

## Managing Fire Hazards in Open Space

The City of Pleasanton manages over 900 acres of open space. Much of this area is covered by annual grass that in late spring and early summer can become a fire risk. Usually beginning in May, exposed ridges start to turn brown and concerns for fire safety starts to rise. Even though grass can look substantially brown, it may not be an immediate fire risk because there can still be a considerable amount of moisture remaining in the plants. Grass with too much moisture is difficult to mow and often re-grows requiring a second mow. In addition, mowing too early invites the establishment of undesirable summer weeds like tumble weed and puncture vine. Maintenance staff monitor each mow site for moisture content and time when mowing conditions are ideal before fire risk increases. Since rain can vary greatly in quantity and timing from year to year, the timing of mowing can also vary. The traditional start of the fire season is June 1<sup>st</sup>, but this date can get pushed into June in a wet year. In an average year, all of the City's weed abatement mowing is done by June 1<sup>st</sup>. With careful monitoring, mowing occurs when moisture levels drop but before fire risk becomes significant. City staff consultants with the Livermore Pleasanton Fire Department (LFPD) Fire Marshall when mowing may go beyond June 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have questions regarding weed abatement, please contact LFPD at 925-454-2361.