

# BEST PRACTICES



# FOR LOW SMOKE AGRICULTURAL BURNING

## **6** STEP APPROACH

**FOR VINEYARD OWNERS  
DECISION MAKERS &  
CONTRACTED VINE PULLERS**

THE PURPOSE OF THIS 6-STEP APPROACH IS TO HELP PRESERVE AIR QUALITY BY SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF SMOKE GENERATED IN NAPA COUNTY DUE TO AGRICULTURAL BURNING.



## **CONTRACTORS** WHO REMOVE VINES ACCORDING TO **BEST PRACTICES** STANDARDS

David Eakle, Eakle Construction  
(707) 965-3610 ext. 101

Johnny White,  
Pina Vineyard Management  
(707) 486-2198

Manuel Rios,  
Rios Farming Company  
(707) 965-2587

Mark Neal, Jack Neal & Son, Inc.  
(707) 963-7303

Matt Weinert, High Demand  
(707) 227 - 6119

Randy Wiig,  
Randall Wiig AG Services  
(707) 259-1210

*To be added to this list,  
please contact: [info@napagrowers.org](mailto:info@napagrowers.org)*

## STEP 1

### SCHEDULE AND DISCUSS VINEYARD REMOVAL

It's important that the vineyard managers/owners make the decision to remove a vineyard early in the process. If the vineyard removal decision can be made prior to harvest, the following steps will be easier to implement.

#### **BEST PRACTICES TIP 1:**

**Discuss vine removal early and schedule vine pulling with the assistance of a vine removal contractor who adheres to best practices procedures**



## STEP 2

### CONTACT YOUR VINE REMOVAL CONTRACTOR

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District defines the procedures associated with agricultural burning in Napa County. It's important to have your vine removal company engaged in your plans for vineyard removal prior to harvest so they can coordinate the efficient use of their equipment and the vineyard owner can ensure that best practices are employed for vine removal and subsequent burning. With adequate preparation and adherence to Air Board requirements, low smoke vine burning events can be achieved.

#### **BEST PRACTICES TIP 2:**

**A list of vineyard removal contractors who adhere by the best practices approach to vineyard pulling and agricultural burning are listed in this pamphlet and at the NVG website: [www.napagrowers.org](http://www.napagrowers.org).**

## STEP 5

### VINE PILING

After the vines have laid on the ground for at least a week and have dried sufficiently, begin the process of stacking the vines into piles that adhere to Bay Area Quality Management District regulations. Once the piles are built, consider securing/placing a tarp over the top center of the piles to assist in keeping the center of the piles dry during rain events. If possible, uncover the piles during longer dry periods.

#### **BEST PRACTICES TIP 5:**

**Dirt, grass, leaves and moisture in the vine piles will cause excessively smoky burns. Avoid stacking the vines if they are not sufficiently dry. Consider placing a tarp over the center of the vine piles to shield some of the pile from moisture accumulation during winter rain events.**

## STEP 3

### PREPARE THE VINEYARD

Prepare the vineyard for vine removal. To ensure a clean burn, vines and the vineyard floor must be as clean as possible. To achieve that objective, it is important to remove all treated wood (end posts and stakes), plastic (dripline, etc.) and other material that cannot be burned plus mow excessive vegetation between the vine rows, as grass in the burn piles generates smoke. Do not add landscape clippings.

#### **BEST PRACTICES TIP 3:**

**Your vineyard removal contractor may be able to provide guidance concerning drip tube, treated wood, and metal (stakes/wire, etc.) disposal.**

## STEP 4

### VINEYARD REMOVAL

It is important that the vineyard soil be dry (if possible) at the time of vine removal as the vines that are pulled under wet soil conditions tend to retain dirt around the root system. When the vines are piled and burned, excessive dirt in the piles create smoke. Also, keep some wire intact as that provides more control of the vines as they are being pulled. Have an individual following the crawler and knocking dirt off the vine root system as, again, dirt in the burn pile generates a lot of smoke. After vine pulling, allow the vines to lay on the ground and dry out for at least a week prior to piling.

#### **BEST PRACTICES TIP 4:**

**Minimize the amount of dirt and other organic material that sticks to the vines as they are being pulled. Allow the vines to dry out prior to piling.**

## STEP 6

### BURNING THE PILES

If the vines are mostly dirt and vegetation free and dried prior to piling plus the piles have been in place for at least 60 days and have not accumulated excessive moisture, it's likely that - following the guidelines below - the piles will burn with a minimum amount of smoke.

1. Make sure that the day you intend to burn the piles is a "Permissive Burn Day". Call 1-800-435-7247 to confirm.
2. Do not start burning until after 10 a.m.
3. If you tarped the piles, remove the tarps
4. There are several ways to ignite a pile but we recommend the use of a propane torch. Using the torch, light the downwind side of the top of the burn pile.

#### **BEST PRACTICES TIP 6:**

**It is generally uncertain if the piles will burn in a relatively smoke free fashion. It is prudent to light one pile (rather than several piles simultaneously) and evaluate the level of smoke generated then determine if it is appropriate to ignite the remaining piles or let them dry out a little more.**