

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Unsafe Equipment Use Poses Fire Danger **Are You Doing the Right Thing, the Wrong Way?**

Sacramento – Clearing dead grass and brush 100 feet from homes is a critical step in preparing for fire season. As the fire danger increases, the unsafe use of power equipment can actually start new fires. Every spring, CAL FIRE and other fire agencies remind homeowners of the importance of cutting down overgrown vegetation, but stress that how they clear their Defensible Space is just as important.

“The spark from the metal blade of a lawn mower against a rock can easily ignite a wildfire,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, director of CAL FIRE. “While it’s important to clear dead grass and brush, we don’t want homeowners doing the right thing the wrong way.

Two weeks ago, a wildfire known as the Banner Fire was sparked by unsafe equipment use, charring 5,321 acres just east of Julian in San Diego County. CAL FIRE officials say the fire serves as a reminder of how dry conditions are and how extra vigilance is needed to prevent wildfires. Homeowners are urged to take advantage of this week’s cooler weather to ensure they have cleared all dead or dying vegetation before increasing temperatures return.

CAL FIRE offers the following tips to prevent fires from equipment use:

- **Do** yard maintenance with powered equipment **before 10 a.m.**, not during the heat of the day or when the wind is blowing.
- **Never** use lawn mowers on dry grass or brush.
- **Remove** any rocks in and around the area before operating equipment.
- Be sure your portable gas powered equipment has a **spark arrester**.
- **Never** re-fuel while equipment is still hot from use
- Keep the equipment maintained and free of carbon and other buildup.

For more steps on how to prepare for fire season visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

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