



# Media Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Army takes action against summer wildfires

**SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii** (May 8, 2015) — Army officials are taking action against wildfires by conducting an annual prescribed burn of the Schofield Barracks training range complex beginning May 11.

U.S. Army Hawaii personnel have spent the last six months preparing for the burn, removing brush around existing range firebreaks and improving roads throughout the range complex to provide better access for firefighters and emergency personnel.

The Army's plan is to conduct a deliberate and phased prescribed burn of approximately 1,200 acres – systematically burning small areas over the course of about one week.

“Safety is our number one priority,” said Chief Scotty Freeman, Fire Division Chief, Directorate of Emergency Services (DES), U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii. “Prescribed burns are an important tool in preventing wildfires and protecting our communities, especially as the dry summer months approach.”

The prescribed burn will improve safety by removing highly flammable guinea grass and other vegetation. If left unchecked, these grasses become large fuel sources for wildfires that can be difficult to contain and threaten area resources.

Freeman estimates that effective prescribed burns can reduce wildfire outbreaks by as much as 75 percent.

The team will conduct final checks, May 10, to ensure all personnel, equipment and safeguards are in place and ready. The actual burn will begin May 11, provided weather conditions such as wind, temperature and fuel moisture are within the regulatory parameters.

Fire officials plan to complete the burn effort in approximately one week, pending any unforeseen issues or weather.

Burn operations will take place during daylight hours, and Army firefighters will remain on site each night to monitor the area.

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“Coordination between supporting agencies is critical for an event like this,” said Col. Duane Miller, Director of Emergency Services, explaining that the garrison must follow Army, state and federal requirements when conducting a prescribed burn.

Multiple personnel from USAG-HI, the Federal Fire Department, the 8th Theater Sustainment Command, the 25th Infantry Division, and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific are supporting the burn effort, to include firefighters, aviators, engineers, natural and cultural resources specialists, explosive ordnance disposal personnel, and law enforcement personnel.

The Army has also coordinated with the Hawaii State Department of Health’s Clean Air Branch and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who have both reviewed and approved the prescribed burn plan.

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