



**Operational Guide for
Use of Equipment in
Grass, Brush or Forest
Covered Areas**

CAL FIRE
Santa Clara Unit

This document is intended as a guideline for the establishment of an operational procedure to be used by ALL Agencies in Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties, performing operations within the grass, brush or forest covered areas of the Santa Clara Unit

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1. Equipment Inspection

- a. PRIOR TO MAY 1ST OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR, ALL AGENCIES IN THE SANTA CLARA UNIT, SHALL INSPECT ALL EQUIPMENT THAT IS INTENDED FOR USE WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO ANY GRASS, BRUSH OR FORESTED AREAS WITHIN SANTA CLARA UNIT. THE EQUIPMENT THAT HAS NOT BEEN INSPECTED WILL NOT BE USED.**
- b. HIRED OR CONTRACTED PRIVATE EQUIPMENT MUST MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS PLAN. INSPECTION OF HIRED EQUIPMENT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AGENCY.**

Section 4442 of the Public Resource Code requires that any type of equipment that is powered by an internal combustion engine must be equipped with an approved spark arrestor. This does not include most motor vehicles if they are equipped with an approved muffler system, routed properly, as described in the Motor Vehicle Code.

For additional information including spark arrestor guidelines go to:

http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/programs/fire/spark_arrester_guides/

Section 4427 (b) of the Public Resource Code requires these tools to be carried on each piece of equipment and that they be kept in a serviceable condition.

EACH PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WILL CARRY THE FOLLOWING TOOLS:

- (A). 1 (one) serviceable round point shovel with an overall length of not less than 46 inches.
- (B). 1 (one) backpack pump water type (5 gallon) fire extinguisher.

Agencies will maintain maintenance and inspection records for equipment related to this plan and make them available for inspection.

2. Operational Procedures:

OPERATIONS CONDUCTED WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO ANY GRASS, BRUSH OR FOREST AREAS WILL BE CONDUCTED USING THE FOLLOWING RULES:

IN ORDER TO DETERMINE PREDICTED FIRE WEATHER CONTACT. ONE OF THE LINKS BELOW, NO LESS THAN 24 HOURS PRIOR TO BEGINNING ANY OPERATIONS

National Weather Service Offices:

Monterey Office Website: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/>

Sacramento Office Website: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sto/>

NO OPERATIONS SHALL OCCUR WITHIN 24 HOURS OF A PREDICTED RED FLAG EVENT AS DETERMINED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.

- (a) Prior** to commencement of any operations, (when possible) a non-divertible fire pump equipped pickup truck should be in operation. It should be staffed with an additional employee. The employee shall be familiar with the operation of the fire apparatus, the vehicle radio, and the location of the operation.

- (b) Prior** to commencement of any operations, a weather sampling will be conducted at the site. Mowing operations should be completed by 10 AM. Additional weather sampling will be conducted every 2 hours thereafter until completion of the operation. *If the ambient temperature reaches 80 degrees Fahrenheit at any time during the operation, weather samplings must be taken hourly. In the event the following readings are noted, **OPERATIONS WILL CEASE IMMEDIATELY!***

THE RELATIVE HUMIDITY IS AT OR BELOW 30%

SUSTAINED WIND SPEEDS REACH 10 MPH OR HIGHER

The Agency is encouraged to complete as many projects in the grass, brush or forest covered areas in the County, annually, prior to curing of flammable vegetation.

Attachments:

(a) Applicable Laws and Regulations:

CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE REFERENCE SECTIONS:

13001. Causing Fire

Every person is guilty of a misdemeanor who, through careless or negligent action, throws or places any lighted cigarette, cigar, ashes, or other flaming or glowing substance, or any substance or thing which may cause a fire, in any place where it may directly or indirectly start a fire, or who uses or operates a welding torch, tar pot or any other device which may cause a fire, who does not clear the inflammable material surrounding the operation or take such other reasonable precautions necessary to insure against the starting and spreading of fire.

13005. Use of Hydrocarbon Burning Engine without Exhaust Spark Arrester

Every person is guilty of a misdemeanor who:

(a) Sells, offers for sale, leases, or rents to any person any tractor, engine, machine, or truck equipped with an internal combustion engine that uses hydrocarbon fuels, if either:

(1) It is specifically designed for use in harvesting or moving grain or hay or for use on land covered with any other flammable agricultural crop, unless the exhaust system of the engine is equipped with a spark arrester in effective working order or the engine is constructed, equipped, and maintained for the prevention of fire pursuant to Section 4443 of the Public Resources Code.

