



**GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
2800 N. Horseshoe Drive, Naples, Florida 34104
239-252-2400**

FIREWISE INFORMATION

The Collier County Land Development Code (LDC) currently permits or exempts clearing of vegetation to implement preserve management plans, wildfire mitigation plans, and create fire breaks to help reduce the threat of wildfire. Applicable regulations regarding LDC and GMP sections provided below:

- 1. *Single-family homeowners firewise clearing for other than fire breaks (LDC section 3.05.05.1)***
 - a. A vegetation removal permit is required when the homeowner proposes to clear more than the allowable acre for other than fire breaks.* Clearing for other than fire breaks includes thinning of canopy trees, mid-story, and woody understory for fuel loads. The homeowner shall provide a wildfire mitigation plan reviewed and approved by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) with the vegetation removal permit application.
 - b. A vegetation removal permit is not needed for fire breaks created by or approved by the Florida Forest Service as part of the Center's Annual Wildfire Mitigation Action Plan (see #2).
 - c. Clearing within 30 feet of structures is the defensible space recommended by firewise.org. This is usually done with initial clearing for home site (see #1 above); however, if one acre of vegetation has been removed and clearing within 30 feet of structures is proposed, a vegetation removal permit is required.
 - d. Removal of tall grasses and vines is recommended and does not require a vegetation removal permit.

The Firewise Communities Program provides resources for homeowners to help prepare for and reduce the risk of wildfire damage and loss on their property. Please refer to the Firewise Toolkit online: <http://firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-toolkit.aspx>

- 2. *Single-family homeowners within the Golden Gate Estates and non-Rural Fringe Mixed Use District (RFMUD)*** are currently allowed to clear up to one acre after the Building Permit for a single-family home has been issued. Existing residences which have not cleared up to an acre may clear up to the maximum one acre at any time. *Clearing allowances within the RFMUD are more restrictive and may not allow for one acre of clearing. (LDC section 3.05.02.F.1)
- 3. *Rural Fringe Mixed Used District (RFMUD)***
For properties within the RFMUD, a general exception is included in the LDC for smaller non-conforming lots within the RFMUD to allow for clearing of brush and understory vegetation within 200 feet of structures to minimize wildfire fuel sources. (LDC section 3.05.07.C.4)
- 4. *Rural Fringe Mixed Use District (RFMUD) Receiving Land developments***
The Collier County Growth Management Plan (GMP) requires new developments within RFMU Receiving lands to prepare a wildfire prevention and mitigation plan that will reduce the likelihood of threat to life and property from wildfire. These plans are required to be developed in coordination with the FFS, County Emergency Management staff and managers of any adjacent nearby public lands. (GMP FLUE RFMUD section 1.A).4)

5. **Fire Breaks exempt from County vegetation removal permits**
The Florida Forest Service may conduct fuel reduction initiatives, including, but not limited to, burning and mechanical and chemical treatment, on any area of wildland within the state which is reasonably determined to be in danger of wildfires. Permits are not required for clearing of fire breaks installed by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) or which are approved by the FFS as part of a wildfire mitigation plan. For single family lots within the Golden Gate Estates, clearing for fire breaks is allowed in addition to the one acre allowed for the home site as long as these fire breaks are or were created by the FFS or reviewed and approved by FFS as part of a wildfire mitigation plan. (LDC section 3.05.02 G.10)
6. **Preserve area management plan that include fire management plans do not require additional vegetation removal permits.** (LDC sections 3.05.07.H.1.g & 3.05.02.G.9)
7. **The Florida Forest Service Annual Wildfire Mitigation Action Plan** incorporates fuel reduction initiatives, including, but not limited to, burning and mechanical and chemical treatment, on any area of wildland within the state which is reasonably determined to be in danger of wildfires. These activities do not require County permits.

Florida Forest Service, Wildland Fire website

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Wildland-Fire>

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***Clearing Allowances in Specific Zoning Districts**

Golden Gate Estates (GGE) and the Urban area (LDC section 3.05.02.F.1)

A vegetation removal permit for clearing one acre or less of land shall not be required for the removal of protected vegetation, other than a specimen tree, on lots subdivided for single-family use pursuant to LDC section 3.05.02.F.1.a.—c. **This shall not apply to lots on undeveloped coastal barrier islands or in the ST, ACSC-ST or RFMU overlay districts** when a higher native vegetation protection requirement may not allow for one full acre of clearing.

- a. A Building Permit has been issued for the permitted principal structure (the Building Permit serves as the clearing permit); or
- b. The permitted principal structure has been constructed, and the property owner or authorized agent is conducting the removal, and the total area that will be cleared on site does not exceed one acre; and
- c. All needed environmental permits or management plans have been obtained from the appropriate local, state and federal agencies. These permits may include, but are not limited to, permits for wetlands impacts or for listed species protection.

Rural Fringe Mixed Use District (RFMUD)

Preservation requirements ranging from 40% to 90% are required on many parcels within the RFMU. Contact staff to determine the clearing regulations on your parcel.

For further information, contact Collier County Environmental Planning at 239-252-6290.