024, there were two Utility Right-of-Way Exemptions in FY 2020 and none in FYs 2021-2023 in the Southern FPA.

In all areas of the State, the Drought Mortality/Unmerchantable Sawlog Exemption showed decreasing usage and reported acreage over the past five fiscal years (**Table 4, Figure 5**), and recently had new acreage limits introduced within the Forest Practice Rules by the BOF. The Christmas Tree Exemption has also shown a general decrease in number and acreage as well from FY 2020 to FY 2024 (**Table 4, Figure 5**).

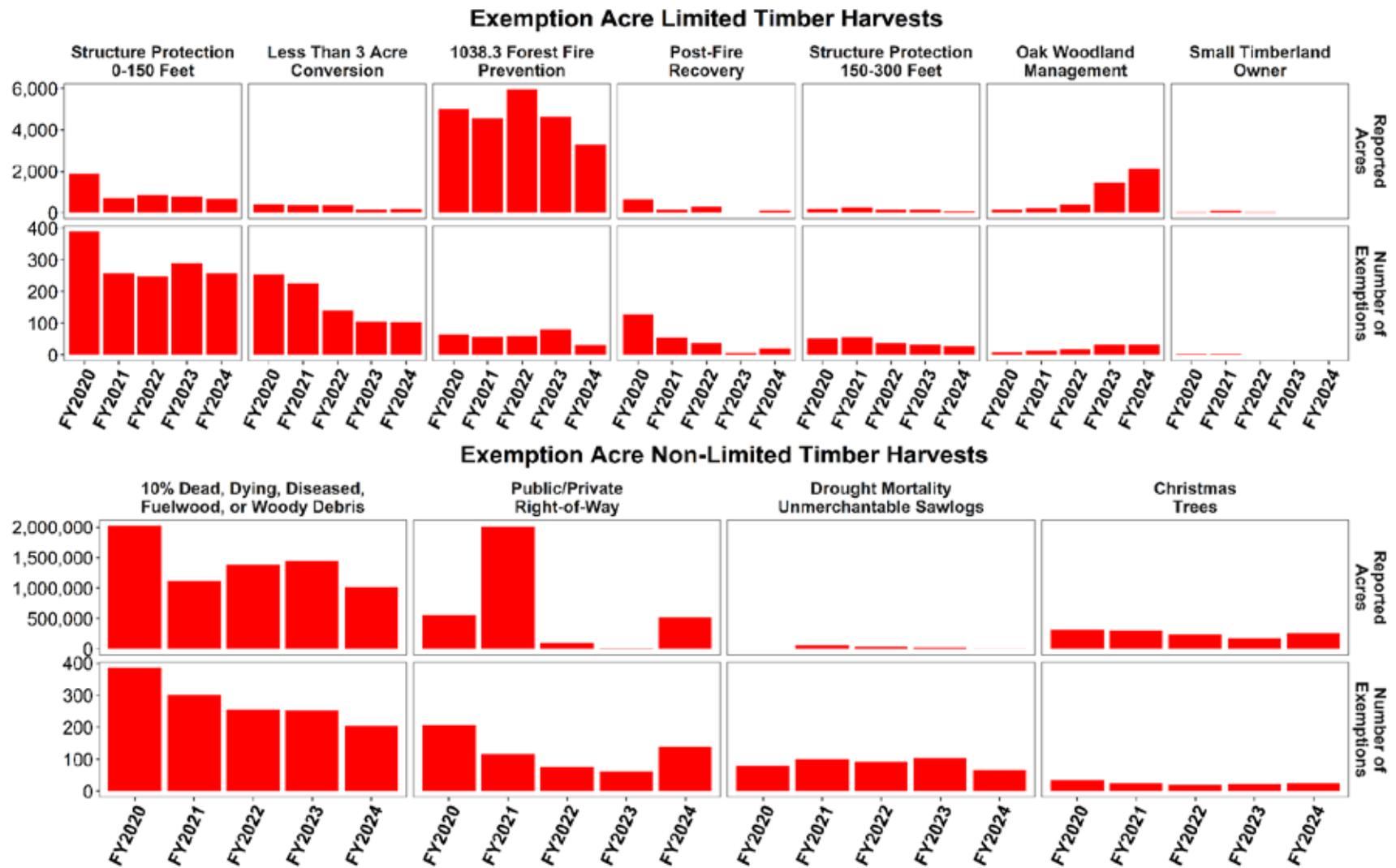
The least used Exemption Notice was the Small Timberland Owner, with eight Notices and 204 reported acres in the past five fiscal years (**Table 4, Table 5, Figure 5**). The Small Timberland Owner Exemption expired in FY 2025 and is no longer available to the public for use.

