

2024 UCI FM Grounds Department Fire Prevention Policy

Grounds Department Fire Prevention Policy for Working in Brush and Native Areas

Purpose:

This policy is designed to minimize the risk of fire when Grounds Department personnel are working in brush and native areas under conditions of high temperatures, low humidity, or high winds.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Grounds Department employees working in or near brush, dry grass, or other native vegetation areas on university property.

1. Definitions

- **High Temperature:** Any temperature above 85°F.
 - **Low Humidity:** Humidity levels below 20%.
 - **High Winds:** Sustained wind speeds over 15 mph or gusts exceeding 20 mph.
 - **Native Areas:** Landscapes dominated by natural vegetation, such as dry grass, brush, shrubs, and trees.
-

2. General Safety Measures

- **Weather Monitoring:**
Grounds crews must monitor daily weather forecasts, paying particular attention to temperatures, humidity levels, and wind speeds. No work should proceed in native areas without checking current and forecasted conditions.
 - **Work Restrictions in Hazardous Conditions:**
 - When temperatures exceed 90°F, humidity drops below 20%, or winds exceed 15 mph, all non-essential work in brush and native areas should be suspended.
 - Essential work (e.g., fire break maintenance or emergency repairs) must follow heightened fire safety protocols outlined in Section 3.
-

3. Fire Prevention Protocols

- **Equipment Use:**
 - **Prohibited Equipment in High-Risk Conditions:** No use of gas-powered equipment (e.g., chainsaws, lawnmowers, string trimmers) in brush areas during high-risk conditions (high temperature, low humidity, or high winds).
 - **Approved Equipment:** Battery-operated tools with minimal heat generation are preferred in dry areas. Use spark arresters on any combustion-powered equipment.

2024 UCI FM Grounds Department Fire Prevention Policy

- **Tool Maintenance:** Ensure equipment is properly maintained to prevent sparks, fuel leaks, or other malfunctions that could ignite a fire.
 - **Spark-Generating Activities:**
 - Welding, grinding, and other activities that produce sparks are prohibited in native areas during high-risk weather conditions.
 - If these activities must be performed, ensure the area is cleared of dry vegetation and at least one fire extinguisher or a minimum of 5 gallons of water is present.
 - **Hot Work Permits:**

Any hot work (such as welding or torch cutting) in native areas must be accompanied by a hot work permit, which requires additional approval from Facilities Management leadership.
-

4. Mandatory Precautions

- **Fire Watch:**

During high-risk periods, a designated fire watch must be present with firefighting tools (extinguishers, shovels, and water) during all operations. The fire watch remains in place for at least 30 minutes after the work is complete to monitor for potential ignition sources.
 - **Clearance of Brush and Debris:**

Before performing any work in native areas, ensure a minimum 10-foot clearance around the worksite is established by removing any dry or dead vegetation.
 - **Water Supply:**

Grounds crews must carry a portable water tank or other water sources in vehicles when working in high-risk areas. In the absence of a water source, a minimum of two fire extinguishers should be available.
-

5. Training and Awareness

- **Annual Fire Safety Training:**

All Grounds Department employees must undergo annual fire safety training, which includes:

 - Recognition of high-risk conditions.
 - Use of fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment.
 - Proper tool maintenance and handling in fire-prone environments.
 - **Emergency Procedures:**

All employees must be familiar with the university's emergency response plan, including immediate steps to take if a fire ignites.
-

2024 UCI FM Grounds Department Fire Prevention Policy

6. Reporting and Compliance

- **Reporting Unsafe Conditions:**
Any hazardous conditions (e.g., dry vegetation, equipment malfunctions, or environmental changes) should be reported to the supervisor immediately.
 - **Compliance and Enforcement:**
Supervisors are responsible for enforcing this policy and ensuring compliance during high-risk weather conditions. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.
-

Effective Date: 9/12/2024

This policy is effective immediately and must be reviewed annually or when significant changes in weather patterns or fire risk conditions occur.

This policy aims to reduce the risk of fire in sensitive areas while maintaining the safety of all Grounds Department personnel.