



# NEWS

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Sept. 14, 2010

Oregon Department of Forestry  
Southwest Oregon District  
5286 Table Rock Rd  
Central Point

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## **BLACKWELL FIRE CAUSED BY PICKAXE**

A landowner using a pickaxe to break a rock accidentally caused the Blackwell Fire, which burned 315 acres on Sunday.

At approximately 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, the landowner was using a pickaxe to split a quartz rock that was 2 feet in diameter. The rock was resting in a recently mowed area on the landowner's property. The landowner wanted to break the rock into smaller pieces so he could move them to a different location. However, a spark caused by the pickaxe striking the rock started a fire in the dry grass clippings.

The landowner attempted to stomp out the fire while his wife dialed 9-1-1.

The facts of the incident support that the landowner will not be held liable for the cost of suppressing this fire. The investigation revealed that no Oregon Department of Forestry fire prevention regulations were violated, and that the landowners took reasonable and prudent action upon discovery of the fire.

Oregon law only allows the Department of Forestry to recover suppression costs if a responsible party is found to be willful, malicious or negligent in the origin or spread of a fire.

The home that burned in the fire was owned by the person who accidentally caused the fire.

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