



ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY NEWS RELEASE

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Invasive Pest Found in Orange County *Fire Officials Ask Public's Help to Stop Spread*

Orange County, CA - Gold Spotted Oak Borer (GSOB), an invasive beetle that has killed thousands of oak trees in San Diego and Riverside counties in a short span of time, has now been detected in Orange County. The GSOB was discovered in approximately 60 trees on County park land in northern Orange County. Since GSOB is transported in oak firewood, it is critical that Californians keep firewood local and not move it out of the area.

This new detection of GSOB represents the second long-distance movement of the beetle from its known areas of infestation in San Diego and Riverside Counties. It is believed to have made the jump from either San Diego or Riverside to Orange County through the movement of infested firewood. "The public plays a key role in stopping the spread of the GSOB," said Orange County Board Chairman, 3rd District Supervisor and OCFA Board Member Todd Spitzer. "When choosing firewood make sure you buy it from a local source and not from out of the area. This infestation could have devastating effects on Orange County and all of California and we all must work to stop its spread."

Here are some immediate steps to help stop the spread of GSOB:

- "Buy it where you burn it"—use firewood from local sources.
- Leave firewood at home.
- Do not transport firewood to recreational cabins, campgrounds, or parks.
- Go to www.gsob.org to learn the signs of GSOB. Inspect cut wood and if infested, refer to www.gsob.org for guidelines on management, handling, and reporting.

The infested trees are slated for immediate removal and disposal. Larvae extracted from under the tree bark were subjected to DNA analysis at the University of California Riverside and confirmed to be *Agilus auroguttatus*, the scientific name for GSOB.

The Orange County Fire Authority is collaborating with the University of California Cooperative Extension, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the U.S. Forest Service and the County of Orange to develop a response plan for GSOB in Orange County and OC Parks is currently evaluating firewood practices in their camping facilities. These infestations can be very destructive to our forests, communities, and individual properties, and are extremely costly to control. "This discovery of GSOB in Orange County is of great concern," said Orange County Fire Chief Jeff Bowman. "Southern California has endured years of drought and bark beetle infestation and we need to work collaboratively with the public and all stakeholders to stop the GSOB from further destroying oak woodlands."

Anyone planning to purchase or burn firewood is encouraged to visit www.firewood.ca.gov to learn how to help stop the spread of GSOB and other pests through the movement of firewood. For more information on GSOB visit www.gsob.org.

For further information contact Battalion Chief Mike Petro, (714) 573-6028 or mikepetro@ocfa.org

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The OCFA is a joint powers authority that serves more than 1.8 million residents in 23 cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.