**Table 4:** The number and acreage with corresponding percentages by Exemption type for combined and individual fiscal years. Underlined italics for Exemption type are acreage-limited Exemption types (under the Forest Practice Rules and/or practical usage, **Table 5**). Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.

<b>EXEMPTIONS</b>	<b>FY 2020-2024</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>
<i>Structure Protection (0 to 150 feet)</i>	1,441 / 25%	389 / 24%	258 / 21%	247 / 25%	289 / 29%	258 / 28%
10 Percent Dead, Dying Diseased, Fuelwood, or Woody Debris	1,402 / 25%	385 / 24%	302 / 25%	255 / 26%	254 / 26%	206 / 23%
<i>Less than 3 Acre Conversion</i>	829 / 15%	254 / 16%	225 / 19%	141 / 14%	106 / 11%	103 / 11%
Public / Private Utility Right-of-Way	601 / 11%	207 / 13%	116 / 10%	76 / 8%	63 / 6%	139 / 15%
Drought Mortality and Unmerchantable Sawlog	440 / 8%	79 / 5%	99 / 8%	92 / 9%	103 / 10%	67 / 7%
<i>Forest Fire Prevention</i>	297 / 5%	65 / 4%	58 / 5%	61 / 6%	81 / 8%	32 / 4%
<i>Post Fire Recovery</i>	246 / 4%	128 / 8%	54 / 4%	38 / 4%	6 / 1%	20 / 2%
<i>Structure Protection (150 to 300 feet)</i>	207 / 4%	52 / 3%	56 / 5%	38 / 4%	34 / 3%	27 / 3%
Christmas Trees	127 / 2%	36 / 2%	24 / 2%	20 / 2%	22 / 2%	25 / 3%
<i>Oak Woodland Management</i>	108 / 2%	9 / 1%	14 / 1%	19 / 2%	33 / 3%	33 / 4%
<i>Small Timberland Owner</i>	8 / <1%	3 / <1%	3 / <1%	1 / <1%	1 / <1%	0 / <1%
<b>REPORTED ACRES</b>	<b>FY2020-2024</b>	<b>FY2020</b>	<b>FY2021</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	<b>FY2023</b>	<b>FY2024</b>
<i>Structure Protection (0 to 150 feet)</i>	4,870 / <1%	1,890 / <1%	679 / <1%	852 / <1%	804 / <1%	645 / <1%
10 Percent Dead, Dying Diseased, Fuelwood, or Woody Debris	6,979,685 / 60%	2,023,689 / 69%	1,114,493 / 32%	1,380,384 / 78%	1,445,644 / 86%	1,015,475 / 56%
<i>Less than 3 Acre Conversion</i>	1,436 / <1%	407 / <1%	353 / <1%	336 / <1%	163 / <1%	178 / <1%
Public / Private Utility Right-of-Way	3,203,978 / 27%	562,143 / 19%	2,003,247 / 57%	94,960 / 5%	16,595 / 1%	527,032 / 29%
Drought Mortality and Unmerchantable Sawlog	148,523 / 1%	7,960 / <1%	62,279 / 2%	37,940 / 2%	30,707 / 2%	9,638 / 1%
<i>Forest Fire Prevention</i>	23,507 / <1%	5,030 / <1%	4,585 / <1%	5,953 / <1%	4,656 / <1%	3,284 / <1%
<i>Post Fire Recovery</i>	1,195 / <1%	643 / <1%	154 / <1%	272 / <1%	12 / <1%	114 / <1%
<i>Structure Protection (150 to 300 feet)</i>	798 / <1%	188 / <1%	243 / <1%	151 / <1%	144 / <1%	73 / <1%
Christmas Trees	1,298,136 / 11%	312,591 / 11%	303,242 / 9%	238,998 / 14%	179,478 / 11%	263,827 / 14%
<i>Oak Woodland Management</i>	4,311 / <1%	142 / <1%	205 / <1%	404 / <1%	1,443 / <1%	2,117 / <1%
<i>Small Timberland Owner</i>	204 / <1%	55 / <1%	99 / <1%	40 / <1%	10 / <1%	0 / 0%

