

GENERAL FIRE CAUSE DEFINITIONS

ARSON – Fire started willfully and maliciously to burn or attempt to burn structures, forest land, or property.

BUILDING – Any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy that is defined in the California Building Code, 1994 Amendments, Chapter 2.

CAMPFIRE – Fire started from a campfire. A “campfire” is “a fire used for cooking, warmth, lighting, ceremonial, or aesthetic purposes, not within a building, mobile home, or living accommodation mounted on a motor vehicle.” (4103.5 PRC) In addition to the traditional type of open campfires, this category includes lanterns, and cooking and warming stoves used in camping or ceremonial activity, etc. when outside a building, mobile home, or living accommodation mounted on a motor vehicle

CONTRACT COUNTIES – Contract Counties (CAL FIRE Pays Local Government for Services) Section 4133 of the Public Resources Code and Section 55607 of the Government Code permit the CAL FIRE Director to contract with counties for protection of State Responsibility Area (SRA). In California, six counties provide fire-prevention services in SRA under contract with the state. The counties of Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Orange, Santa Barbara and Ventura have assumed this responsibility.

DEBRIS BURNING – Fire started by burning refuse, slash, trash, rights-of-way, or rangeland.

Dooryard – Fire started by burning a trash pile, incinerator, etc., usually with a dooryard-burning permit, Form LE-62.

Other – Fire started by project, contract, slash or other burning, usually with a Project Permit Form LE-7, or application and burning permit, Form LE-5.

DIRECT PROTECTION AREA – That area for which a particular fire protection organization has the primary responsibility for attacking an uncontrolled fire and for directing the suppression action. Such responsibility may develop through law, contract, or personal interest of the firefighting agent (e.g., a lumber operator). Several agencies or entities may have some basic responsibilities (e.g., private owner) without being known as the fire organization having direct protection responsibility.

ELECTRICAL POWER – Fire started by electric distribution or transmission, power line – hardware, pole or tower, and conductors, to the user’s meter.

EQUIPMENT USE – Fire started by the use of mechanical or electrical equipment.

Stationary Equipment – Fire started by any mechanical equipment that is stationary (not normally portable).

Portable Equipment – Fire started by any mechanical equipment or tool that is portable (not normally stationary).

Other Equipment – Fire started by any equipment not listed above.

INCENDIARY – Fire is intentionally ignited under circumstances in which the person knows that the fire should not be ignited.

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LIGHTNING – Fire started by lightning.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – Fire department, especially of a municipal government, whose purpose is preventing and putting out fires

OTHER CAUSE OR OTHER/MISCELLANEOUS – Fire started by events or activities that cannot be logically placed in any of the preceding “cause” classifications. Examples are electrical wiring on user’s side of meter, explosives and munitions (without arson intent) fireworks or signal devices (not in play activity), spontaneous combustion, spark from fireplace (when not debris burning), horseshoe spark, light bulb, or natural source (not lightning). Do not use for fires of unknown cause unless “other” is the most logical choice of causes.

PLAYING WITH FIRE (P-W-F) – Fire started without malicious intent by adults or children playing or experimenting with fire or fire-causing agents. Includes fires started unintentionally while playing with fireworks, toys, models and other fire-causing devices. When children cause a fire by smoking, the intent determines the cause, i.e., if smoking as a play activity, use “Playing with fire;” if smoking as a smoker, the cause is “Smoking.”

RAILROAD – Fire started by railroad rolling stock, such as speeder, locomotive, or rail car.

SCHEDULE A – Schedule A (Local Government Pays for CAL FIRE Services). Public Resources Code 4142 allows CAL FIRE to provide fire protection/emergency services to local governments under contracts.

SCHEDULE B – State personnel and resources, performing the state (CAL FIRE) mission, using state funding.

SCHEDULE C – Local Government employees that work under the Supervision of CAL FIRE, via the authority of a cooperative agreement.

SMOKING – Fire started from smoking tobacco or other material; includes matches and other heat sources used in smoking.

STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREA (SRA) – Areas of the State in which the financial responsibility of preventing and suppressing fires has been determined by the State Board of Forestry pursuant to PRC 4125, to be primarily the responsibility of the State (PRC 4102).

UNDETERMINED – includes those fires that have not yet been investigated or those that have been investigated, or are under investigation, and have insufficient information to classify further.

VEHICLE – Fire started by a motorized transportation vehicle.

WILDFIRE – As defined in Public Resources Code Sections 4103 and 4104. Wildland: Uncultivated land, other than fallow, neglected or maintained for such purposes as wood or range-forage production, wildlife, recreation, protective watershed cover or wilderness.

WILDLAND FIRE – Any fire occurring on undeveloped land.