

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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### **CAL FIRE and National Guard Train for Fire Season**

**Sacramento** – The risk of wildfires has already increased due this year’s dry conditions, and in preparation CAL FIRE and the California National Guard are holding their annual fire aviation training. The annual joint helicopter training that began Friday, April 12 and will go through Sunday, April 14, 2012 at the CAL FIRE Academy in Ione in addition to Lake Pardee in Amador County.

“This training allows us to call upon the National Guard helicopters to assist us when California experiences extreme fire conditions,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, director of CAL FIRE. “Last Summer, the Guard helped us battle several large wildfires.”

“This cooperative training is crucial to our fight against the imminent California wildfires,” said Maj. Gen. David S. Baldwin, adjutant general for the California National Guard. “Our long-standing partnership with CAL FIRE and other state agencies has proved a winning combination; our interagency training translates into maximized preparedness and seamless cooperation when the fires inevitably hit.”

Each year, the two departments join forces to train military pilots on how to effectively make water drops on wildfires and how to safely integrate into a wildfire situations. CAL FIRE will be instructing National Guard helicopter pilots and crewmembers in basic incident management and firefighting operations so they can safely assist CAL FIRE in battling massive wildfires. CAL FIRE and the California National Guard have a long standing cooperative relationship that has spanned over three decades.

CAL FIRE holds similar trainings with the United States Marines and Navy. “By training military pilots to fly fire missions, CAL FIRE ensures that California has every available air resource when major firestorms occur,” said Chief Ken Pimlott.

CAL FIRE has the largest aerial firefighting fleet in the world with over 50 aircraft including 11 UH-1H Super Huey helicopters.

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Photos available: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/calfire/sets/72157629797798929/>

Video available: <http://youtu.be/aEpwD9sgXKM>

#### **Media Availability**

**Who:** CAL FIRE and California National Guard

**What:** Training and instruction with military helicopters on the ability to collect and drop water during wildland firefighting efforts and to safely integrate into fireground operations.

**Where:** CAL FIRE Academy, 4501 Highway 104, Ione & Lake Pardee

**When:** Saturday, April 13, 2013 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.