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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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## Fire Officials Stress Safety during Memorial Day Weekend

Recent wildfires and water related deaths act as reminder of the dangers

**Sacramento** – As Memorial Day approaches, millions of Californians will plan outdoor activities to enjoy the great spring weather that is forecast. Even with the expected good weather, CAL FIRE officials are stressing the importance for everyone to be extra safe due to hidden dangers that many don't think about when recreating outdoors.

In just the past few weeks wildfires have already caused major destruction and waterways have already claimed numerous lives. California is in the third year of a drought and it was the unseasonably early dry conditions combined with strong winds that fanned a wildfire into the community of Santa Barbara. The "Jesusita" Fire burned over 8,700 acres and damaged or destroyed nearly 100 homes. Wildfires are not the only danger that can occur in the outdoors, water drownings also increase dramatically during the holiday weekend. In just the last week alone, CAL FIRE crews have responded to water rescues across the state, many of which have tragically led to fatalities.

"California is a beautiful place to live and recreate in," said Chief Del Walters, director of CAL FIRE. "It is so important that people understand the dangers the outdoors pose. Even the simplest of steps can prevent these types of tragedies."

Here are some simple steps CAL FIRE would like everyone to remember this holiday:

### Camping:

- Obtain any necessary permits needed for campfires
- Clear away grass, leaves and other debris within a 10-foot perimeter of the campfire
- Have a responsible person in attendance at all times
- Ensure all campfires are completely extinguished before leaving
- When Barbequing, never leave the grill unattended

### In the Water:

- Always wear a life jacket!
- Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult
- Never swim alone
- Drinking and swimming is just as dangerous as drinking and driving.

For more ways to be safe during the Memorial Day Weekend visit the CAL FIRE website at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).