



Palm Trees

Due to the recent 2007 wildfires, it was determined that certain species of palms increased the fire hazard due to tree form and lack of maintenance. The following is the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District requirements for palm trees related to new construction.

Palm Tree Requirements (Local Policy). Palm Trees that have fibrous tissue (Photograph 1) or leaf bases (Photograph 2) on the trunk shall be planted and maintained 30 feet from the tree's drip line to any combustible structure. Some examples of tree species with fibrous tissue are *Chamaerops humilis* (Mediterranean Fan Palm), *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island Date Palm), *P. dactylifera* (Date Palm), *P. reclinata* (Senegal Date Palm), *P. roebelenii* (Pygmy Date Palm), and *Trachycarpus fortunei* (Windmill Palm). The *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican Fan Palm) is an example of a palm tree with leaf bases. All dead palm fronds including older leaves that persist on the tree, forming a "skirt" of brown thatch (Photograph 3) shall be removed annually; this requirement applies to palms within 100 feet of any structure or within 30 feet of a driveway or roadway.

Exception: Palms that can be "skinned" or cleaned of the fibrous tissue or leaf bases may be planted 10 feet from the tree's drip line to any portion of a combustible structure. These trees shall be maintained annually.



Photograph 1

Palm with fibrous tissue on the trunk



Photograph 2

Leaf bases on Mexican Fan Palm trunk



Photograph 3

Mexican Fan Palm with palm fronds hanging down.



Photograph 4

Fire envelopes palm tree that was poorly maintained