



NEWS RELEASE

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CAL FIRE SUSPENDS BURN PERMITS IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Perris, CA – With 2020 starting out with February being the driest month since the 1850's in California, warming temperatures and winds are quickly drying out the annual grass crop. The increasing fire danger posed by dead grass and hotter, drier conditions in the region is prompting CAL FIRE and the County of Riverside to suspend all burn permits for outdoor residential burning within the State and Local Responsibility Area of Riverside County. This suspension takes effect at 8:00 a.m., Monday, June 8, 2019 and bans all residential outdoor burning of tumbleweeds.

In addition to suspension of open burning, the following restrictions also are hereby applied and will be in effect at 8:00 a.m. Monday, June 8, 2020 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.

“The last few years saw devastating reminders that the public cannot let their guard down. Together, we must continue to adapt and evolve to be able to withstand the intensity of these fires, keeping in mind, that the only way to mitigate the damage they cause is through prevention and preparation,” said Chief Thom Porter, CAL FIRE Director. “The potential is great for the dry, hot weather that fueled the massive fires over the last few years will return again this year, so it is up to the public to be ready.”

“Winter and spring rains have lent to aggressive growth of grass and vegetation. Paired with unseasonably warmer days, the vegetation is beginning to quickly dry out and becoming a fire hazard. I urge all Riverside County residents to take advantage of hardening your homes to protect you and your property from an approaching wildfire”, said CAL FIRE / Riverside County Fire Chief, Shawn C. Newman.

Since January 1, 2020, CAL FIRE and firefighters across the state have already responded to over 1,700 wildfires. While outdoor burning of landscape debris by homeowners is no longer allowed, CAL FIRE is asking residents to take that extra time to ensure that they are prepared for wildfires by maintaining a minimum of 100 feet of Defensible Space around every home and buildings on their property and being prepared to evacuate if the time comes.

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 plants and non-flammable ground cover.
- 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, on how to be prepared for wildfires, as well as tips to prevent wildfires, visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

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