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**Fire Season Brings Reminder for
Careful Water Use**

CALABASAS, CA October 20, 2010 – Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) customers are reminded to be cautious in how they use water during times of elevated fire danger.

“Many customers have misperceptions on how to prepare when a fire is approaching their neighborhood,” said John R. Mundy, LVMWD’s General Manager. “As a result of poor practices, such as wetting roofs or spraying vegetation, they actually reduce water pressure where it may be needed or worse, empty storage tanks resulting in an interruption of service.”

Instead, LVMWD recommends that all homeowners follow the advice of the Los Angeles County Fire Department by clearing a perimeter around the structure, sealing off vents where sparks and embers can enter a building and keeping combustible items such as patio furniture away from the structure. More information is available in the department’s “Ready Set Go” booklet, which can be viewed at www.fire.lacounty.gov.

“During past fire events we have seen customers turn on their irrigations systems and hose down rooftops,” added Mundy. “In most instances, all this does is waste water and strain the system, especially at higher elevations. During a fire event, we try to operate the water system in direct support of firefighting efforts.”

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Customers are reminded that professional firefighters and water district technicians are the only personnel authorized to use a hydrant. “Connecting the wrong type of hose or using the wrong tools can have serious consequences,” said Acting Assistant Fire Chief Terry DeJournett. “Improper use of hydrants can result in exposure to lethal water pressure, changes in water pressure elsewhere in the system, and can cause damage that could render the hydrant inoperable to firefighters.”

Residents can prepare for a fire by filling buckets and bathtubs with water and soaking towels to douse embers or small spot fires. Pool owners can purchase pumps that deliver a stream of water that is independent of the community water system.

“We urge area residents to cooperate with the Fire Department by preparing in advance for a fire event,” said Mundy. “Take advantage of their classes and literature but most importantly, be prepared to evacuate if you are requested to do so. Your safety and that of your family members and pets outweigh the risks of trying to fight a wind-driven wild fire with a garden hose.”

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District serves some 65,000 people in the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village and surrounding unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

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