

Burn Unit Preparation

Techniques, equipment, tools

Low vs. High fire seasons

- Preparation will be dependent on burning in the “low” or “high” fire season.
- Low Fire season usually starts in the late fall, early winter after the first rain of two (2”) inches with more on the way. When the grass greens up but the brush, trees, are in the dormant stage and the slash has cured out.
- High fire season usually starts in the late spring, summer and fall when the grasses have dried out, and the brush and timber have finished the green up in spring and are entering the dormant phase.

Image credits:

- All copyrighted:
- Stephen Earl and Deborah Paquette Davis family Trust
- JKHughes
- Jeff and Tammy Zimmerman. advancedfiretech@gmail.com

Fire line location

- The key to burn plot location should be based on ridges and drainages.
- Use existing natural and human made barriers.
- Make the lines as short and straight as possible using topography to your advantage.
- Avoid undercut, mid-slope, and sharp turns in your lines.
- Eliminate hazards along the lines (snags, slash, overhanging branches)
- Lines that run along ridges should be located on the ridgetops or slightly to the lee side away from the burn.

Trees like this type of smoke, centered firing technique to protect values at risk





Hand firing a corner, “safe” or cold black



Drip torch, handfiring, strip burning using fusees



Activity fuel burning, strip burning using heli-torch



Using backing and flanking fire to not shade out the burn.



Multiple entries into the burn block, taking advantage of the seasonality of available fuels leads to successful burns,

- Low season:
 - Burn slash produced from line preparation or to reduce hazards around burn blocks,
 - Dormant brush can be burned before the green up in spring.
 - Remember California Public resource code: 4491, “shall provide fire safety standby”
- High season:
 - There is a “sweet spot” in spring, when the non native grasses are dormant,(brown) but the brush is still in green up (flowering), to burn off grass patches, in preparation for broadcast burning of brush.
 - High season may limit or preclude the availability of fire safety standby.

Be aware that when fire meets fire, fire whirls may develop

