



# NEWS RELEASE

06-050

**Today's Date:** Monday, May 8, 2006  
**District:** 1 - Eureka  
**Contact:** Ann Marie Jones  
**Phone:** (707) 445-6444

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CALTRANS CAUTIONS PUBLIC ABOUT UNAUTHORIZED CUTTING, INJURY OR REMOVAL OF VEGETATION

In response to several recent acts of illegal vegetation removal, Caltrans is asking the public to be sure to check readily available public maps and records to verify ownership prior to performing any work on vegetation that may be on State highway, right of way or property.

If you dig up, cut down, prune, trim, or otherwise injure vegetation within any State highway, right of way, or property, without a permit issued by Caltrans, you may face civil penalties.

The law allows the State to recover, in a court of law, a penalty of \$1,000 for each shrub and \$10,000 for each tree so damaged on State property (Streets and Highways Code Section 730.5).

In addition to the \$10,000 penalty per tree, the State may also recover costs and expenses, including attorney and expert fees incurred in the action, and the actual costs incurred because of the damage to any tree on State property.

Additionally, the State can recover two or three times the damages caused by the tree cutting, injury or removal (Civil Code Section 3346, Code of Civil Procedure Section 733). Double damages are imposed when a tree is cut down, removed or otherwise injured due to the wrongdoer's negligence or mistake. Triple damages can be awarded when the wrongdoer acted maliciously or willfully.

If you wish to obtain a permit issued by Caltrans to perform work on vegetation located on State property in Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt or Del Norte County, please contact the Caltrans Encroachment Permit Office at 707-445-6385.

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