**Table 5:** For Exemptions limited in their spatial footprint by the Forest Practice Rules or practicality in use, the percentage of acres by Exemption type for combined and individual fiscal years 2020 through 2024. Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.

<b>REPORTED ACRES (Acreage Limited Exemptions)</b>	<b>FY 2020-2024</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>
Structure Protection (0 to 150 feet)	13%	23%	11%	11%	11%	10%
Less than 3 Acre Conversion	4%	5%	6%	4%	2%	3%
Forest Fire Prevention	65%	60%	73%	74%	64%	51%
Post Fire Recovery	3%	8%	2%	3%	<1%	2%
Structure Protection (150 to 300 feet)	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	1%
Oak Woodland Management	12%	2%	3%	5%	20%	33%
Small Timberland Owner	1%	1%	2%	<1%	<1%	0%

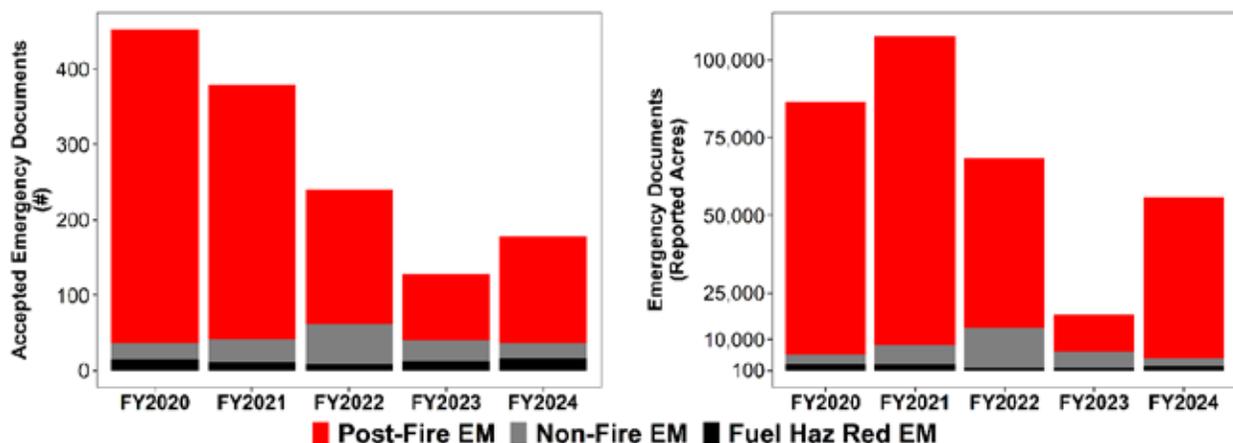


**Figure 5:** Exemption numbers and reported acres by fiscal year and Exemption Notice type for Exemptions with Forest Practice Rule limited acreage area (top two rows), and by Exemptions with no acreage limit (bottom two rows). Please note the differences in y-axis limits in each row.

## Individual Emergency Notice Type Usage

Post-fire Emergency Notices used for salvage timber harvests represented the majority of Notice of Emergency Timber Operations documents in both number (84%) and reported acreage (89%) for the past five fiscal years (**Figure 6, Table 6**). In each fiscal year this also held true, although there was a declining trend of post-fire Emergencies and acreage and increasing proportion of non-fire related Emergencies and Fuel Hazard Reduction Emergencies until FY 2024. Post-fire Notices increased again due in part to the 2024 Park Fire (**Figure 6, Table 6**). In the past five fiscal years, nearly 300,000 acres have been reported under Emergency Notices. Nearly 30,000 acres under Emergency Notice were for non-fire related Emergency conditions, which varied by fiscal year in number, but showed an increasing proportion until FY 2024. Meanwhile, in number and acreage, Fuel Hazard Reduction Emergency Notices were the fewest of all such Notices (**Table 6**). However, these acreage numbers may not reflect actual harvested/treated area on Notices, as reported in California Forestry Report #8<sup>3</sup>.

