



# Media Release

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*"Malama na Koa"*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Army taking action against summer brushfires

**SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii** (May 9, 2016) — Army officials are taking action against brushfires by conducting an annual prescribed burn of the Schofield Barracks training range complex this month.

The Army's Wildland Fire Division will begin the prescribed burn May 16, pending weather conditions such as wind, temperature and fuel moisture are met. They anticipate burn operations will last roughly one week.

This year's burn is particularly important as drought conditions caused by El Nino are posing higher than normal brushfire dangers across the state. These conditions are expected to continue through the summer.

"Our goal is to safely conduct the prescribed burn before the brushfire season gets into full swing," said Dan Brush, deputy director of Emergency Services, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii. "We'll be removing highly flammable guinea grass and other vegetation that – if left unchecked – could fuel large brushfires that are difficult and expensive to contain, and endanger local communities and natural resources."

The Army's 2015 prescribed burn removed a significant amount of guinea grass and other vegetation the Army had not been able to burn in previous years and reduced the number of accidental/unintentional fires on the range by upwards of 75% over the year.

Similar to last year, the Army plans to conduct a deliberate and phased prescribed burn of approximately 1,200 acres – systematically burning small areas over the course of approximately one week. Army personnel have spent months preparing for 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 has also coordinated with the Hawaii State Department of Health's Clean Air Branch and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure all state, federal and Army requirements are met.

Army staff will closely monitor humidity, wind and the level of concentration of natural fuel in the burn areas in an effort to minimize smoke and ash.

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“We will take every precaution to lessen potential impacts on our neighbors,” Brush said.

“However, by taking wildland fire prevention measures and conducting this burn, we believe we will greatly reduce unintentional fires over the course of what will be an extremely dry summer.”

The team will conduct final checks May 15 to ensure all personnel, equipment and safeguards are in place and ready. The actual burn will begin May 16, provided environmental conditions such as wind, temperature and fuel moisture are within the regulatory parameters.

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

- 30 -

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