



City of Malibu News

23825 Stuart Ranch Road • Malibu, California • 90265-4861
Phone (310) 456-2489 • Fax (310) 456-3356 • www.malibucity.org

For Immediate Release

August 12, 2021

Contact: Matt Myerhoff, Media Information Officer

Cell: 424-395-6450

mmyerhoff@malibucity.org

City Council Amends Malibu's Nuisance Code to Address Safety Hazards Related to Homeless Encampments

(Malibu, CA) – The Malibu City Council unanimously approved amending the City's Nuisance Code to strengthen the City's ability to address hazards posed by homeless encampments in Malibu during the August 9 Council meeting.

"Homelessness is a nationwide humanitarian crisis that also has severe local impacts to our community's public health and safety, environment and quality of life that we can't ignore," said Mayor Paul Grisanti.

"Strengthening our Nuisance Code gives us more tools to protect our community from the real threat to lives and property posed by fires starting in homeless encampments in the mountains of Malibu."

Fire officials expect 2021 to be another very dangerous year for wildfires. According to CAL FIRE, California has already seen 579,614 acres burned and 400 structures destroyed in 6,049 fire incidents so far this year.

Fires that start in homeless encampments have become a critical concern across the region, and this year alone, nearly 20 fires have started in homeless encampments in Malibu. Most of those were on undeveloped private property. The amendments to the Nuisance Code strengthen the City's ability to hold private property owners responsible for unabated nuisances on their property, particularly homeless encampments that have been connected to a brush fire or that pose a high risk of starting a fire.

The primary changes to the Nuisance Code are language specific to fire and public health hazards, giving specific examples to make it more clear to property owners what a nuisance is, including:

Any accumulation or storage of trash, biohazards (including human waste), or articles of personal property on undeveloped or vacant land that creates, or creates the conditions for, a fire or safety hazard to nearby persons or properties, including, without limitation, the maintenance or storage of cooking or heating paraphernalia or equipment on undeveloped or vacant land, which facilitates activity that creates a risk of fire or otherwise creates a public health hazard.

The amendments would also give authority to the City Manager to take action quickly to address a nuisance, allowing a much faster response to an emergency condition that poses an immediate threat to the physical safety of the community. Most other cities delegate this authority to their city manager or a department head. The current code requires City Council approval to implement a Summary Abatement. City Council approval could take several weeks which impedes the City's ability to quickly address these hazardous conditions.

The amendments will be enforceable in 30 days. City Code Enforcement staff will be sending letters to property owners to advise them of the amendment before it goes into effect.

While the amendments to the nuisance code are aimed at addressing encampments that develop on private property, the City does have the ability to remove people who are trespassing on public property that is closed to the public under the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone ordinance. City staff are in the process of identifying areas that will be posted as closed under this ordinance and installing signage.

The community can review documents about the City's past and ongoing work to address homelessness, including the Homelessness Strategic Plan, community survey results, outreach efforts, and agendas and minutes from public meetings at <https://www.malibucity.org/1066/Reference-Documents>.

###