

	PACIFIC COAST TREE EXPERTS Safety Management System		Doc No:	WLFIRE
			Initial Issue Date	3/18/2024
			Revision Date:	8/12/2026
			Revision No.	3
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Purpose

The purpose of this Wildland Fire Preparedness and Prevention Program (WFPPP) is to minimize the risk of fire ignition and improve fire response during all Pacific Coast Tree Experts (PCTE) operations in wildland and high-fire-risk areas. The program outlines procedures to proactively identify fire hazards, ensure preparedness, and guide crews in emergency situations specific to utility vegetation management and line clearance tree care services.

Scope

This program applies to all outdoor field operations conducted by PCTE, particularly those near forested land, utility corridors, and vegetation-rich zones. It covers all employees, contractors, and sub-contractors performing trimming, removal, and ground support functions.

Program Availability

This written program is available to all employees via QR code posted at each yard and vehicle, and in physical copy at the Canoga Office. Employees may request a digital or printed copy from their supervisor or the Program Administrator.

Statement of Management Commitment

PCTE is committed to minimizing the risk of wildfire through training, planning, fire suppression readiness, daily risk assessments, and compliance with all applicable fire safety laws and standards. This program is reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Fire Danger Monitoring and Trigger Levels

General Foremen, Safety personnel, and crews shall monitor daily fire danger levels using resources from CAL FIRE, the National Weather Service (Red Flag Warnings), and local fire agencies. When fire danger is HIGH, VERY HIGH, or EXTREME, field activities may be limited, modified, or suspended.

Fire Weather Watch – Preparedness Level

When a Fire Weather Watch is issued for the work area, supervisors shall review planned operations, verify fire suppression equipment, evaluate ignition-producing activities, confirm emergency communications and access, and determine whether work modifications may be necessary.

Red Flag Warning / Critical Fire Conditions – Action Level

When a Red Flag Warning, local fire restriction, or other critical fire condition is in effect, the General Foreman, Safety Supervisor, and Crew Foreman shall evaluate whether work may continue safely. Spark-producing or other high-risk activities shall be modified, postponed, or suspended when required by PCTE policy, client requirements, or the agency having jurisdiction. Additional suppression resources and fire-watch measures shall be implemented as necessary.

Trigger points include:

- Spark-producing or other high-risk work shall not proceed during Red Flag conditions unless the activity is permitted by applicable restrictions and approved controls are in place.

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- Mulching, mastication, or heavy equipment use may require standby water sources and a dedicated fire watch.
- JSAs must reflect updated mitigation strategies during fire season (April 1 – December 1 or as declared).

Responsibilities by Role

Program Administrator / Safety Director: Oversee program compliance, and revise annually.

General Foremen & Safety Supervisors: Enforce fire safety on job sites, conduct daily risk reviews, ensure readiness of fire tools.

Crew Foreman: Ensure crew training, inspect and maintain suppression tools, complete JSAs, implement mitigations.

Employees: Follow fire-safe procedures, attend training, inspect equipment, and report hazards immediately.

Fire Prevention Procedures

General Field Protocols

- Complete the Fire Season Job Briefing from April 1 through December 1, and at any other time when dry vegetation, local fire restrictions, or fire conditions create an increased wildfire risk.
- Check fire level, weather, and wind conditions
- Inspect fire tools (shovel, axe, extinguisher, back pump)
- Identify nearest fire station, EMS access, safe zones
- Confirm working cell or radio communication
- A dedicated fire watch shall be assigned during designated spark-producing or high-fire-risk activities. The fire watch shall have no conflicting duties that interfere with continuous observation of the work area.
 - Unless a longer period is required by the client, landowner, agency having jurisdiction, or site-specific conditions, PCTE's fire watch shall remain at the work area for a minimum of 30 minutes following completion of the designated activity.

Hot Work & Equipment Use

- Avoid grinding, cutting, or welding in vegetated areas.
- Daily inspection of chainsaws, weeders, and other motorized equipment.
- Spark arrestors are required and inspected before use.
- Fueling must be done in cleared areas at least 10 feet from flammable materials.

Power Tools & Vehicles

- Equipment must be free of vegetation around exhaust and hot surfaces.
- Crews carry at least one shovel per person, one fire extinguisher (10 lbs ABC rated), and one backpack pump filled with water.
- Refueling chainsaws and equipment must occur away from ignition sources.
- Fire suppression tools must be kept within 25 feet of the work area.
- Portable fire extinguishers shall be visually inspected monthly to verify that they are available, fully charged, operable, and free of obvious damage. Fire extinguishers shall also receive the required annual maintenance inspection and maintain a current inspection record/tag.
- Fuel containers must be labeled and stored securely.

Smoking & Personal Items

- No smoking is allowed on the jobsite during declared fire season or red flag conditions.

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- Where permitted, smoking is restricted to a 10-foot cleared area, with extinguished materials placed in a water bottle or sealed container.

Required Fire Tools and Suppression Equipment

Where California Public Resources Code §4428 applies, PCTE shall provide and maintain the required firefighting tools within the operating area. A designated fire toolbox or equivalent designated fire-tool storage shall contain, at minimum:

- One backpack pump-type fire extinguisher filled with water and ready for use.
- Two axes.
- Two McLeod fire tools.
- A sufficient number of serviceable shovels so that each employee at the operation can be equipped to fight fire.
- One or more serviceable chainsaws of at least 3½ horsepower with a cutting bar at least 20 inches long, or the alternative timber-felling tools specified by applicable law.

Passenger vehicles used in covered operations shall be equipped with one shovel and one axe. Other vehicles and tractors used in covered operations shall be equipped with at least one shovel, as applicable under PRC §4428.