Similar to Exemption Notices, the majority of Emergency Notices, for all Notice types, were 1 to 100 acres in reported size (**Table 7**). However, the majority of reported acreage was on Notices of 100 to 1,000 acres in reported size, while there were no Emergency Notices of any type over 10,000 acres in size (**Table 7**).



**Figure 6:** Emergency Notice type usage by the number of accepted documents (left) and reported acres (right) for each fiscal year, where bar colors indicate the type of Emergency Notice.

<sup>3</sup> [CAL Fire Forest Practice, California Forestry Report #8: "Monitoring Results of Non-Federal Post-Fire Salvage Logging in California Forests: Report on Post-Fire §1052 Notice of Emergency Timber Operations"](#)

**Table 6:** The number and acreage with corresponding percentages by each type of Emergency Notice for combined and individual fiscal years. Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.

<b>EMERGENCIES</b>	<b>FY2020-2024</b>	<b>FY2020</b>	<b>FY2021</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	<b>FY2023</b>	<b>FY2024</b>
Post-Fire Notice	1,162 / 84%	416 / 92%	338 / 89%	179 / 75%	88 / 69%	141 / 79%
Other Emergency	153 / 11%	22 / 5%	30 / 8%	53 / 22%	27 / 21%	21 / 12%
Fuel Hazard Reduction	63 / 5%	15 / 3%	11 / 3%	8 / 3%	13 / 10%	16 / 9%
<b>REPORTED ACRES</b>	<b>FY2020-2024</b>	<b>FY2020</b>	<b>FY2021</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	<b>FY2023</b>	<b>FY2024</b>
Post-Fire Notice	299,617 / 89%	81,634 / 94%	99,633 / 93%	54,830 / 80%	11,786 / 66%	51,734 / 93%
Other Emergency	29,832 / 9%	3,215 / 4%	6,227 / 6%	12,751 / 19%	5,158 / 29%	2,481 / 4%
Fuel Hazard Reduction	6,735 / 2%	1,853 / 2%	1,786 / 2%	836 / 1%	823 / 5%	1,438 / 3%

**Table 7:** The number and proportion of 5-year total Emergency Notices from FY2020 through FY2024 by emergency type, and all Notice types, by reported acreage size class. Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.

<b>Size Class (Reported Acres)</b>	<b>Post-Fire #</b>	<b>Non-Fire #</b>	<b>Fuel Hazard Reduction #</b>	<b>All Notice Type #</b>
1 Acre or Less	15 / 1%	7 / 5%	1 / 2%	23 / 5%
1.1 to 100 Acres	625 / 54%	74 / 48%	44 / 70%	743 / 48%
100 to 1000 Acres	446 / 38%	67 / 44%	17 / 27%	530 / 44%
1000 to 10,000 Acres	76 / 7%	5 / 3%	1 / 2%	82 / 3%
Over 10,000 Acres	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
<b>Reported Acres (By Size Class)</b>	<b>Post-Fire Acres</b>	<b>Non-Fire Acres</b>	<b>Fuel Hazard Reduction Acres</b>	<b>All Notice Type Acres</b>
1 Acre or Less	10 / <1%	3 / <1%	0.3 / <1%	13 / <1%
1.1 to 100 Acres	21,625 / 7%	2,276 / 8%	1,473 / 22%	25,374 / 8%
100 to 1000 Acres	161,377 / 54%	20,690 / 69%	4,183 / 62%	186,250 / 69%
1000 to 10,000 Acres	116,605 / 39%	6,863 / 23%	1,080 / 16%	124,548 / 23%
Over 10,000 Acres	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%

## Exemption and Emergency Notice Inspections and Violations

The proportion of Exemption Notices accepted in the past five fiscal years with at least one inspection was largely the same or increased in FY 2021 (44%), FY 2022 (43%), and FY 2023 (40%), before seeing a significant drop in FY 2024 (17%) (**Table 8**). The percentage of Emergency Notices with an inspection have continued to decrease over the past five fiscal years as well (**Table 8**). The hours dedicated to inspection of EX-EM Notices by Forest Practice Inspectors in the past five fiscal years have continued to decrease for each fiscal year as well (**Table 8**). Inspection hours spent on Exemption and Emergency Notices, *regardless of the year of document acceptance* (i.e., documents from pre-FY 2020 may have been inspected in the past five fiscal years), have shown a year-by-year decrease (**Table 9**).

