



## Critical Days of Summer: Outdoor Fun & Fire Safety

Summer not only brings sunshine and warmth but also the heightened risk of devastating wildfires. In California, our most challenging days occur during this season, demanding immense dedication, coordination, and preparedness from our brave men and women as they tirelessly combat the wrath of wildfire.

With California's climate and diverse ecosystems, the state is particularly susceptible to wildfires. The combination of high temperatures, dry conditions, and strong winds creates the perfect storm for these destructive infernos. As temperatures soar and vegetation becomes parched, the risk of fire escalates dramatically. CAL FIRE stands as one of the first lines of defense in the State Responsibility Area, shouldering the responsibility of protecting lives, property, and the state's precious natural resources.

Recognizing that a proactive approach is key to mitigating the risk of wildfires, CAL FIRE also places great emphasis on public awareness and prevention. Through comprehensive public education campaigns, we disseminate information on fire safety, evacuation procedures, and the importance of creating defensible space and hardening homes.

Ensuring the safety of Californians is not solely CAL FIRE's responsibility however—it begins with you. As the weather warms up, activities like grilling, sitting around fire pits, and camping carry fire risks that should not be overlooked. Without proper safety measures, these activities can have deadly consequences. Here are some important fire safety tips to keep in mind:

**Fire Pits:** Keep your fire pit at least 10 feet away from your house and anything else that can catch fire, such as trees and bushes. Avoid using treated wood, wet wood, or anything else that produces gas or dense smoke. Don't use flammable fluids to start the fire. Use a fire screen to catch stray sparks and keep a fire extinguisher or bucket of water nearby. Make sure that the fire is fully extinguished using the drown, stir, and feel method before leaving the fire pit unattended. Also, make sure to use local wood as transporting firewood long distances can contribute to the [spread of forest pests and diseases](#).

**BBQ Grills:** Whether you're using propane or charcoal grills, it's crucial to follow safety guidelines. For propane grills, avoid overfilling the tank and check for leaks using a solution of dish soap and water. Store the tank upright, away from heat sources and outside your house. When using charcoal grills, douse hot coals with plenty of water and stir to ensure there are no remaining embers. Never place hot coals or embers in anything flammable, such as plastic, paper, or wood.

**Campfires:** While enjoying the warmth and ambiance of a campfire, it's important to prioritize safety. Choose a location away from dry grass, trees, and your tent. Create a perimeter of rocks around the fire to help contain it, ensuring a three-foot space that is free of kids and pets. Do not use gasoline to start the fire and make sure to fully extinguish the campfire using the drown, stir and feel method with water and dirt before going to bed. Make sure you know the rules and regulations in the local area you are wanting to build a campfire as they can change from day to day. You also need to get a campfire permit, which you can start the process by going [here](#).

**RV Safety:** If you're planning a camping trip in an RV, it's essential to consider fire safety precautions. RVs may be powered by propane, contain hazardous substances, or use electric generators. Properly install smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and propane leak alarms in your RV. Regularly inspect and maintain all mechanical and electrical systems. Replace frayed electric cords immediately. Never leave your stove unattended when cooking and keep flammable objects away from it. Store propane tanks outside the RV, avoiding the backend in case of a rear-end collision. Always allow the generator to cool down before refueling. RVs are often pulled by hitches and chains, and as such, dragging chains can cause sparks, which cause fire. Ensure your chains are properly secured to avoid causing sparks that could create fire and your RV from becoming damaged.

As the summer heat intensifies, CAL FIRE's commitment and unwavering efforts remain steadfast in safeguarding California's communities from wildfires. By staying vigilant and following fire safety guidelines, we can work together to mitigate the risk and protect our beloved state.