

VIP VOLUNTEERS IN PREVENTION

The **Volunteers In Prevention (VIP)** of the **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)** are an efficient fire prevention and loss reduction education force for California.

Each year more than 5,600 wildfires burn over 172,000 acres of California's watershed, timber, and grasslands. As a result, millions of dollars in damage are done to the environment; homes are destroyed; and lives are threatened and sometimes lost.

With 95 percent of the wildland fires CDF responds to each year being person-caused, fire prevention and public life safety education are key to reducing losses from fires in California. In 1980, CDF conceived and developed a fire prevention volunteer program and called it "Volunteers In Prevention". Citizen volunteers have been staffing and operating many aspects of CDF's fire prevention program ever since.

VIP Activities

1. Fire and Life Safety Education

History has shown that when VIP teams provide fire prevention teaching in grades K-3rd, child-related fires in those areas have dropped by 50 percent. In addition, VIPs educate thousands of children and their parents about fire prevention by participating in fairs, displays, and parades each year.



2. Public Information Education

VIPs are trained to assist CDF's efforts during wildland fires and other emergencies by providing information to the media and public.

3. Wildland Occupant Firesafe Program

Volunteers are trained to make preliminary wildland homeowner property inspections for fire safety as required by Public Resources Code 4291, and to discuss with homeowners ways to make their homes fire safe. These one-on-one contacts are an increasingly important education tool as the population in California's wildlands continues to grow.

4. Red Flag, Holiday, and Arson Patrols

Volunteers patrol selected hazardous areas during declared critical fire weather and on holidays. They help alert the general public to the possibility of heightened fire danger. They also provide CDF with extra "eyes and ears" in areas threatened by arsonists.

5. Communications

A specialized group of volunteers (HAM radio operators and CB radio groups) provide additional communication networks for CDF during emergencies including wildland fires, earthquakes, and floods.



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Becoming A VIP

To become a Volunteer In Prevention, all you need is the willingness to give your time, a desire to learn fire prevention fundamentals, and an interest in educating Californians of all ages. Contact your nearest CDF Unit and talk to the VIP coordinator. You will need to fill out a volunteer service agreement, emergency contact form, vehicle registration form, and a parental consent form if you are a minor. There is no mandatory number of hours you will need to volunteer, but your VIP coordinator will be counting on your efforts.

You will work under the direction of the VIP coordinator who will match your interests with the needs of the program. For example, if you have teaching skills, school programs may be perfect for you. If you are a HAM or CB radio operator, communications may be your niche. Either way you will be taught the information you need. And, although you are volunteering your time, there will, under certain circumstances, be some reimbursement for your travel and meal expenses.

When working as a VIP you will wear a VIP uniform. A VIP logo will be visible, as well as an authorized VIP identification card.

Any citizen performing voluntary fire prevention duties under the supervision of a CDF officer, will be covered under workers' compensation insurance.

Experience of the appropriate type and length of time as a Volunteer In Prevention may be used to meet the entrance requirements for some CDF job examinations.

**For information on becoming a Volunteer In Prevention
contact your nearest CDF Unit.**

**You can find those locations and phone numbers
on the CDF Website at www.fire.ca.gov
or by contacting CDF Sacramento Headquarters
at (916) 653-5123.**

