

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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### Public Urged to Use Extreme Caution Due to Drought Conditions

#### *CAL FIRE Offers Fireworks Safety This Fourth of July*

**San Diego** - Many Californians and visitors will be celebrating our nation's independence this July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday with fireworks, but CAL FIRE wants to remind the public that California has a zero tolerance for the sale and use of illegal fireworks.

***It is illegal to possess or use any fireworks in San Diego County.***

If convicted, a violator could be fined up to \$50,000 as well as sent to jail for up to one year. "Every year CAL FIRE and fire departments across California respond to fireworks-related incidents that hurt people and cause damage to property and natural resources," said State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover, CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal.

On June 13, 2016, CAL FIRE suspended all burn permits for outdoor open residential burning within the State Responsibility Area of San Diego and Imperial Counties due to the elevated threat of wildfire caused by the drought.

"San Diego lives with the threat of wildfire year round and it is critical that the public do their part to be extra fire safe when outdoors. It can take hundreds of thousands of gallons of water to control a large wildfire. With record-setting drought conditions we must take every step possible to prevent new wildfires from starting" said Tony Mecham CAL FIRE San Diego Unit and County Fire Chief. "One Less Spark, means One Less Wildfire."

"Wildfire activity has significantly increased during the last several weeks and California continues to experience explosive fire conditions as a result of five years of drought," said Chief Ken Pimott, CAL FIRE director. *"Everyone needs to understand the dangers associated with the use of illegal fireworks. Any person who starts a fire from fireworks – even accidentally – can be held liable for the fire-fighting costs as well as property damage costs."*

CAL FIRE has already responded to over 2,000 wildland fires this year, a large increase in the average number of fires for the same time period. Residents are urged to visit [www.ReadyforWildfire.org](http://www.ReadyforWildfire.org) for tips on how to prepare their homes and family for wildfire. The website also links to important water saving tips, a resource critical to the control of wildfires.

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