The number of EX-EM Notices with at least one Notice of Violation [of the Forest Practice Act and Rules] (NOV) has decreased over the past five fiscal years as well. The percentage of EX-EM timber harvests with an NOV ranged between 1% and 3% across individual fiscal years, with only 2% of both Exemption and Emergency Notices having an NOV the past five fiscal years combined (**Table 10**).

**Table 8:** The proportion of Exemption and Emergency Notices inspected, by the fiscal year of acceptance of the document type and for the last five fiscal years, and associated inspection hours (office and field time) by the year of document acceptance.

<b>Proportion Inspected For Notices Accepted FY 20-24</b>	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY2023	FY 2024	FY 2020-FY 2024
Exemption Notices	37%	44%	43%	40%	17%	37%
Emergency Notices	86%	75%	73%	66%	23%	71%
<b>Inspection Hours for Notices Accepted FY 20-24</b>	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY2023	FY 2024	FY 2020-FY 2024
Exemption Notices	3,463	2,771	2,434	1,986	634	11,287
Emergency Notices	3,882	2,446	1,266	595	281	8,470
<b>All EX-EM Documents</b>	<b>7,345</b>	<b>5,217</b>	<b>3,700</b>	<b>2,581</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>19,757</b>

**Table 9:** Inspection hours by fiscal year and for the last five fiscal years, by document type, regardless of the fiscal year a document was accepted (i.e., documents accepted prior to these fiscal years) by CAL FIRE.

<b>Inspection Hours FY 20-24 (Regardless of Document FY)</b>	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2020-FY 2024
Exemption Notices	3,439	3,714	3,087	2,743	1,719	14,702
Emergency Notices	1,382	2,517	2,403	2,585	1,066	9,951
<b>All EX-EM Documents</b>	<b>4,821</b>	<b>6,231</b>	<b>5,490</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>2,785</b>	<b>24,653</b>

**Table 10:** Number and percentage of non-discretionary documents with a Forest Practice Rule violation by document type, by the fiscal year and the last five fiscal years of acceptance of the document with a violation.

<b># / % of Notices with Notice of Violation(s)</b>	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY2023	FY 2024	FY 2020-FY 2024
Exemption Notices	53 / 3%	29 / 2%	34 / 3%	17 / 2%	3 / <1%	136 / 2%
Emergency Notices	14 / 3%	8 / 2%	7 / 3%	1 / 1%	2 / 1%	32 / 2%

Individual Exemption types and types of Emergency timber harvests show a varying level of inspection NOV's the past five fiscal years (**Table 11**). Christmas Tree Exemptions were the least inspected and had no NOV's, while Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemptions were the second most inspected Exemption that received the most NOV's (the now expired Small Timberland Owner Exemption was the most inspected, but was a very small number of overall Notices (**Table 4**))(Table 11). Less Than 3 Acre, Forest Fire Prevention, and 0-150 Foot Structure Protection Exemptions

had the highest number and proportion of NOVs, with varying levels of inspections (**Table 11**). Post-fire Emergency Notices had the highest number of Forest Practice Rules violations (28 NOVs), while the Fuel Hazard Reduction Emergency had the highest percentage of Emergency Notices with an NOV the past five fiscal years (**Table 11**). Emergency Notices of all types in general had equal or largely higher inspection levels than Exemptions (**Table 11**).

Inspection and Notice of Violation results may in part relate to decreasing numbers of Exemption Notices, and variable but largely decreasing Emergency Notices, Forest Practice Inspector staffing challenges, Forest Practice Inspector emergency response duties, and responsibilities unrelated to Forest Practice inspection and enforcement within CAL FIRE Units (such as vegetation treatment projects). It may also reflect improving practices in the field and continued Licensed Timber Operator (LTO) and Registered Professional Forester (RPF) education and training, undertaken by both CAL FIRE Forest Practice and associated professional associations.

