**4584. Exempt Activities.**

Upon determining that this exemption is consistent with the purposes of this chapter, the board may exempt from this chapter, or portions of this chapter, a person engaged in forest management whose activities are limited to any of the following:

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**(k)  (1)** The harvesting of trees, limited to those trees that eliminate the vertical continuity of vegetative fuels and the horizontal continuity of tree crowns, for the purpose of reducing the rate of fire spread, duration and intensity, fuel ignitability, or ignition of tree crowns. An exemption pursuant to this paragraph shall be known as the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption.

**(2)** The board may authorize an exemption pursuant to paragraph (1) only if the tree harvesting will decrease fuel continuity and increase the quadratic mean diameter of the stand, and the tree harvesting area will not exceed 300 acres. Increases in quadratic mean diameter shall only consider trees greater than eight inches in diameter at breast height. The notice of exemption may be authorized only if all of the conditions specified in paragraphs (3) to (9), inclusive, are met.

**(3)** A registered professional forester shall prepare the notice of exemption and submit it to the director.

**(4)  (A)** The submitted notice of exemption shall include a description of the preharvest stand structure and a statement of the postharvest stand stocking levels and the expected postharvest increase in quadratic mean diameter.

**(B)** The level of residual stocking shall be consistent with maximum sustained production of high-quality timber products. The residual stand shall consist primarily of healthy and vigorous dominant and codominant trees from the preharvest stand. Stocking shall not be reduced below the standards required by the following provisions that apply to the exemption at issue:

**(i)** Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Sections 913.3, 933.3, and 953.3 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, where appropriate.

**(C)** If the preharvest dominant and codominant crown canopy is occupied by trees less than 14 inches in diameter at breast height, a minimum of 100 trees over four inches in diameter at breast height shall be retained per acre for Site I, II, and III lands, and a minimum of 75 trees over four inches in diameter at breast height shall be retained per acre for Site IV and V lands.

**(D)** All trees that are harvested or all trees that are retained shall be marked or sample marked by, or under the supervision of, a registered professional forester before felling operations begin. The board shall adopt regulations for sample marking for this section in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. Sample marking shall be limited to homogenous forest stand conditions typical of plantations.

**(5)  (A)** The board shall adopt regulations for the treatment of understory vegetation and standing dead fuels, canopy closure, clearance to base of live crown, or ladder fuels, that could promote the spread of wildlife. A fuel reduction effort conducted under a submitted notice of exemption pursuant to this subdivision shall comply with the canopy closure regulations adopted by the board on June 10, 2004, and as those regulations may be amended.

**(B)** The postharvest stand shall not contain more than 200 trees over three inches in diameter per acre.

**(C)** Vertical spacing shall be achieved by treating dead fuels to a minimum clearance distance of eight feet measured from the base of the live crown of the postharvest dominant and codominant trees to the top of the dead surface fuels.

**(D)** The standards required by subparagraphs (A) to (C), inclusive, shall be achieved on approximately 80 percent of the treated area.

**(6)**Prior to submission of a notice of exemption to the department, the registered professional forester responsible for submitting the notice shall designate temporary road locations, landing locations, tractor road crossings of class III watercourses, unstable areas, or connected headwall swales on the ground and map their locations.

**(7)** The construction or reconstruction of temporary roads on slopes of 30 percent or less shall be allowed if all of the following conditions are met:

**(A)** Temporary roads or landings shall not be located on unstable areas, as defined in Section 895.1 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

**(B)** Temporary roads shall be single-lane in width.

**(C)** Temporary roads shall not be located across a connected headwall swale, as defined in Section 895.1 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

**(D)** Construction or reconstruction of temporary roads, landings, or watercourse crossings shall not occur during the winter operating period. Pursuant to subdivision (g) of Sections 923.6, 943.6, and 963.6, as applicable, of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, roads and landings used for log hauling or other heavy equipment uses during the winter period shall occur on a stable operating surface and, where necessary, be surfaced with rock to a depth and quantity sufficient to maintain the stable operating surface. Use shall be prohibited on roads that are not hydrologically disconnected and exhibit saturated soil conditions. Timber Operations during the winter period shall comply with paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (c) of Sections 914.7, 934.7, and 954.7, as applicable, of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

**(E)** Use of temporary roads shall comply with the operational provisions of Article 12 (commencing with Section 923) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, and recognize guidance on hydrologic disconnection in Technical Rule Addendum Number 5.

