

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE Increases Staffing As Fire Threat Expands

Additional Seasonal Firefighters Hired From Sacramento Foothills to LA Basin

Sacramento – Despite recent rainfall, CAL FIRE continues to respond to a significant increase in wildfires across much of California. While March rain totals were higher than this winter, the rain has done little to combat drought conditions. Starting Monday, March 31, CAL FIRE will begin hiring additional seasonal firefighters in Central California, the Bay Area region and the Sacramento foothills.

“Even with rain in March, our fire activity has remained 200 percent more over average statewide,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE director. “The rain has been great, but it has not been enough to make up for our dry winter and California’s drought.

Monday's move includes the hiring of additional seasonal firefighters and the opening of many remote seasonal fire stations. The staffing increase comes after several months of CAL FIRE staffing equipment with permanent and seasonal firefighters several months earlier than normal.

“This week’s rainfall has stayed relatively in the North, but the medium and heavy brush and timber along the Central Coast and Southern end of the state remain critically dry,” said Chief Thom Porter, CAL FIRE assistant southern region chief. “A recent fire in Monterey County charred 400 acres with extreme intensity, despite the humidity being above 80 percent.”

Between January 1 and March 22, CAL FIRE has responded to over 800 wildfires that have charred nearly 2,300 acres. In an average year for the same time period, CAL FIRE would typically respond to under 275 wildfires for approximately 1,000 acres.

CAL FIRE continues to ask homeowners to ensure that they are prepared for wildfires by maintaining 100 feet of Defensible Space. For more information on preparing for wildfires and defensible space visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

Visit Drought.ca.gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought, and for more water conservation ideas, visit SaveOurH2O.org.

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