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**HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY URGES RESIDENTS  
TO PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY DURING JULY 4 HOLIDAY WEEKEND**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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HONOLULU — The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) is urging residents to practice fire safety during the Fourth of July holiday weekend as wildfire season enters full swing.

Traditional Independence Day activities like fireworks and barbecues are also common causes of wildfires. People should keep fire safety top of mind this weekend and throughout Hawai'i's dry season.

"It's easy to see that our landscape is drying. After the exceptionally rainy winter and spring, the lush vegetation that resulted is now becoming abundant wildfire fuel," said HIEMA Administrator David Lopez. "This is especially true in high-risk wildfire areas like West O'ahu and West Maui, where Kona winds brought abnormal amounts of rain."

Hawaii's drought index is steadily increasing and daytime humidity levels are trending gradually downward. When drought and low humidity combine with high wind, these conditions lead to high wildfire risk. During this season, one spark can ignite a wildfire that has the capacity to devastate communities.

"Wildfires are the one natural disaster that we can largely prevent," said Lopez. "We all need to do our part to eliminate risky fire behavior, protect our communities and report any fires or suspicious activity by calling 911."

Practice fire safety this weekend and every weekend:

- Attend a professional fireworks display in a controlled, safe environment. If you do use legal fireworks, you must obtain a permit and can only set off fireworks between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. on July 4. Never set off fireworks when it's windy or if there is dry grass or combustibles in the area.
- Be careful cooking outdoors. Clear vegetation and combustibles 10 feet around grills or hibachis. Have a hose or water on hand to extinguish any errant flames or embers. Put coals out completely – double check!
- If you are working around your property, use care with machinery that can cause sparks, like lawnmowers, chainsaws or grinders. Do your yardwork in the morning before your lawn dries out.
- Drive carefully and responsibly. Watch out for towing chains or dragging metal parts that can cause sparks. Never park your car on untrimmed dry vegetation; a hot exhaust or engine can ignite dry grass.

You can do more to prepare for wildfire season:

- Clear your "defensible space" around your home. Keep grass short and trim tree branches high off the ground. Maintain a 5-foot combustible-free zone around your house. Remove dry brush, leaf piles and dead vegetation from your property.
- Harden your home by using non-combustible building materials like metal roofing, metal mesh vents and eave screens.
- Make sure you're prepared for an emergency. Sign up for local emergency alerts, have a Go Bag packed and know your family emergency plan, including at least two evacuation routes out of your neighborhood.

For more information on wildfire safety and preparedness, visit [www.ready.hawaii.gov/wildfire](http://www.ready.hawaii.gov/wildfire).

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