

TO: ALL CONDOMINIUM COMMUNITIES

FROM: MELISSA ERRICKSON, OWNER, PIN OAK COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

RE: LANDSCAPING MULCH

Dear Resident,

We recently learned of a new law that has been passed in New Jersey that affects our communities.

This law concerns the use of combustible landscape materials, such as wood-based mulch products. This concerns us since much of our landscaping has mulch to keep weeds at bay. Mulch beds are notorious as areas where fires are started when people carelessly throw smoking material or other flames into them. There have been numerous fires in NJ caused by mulch beds, especially later in the summer when the mulch gets dried out.

The law, which goes into effect on April 15, 2025, says the following:

- The use of wood-based mulch is prohibited within 18 inches of any building or structure which is constructed of combustible material on their exterior such as vinyl siding or wood. It also prohibits the use of wood-based mulch within 18 inches of any deck, balcony or any other portion of the building constructed of combustible material.
- The exception to this is for buildings that have non-combustible exteriors such as stone, concrete or stucco.
- Another exception is that plant materials are allowed if they are not beneath a combustible overhang with less than 6 feet of clearance.

How does this concern you? This spring, the landscapers will be pulling the existing mulch away from any building that has siding or any other combustible material against the mulch. We will be doing that for an 18" section in each bed. The plants will remain. The mulch that is removed will be distributed to the rest of the planting bed. We verified that pulling the mulch away from the building and leaving it just soil for now will be compliant.

After this is completed, Management and the Boards will evaluate the beds to determine the next step. Some suggestions are to put stone or fire-resistant mulch between the bed and the building or posts. As you can imagine, there's a cost to all this and the Boards will determine what is best for the community.

DO NOT PLACE anything in the area that we have removed mulch away from the building. If it is found that you have done anything to cause the building to be non-compliant you will be billed whatever amount the Township has fined the Association, which could be upwards of \$7500.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding with this.