

# BEAR VALLEY HELITACK BASE

The Bear Valley Helitack Base was established in 1987 and is located in the CDF San Benito-Monterey Unit on Airline Highway in Paicines. The base was originally named Bitterwater Helitack Base and kept this name until 1992 when it was changed to Bear Valley.

Bear Valley responds to an average of 150 calls per year ranging from fires to rescues. On a daily basis, the crew of the Helitack Base consists of one pilot, two fire captains, five to six firefighters and an engineer. In addition to the \*helitack crew there are two fire engines staffed at Bear Valley station. Bear Valley Helitack operates a UH-1H helicopter. It is one of two ships that have a belly tank rather than a bucket. The belly tank can hold 325 gallons of water.



Also operated out of Bear Valley is the helitender, which serves as a support vehicle for the copter. The helitender contains 1,000 gallons of fuel, along with foam, backup tools, out-of-county bags, Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's) and many other items that are necessary to support the crew.

Bear Valley provides coverage and protection from southwest Santa Clara to Interstate-5 in the CDF Fresno-Kings Unit, down to Northern San Luis Obispo and all the way to the ocean.

\*CDF helitack crews consist of highly trained and experienced firefighters who are assigned to and respond to wildland fires aboard CDF helicopters. Once arriving on an incident the crew, typically 5 to 6 firefighters along with a fire captain, are let off with fire fighting hand tools and initiate fire suppression actions. Helitack crews also perform other helicopter support operations when not assigned to direct fire line operations such as helibase operations and support.

*For information about other helitack bases, visit the  
**Air Program** page of the  
CDF website:  
[www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)*

