



Permit to Enter Process

Private Property and Environmental Studies: Your Questions Answered

Whenever large projects, like the high-speed rail program are being planned, certain requirements must be met. Some of these requirements include state and federal environmental rules and laws. These rules and laws guide high-speed rail program planners to look carefully at how the program might impact the environment. They must also find ways to reduce those impacts when possible. Environmental surveys are a way to measure potential program impacts and prepare potential mitigation strategies to address those impacts.

When building a program such as high-speed rail, planners must figure out how this program will potentially affect any number of items from biological and cultural materials to traffic to noise levels. To complete these surveys, California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) scientific experts will go to areas around the future high-speed rail program to conduct studies.

While many of these properties are privately owned, the Authority's experts will still need to visit those properties to collect information and conduct the necessary studies. To gain access to privately-held properties, the Authority issues a Permit to Enter (PTE) form requesting access to the property. Once the PTE form is signed and returned, the Authority or its representatives will contact the property owner to arrange access.

Completing the environmental surveys is an important step in planning the high-speed rail program. Your help and permission to enter your property are very important, and we appreciate your help.

Please view the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding the PTE process:

WHO IS THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY?

The Authority is a state agency that is responsible for planning, designing, building and operating the first high-speed rail system in the nation.

WHY DOES THE AUTHORITY NEED TO CONDUCT ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES ON MY PROPERTY?

Federal and State laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) require the assessment of potential impacts to environmental resources when building new projects. These studies identify the potential presence of environmental resources and help to determine how to reduce and mitigate for negative impacts to them. These environmental studies may include surveying for or sampling archaeological, botanical and wildlife resources or conducting geologic tests to better understand soil conditions.

DO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES ON MY PROPERTY MEAN THE AUTHORITY WANTS TO ACQUIRE MY PROPERTY?

Accessing your property to conduct environmental studies does not necessarily mean the Authority will want to acquire your property. Your property may be accessed for environmental study to help determine where environmental resources exist to determine the best possible alignment for the rail to pass/take through an area, or simply to learn the extent of a particular resource within the area.

IF I AGREE TO LET EXPERTS FROM THE AUTHORITY ON TO MY PROPERTY, HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN THEY ARE COMING?

After you have provided the Authority with permission to access your property, a forty-eight (48) hour notice will be given to each owner/operator of the property to notify them that the experts will be on your property.

CAN THE AUTHORITY ACCESS MY PROPERTY MORE THAN ONCE?

The Authority may access your property on more than one occasion during the time period set forth on the Permit to Enter (PTE) form that you signed. Each time the Authority plans to access your property, the Authority will provide you with notice at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. If you have questions about the timeframe on the PTE form you have signed, please contact the Authority for assistance.

WHAT WILL THESE EXPERTS FROM THE AUTHORITY DO WHEN THEY ARE ON MY PROPERTY?

They will conduct surveys on your property of environmental resources to help determine how to reduce and plan for any potential impacts to your property from the high-speed rail program. These experts will not:

- Go inside your house or other structures. They will only go in outside areas like front yards and back yards.
- Alter or remove anything from the property.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK MIGHT THE AUTHORITY NEED TO DO ON MY PROPERTY?

The Authority's representatives will conduct surveys that may include the collecting of cultural/biological plant material such as leaves, and flowers, some hand digging of small soil pits and soil testing, drilling or trenching. As per all applicable rules and regulations, all excavated soils will be backfilled. Should intrusive investigations such as drilling or trenching be required, the Authority will work with you to determine the least impactful way to complete this work and will provide financial compensation when appropriate.

CAN I GIVE SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR ACCESSING MY PROPERTY?

If you have any special conditions or instructions of which the survey teams should be aware, or if you would like to be present while the team(s) is (are) performing these studies, please include your name, contact information and best time to contact you, along with any special instructions, on the PTE form you are returning to the Authority.

CAN I REFUSE TO ALLOW PLANNERS ACCESS TO MY PROPERTY?

Yes. If you do not want planners accessing your property, you can mark your PTE form as "Do Not Enter" and return it to the Authority. Although Authority planners may be doing survey work in the area, they will not enter your property.

WILL ENVIRONMENTAL DETAILS ABOUT MY PROPERTY BE MADE PUBLIC?

Environmental studies build the environmental analysis included in Environmental Impact Reports/Environmental Impact Statements (EIR/EIS), which are provided for public review; however property specific details are not specified in the greater context of the assessment summary. Other technical reports that may result from environmental studies are submitted to oversight agencies for review; however, property details, if specified, are redacted if the studies are made public.