
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit

CONTACT: Kevin M .Colburn
(707) 987-3689
Suzie Blankenship
(707) 576-2342

RELEASE
DATE: October 15, 2009

CAL FIRE TO DOWNSTAFF EQUIPMENT IN SONOMA-LAKE-NAPA UNIT BURN SUSPENSION LIFTED

St. Helena – The Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) plans to start down staffing equipment and personnel starting Monday, October 19, 2009. Due to rain and cooler temperatures the Unit is beginning the transition from summer staffing levels to winter staffing. The Unit includes the State Responsibility Areas (SRA) within the counties of Sonoma, Lake, Napa, Yolo, Solano and Colusa.

The transition from summer staffing to winter staffing results in the release of seasonal fire suppression employees, down staffing some fire equipment, and the termination of contracts for fixed wing aircraft such as air tankers. Chief Ernie Loveless points out that “the reduction in staffing and resources is indicative of a major reduction in the wildland fire danger. However, residents need to remember that even with the welcome rains, a period of dry windy conditions could dry fuels to the point where wildland fires are possible.” CAL FIRE is prepared to quickly “ramp up” if conditions here or elsewhere in the state dictate.

In addition, CAL FIRE will lift the burn ban suspension in the SRA. Anyone interested in conducting dooryard burning must make sure they meet all fire and air pollution permit requirements. Check with your local fire agency and air quality district for requirements.

The transition to winter staffing however, does not signal the end of fire protection responsibilities for CAL FIRE locally. CAL FIRE provides year round emergency response as the fire department for Napa County, the Town of Yountville, the South Lake Fire Protection District and The Sea Ranch. Additional response is also provided by contract to the Cloverdale Fire Protection District and to Sonoma County in both the western and southern portions of the county. CAL FIRE also provides personnel and incident management expertise for emergencies statewide, including earthquakes and floods.