



Cypress Fire Protection District News

Summer 2017

Lean, Clean and Green

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Heavy winter rainfall has given us cause to celebrate relief from five years of drought. But it has also produced an abundant growth of vegetation. Sure, it was important to maintain defensible space around your home last year. Brush and trees readily burned because their moisture content was reduced by years of drought. But defensible space will be as important this year, too. The probability of wildland fire increases with an abundance of light flashy fuels such as grasses, weeds, and light brush

Wise homeowners realize that living in beautiful forests comes with the risk to family, property and homes from wildland fire. They also know that the risk can be reduced by living lean - providing defensible space around their homes; clean—reducing ignition hazards; and green - landscaping with fire-resistant plants.

Defensible space has proven so effective that its requirement was enacted into California law to reduce economic loss, preserve neighborhoods, and improve firefighter safety. Public Resources Code Sec. 4291 states that it is the property owner’s responsibility to comply with the requirements of the law and at all times maintain the standards set forth. To establish defensible space, flammable vegetation around your home must be reduced a MINIMUM of 100 feet, or to the property line, which ever is closer.

The 30 feet of space immediately around your home should be maintained to prevent flame contact and reduce the hazard of ignition. This can be accomplished by thinning and spacing plants to interrupt continuity; removal of dead leaves, needles, and plants; and pruning shrubs

and trees away from the home. Large trees should be limbed up so their branches are at least 6 to 15 feet above the ground. Smaller trees, less than 18 feet high, should be limbed up one-third of their height. Firewood should be stored more than 30 feet from the home and other combustibles such as deck chairs, trash, and recycling material should not be stored against the walls.



The next 30 to 100 feet around your home should be maintained to reduce the fuel available to a wildland fire. Standing dead or fallen trees and tree stumps should be removed. Thin trees to eliminate a continuous tree canopy and remove brush to eliminate a continuous fuel bed. Dead or dying grass should be mowed to a maximum height of 4 inches. Separate trees 4 to 40 feet, depending on slope, and

eliminate low branches that become “ladders” for fire from ground fuels to the trees.

Consider removing plants that contain oils, resins, and waxes, that burn readily, such as ornamental junipers, paupon, holly, red cedar, and young pine.

For more information, visit our website at www.CypressFire.org.

WHAT’S HAPPENING

- October 14 Rio Road Station Open House
- November 6—17 Residential Chipping
- November 16 Board Meeting
- January 25 Board Meeting



Customer Feedback

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New Emergency Medical Services Coordinator

Battalion Chief George Nunez has been selected as the new EMS coordinator. Chief Nunez has more than 20 years of medical experience working as an EMT and Paramedic in the Riverside County area, and also brings a great deal of firefighting experience with him. He succeeds Nathan Armstrong who left the position to become the Battalion Chief for the Peninsula Division.

Chief Nunez began his career as a Firefighter I in the Riverside Unit in 1996. He promoted to Firefighter II (Limited Term) in 2000, and after completing Paramedic courses at Crafton Hills College in 2001, he promoted to Firefighter II Paramedic and worked in Indio. In 2003, he promoted to Fire Apparatus Engineer Paramedic at Lake Riverside, and transferred to West Indio in 2005. George promoted to Fire Captain and took a position at Fenner Conservation Camp in 2006 and transferred to Prado Conservation Camp in 2010.



His goals for the medical services program are to maintain the high level of service to the public and to insure that members of the program can obtain the training that they desire.

BEACH SAFETY

The Monterey coastline is one of the most scenic areas in the world, where blue water and rocky shores are separated by the white spray of crashing waves. Beautiful sandy beaches punctuate stretches of rugged shoreline and offer the opportunity to see the ocean up-close. But before you go, be aware of the hazards that exist along the coast.

Many beaches drop off steeply into the water, so with a few steps you are waist deep in the ocean. Some beaches have coarse sand which erodes beneath your feet as the waves recede back into the ocean, making footing unstable. Heavy surf conditions can produce waves more than 30 feet high, or a series of several smaller waves with a huge surprise wave, called a sneaker, that can knock you over with a tremendous force. Rocks and jetties are rugged and slippery, making them hazardous to walk on. Rising tides can cut off trails and access and allow waves to wash farther up the beach. And if you wind up in the water, strong rip currents may carry you out to sea.

