MAINTAINING SIDEWALKS
Keeping sidewalks clear of obstructions is important in creating an environment that is walkable, accessible and friendly to all pedestrians. Property owners have the responsibility of maintaining the sidewalks adjacent to their property by making sure that vegetation, debris, litter and garbage bins do not block access for pedestrians. (CMMC 12.56.010)

Additionally, cars should not be parked on sidewalks because they pose a safety hazard for pedestrians. Parking your car on the sidewalk may mean that pedestrians are obligated to walk on the street and this creates dangerous situations. (CMMC 10.40.020 and CMMC 12.04.030)

HELP KEEP STREETS AND SIDEWALKS CLEAR
In order to protect the health and safety of the public, it is important to keep streets, sidewalks, walkways and other public right-of-way areas free from obstructions. The ability of a driver at an intersection to see pedestrians, bicyclists and other drivers crossing the street is blocked by trees or large shrub. Additionally, maintaining streets and sidewalks in safe conditions encourages walking and biking and those activities help reduce traffic on roads.

As new or longstanding residents and/or property owners, you should familiarize yourself with your responsibilities on keeping streets and sidewalks clear of obstructions. The entire community depends on your commitment to neighborhood safety.

KEEPING VEGETATION TRIMMED
As Corte Madera residents, we all know that landscaping can add beauty to a neighborhood but landscaping can also become a safety concern. Some examples of hazardous situations can include vegetation growing too low or too far out that pedestrians and bicyclists are forced off the sidewalk and into the street. Untrimmed vegetation can also block the clear view of traffic for drivers.

It is very important to traffic and pedestrian safety that drivers have a line of sight that is free and clear of obstructions. Property owners have an obligation to take care of any vegetation or obstructions that present potential safety hazards. (CMMC 12.40.030)

Landscape on Private vs. Public Property
Any tree or vegetation planted on private property is the property owner’s responsibility, including if it is encroaching into the public right-of-way. Property owners are responsible for trimming overgrown trees and shrubs that are blocking sight lines or blocking a path or walkway. The Department of Public Works (DPW) abates sidewalk obstructions by sending a Notice to the property owner. The Notice requires trimming to be conducted within a certain timeframe.

For fallen trees or other vegetation blocking the public right-of-way, you should contact DPW at (415)927-5057 during regular business hours or at (415)613-5437 on the weekends. If you know that the area you are reporting is outside Town limits, please call the County of Marin Department of Public Works at (415)473-6528.

If you have concerns about the landscaping that is preventing you from using walkways or having clear visibility at intersections, contact DPW or the property owner (if you know who the property owners is).

Tree Removal
Before you remove a tree, you must contact the Planning Department to determine whether a Tree Permit is required. For more information on tree regulations and the permit process, contact the Planning Department at (415)927-5064. (CMMC 15.50.040)

Defensible Space
As previously mentioned, maintaining landscaping is important for traffic safety but it is also very important for fire safety. In Town, all property owners have the responsibility and obligation to maintain the vegetation on their property in a condition that will not contribute to the spread of fire. This is called defensible space. You can learn more about defensible space and about fire resistant landscaping by contacting Central Marin Fire at (415)927-5077.
HELPFUL GUIDELINES

Property owners have an obligation to maintain vegetation and take care of obstructions that could be considered a potential safety hazard to pedestrians and drivers. For the ease and safety of everyone, follow the guidelines in this brochure.

***Please note that these guidelines are subject to change. Make sure to contact the Planning and Building Department and the Department of Public Works for the most current ordinances. You should also look in the Corte Madera Municipal Code (CMMC) for more information. You can read CMMC online at https://library.municode.com/ca/corte_madera/codes/code_of_ordinances

INTERSECTION CLEARANCE

Property owners must ensure a clear view of the street and approaching traffic. To do this, lower tree branches should be kept trimmed to 13 feet and 6 inches, minimum for sidewalks and streets. Bushes, hedges or shrubs must be limited to 4 feet in height for a distance of 50 feet from any intersection or curve.

PROPER TREE CLEARANCE

The lower tree branches adjacent to any public right-of-way should be trimmed in order to provide a clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches.

Examples of Tree and Intersection Clearances in Corte Madera

The photo on the left shows an intersection that does not have proper clearance. The photo in the center shows proper clearance for an intersection and trees in the public right-of-way. The photo on the right does now show proper tree clearance and also shows encroachment over the sidewalk.

For more information on removing vegetation on Town property or concerns regarding sidewalk repairs, contact the Department of Public Works at (415)927-5057. For information on tree removal on private property, contact the Planning Department at (415)927-5064.