
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE investigators determine cause of destructive Butte Fire

Sacramento – After a thorough investigation, CAL FIRE has determined that the 2015 Butte Fire was sparked by a tree that came into contact with a Pacific Gas & Electric Company powerline.

TWEET THIS: [.@CAL_FIRE investigators determine power lines were cause of destructive #ButteFire.](https://twitter.com/CAL_FIRE/status/694123456789012345)

Investigators were dispatched as part of the initial response to the Butte Fire and immediately began working to determine the origin and cause of the fire. The ensuing investigation uncovered evidence that contact between a tree and a PG&E powerline near Butte Mountain Road in Amador County sparked the fire on September 9, 2015.

The fire burned for 22 days and spread into Calaveras County before the blaze was fully contained. The fire became the 7th most destructive wildfire in California's history. Two civilians lost their lives and more than 900 structures were destroyed by the fire. At its peak, nearly 5,000 firefighters battled the blaze. Resources included 519 fire engines, 18 helicopters, 8 airtankers, 92 hand crews, 115 bulldozers, and 60 water tenders.

Under California's Health and Safety Code, CAL FIRE has the ability to seek recovery of costs incurred battling wildfires that are determined to be sparked due to negligence or violations of the law. CAL FIRE will seek to recover firefighting costs in excess of \$90 million from PG&E.

Everyone must take steps to prevent sparking wildfires. One Less Spark truly means, One Less Wildfire. Learn more at ReadyForWildfire.org.

CAL FIRE has submitted the Butte Fire Investigation Report to the Amador and Calaveras County District Attorneys for their review. A copy of the final report can be found here: http://calfire.ca.gov/fire_protection/fire_protection_firereports.

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Media Notes

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Important links:

www.fire.ca.gov

www.ReadyForWildfire.org