**Table 11:** The percentage of Exemption types and Emergency Notice types that were inspected FY 2020 through FY 2024, and the number and percentage of each type of non-discretionary harvest type with at least one Notice of Violation of the Forest Practice Rules.

<b>FY 2020-FY 2024 Exemptions</b>	<b>% Inspected</b>	<b># / % with NOV</b>
Structure Protection (0 to 150 feet)	37%	40 / 3%
10 Percent Dead, Dying Diseased, Fuelwood, or Woody Debris	25%	12 / 1%
Less than 3 Acre Conversion	64%	57 / 7%
Public / Private Utility Right-of-Way	22%	4 / 1%
Drought Mortality and Unmerchantable Sawlog	37%	3 / 1%
Forest Fire Prevention	61%	13 / 4%
Post Fire Recovery	11%	1 / <1%
Structure Protection (150 to 300 feet)	54%	5 / 2%
Christmas Trees	1%	0 / 0%
Oak Woodland Management	58%	1 / 1%
Small Timberland Owner	88%	0 / 0%
<b>FY 2020-FY 2024 Emergencies</b>	<b>% Inspected</b>	<b># / % with NOV</b>
Post-Fire Emergency	70%	28 / 2%
Non-Fire Emergency	78%	2 / 1%
Fuel Hazard Reduction Emergency	71%	2 / 3%

## Exemption and Emergency Notice vs Discretionary THP-NTMP Usage

For context, as ministerial Exemption Notices have shown a downward trend in number and reported acreage the past five fiscal years, and Emergency Notices have shown to be variable but largely decreasing, discretionary Timber Harvest Plan (THP), Program Timber Harvest Plan (PTHP), Working Forest Management Plan (WFMP), Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP), and Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan Notices of Timber Operations (NTMP-NTO) numbers and acres have also shown a decrease the past five fiscal years (**Table 12**). The one exception is that NTMP harvest documents showed a five-fiscal year high of 3,379 acres in FY 2024, on eight approved NTMPs (**Table 12**). NTMP-NTOs also showed an increase in number in FY 2022 and FY 2023, before dropping to a five-fiscal year low in FY 2024 as well (**Table 12**).

In terms of discretionary and ministerial harvest document numbers, the Cascade FPA leads the State the past five fiscal years with over 4,100 harvest documents, followed by the Coast FPA with over 3,200 (**Table 13**). This trend is largely driven by Exemption and Emergency Notice usage in the Cascade FPA. However, the Coast FPA leads the State by a significant amount in discretionary THP-NTMP type harvest documents (over 1,000 harvest documents) (**Table 13**), including NTMP-NTOs.

The past five fiscal years have shown a general decrease in timber harvesting numbers and acreage, with some variability. Anecdotally, there was a substantial volume of salvaged burned logs due to wildfires in the past five fiscal years, in addition to non-fire related tree mortality harvesting, saturating the log market. Other factors, such as demand for specific tree species, have also anecdotally influenced the log market and subsequent timber harvesting levels.

**Table 12:** The number of accepted or approved harvest documents, and reported acreage under accepted or approved harvest documents, by fiscal year and for FY 2020 through FY 2024, by the harvest document type or combination of types. Note: NTMP-NTO acreage was not readily accessible.

