



# SAFETY COMMUNICATION

## Pile Burning Injuries

In the past week, there have been four burn injuries suffered during pile burning operations statewide.

- On March 27, 2019, in the Amador El Dorado Unit (AEU), an inmate firefighter suffered a burn injury to the hand while adding fuel to a burn pile. Treatment continues for the burn injuries.
- On March 28, 2019, in the Tulare Unit (TUU), an inmate firefighter suffered burn injuries to the torso, arm, and leg while adding fuel to burning piles. The injuries continue to be treated at the burn center.
- On March 28, 2019, in the Butte Unit (BTU), a California Conservation Corp Crewmember suffered burns to due to standing too close to a burn pile.
- On March 31, 2019, in the Sonoma Lake Napa Unit (LNU), a CAL FIRE employee suffered burn injuries to the neck and chin.



With the increased emphasis on fuels reduction projects, personnel will be more engaged in these operations. It is critical that steps are taken to minimize the risks associated with pile burning and prescribed firing operations.

Brief personnel to the potential hazards during pile burning, including unnecessary exposure to radiant heat, mitigating radiant heat, and reporting unsafe conditions.

Although prescribed fire projects are *controlled* burning operations, risk management measures need to be taken as

seriously as an active wildland fire.

### Reduce burn injuries by:

- **Backing away when you “feel” heat penetrating your protective clothing!**
- Ensuring drip torch fuel is properly mixed with the correct ratio.
- Ensuring personnel are trained on safe response to changes in fire intensity and are aware of the potential to be caught in a hazardous situation.
- Utilizing all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriately and ensuring a proper fit.
- Understanding the limitations of your PPE.
- Being aware of the contact points between PPE and your body.
- NOT overfilling drip torches.
- Rotating personnel frequently to minimize the exposure to radiant heat.
- Reviewing and reinforcing standard operating procedures for firing operations. Know the Plan and follow the Plan.
- Treating and reporting all injuries immediately per policy.

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