(2) It is not specifically designed for any of the uses described in paragraph (1) but could be used for any of those uses, unless the person provides written notice to the purchaser or bailee at the time of sale or at the time of entering into the lease or rental contract stating that the use or operation of the engine on any flammable agricultural cropland is a violation of subdivision (b), unless the exhaust system is equipped with a spark arrester in effective working order or the engine is constructed, equipped, and maintained for the prevention of fire pursuant to Section 4443 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) Operates or causes to be operated any tractor, engine, machine, or truck equipped with an internal combustion engine that uses hydrocarbon fuels in harvesting or moving grain or hay, or on land covered with any other flammable agricultural crop, unless the engine is equipped with a spark arrester maintained in effective working order or the engine is constructed, equipped, and maintained for the prevention of fire pursuant to Section 4443 of the Public Resources Code.

Spark arrester, as used in this section, is as defined in Section 4442 of the Public Resources Code. Spark arresters attached to the exhaust system of engines on equipment or vehicles, as described in this section, shall not be placed or mounted in such a manner as to allow flames or heat from the exhaust system to ignite any flammable material. Motortrucks, truck tractors, buses, and passenger vehicles, except motorcycles, are not subject to the provisions of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) if the exhaust system is equipped with a muffler as defined in the Vehicle Code.

13007. Any person who personally or through another willfully, negligently, or in violation of law, sets fire to, allows fire to be set to, or allows a fire kindled or attended by him to escape to, the property of another, whether privately or publicly owned, is liable to the owner of such property for any damages to the property caused by the fire.

13009. (a) Any person (1) who negligently, or in violation of the law, sets a fire, allows a fire to be set, or allows a fire kindled or attended by him or her to escape onto any public or private property, (2) other than a mortgagee, who, being in actual possession of a structure, fails or refuses to correct, within the time allotted for correction, despite having the right to do so, a fire hazard prohibited by law, for which a public agency properly has issued a notice of violation respecting the hazard, or (3) including a mortgagee, who, having an obligation under other provisions of law to correct a fire hazard prohibited by law, for which a public agency has properly issued a notice of violation respecting the hazard, fails or refuses to correct the hazard within the time allotted for correction, despite having the right to do so, is liable for the fire suppression costs incurred in fighting the fire and for the cost of providing rescue or emergency medical services, and those costs shall be a charge against that person. The charge shall constitute a debt of that person, and is collectible by the person, or by the federal, state, county, public, or private agency, incurring those costs in the same manner as in the case of an obligation under a contract, expressed or implied.

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC RESOURCE CODE REFERENCES SECTIONS:

4427. During any time of the year when burning permits are required in an area pursuant to this article, no person shall use or operate any motor, engine, boiler, stationary equipment, welding equipment, cutting torches, tarpots, or grinding devices from which a spark, fire, or flame may originate, which is located on or near any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land, without doing both of the following:

(a) First clearing away all flammable material, including snags, from the area around such operation for a distance of 10 feet.

(b) Maintain one serviceable round point shovel with an overall length of not less than forty-six (46) inches and one backpack pump water-type fire extinguisher fully equipped and ready for use at the immediate area during the operation.

4442. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, no person shall use, operate, or allow to be used or operated, any internal combustion engine which uses hydrocarbon fuels on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land unless the engine is equipped with a spark arrester, as defined in subdivision (c), maintained in effective working order or the engine is constructed, equipped, and maintained for the prevention of fire pursuant to

4443. (b) Spark arresters affixed to the exhaust system of engines or vehicles subject to this section shall not be placed or mounted in such a manner as to allow flames or heat from the exhaust system to ignite any flammable material.

(c) A spark arrester is a device constructed of nonflammable materials specifically for the purpose of removing and retaining carbon and other flammable particles over 0.0232 of an inch in size from the exhaust flow of an internal combustion engine that uses hydrocarbon fuels or which is qualified and rated by the United States Forest Service.

(d) Engines used to provide motive power for trucks, truck tractors, buses, and passenger vehicles, except motorcycles, are not subject to this section if the exhaust system is equipped with a muffler as defined in the Vehicle Code.

(e) Turbocharged engines are not subject to this section if all exhausted gases pass through the rotating turbine wheel, there is no exhaust bypass to the atmosphere, and the turbocharger is in effective mechanical condition.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

ANY fire emergency:

Dial 911

CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection)
Santa Clara Unit, Morgan Hill Headquarters:

Emergency Command Center (ECC): PH# 1-408-779-6611

Santa Clara Unit Fire Prevention Bureau PH# 1-408-779-2121

Burn Day Information:

Bay Area Air Quality Management District PH# (800) 792-0787

National Weather Service Offices:

Monterey Office Website: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/>

Sacramento Office Website: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sto/>

For additional information including spark arrester guidelines go to:
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