

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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**RELEASE**  
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### **CAL FIRE Urges Personal Responsibility in Protecting Against Wildfire - Do Your Part to Protect Your Community - Create Defensible Space and Harden Your Home** *“Wildfire Preparedness Week” is May 2-8”*

**Sacramento** – Being proactive and prepared for wildfire is crucial to making our communities more resilient to the impacts of wildfire. You can dramatically increase your safety and the survivability of your home by preparing well in advance of a wildfire. This week marks California’s annual “Wildfire Preparedness Week,” CAL FIRE and our partner agencies are raising awareness and encouraging families and communities to take a hands-on approach in wildfire preparedness.

The 2020 fire season broke numerous records. California experienced six of the largest and most destructive wildfires in state history. More than four-million acres burned across the state, double the previous record from 2008. Due to continued dry conditions and temperatures well above normal for this time of year, the 2021 wildfire season could be as catastrophic and devastating as last year. So far this year, CAL FIRE has responded to more than 1,300 wildfires that have burned more than 3,500 acres on state and federal lands combined.

“As we continue to deal with the impacts of climate change, we want to encourage Californians to be prepared for this year’s fire season,” said CAL FIRE Chief Thom Porter. “With the support of Governor Newsom, CAL FIRE has bolstered fire protection resources with 1,399 additional firefighters, added 30 new fire crews, replaced five of our helicopters with state-of-the-art CAL FIRE S70i Hawk helicopters with more on the way, enhanced technology to assist with fire behavior modeling, provided on-demand wildfire spread prediction, and wildfire risk forecasting capabilities. While we are ramping up our preparedness, residents need to do the same.”

This year, California budgeted more than \$1 billion for fire management, fire prevention, mitigation efforts including prescribed fire and fuel breaks, forest health, and home hardening. Building on the success of past fuel reduction work, CAL FIRE is pivoting to a model of continuously developing and maintaining a list of more than 500 fuel projects across the state. These projects are vital to slowing the spread of fires in the Wildland Urban Interface and providing areas from which fire personnel can safely and aggressively attack fires. Through grants to regionally based partners and collaboratives, CAL FIRE seeks to significantly increase fuels management including hazardous fuel reduction, treatment of degraded areas, and the conservation and restoration of forests.

Firefighting alone cannot protect us. Californians have an important role in preventing wildfires as well as preparing for the upcoming wildfire season. Now is the time to ensure adequate defensible space around homes and buildings, make homes more fire resistant and have an emergency preparedness/escape plan.

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This is especially important since approximately 25% of the state’s population, or 11-million Californians, live in a high-risk fire zone. Thousands of communities depend on smart planning and prevention tools such as protective fuel breaks, defensible space around homes, and home hardening for their safety and survival. These tools work together to build more fire-resilient communities. Californians can learn more about all aspects of wildfire safety and preparedness at [www.ReadyForWildfire.org](http://www.ReadyForWildfire.org).

Additionally, CAL FIRE is encouraging Californians to access the “Ready for Wildfire” web-based app that includes local alerts, checklists for preparedness, evacuation plans, and other kits. To download the free Ready for Wildfire web-based app, visit <https://plan.readyforwildfire.org/>.

Read Governor Gavin Newsom’s [Proclamation of the 2021 Wildfire Prevention Week](#).

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**Media Notes:**

Wildfire Awareness Press Kit: <https://calfire.box.com/s/yce08umg4vyp4meq00kr18ht87st04ta>