



FIRE SAFE MOWING GUIDE

Preparation:

- Prior to starting mowing operations inspect all equipment.
 - ✓ Make sure the exhaust system, spark arrestor or turbocharger, and mower are in proper working order and free of carbon buildup.
 - ✓ Keep the mower free of flammable materials. Check the grass outlet around any blades and around any shrouds, covers, and heat shields. Keep the engine and radiator free of oil and dust.
 - ✓ Use the recommended grade of fuel and do not top off.
 - ✓ Flail mower chains and blades should be set high enough to avoid sparks from rock strikes and contact with debris.
 - ✓ Inspect safety devices and equipment to insure that they are serviceable
 - ✓ Including but not limited to: portable radios, shovels (46" round point shovel), water fire extinguishers (minimum 5 gallons), weather kits (belt weather kit, or Kestrel type), and personnel protective equipment.

Operational Procedure:

- As a minimum recommendation an employee in a pickup 4X4 (vehicle having off road capabilities)
 - ✓ With a backpack pump type water fire extinguisher
 - ✓ A round point shovel and a two way radio shall be assigned with each mowing operation.
 - ✓ A person to serve as a look out and to monitor weather conditions. The employee must be able to maintain visual contact with mowing operations at all times and be trained in using the firefighting equipment on the vehicle.
 - ✓ If the height of the vegetation requires that a worker scout the ground ahead of the mower then a separate person should be assigned to perform that function.
- Prior to starting mowing operations fire weather observations must be checked and continuously monitored at the site to insure safe conditions for mowing.
 - ✓ Use the following guidelines as a "Go, No Go" check prior to mowing:
 - When the ambient air temperature reaches 80 degrees Fahrenheit
 - and the relative humidity is at 30 percent or lower
 - and wind speeds reach 10 mph or higher
 - Operations should not start. If these conditions occur during mowing all operations should cease immediately.

Operational Procedure:

- When fueling equipment allow it to cool in an area where there is no flammable vegetation that can be ignited by the hot exhaust, Preferably in a dirt area.
- Plan your operations where areas of greatest risk are mowed early in the day to minimize the chance of ignition and spread of wild fire. Start all mowing from a safe “anchor point” where a fire started from mowing burns downwind, away from the mower and uncut vegetation.
- When fire danger is “High” or when mowing operations extend beyond the noon hour the operation must be accompanied by a water tender capable of providing initial fire suppression.

Fire Safety:

If a fire starts **do not** attempt to suppress it unless it is small and it is safe to do so. Call 911 immediately and report the location and size of the fire and route in. Always insure the safety of personnel and the motoring public. Assist fire and law enforcement agencies as appropriate within policy.

For additional information including spark arrestor guidelines go to:

http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/programs/fire/spark_arrester_guides/