

# CalFire issues residential burning tips

By Teri Mizuhara

In 2013, 32 percent of all wildfires in the Amador-El Dorado Unit of CalFire were caused by residential debris burning, which is up from 23 percent in 2012.

This amounted to a total of 94 fires and 66 acres burned.

Escaped debris burning continues to be one of our leading causes of wildland fires in the region. However, by following some simple precautions, the number of escapes can be significantly reduced.

Please remember that every debris burn escape is a threat to people, property and natural resources. To reduce your risk of causing a wildland fire, review the steps listed below to safely burn your debris piles.

## **Safety tips for burning:**

- Make sure your pile(s) are no larger than 4 feet by 4 feet in size
- Scrape a 10-foot wide ring around each debris pile down to bare dirt
- Have a shovel and water supply (charged hose) close by to use in the event your fire escapes from the pile
- Make sure an adult is in attendance until the pile is completely extinguished
- You can only burn on “permissive burn days” so make sure to call your local Air Quality Management District immediately prior to lighting your pile(s). For Amador County, call

209.223.6246. For El Dorado County, call 530.621.5897 or 866.621.5897. For the Lake Tahoe area of El Dorado County call 530.621.5842 or 888.332.2876. For Alpine County, call 916.445.0745. Placer County (within 12 miles of Auburn), call 530. 889.6868. Placer County: 800.998.2876, Nevada County: 530.274.7928; Yuba County: 530.741.6299; Truckee area: 530.582.1027; Western Sierra County: 530.289.3662.

It is imperative that landowners follow all requirements listed on the burn permit. If a fire escapes their control, they can be issued a citation and be held liable for suppression costs and damages.

Residential burn permits will be required beginning May 1. These permits are issued to the public free of charge, are valid for three years from the date of issuance and allows for the burning of dry vegetation (not household trash) that originates on the landowners property. You can pick up your free residential burn permit at most of the local staffed fire stations.

Don't forget that the use of burn barrels is no longer legal in Amador, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sierra or Yuba counties. The only exception allowing the use of burn barrels is for the residents of the community of Iowa Hill in Placer County.

*Teri Mizuhara works for CalFire.*