

California Forest Improvement Program

Cap Rates for Practices

Overview of Cap Rates

The maximum reimbursement for each practice is “capped” at a rate set by the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP, Program). These cap rates are established for Program consistency as well as to encourage landowners to develop cost-effective projects.

Cap rates for grant agreements approved after July 1, 2026, are listed on the following pages. For additional instructions please read the CFIP User’s Guide published on the CFIP webpage at:

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/california-forest-improvement>

For practices with multiple allowable cap rates (light/moderate/heavy):

- Participants are encouraged to select the single most appropriate rate for their site conditions and not propose multiple cap rates within a single practice.
- Light/moderate/heavy selection must be justified in the project description portion of the application package and approved by the CAL FIRE Forestry Assistance Specialist (FAS). For guidance in determining the appropriate cap rate for your site, please refer to the CFIP User’s Guide description of that practice.

CFIP allows participants to choose between hiring a contractor or doing the work themselves. Self-labor and contractor labor may both be used on the same project, but not on the same practice. If both are used, the RM-8 CFIP Project Budget and the project description will specify either the contractor or self-labor cap rate for each proposed practice. Changing the labor type for a practice must be discussed with the CAL FIRE FAS before it occurs and may require amendment of the grant agreement.

If the actual cost of a project practice exceeds the listed maximum cap rate, the landowner must pay the difference, regardless of the cap rate chosen. If the actual cost of a project practice comes in under the cap rate, the actual cost and not the cap rate will be used as the eligible cost when calculating the total reimbursement payable by the State, i.e., the total eligible cost is either the cap rate or the actual cost, whichever is lower.

Contractor Labor Cap Rates

- Full California Cooperative Forest Management Plan:
 - \$6,904 plus \$6 per acre, not to exceed \$12,904
 - RPFs developing a Full Management Plan on their own property will typically only be paid at the Mini Plan rate. At FAS discretion, RPFs may negotiate above the Mini Plan rate if negotiations are supported by cost estimates for paying employees who are working on plan development. CFIP Invoices for reimbursement must be supported by proof of payments to employees.
- Mini-Management Plan: \$2,679 plus \$2 per acre, not to exceed \$4,679
- Archaeology Addendum: \$2,303 plus \$4 per acre, not to exceed \$6,303
- Other Plan Addendum: \$2,303 plus \$4 per acre, not to exceed \$6,303
- Emergency Forest Management Plan Tier 1: \$1,093
- Emergency Forest Management Plan Tier 2: \$2,186
- RPF Supervision: \$290 per acre for the first 20 acres, and \$97 per acre for each additional acre.
- Planting:
 - Site Preparation Herbicide – Light: \$434
 - Site Preparation Herbicide – Moderate: \$664
 - Site Preparation Herbicide – Heavy: \$895
 - Site Preparation Mechanical – Light: \$691
 - Site Preparation Mechanical – Moderate: \$1,039
 - Site Preparation Mechanical – Heavy: \$1,382
 - Substantially Damaged Site Preparation: Negotiated rate between FAS and Project Proponent
 - Trees & Planting – Light: \$348
 - Trees & Planting – Moderate: \$520
 - Trees & Planting – Heavy: \$691

- Tree Shelters: \$429
- Pre-commercial Thinning:
 - Light: \$691
 - Moderate: \$1,039
 - Heavy: \$1,382
- Release:
 - Mechanical – Light: \$691
 - Mechanical – Moderate: \$1,039
 - Mechanical – Heavy: \$1,382
 - Herbicide or Other – Light: \$434
 - Herbicide or Other – Moderate: \$664
 - Herbicide or Other – Heavy: \$895
- Pruning:
 - Light: \$290
 - Moderate: \$434
 - Heavy: \$578
- Follow-up:
 - Follow-Up Herbicide – Light: \$434
 - Follow-Up Herbicide – Moderate: \$664
 - Follow-Up Herbicide – Heavy: \$895
 - Follow-Up Mechanical or Handwork – Light: \$691
 - Follow-Up Mechanical or Handwork – Moderate: \$1,039
 - Follow-Up Mechanical or Handwork – Heavy: \$1,382

- Land Conservation/Habitat Improvement: Cap rates in this practice are variable and will be negotiated with the FAS based on site condition, acreage, the type of project and rates used for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

* Properties must be in compliance with the Forest Practice Act at the time of application. Properties with unpermitted conversions, are not eligible for funding. The area listed within Public Resources Code 4291 (defensible space) is not eligible for reimbursement. Disposal of slash, stumps, or other materials generated by commercial timber operations are not eligible for reimbursement. Materials/slash generated by CFIP practices must meet a 30" maximum height from the ground, utilizing lop and scatter, for the entirety of the associated practice area, at the completion of the associated practice. Lop and scatter is not eligible as a follow-up practice, and is compensated within the rate of the generating practice.

Self-Labor Cap Rates

The self-labor rate for each practice is capped at **75%** of the equivalent contractor labor cap rate, from the above pages.

Self-labor may be performed by the landowner, their family members, and/or direct employees, and must be explained and justified in the project description. Self-labor is at the discretion of both the FAS and Stewardship Forester.

When a landowner elects to perform the work themselves, they must track and record their hourly rates for their work. These records must be maintained by the landowner and available by request to the FAS.

The equipment rates are derived from the CALTRANS “Labor Surcharge and Equipment Rental Rate Book” using the version corresponding to the approval date of the CFIP Agreement. Link:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/construction/equipment-rental-rates-and-labor-surcharge>

The labor rate for family members and/or direct employees is the actual cost paid. The labor rate for the landowner, performing their own labor, is the prevailing wage for a Senior Tree Trimmer derived from the California Department of Industrial Relations. The current rate per hour will be the basic hourly rate for the county in which the project resides. This rate will be provided to the landowner when the CFIP agreement is approved. The rate currently ranges from \$27.00 to \$31.50/hour.

[General prevailing wage determinations: 2026-1 journeyman determinations](#)