

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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RELEASE
DATE: May 27, 2021

CAL FIRE Stresses Safety this Memorial Day Weekend *Public asked to take steps to prevent wildfire!*

Sacramento – As we roll into the official start of summer, CAL FIRE is urging Californians to be extra cautious this Memorial Day weekend and take steps to help prevent wildfire, drownings, and other accidents. Since January 1st, CAL FIRE has responded to 2,265 wildfires and more than 195,000 other incidents.

“Approximately 95% of all wildfires in California are caused by human activity, and each year we see disasters that could have been prevented” said Chief Thom Porter, CAL FIRE director. “The dry conditions and increased temperatures throughout the state have created a situation where a fire could easily spark, so we ask everyone to be cautious as they enjoy their time outdoors.”

If you plan on driving to your holiday destination:

- Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained with nothing dragging on the ground, which can cause a spark and potentially a wildfire.
- When towing, make sure trailer chains are properly secured.
- Never drive or pull over into dry grass, which can start a wildfire.

If you are staying around your home:

- If using equipment, check that spark arresters and equipment are in good working condition. Use it prior to 10:00 a.m., and avoid yardwork on hot, dry and windy days.
- Make sure you use the right tool for the job – lawnmowers are for cutting grass only.
- If grilling, never leave the grill unattended and always watch what you grill.

If you plan on going camping:

- Make sure to obtain a [campfire permit](#) and check for local fire restrictions.
- If you plan on having a campfire, make sure it is legal to do so. Clear grass, leaves, and other debris within a 10-foot perimeter of the ring.
- Make sure all campfires are completely extinguished before leaving.
- Buy your firewood where you burn it, that way you are not spreading dangerous insects and diseases.

Water drownings increase dramatically during Memorial Day weekend.

- Never swim alone and if you are not a strong swimmer, always wear a life jacket.
- Children should always wear a life jacket in or around water and be supervised by a responsible adult within arm’s reach.
- Be particularly cautious of rivers and waterways with rapid currents and never underestimate calm water.
- Drinking while boating/swimming is just as dangerous as drinking and driving on the roadways.

For more ways to be safe this holiday, visit www.fire.ca.gov or www.ReadyforWildfire.org.