

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Drought Prompts CAL FIRE to Increase Statewide Staffing *Expected Prolonged, Elevated Threat of Wildfire Due to Dry Conditions*

Sacramento – With unseasonably high temperatures, limited rainfall and moisture levels resembling the state’s peak fire season, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) announced today that it has hired 125 supplemental firefighters in Northern California and extended seasonal firefighting forces in Southern California due to dry winter conditions.

Today’s announcement follows Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.’s drought State of Emergency earlier this month.

“In order to maintain a sufficient depth of resources to address the prolonged, elevated threat of wildfire due to drought, we have staffed 25 additional fire engines and have retained aerial firefighting assets at five air attack bases that would normally be closed this time of year,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, director of CAL FIRE. “We have a well exercised mechanism for addressing short term elevations in the threat of wildfire, but these prolonged conditions warrant an even more aggressive action in order for us to be prepared to protect the people, property and natural resources of California.”

In Northern California, CAL FIRE is adding two additional fire engines in each of the 12 northern administrative units plus a third fire engine in the Shasta-Trinity Unit. In addition, the Chico Air Attack Base has been re-opened with two fixed wing aircraft.

The additional firefighters have been assigned to the following areas:

<u>Unit:</u>	<u># of additional firefighters:</u>
Amador-El Dorado Unit:	10
Butte Unit:	12
San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit:	12
Humboldt Unit:	10
Lassen-Modoc:	10
Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit:	5
Mendocino Unit:	10
Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit:	12
Santa Clara Unit:	12
Shasta-Trinity Unit:	10
Siskiyou Unit:	10
Tehama-Glenn Unit:	12

In Southern California, aircraft and staffing at Hemet (Riverside County), Ramona (San Diego County) Hollister (San Benito County) and Paso Robles (San Luis Obispo County) air attack bases have been kept on allowing for eight air tankers, and four air tactical planes to be immediately available.

The Governor's [drought State of Emergency](#) directed CAL FIRE to "hire additional seasonal firefighters to suppress wildfires and take other needed actions to protect public safety during this time of elevated fire risk." The increased staffing levels follow a series of actions from the administration to ensure that California is prepared for record dry conditions.

Earlier this week, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture released the [California Water Action Plan](#), which will guide state efforts to enhance water supply reliability, restore damaged and destroyed ecosystems and improve the resilience of our infrastructure. Governor Brown has called on all Californians to reduce their water usage by 20 percent and last week, the [Save Our Water](#) campaign announced four new [public service announcements](#) that encourage residents to conserve. Last December, the Governor formed a [Drought Task Force](#) to review expected water allocations and California's preparedness for water scarcity. In May 2013, Governor Brown issued an [Executive Order](#) to direct state water officials to expedite the review and processing of voluntary transfers of water and water rights.

CAL FIRE is asking everyone to be extra cautious during the heightened fire danger period in order to prevent wildfires. One less spark means one less wildfire. For more fire prevention tips visit www.PreventWildfireCA.org and for evacuation tips visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

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