
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



CONTACT: Daniel Berlant
Information Officer
(916) 651-FIRE (3473)

RELEASE
DATE: July 17, 2010

CAL FIRE Mapping Specialist to assist with Gulf Oil Spill

Sacramento – This morning a CAL FIRE mapping specialist was deployed to Florida to assist in the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Joe Larson, a CAL FIRE GIS (Geographical Information System) specialist, from San Luis Obispo County left Saturday morning for Tallahassee, Florida to assist in mapping the spread of oil towards the Florida Coast.

As a mapping specialist, Larson's normal duties include mapping fire perimeters, updating emergency response areas and fire hazard severity zones. His out of state mission will be to lead the Technical Services Branch in the Florida Emergency Operation Center in its support for the Deepwater Horizon efforts. Larson is scheduled to be assigned to the mission for at least two weeks.

"I am proud of CAL FIRE's worldwide reputation in superior disaster response and emergency management," said Chief Del Walters, director of CAL FIRE. "Florida sent resources to California during the 2008 lightning fire siege, and this opportunity is allowing us to return the favor."

The request for assistance by Florida emergency officials was made on July 16 through the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) and the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), a congressionally ratified organization that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid. Through EMAC, a disaster impacted state can request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently.

Though CAL FIRE is best known for its wildfire fighting activities, the department has often been called on to respond to all types of disasters in California and in other states. In 2005 for example, CAL FIRE sent a team of emergency responders to Louisiana to assist in the incident command of the Hurricane Katrina aftermath.

###