



NEWS RELEASE

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CAL FIRE SUSPENDS BURN PERMITS IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Perris, CA – After a wet winter, warming temperatures are quickly drying out the abundant annual grass crop. The increasing fire danger posed by the high volume of dead grass and hotter, drier conditions in the region is prompting CAL FIRE to suspend all burn permits for outdoor residential burning within the State Responsibility Area of Riverside County. This suspension takes effect Friday, May 26, 2017 and bans all residential outdoor burning of landscape debris such as branches and leaves.

“We are asking that residents not be lulled into a false sense of security on the heels of an exceptionally wet winter,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE director. “The abundant dead grass will only serve as a fuse to the heavier vegetation still suffering the lasting effects of 5 years of extreme drought.”

In addition to suspension of open burning, the following restrictions also are hereby applied and will be in effect Friday, May 26, 2017 and until further notice:

1. Use of campfires is restricted to within established campfire facilities located in established campgrounds open to the public.
2. Agricultural burning in the **Palo Verde Valley** and **Coachella Valley** is authorized as required for agricultural rehabilitation.
3. Cooking fires with a valid permit are permissive when no alternate means of cooking is available and requires an on-site inspection prior to the issuance of a permit.
4. Warming fires are permissive and require an on-site inspection prior to the issuance of a permit when weather conditions exist to justify the request.

“CAL FIRE/Riverside County Fire Department encourages residents to be prepared for wildfires. Please comply with the implemented open burning suspension. They are put in place for you and for the safety of our firefighters”, said John R. Hawkins, CAL FIRE/Riverside County Fire Chief.

Since January 1, 2017 CAL FIRE and firefighters across the state have already responded to nearly 800 wildfires. While outdoor burning of landscape debris by homeowners is no longer allowed, CAL FIRE is asking residents to ensure that they are prepared for wildfires by maintaining a minimum of 100 feet of Defensible Space around every home and building on their property.

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Here are some tips to help prepare homes and property:

- Clear all dead and or dying vegetation 100 feet from around all structures.
- Landscape with fire resistant/drought tolerant plants
- Find alternative ways to dispose of landscape debris like chipping or hauling it to a biomass energy or green waste facility

The department may issue restricted temporary burning permits if there is an essential reason due to public health and safety. Agriculture, land management, fire training, and other industrial-type burning may proceed if a CAL FIRE official inspects the burn site and issues a special permit.

The suspension of burn permits for residential landscape debris does not apply to campfires within organized campgrounds or on private property. Campfires may be permitted if the campfire is maintained in such a manner as to prevent its spread to the wildland. A campfire permit can be obtained at local fire stations or online at PreventWildfireCA.org.

For additional information on how to create Defensible Space, as well as tips to prevent wildfires, visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

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