

Executive Summary

The objective of this report is to assess and report those projected factors that will influence wildland fire potential throughout California during the 2004 fire season. It is based on previous activity, current developments, present conditions and climatology forecasts over the next several months.

The intent is to assist firefighting agencies throughout California in the training, preparation and development of operational strategies and tactics for the upcoming season. This document will provide credible intelligence consisting of current fuel conditions, climatology factors, safety considerations and recommendations for taking safe aggressive action to mitigate the threats of wildland fire.

Firefighting agencies should be keenly aware of the extremely hazardous fuel conditions in some parts of California that are reaching historical proportions. From the combined effects of a prolonged drought throughout the State, Sudden Oak Death (SOD), varying amounts of tree damage from heavy winds (“blow-down”) and snow (“snow-break”), fir engraver beetle infestation to the North and chaparral mortality and Bark Beetle infestation to the South; fire departments and wildland agencies are faced with a situation where firefighter safety is at risk with each incident response.

Note the following:

- ✚ Current fuel moistures are nearing record lows
- ✚ Current Energy Release Components are at record highs
- ✚ Common denominator of recent wildfire activity in the absence of typical fire weather patterns has been the quick ignition and rapid spread of fire; primarily fuel driven.
- ✚ Due to prolonged drought, insect infestation, Sudden Oak Death (SOD), wind damage and snow damage expansive pockets of tree and brush mortality exist throughout the State. These conditions have created an accumulation of ladder and ground fuels which are extremely subject to ignition.
- ✚ The potential for a plume-dominated fire is extremely high due to the heavy dead fuel loading of the landscape and the potential for crown fire.
- ✚ Fire Behavior will be extremely erratic and unpredictable in many instances.

Executive Summary (continued)

It is important to remember that firefighter safety is and will continue to be the first priority. Take time to review and practice the **10 Standard Fire Orders**, **18 Watch-Out Situations**, **Common Denominators of Fire Behavior on Tragedy Fires**, and **LCES**. Unfortunately history has reflected that most wildland fire fatalities have been directly related to violations of these directives.

Take the time to review this document thoroughly. It should provide an excellent source of information for training at the Company level. Ensure and promote a safe working environment at all times and remember the importance of awareness, safety, and responsibility.....it works.