**(F)** No logging road or landings construction or reconstruction activities of any kind shall occur within 200 feet of class I and class II watercourses or within 50 feet of a class III watercourses.

**(G)** The landowner shall retain a registered professional forester who is available to provide professional advice to the licensed timber operator and timberland owner throughout the active Timber Operations. The name, address, telephone number, and registration number of the retained registered professional forester shall be provided on the submitted notice of exemption. This professional advice shall include overseeing the construction or reconstruction of any temporary roads or landings and advising on necessary mitigation to avoid potential Impacts to associated watershed and forest resources. The registered professional forester shall also comply with Section 1035.2 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, relating to interaction between the licensed timber operator and the registered professional forester.

**(H)** The registered professional forester responsible for submitting the notice of exemption shall affirm that the construction or reconstruction of each temporary road is necessary to provide access to harvest areas where no feasible alternative exists. The submitted notice of exemption shall include the number and cumulative length of temporary roads that will be constructed or Reconstructed.

**(I)  (i)** Temporary road construction or reconstruction, shall be limited to no more than two miles of road per ownership in a planning watershed per any five-year period.

**(ii)** For each exemption affecting less than 40 acres, all temporary roads constructed or Reconstructed under this exemption shall not exceed a cumulative length of 300 feet.

**(iii)** For each exemption affecting between 40 and 80 acres, all temporary roads constructed or Reconstructed under this exemption shall not exceed a cumulative length of between 300 and 600 feet, as determined on a pro rata basis by the total acreage affected by the exemption.

**(iv)** For each exemption affecting over 80 acres, all temporary roads constructed or Reconstructed under the exemption shall not exceed a cumulative length of 600 feet. The submitted notice of exemption shall list the number of acres affected and the cumulative length of the road in feet.

**(v)** Temporary roads constructed or Reconstructed under this exemption shall not be connected to other temporary roads constructed under previous or subsequent exemptions filed under this paragraph.

**(vi)** All temporary roads shall be abandoned using proactive measures that have been applied to effectively remove them from the permanent road network, in accordance with the definition of Abandoned Road as defined in Section 895.1 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

**(vii)** This paragraph shall not be interpreted to permit road construction or reconstruction except as authorized under the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption, pursuant to this paragraph.

**(viii)** No trees larger than 36 inches in diameter at stump height, measured 8 inches above ground level, shall be removed for the purposes of road construction or reconstruction under a notice of exemption submitted pursuant to this subdivision. A tree that is between 30 and 36 inches in diameter at stump height, measured 8 inches above ground level, may be removed for the purposes of road construction or reconstruction under a notice of exemption submitted pursuant to this subdivision only if there are no feasible alternatives for the road placement.

**(8)** Except within constructed or Reconstructed temporary road prisms, only trees less than 30 inches in stump diameter, measured at eight inches above ground level, may be removed.

**(9)** All Timber Operations conducted pursuant to this subdivision shall only occur within the most recent version of the department’s Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map in the moderate, high, and very high fire threat zones.

**(10)** If pesticides or herbicides will be used within the boundaries of an area covered by a notice of exemption pursuant to this paragraph within one year of director acceptance, the timberland owner shall notify the appropriate regional water quality control board 10 days prior to application of any pesticides or herbicides.

**(11)** After the Timber Operations are complete, the department shall conduct an onsite inspection to determine compliance with this subdivision and whether appropriate enforcement action should be initiated. The department shall notify the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Geologic Survey seven days prior to conducting the onsite inspection. The Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Geologic Survey may conduct an inspection with the department.

**(12)**This subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2026.