PCTE may require additional equipment, including ABC fire extinguishers, additional backpack pumps, water tanks/Water Buffalo units, axes, McLeods, or other suppression equipment based on fire conditions, terrain, job size, client requirements, or the agency having jurisdiction.

Ignition Source Controls

Ignition sources are any tool, equipment, or activity that can initiate a wildfire when interacting with dry vegetation or combustible materials. Identifying and mitigating these risks is critical during all phases of work, especially during fire season or under Red Flag Warnings.

General Mitigation Strategies

To reduce ignition risk, crews should:

- Schedule high-risk tasks (e.g., chainsaw operations) during cooler times of day or low fire danger periods
- Avoid hot work during Red Flag days unless approved mitigations are in place
- Use non-sparking or insulated tools where possible
- Maintain defensible space (10–30 ft.) around hot work areas
- Assign a fire watch for all spark-producing activities in wildland areas
- Keep fire suppression tools readily available and visible

A. Smoking

- Smoking is prohibited during fire season or when local bans are in effect.
- If allowed, smoking must be confined to a cleared 10-foot radius area free of combustible materials.
- All cigarette butts must be fully extinguished in water and properly disposed of—never discarded on the ground.

B. Downed or Arcing Power Lines

- Immediately report any arcing, sparking, or downed wires to the utility or emergency services.

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- Secure and stay clear of downed lines.
- Do not attempt to approach or move energized equipment.

C. Hot Exhaust Systems (Vehicles & Equipment)

- Perform daily inspections on all spark arrestors, mufflers, and heat shields.
- Vehicles must be parked in areas free from vegetation—maintain at least 10 feet clearance.
- If no clear area is available, crews must manually clear vegetation before parking or staging.
- Fire watch is recommended during high fire danger when using equipment off-road.

D. Hot Work (Grinding, Welding, Cutting)

- Conduct only on non-combustible surfaces (e.g., bare soil, pavement).
- Clear 30 feet around the work area of grass, leaves, or flammable debris.
- Always post a fire watch during hot work and for 30 minutes after.
- Never perform hot work during Red Flag Warnings unless specifically approved and mitigated.

E. Hot Brakes

- Avoid parking vehicles with hot brakes in areas with vegetation.
- When emergency parking is necessary, clear a 10-foot radius of combustible material.

F. Chainsaws & Power Tools

- Inspect required spark arrestors before use and maintain them in effective working condition.
- Remove dry chips, bark, and sawdust from the exhaust area, especially during stump flush cuts.
- Maintain a 10-foot cleared zone for starting/warming up saws.
- Fueling must be done in cleared areas, at least 10 feet away from ignition sources.
- Keep a shovel and fire extinguisher within 25 feet of fueling locations.
- Store fuels in approved, labeled containers and never leave flammable tools unattended.

Emergency Procedures

To ensure rapid and effective response in the event of a wildfire or other emergency, the following communication procedures must be followed at every job site:

- Supervisors must verify daily that a reliable means of communication (e.g., cell phone, two-way radio, or satellite device) is available and functional.
- Crews must know the exact worksite location, including street address, road access, or GPS coordinates.
- A designated emergency meeting location (staging area or safe zone) must be identified during the daily job briefing.
- One crew member must be assigned to call 9-1-1 and relay emergency information if a fire occurs.
- In areas with poor signal, identify coverage zones and establish a check-in protocol with a supervisor or designated off-site contact.
- The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) completed each morning must include:
 - The nearest fire station
 - Closest hospital or clinic
 - Accessible EMS route

If a fire occurs:

1. Call 9-1-1 immediately and provide the exact location.

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2. Evacuate the area if unsafe and direct the crew to the designated safety zone or emergency meeting location.
3. Employees may attempt initial fire suppression only when trained, the fire is small and can be safely addressed with available equipment, an escape route is maintained, and suppression efforts will not expose employees to electrical, smoke, terrain, wind, or other uncontrolled hazards.
 - Employees shall evacuate rather than attempt suppression when conditions are unsafe or the fire is spreading beyond their ability to control it.
4. Notify the General Foreman and Safety Supervisor as soon as possible.

Do not delay reporting until the fire is “out of control.” All fires must be reported, even if extinguished.

Fire Safety Training

All employees shall be trained annually (or upon hire) in the following topics:

- Fire Weather Watch versus Red Flag Warning response procedures.
- Applicable requirements of PRC §§4427, 4428, 4431, and 4442.
- Fire-tool locations, inspection, and proper use.
- Fire-watch responsibilities and post-work monitoring.
- Spark arrester inspection and ignition-source controls.
- Monthly fire extinguisher inspection requirements.
- Stop-work and evacuation criteria when wildfire risk cannot be adequately controlled.

Program Review

This program is reviewed and updated annually or when:

- Regulatory changes occur
- New hazards or equipment are introduced
- Feedback from incident reviews is received

Revision History

Date Revised	Revised By	Description of Change
2024-03-18	Program Administrator	Initial creation of PCTE WFPPP
2025-03-10	Program Administrator	Annual review and update completed
2026-02-13	Program Administrator	Annual review completed
2026-08-12	Program Administrator	Revised fire-danger trigger procedures, statutory fire-tool requirements, ignition-source controls, portable power-tool requirements, fire extinguisher inspections, fire-watch procedures, emergency response, and employee training.

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Management Acknowledgment

This Wildland Fire Preparedness and Prevention Program has been reviewed and approved by PCTE Management. It reflects our commitment to safety, compliance, and environmental responsibility in wildfire-prone areas.

Approved By: Javier Pinedo Date: 08/12/2026

Signature: 