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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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## **CAL FIRE Stresses Safety this Memorial Day Weekend**

**Sacramento** – This Memorial Day weekend, Californians everywhere will be recreating in the majestic outdoor areas of the Golden State. In anticipation of the increased outdoor activities, CAL FIRE officials are urging everyone to exercise caution and emphasize safety this holiday weekend.

“The heavy rainfall this past winter and spring has led to abundant growth of grass and brush,” said Chief Del Walters, director of CAL FIRE. “Despite the recent wet weather, this weekend’s warmer temperatures will dry out the vegetation, contributing to California's elevated risk of wildfires.”

Thousands of acres of wildland have already burned this year in California, and the potential for even larger, more destructive fires will increase as the state enters the summer and fall months.

Wildfires are not the only danger posed by the outdoors; drownings also dramatically increase during the Memorial Day weekend. In California, drowning is the leading cause of deaths among children under 14, and every year CAL FIRE responds to water rescues all across the state, many of which tragically claim the lives of both adults and children.

“Memorial Day is a great time to get together with friends and family to enjoy the outdoors,” said Chief Walters. “But it is important that everyone understands the dangers that the outdoors pose, and take steps to stay safe and prevent tragedy.”

CAL FIRE would like everyone to remember these important steps this holiday:

### **Camping:**

- Obtain necessary permits needed for campfires
- Clear away grass, leaves and other debris within a 10-foot perimeter of any campfire
- Have a responsible person in attendance at all times
- Ensure all campfires are completely extinguished before leaving
- When barbequing, never leave the grill unattended

### **In the Water:**

- Always wear a life jacket!
- Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult
- Never swim alone
- Swimming and alcohol don't mix. Alcohol can impair your ability causing you to underestimate the water and overestimate your abilities.

For more ways to be safe during the Memorial Day Weekend visit the CAL FIRE website at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).

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