<b>Accepted/Approved Harvest Documents</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b><u>FY 20-24</u></b>
<b><i>Accepted/Ministerial</i></b>						
Exemptions (#)	1,607	1,209	988	992	910	5,706
Exemptions – Harvest Area Limited (#)	900	668	545	550	473	3,136
Emergencies (#)	453	379	240	128	178	1,378
<b><i>Approved/Discretionary</i></b>						
THPs+NTMPs (#)	220	198	183	211	183	995
THP+PThP+WFMP (#)	212	189	177	203	175	956
NTMP (#)	8	9	6	8	8	39
NTMP-NTO (# - Year of NTO)	94	82	107	101	71	455
<b>Reported/Approved Acreage</b>						
	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b><u>FY 20-24</u></b>
<b><i>Accepted/Ministerial</i></b>						
Exemptions (Acres)	2,914,736	3,489,579	1,760,288	1,679,656	1,822,382	11,666,642
Exemptions – Harvest Area Limited (Acres)	8,354	6,318	8,007	7,232	6,411	36,321
Emergencies (Acres)	86,702	107,646	68,417	17,767	55,653	366,184
<b><i>Approved/Discretionary</i></b>						
THPs+NTMPs (Acres)	95,441	69,677	62,234	78,913	65,486	371,752
THP+PThP+WFMP (Acres)	93,886	67,195	60,345	77,171	62,107	360,705
NTMP (Acres – Year of Approval)	1,555	2,482	1,889	1,742	3,379	11,047

**Table 13:** The number of accepted or approved harvest documents for FY 2020 through FY 2024 by Forest Practice Area, by the harvest document type or combination of types.

<b>Accepted/Approved Harvest Documents FY 2020-2024</b>	<b>Coast</b>	<b>Cascade</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>Sierra</b>
<b><i>Accepted/Ministerial</i></b>				
Exemptions (#)	1885	2974	89	758
Exemptions – Harvest Area Limited (#)	1384	1510	11	231
Emergencies (#)	340	844	0	194
<b><i>Approved/Discretionary and Accepted/Ministerial</i></b>				
THPs+NTMPs (#)	655	287	5	48
THP+PTHP+WFMP (#)	628	277	5	46
NTMP (#)	27	10	0	2
NTMP-NTO (# - Year of NTO)	389	53	0	13
<i>Accepted/Non-Discretionary TOTAL</i>	<b>2,225</b>	<b>3,818</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>952</b>
<i>Approved/Discretionary TOTAL</i>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>61</b>
<i>All Harvest Document Types TOTAL</i>	<b>3,269</b>	<b>4,158</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>1,013</b>

## Discussion

Generally, Exemption Notices declined in number and reported acreage over the past five fiscal years, with some exceptions for individual Exemption Notice types and/or fiscal years where an Exemption type had a limited usage increase one year or a fiscal year showed increased usage relative to other years for select Notice types. Exemption Notices with acreage limitations (i.e., in statute or via operational limits of where harvesting can occur, such as near a residential structure) have largely shown a decrease in number and acreage. The Drought Mortality/Unmerchantable Sawlog on Substantially Damaged Timberland Exemption underwent regulatory changes, including an acreage limit, but is not reflected in this report. It is important to also highlight the Oak Woodland Restoration Exemption increases in usage (number and acreage), showcasing the popularity of that particular Exemption type.

Emergency Notices continue to be overwhelmingly used for post-fire salvage logging. Use of the Emergency Notice for Fuel Hazard Reduction continues to be limited, particularly in comparison to the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption. Non-fire-related Emergency Notices are dependent on environmental and regional events (i.e., drought, insect outbreak, windthrow, etc.), while fire-related Emergency Notices are dependent upon fire seasons, ownerships, market conditions, and other variables.

CAL FIRE continues to undertake rigorous, objective monitoring of all types of timber harvesting on non-federal, private and State timberlands in California, for both ministerial and discretionary timber harvests (i.e., the Forest Practice Rules Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring Program, or FORPRIEM 2, focused on THPs). The findings from CAL FIRE's 2019 *Report on Emergency Notice of Timber Operations Monitoring Results and Exemption Notice Use* were prominently featured in California Forestry Report No. 7: *Mitigating Potential Sediment Delivery from Post-Fire Salvage Logging*, the first guidance document ever published on best practices for post-fire salvage logging<sup>4</sup>. CAL FIRE further reported on a second round of monitoring results on post-fire salvage logging in California Forestry Report No. 8: *Monitoring Results of Non-Federal Post-Fire Salvage Logging in California Forests: Report on Post-Fire §1052 Notice of Emergency Timber Operations* (**Appendix 1, Table 14**).

