

The French Connection



For a week beginning Monday, April 4, 2011 and continuing through April 12, 2011, a contingency of 37 members of ENSOSP (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Officiers Sapeurs Pompiers) which translates to “The National School of Superior Fire Officers” will be in California. The instructors and graduates from France will arrive in California to tour various CAL FIRE locations throughout Northern California, meeting personnel and having the opportunity to observe CAL FIRE operations.

The French fire service is a National Department consisting of 99 political divisions, a military brigade (Army) located in Paris and a naval brigade located in Marseille. The staffing of the national department consists of approximately 29,000 explorers, 204,000 volunteers, 11,000 military, 10,000 medically trained and 38,000 paid fire fighters. The French instructors and graduates are members of the 72nd French Academy for Fire, Rescue and Civil Protection Officers of ENSOSP.

Each graduating class has the opportunity to make a selection as to what they want to do for further study after graduation. For this group it was decided in April, 2010 to come to the United States, specifically California and CAL FIRE to exchange ideas, information and technology on “All Hazard” emergency service techniques. Keep in mind that the climate and topography of France is very similar to that of California. The entire cost of the trip is being paid for by the ENSOSP group through donations and fund raising efforts. They have been selling smoke detectors and remote control model helicopters. All CAL FIRE employees who will be participating in making this a unique and meaningful experience for the visiting French firefighters are generously and willingly volunteering their time. During these challenging fiscal times no funding will be born by CAL FIRE.

Members of the CAL FIRE Incident Command Team 5 will greet the group upon their arrival in San Francisco and begin their visit with a tour of the Golden Gate Bridge. During their stay in LNU they will tour the unit, receive instruction on CAL FIRE’s Fire Prevention Program, and an introduction to the concepts of Cooperative Fire Protection in the State of California. There will also be demonstrations of CAL FIRE Hand Crew and Dozer operations which should be of special interest to our French guests who do not utilize these resources during their extended fire incidents. The group will then travel to AEU who in turn will escort them on a tour of the California State Capitol and the Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial. The afternoon will include a meeting with CAL FIRE acting Director, Ken Pimlott, at Sacramento Headquarters and a visit to the CDF Firefighters offices where they will have the opportunity to visit with President Bob Wolf. The group will then travel to McClelland Air Base where they will be introduced to the CAL FIRE’s Air Program. Given that France uses many air resources as a response to their wildland fire incidents, they are sure to have a multitude of questions. The day will come to an end with a visit to Cal EMA. While under the direction of AEU they will also have the opportunity to tour the Angora Incident in Tahoe. Lastly, BTU will provide the group with a viewing of a VMP burn, Hazardous Material incident demonstrations, Swift Water Rescue, RIC, and High angle/ Low angle rescue techniques. A trip to CAL FIRE Northern Operations in Redding will conclude their visit.

Fred Flores
Incident Commander
CAL FIRE Incident Command Team 5