

From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, October 14, 2019.

Late last week, California saw a dramatic increase in fire activity during a major wind event coupled with very dangerous low humidities across much of the state. But as we moved into the weekend, those winds began to die down, allowing firefighters to get a handle on the blazes and begin making significant progress in getting them contained. In all, CAL FIRE firefighters battled 146 fires over the past 7 days. You can see on our graphic how this year has fared so far against last year – So far in 2019, we've had a total of 4,755 fires vs last year's 5,011 fires. But take a look at the acreage – 41,204 acres vs 631,733 acres last year.

Let's take a quick look now at a few of the large fires currently burning across the state.

We'll start in Los Angeles County with the nearly 8,000 acre Saddleridge Fire in Sylmar. The Los Angeles County Fire Department, Los Angeles City Fire Department, and the Angeles National Forest are in Unified Command on the Saddleridge Fire. While they continue to deal with very rugged and steep terrain, making access difficult in battling the blaze, firefighters are making great progress and currently have it 43% contained and all evacuation orders were lifted this morning. So great news on that fire.

In Riverside County, there's also some great news on the Sandalwood Fire in Calimesa. Again, thanks to more favorable weather conditions, firefighters now have the Sandalwood Fire 94% contained and at just over 1,000 acres, so very close to reaching containment. All evacuation orders were lifted on the Sandalwood Fire this morning as well.

And an update on the Briceburg Fire burning north of Midpines in Mariposa County. The Briceburg Fire is now 75% contained at just over 5,500 acres. Firefighters continue to build and reinforce remaining containment lines and patrol for hot spots in the area.

And finally, in addition to the wave of fires that started on Thursday, there was also a new significant fire that sparked on Friday in Ventura County. The Olivias Fire, near the Buenaventura Golf Course, is currently 200 acres & firefighters have it 50% contained as of this morning.

Switching over to our Fire Weather Headlines for the upcoming week, unfortunately we've got more wind coming up in the forecast. In Northern California, we're looking at another possible round of windy conditions on Wednesday in the northeast and east side of the state. And in Southern California, in Santa Barbara County and along the I-5 corridor, we could see breezy conditions starting on Thursday night.

While these upcoming windy conditions have not yet caused Red Flag Warnings to be issued in the areas, we will continue to monitor them closely and be ready to position resources as needed to respond. But it's vital that the public also stay aware of these events, and take action accordingly. As we saw last week, these Red Flag Warning conditions can very easily turn any new wildfires starts into major incidents, and it's very important that everyone not only stay informed about when Red Flag Warnings are issued in your area, but also take the warnings very seriously and take the appropriate action to get Ready in case a fire starts near you. You can always find the latest information on Red Flag Warnings across California on our website at fire.ca.gov, or by following us on Facebook and Twitter, as well as following your closest National Weather Service office on social media.

We are now several weeks into fall, which means we're just starting to see some bouts of colder weather. That means many people will soon be using fireplaces, wood burning stoves, and other heating equipment around the homes. Heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths, so it's important that before you start using that heater or fireplace, you take measures to minimize the risks involved.

Make sure that before you start using your heating equipment, have it inspected and cleaned by a licensed professional to make sure its ready to go when the cold weather hits. Things like a buildup of soot in a chimney, or a malfunctioning heater, can lead to a fire in your home.

When you are using your heating device, keep anything that can burn like fabrics, furniture and people or pets AT LEAST 3 feet away. It's a good idea to designate a 3 foot "kid free" zone around any open fires or space heaters.

And be sure to also test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms once a month, so that you can be sure that if an emergency does occur, you and your family can get out safely.

For more tips on how you can heat your home safely, be sure to visit our website at fire.ca.gov.

And that's the latest on the fire situation in California. I'm Scott McLean. Stay safe.