

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Santa Clara Unit



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Practice Safe Equipment Use

Morgan Hill – The CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit wants to remind all homeowners to practice safe equipment use while working outside during the upcoming hot, dry months.

Whether working to create a defensible space around your home, just mowing the lawn, or pulling your dirt bike over to the side of the road, if you live in a wildland area you need to use all equipment responsibly. Lawn mowers, weed eaters, chain saws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire. Here's how you can do your part, the right way, to keep your community fire safe.

- Do all yard maintenance that requires a gas or electrical motor before 10 a.m. Not in the heat of the day, or when the wind is blowing!
- Lawn mowers are designed to mow lawns. Never use lawn mowers in dry vegetation. • Use a weed trimmer to cut down dry weeds and grass.
- Remove rocks in the area before you begin operating any equipment. A rock hidden in grass or weeds is enough to start a fire when struck by a metal blade.
- In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment including tractors, harvesters, chain saws, weed eaters, mowers, motorcycles, and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).
- Keep the exhaust system, spark arresters and mower in proper working order and free of carbon buildup. Use the recommended grade of fuel and don't top off.
- Keep the engine free of oil and dust, and keep the mower free of flammable materials.
- In wildland areas, a permit may be required for grinding and welding operations, and spark shields may be required on equipment. Be sure to have 10 feet of clearance, a 46" round point shovel, and a backpump water-type fire extinguisher ready to use.
- Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires you won't even see, until it's too late! Don't pull off into dry grass or brush.
- Keep a cell phone nearby and call 911 immediately in case of a fire.

For more information on preparing for wildfires and defensible space visit: www.readyforwildfire.org.

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