Current barriers to EX-EM Notice usage are complicated to assess and relate, particularly for individual types of harvest documents. Licensed Timber Operator and Registered Professional Forester availability, market conditions (both tree species demand and burned or unburned condition of trees), timber harvest and subsequent hauling distance to a sawmill, external variables (out-of-State lumber supply, building

---

<sup>4</sup> [CAL FIRE Forest Practice, California Forestry Report #7: "Mitigating Potential Sediment Delivery from Post-Fire Salvage Logging"](#)

demand, economy), and site and timberland-owner specific conditions (e.g., dense, high fire hazard forest settings) all may factor into the use of EX-EM Notice documents. Recent modifications to the Oak Woodland Restoration Exemption and the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption (renamed Forest Resilience Exemption) were intended to increase use of those ministerial harvest permitting types.

It should be noted that AB 2276 (Ch. 388, Stats. 2024) resulted in multiple changes to the Forest Practice Act Exemption statutes. AB 2276 repealed the underutilized Small Timberland Owner Exemption; renamed the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption to the Forest Resilience Exemption, amended several provisions including raising the diameter limits and changing the diameter measurement standard for harvested trees from stump diameter to Diameter-at-Breast Height (DBH), and extended the sunset date to January 1, 2031. The bill also amended the California Black and Oregon White Oak Restoration Exemption to mirror some of the provisions of the Forest Resilience Exemption, including the diameter language; and extended the sunset date of the 150'-300' Defensible Space Around a Habitable Structure Exemption (§ 1038(c)(6) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations) to January 1, 2031. The revised statute included a requirement that the BOF adopt the changes in Forest Practice Rules through emergency rulemaking action. The amended Rules have been in effect since late 2024, but corresponding data on the new Forest Resilience Exemption and amended Oak Woodland Exemption is not reflected in the fiscal years reported herein.

Additionally, the monitoring requirements in Public Resources Code Section 4589 specify that the 2025 report is to include recommendations “necessary for revisions to diameter limits at stump heights of harvestable trees” for the former Forest Fire Prevention (now Forest Resilience) and Oak Woodland Restoration Exemptions. However, the statute changes made by AB 2276 specific to diameter limits and the diameter measurement standard muted the need for such recommendations. The new Forest Practice Rule diameter standards for both Exemption types are in their first full year of implementation and have yet to be subject to field analysis.

## Appendix 1

Table 14: CAL FIRE Exemption and Emergency Notice monitoring reports since initiation of monitoring in 2018, and other monitoring, including non-field based trends and use reports and future CAL FIRE Forestry Report monitoring documents.

Report	Monitoring and Analysis	Document(s) Monitored	Completed?
"Exemption and Emergency Notice Monitoring Pilot Project Report"	2018	§1038(k) [deprecated], §1038(j) [deprecated], §1052 Emergency Notice	2018
"Report on Emergency Notice of Timber Operations Monitoring Results and Exemption Notice Use"	2019	§1052 Emergency Notice	2019
"Report on Exempt Timber Harvesting for the Reduction of Fire Hazard Within 150 Feet of Structures"	2020	§1038(c) [0-150 Foot Structure Defensible Space]	2021
"Beyond Zone 1: Monitoring of Fire Hazard Reduction Within 300 Feet of Residences Through Timber Harvest with the §1038(c)(6) Exemption"	2020 to 2021	§1038(c)(6) [150-300 Foot Residential Defensible Space]	2021
"Forest Fire Prevention, or Forest Resiliency? Monitoring Report on the §1038 Forest Fire Prevention Exemption"	2021 to 2022	§1038.3 Forest Fire Prevention	2022
Annual EX-EM Report	2023 <i>(Not Field Based)</i>	5-Year Summary of EX-EM Documents	2023
"Monitoring Results of Non-Federal Post-Fire Salvage Logging in California Forests"	2022 to 2023	§1052 Emergency Notice	2025 <a href="#">Forestry Report #8</a>
Annual EX-EM Report	2024 <i>(Not Field Based)</i>	5-Year Summary of EX-EM Documents	2024
§1038(d) Drought Mortality and Unmerchantable Sawlog	2023 to 2024	§1038(d)	Current Analysis and Writing
Forest Practice Rules Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring 2 (FORPRIEM 2)	Ongoing monitoring since 2025	Timber Harvest Plans	Ongoing monitoring effort