
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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RELEASE
DATE: May 7, 2018

“Wildfire Awareness Week” Declared in California

CAL FIRE Advises Personal Responsibility for Protecting Yourself and Your Community!

Sacramento – California’s wet winter created a sizable crop of new growth grass, but don’t let the wet weather fool you as the abundant grass dries into fuel-ripe tinder. Now is the time to act to prevent wildfires. Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. declared May 6-12 “Wildfire Awareness Week” to urge homeowners that Fire Defense is Self Defense, Get Ready – We Are!

Already this year, CAL FIRE has responded to more than 950 wildfires that have burned over 5,800 acres. We need all Californians to accept fire as part of our natural landscape, understand the potential fire risk, and take action before a wildfire starts in order to minimize harm to residents, homes, businesses, and community assets. We encourage residents to help safeguard their homes by using fire-safe construction features, and look for points of entry where embers can enter the home during a fire. Home and property safety preparation should also include creating a defensible space by clearing brush at least 100-feet or more away from your home, and using fire resistant landscaping to help stop the spread of wildfire.

“Our firefighters train hard to prepare for wildfires. Residents need to do the same,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE Director, and California’s State Forester. “Wind-driven embers can destroy homes or neighborhoods far from the actual flame front of a wildfire. The reality is that in a major wildfire, there simply will not be enough aircraft, fire engines or firefighters to defend every home in the early stages of the incident. This reality requires you to take personal responsibility for protecting yourself, your family, and your community.”

Damage to the state’s forests from the extended drought will continue to intensify wildfire conditions this year. An estimated 129 million trees have died across the state due to drought conditions and the effects of the bark beetle infestation. These dead and dying trees make forests more susceptible to destructive wildfires and pose public safety risks from falling trees. No amount of rain will bring these dead trees back and it will take several years of continued rain to get back to normal levels of moisture.

CAL FIRE’s “Ready for Wildfire” app is the perfect tool to use in year-round preparation. Checklists found on the CAL FIRE app help homeowners prepare and maintain defensible space, harden homes with ignition-resistant building materials, and create family evacuation plans and kits. The app features customizable alerts to electronic devices when CAL FIRE responds to a wildfire of 10 acres or more in the vicinity.

To download the ready-for-wildfire app and to learn how to create defensible space around your home, visit ReadyForWildfire.org.

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Media Notes:

Wildfire Awareness Press Kit, <http://calfire.ca.gov/communications/WAW>