

From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, August 12, 2019.

Last week, in addition to the usual wildfire activity that we see this time of year, California firefighters also faced some less common events this week. Northern California saw significant lightning activity over the weekend, with over 3,100 confirmed strikes within a 48-hour period. While most of those lightning strikes did not lead to fire activity, several dozen did. In total, Northern California saw 77 lightning sparked fires across federal and state jurisdictions.

In addition to all that, CAL FIRE firefighters were called on to assist with the over 1,300 acre Ward Fire in the state of Oregon, which was also sparked by lightning. All of the responding CAL FIRE resources have returned to California, but all-in-all, a very busy week for firefighters.

Looking at our stats, firefighters battled over 330 new fires last week, 227 of which were within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. Again, we continue to see lower overall numbers this year compared to last year. The number of fires so far this year isn't too much lower than last year's number, around 3,200. But the big difference so far this year is in the total number of acres burned – 23,748 acres so far in 2019, versus over 600,000 last year. Very good news so far, but we do still have several more months of potential fire activity to go.

And more good news – currently, there are no significant wildfires burning within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. As I mentioned earlier, there were over 200 new fires within the State Responsibility Area, and several of those did turn into major incidents, but all of them have been fully contained as of today.

Let's take a quick look at a couple of the larger fires that CAL FIRE battled last week. We'll start with one that was contained just last night – the Golf Fire in Lake County. The Golf Fire started on Thursday northwest of the city of Clearlake. That fire burned 20 acres before firefighters had full containment on it. The cause of the Golf Fire has been determined to be due to an improperly discarded cigarette. While cigarettes causing wildfires is a fairly uncommon occurrence, the Golf Fire is a reminder that it can still happen. It's very important to properly dispose of cigarettes, making sure they are completely out before disposing of them. Remember, all it takes is one spark.

Next up is the Harte Fire in Alameda County. The Harte Fire started on Friday afternoon and was fully contained later that day after growing to 240 acres. CAL FIRE was in Unified Command with the Alameda County Fire Department on the Harte Fire.

And finally, we wanted to quickly mention the largest fire currently active in the state – the Tucker Fire in the Modoc National Forest. The Tucker Fire started late last month, and according to the US Forest Service it is now 95% contained at just over 14,000 acres. You can find more information on the Tucker Fire as well as other fires within Federal jurisdiction by visiting Inciweb at inciweb.nwcg.gov.

Last weekend, we saw some more seasonally normal temperatures across much of the state, but after today we're expecting things to heat back up through Thursday, and along with those higher temperatures we're forecast to also see a decrease in humidity. The good news is that we should see somewhat of a cooling trend as we return to near-normal temps and humidity into the weekend.

Additionally, we're expecting some gusty winds in Southern California along the I-5 corridor and Kern County mountains Thursday into the weekend. Which could fan any new fire starts that occur in those areas.

As we move through August, and begin to enter the historically most destructive months in the year, we wanted to offer a reminder of the steps you should take around your home when an evacuation is anticipated to give it the best chance of surviving. Keep in mind that during an evacuation, your priority should always be the safety of you and your family, and if a warning becomes an order, or you otherwise just feel unsafe, just go. Don't hesitate. But there are a few things you can do if you have time.

On the inside of your home, shut all windows and doors, but please leave the lights on so that firefighters can see your home in smoky conditions. Shut off the gas, your air conditioner and swamp coolers. And also identify flammable furniture and interior decorations like window shades, curtains, couches and chairs, and remove them or move them to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.

On the outside of your home, move flammable items like patio furniture, children's toys, door mats, or trash cans and place them inside of your house. Turn off propane tanks and propane appliances. Locate your pets and keep them nearby, and prepare any livestock for transport, or consider moving them to a safe location early. And please, be sure to check on your neighbors to make sure they are also preparing to leave and know what to do, especially the elderly.

For more tips on what pre-evacuation steps you can take, and for a complete pre-evacuation checklist, be sure to visit our website at [Ready For Wildfire dot org](http://ReadyForWildfire.org).

That's the latest on the fire situation in California. I'm Scott McLean, stay safe.