CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Amador-El Dorado-Sacramento Unit

CONTACT: Teri Mizuhara, Fire Prevention Specialist II, 530.708.2724
RELEASE DATE: June 24, 2013

Are You Doing the Right Thing The Wrong Way?

Camino – "Recently there have been a number of wildfires caused by people using gas powered equipment to create defensible space at the wrong time of day. Using equipment such as tractors, lawn mowers or weed eaters at the wrong time of day can end disastrously. It is best to operate gas powered equipment before 10 am and after 7 pm when the humidity's are higher and temperatures are cooler, this will lessen the chance of sparking a fire" cautions Unit Chief Kelly Keenan of the Amador-El Dorado-Sacramento Unit of CAL FIRE. "We understand that many people are taking advantage of this cooler than average weather and are outdoors creating additional defensible space around their homes. We want to encourage this, but at the same time we don't want folks to endanger themselves or their community" adds Chief Keenan.

Here are some tips to do *the right thing the right way*:

- operate gas powered equipment before 10 in the morning or after 7 in the evening
- maintain your equipment in good working order to prevent carbon buildup which can cause a fire
- make sure you have a spark arrester and that is it in good shape
- allow all equipment to cool for a minimum of 15 minutes before refueling
- remove rocks from the area to be mowed, a metal blade from a mower striking a rock can cause a fire
- never mow *dry* grass with a mower designed to cut *green* grass, this is a common cause of fires which may not only result in a wildland fire, but often destroys your mower. The dry grass can get caught inside the mower and catch fire, leaving in its wake a trail of wildland fires and a fire in the engine compartment
- use a weed eater to mow dry grass and weeds
- have a shovel, fire extinguisher or other water source available and phone nearby in case you start a fire. Never hesitate to call 9-1-1, fires can get out of control quickly and threaten life and property in a matter of minutes.

Following these fire safety tips will allow you to work safely in your yard. If you want to read more fire and life safety information, please visit our website at www.fire.ca.gov. Thank you and have a fire safe summer.

# # #