AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE DIVISION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Topic: Agricultural Burning - Wildlife and Game Habitat Improvement

Distribution: All Policy Holders

This policy and procedure provides guidance in the enforcement of APCD rules relating to prescribed burns used in Wildlife and Game Habitat burning operations. It is the policy of the APCD to allow Wildlife and Game Habitat burning as regulated under APCD Rule 401 and the requirements of Article 3, Chapter 3, Part 4, Division 26 of the California Health and Safety Code.

APPLICABILITY

The provisions and exemptions provided in the Agricultural Burning regulations apply to the use of prescribed burns used to improve wildlife and game habitat by opening up vast expanses of old impenetrable chaparral while increasing the diversity of vegetation.

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply to all prescribed wildlife and game habitat improvement burning operations:

1. No burning shall be conducted for the improvement of land for wildlife or game habitat until the person (agency) desiring to conduct such burning obtains from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) a written statement certifying that the burning is desirable and proper. This statement must then be filed with the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) prior to conducting the burn.

   When the Department of Fish and Game conducts such burns, the department shall, on their own behalf, issue and file the required statement(s).

2. A permit to burn must be obtained from a public fire department, fire protection agency or other agency authorized to issue such permits by the Air Resources Board. A list of agencies authorized to issue burning permits is provided as Appendix A to Policy and Procedure VI.

   Wildlife and Game Habitat Improvement burns may be conducted through a cooperative agreement or contract involving a public agency. The public agencies having authority to burn lands are the U.S. Forest Service, Santa Barbara County Fire Department, Santa Barbara City Fire Department, Carpinteria/Summerland Fire

Department, Lompoc City Fire Department, Santa Maria City Fire Department, Vandenberg Air Force Base Fire Department, and California Department of Parks and Recreation.

3. Wildlife and Game Habitat Improvement Burning is permitted only on days designated as permissive burn days by the Air Resources Board (refer to Policy and Procedure VI.C., Burn Day Determination). APCD policies regarding permits to conduct burning on days designated as No-Burn days are outlined in the "Burning on a No-Burn Day", Policy and Procedure VI.A.2.

4. Materials to be burned must be free of Non-Agricultural materials. Materials must not contain tar, tar paper, petroleum wastes, tires, plastics, demolition debris, treated wood, trash or household garbage.

5. Materials to be burned must be arranged so as to burn with a minimum of smoke, be loosely stacked to allow maximum drying and provide good combustion.

6. Materials to be burned must be free of dirt and moisture which would hinder complete combustion.

7. Standing brush may be burned without being cut or treated. However, APCD policy is to encourage brush treatment by crushing whenever the procedure is practical.

8. Prior to burning, materials should be dried for the minimum recommended periods listed below:

   a) Six (6) weeks for trees and large branches 3" to 8" in diameter
   b) Four (4) weeks for small trees and branches 1" to 3" in diameter
   c) Three (3) weeks for small branches and materials ¼" to 1" in diameter
   d) Ten (10) days for very fine materials less than ¼"

9. Wildlife and Game Habitat Improvement burns shall be ignited as rapidly as practicable within applicable fire control restrictions.

10. Use an approved ignition device that does not produce black smoke, such as butane, propane, LPG or diesel oil burners. All ignition devices using the following burning agents will be approved:

    - Ethylene glycol/potassium permanganate,
    - gasoline/diesel,
    - propane/butane, and
    - phosphorus

- The following are examples of devices using the above agents:

    - helicopter torches
    - propane torches
    - flame throwers
    - diesel sprayers
    - common fuses
    - orchard torches
    - drip torches
    - jellied petroleum devices
    - commercial grenade devices
    - matches

Any device not listed above must be approved for use by the APCO prior to its application or use. Igniting tires or pouring diesel fuel on the materials are NOT acceptable ignition methods!

11. The wind direction at the burning site shall be such that the smoke will not cause a public nuisance.

12. The Air Pollution Control Officer may restrict agricultural burning operations to selected sequentially numbered permits on specified days. The goal of this option is to ensure that a major portion of the total tonnage of materials scheduled for burning is not ignited at one time during adverse conditions.

13. Upon completion of a Wildlife and Game Habitat Improvement burn the person/agency which conducted the burn will contact the APCD at 961-8800 to submit the following information:

    a) Date of Burn
    b) Total acres burned
    c) Estimated tons of material per acre burned

NOTE: Any open burning which meets the definition of "Wildland Vegetation Management Burning", as defined in Rule 401.B., shall be conducted in compliance with the requirements of Rule 401.D. even though such burning may also be conducted under another provision of Rule 401 or any other APCD rule (e.g., Rule 312 or Rule 313). Forest Management, Range Improvement and other agricultural burning not meeting the definition of Wildland Vegetation Management Burning do not need to comply with the requirements of Rule 401.D.