So follow these beach safety tips. Be aware of current surf conditions and how they are changing. The National Weather Service issues heavy surf advisories and warnings. Many beaches have signs explaining their specific hazards. Read and obey all orders. Talk to local residents about the hazards. Never turn your back on the ocean. And most importantly, think about what you are doing and use common sense.



Fire Defense Plan

CAL FIRE has developed a wildland fire defense plan for the District which analyzes the community, assesses risk and proposes measures to reduce the possibility and destructiveness of fire. The plan was developed in cooperation with several adjacent agencies and stakeholders, including Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District, Cal Trans, Monterey County, California State Parks, California Highway Patrol, Monterey County Sheriff's Office, Cal Am, PG&E, and homeowner associations. The objectives of the plan were determined through collaboration to meet the needs of all those at risk.

An element of the plan is to reduce the vegetation, or fuels, available to sustain a wildland fire. This reduction of fuels is in addition to the annual clearance that residents do around their homes and involves the larger unimproved areas in their property. Some methods employed in fuel reduction work are removal of dead vegetation, thinning of fuels, interrupting the continuity of fuels, and removal of ladder fuels. The plan calls for a reduction of fuels and is not intended to completely remove vegetation to prevent wildland fires. The reduction is usually accomplished by a combination of manual, mechanical, chemical or other methods.

Another element of the plan is to determine where to place effective fuel breaks to stop the spread of fire. Roads, ridge tops, and flat or gently sloped terrain are areas where vegetation can be reduced to become an effective fuel break. A road, for example, that has had the vegetation reduced twenty to thirty feet back from the edges makes an effective fuel break, and also enhances its use by firefighters for access and as an escape route during a fire.

However, before any fuel reduction work can begin, CAL FIRE is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate and disclose the potential environmental implications of their proposed work before undertaking it. Furthermore, CAL FIRE is required to avoid or reduce, when feasible, the significant environmental impact of their work. This requires a survey of the properties in the District for artifacts, endangered species or other items that could be adversely affected by implementation of the fire defense plan. Earlier this year, residents of the District received a letter from CAL FIRE, requesting permission of the property owner to conduct the required survey. The letter was accompanied by a contract explaining the scope of the work and limitations of liability. Many residents have signed and returned the contracts, and the surveys are underway.

Work has been planned to first reduce fuels in areas that provide the greatest benefit of wildland fire protection. Areas along busy roads or highways, high density stands of fuels, and fuels in areas of residences are typical high priorities. Much of the work will be done by CAL FIRE hand crews. These inmate firefighters have been specially trained in brushing and felling trees to perform this kind of work and can work in terrain inaccessible by mechanized equipment. Another option is using herds of goats. A single goat can consume 10–15% of its body weight per day; a 300 goat herd can consume 1,000 pounds of vegetation per day. They eat practically every type of vegetation, including poison oak, but they do not discriminate and will eat endangered species of plants also.

The first line of defense for every property owner in the District is to maintain their property in accordance with state and local fire standards for defensible space and building materials. Defensible space remains a very high priority for the District due to the housing density within the wildland urban interface. The District goes to great lengths to educate residents and visitors about wildland fire safety.

The plan will establish a network of fire roads along with enhanced access and egress of existing roads. Surface fuels, ladder fuels, and forest canopy density will be reduced to improve fire suppression effectiveness, and the degree of effectiveness is directly proportional to their reduction. With fuel reduction improvements, fire suppression efforts will require fewer resources. Fire line heat intensities and flame lengths will be less, and allow direct attack by fire crews with improved line construction rates. Reduced forest canopy increases aerial application of retardant, reduces the potential for crown fire initiation and spread, and makes spot fires easier to detect and suppress. Reduced forest canopy also contributes to a healthier forest which reduces the fire hazard.

The actions described in the fire defense plan will result in reduced fire intensity, less damage to the community, and provide for safer access and egress for residents and firefighters. The likelihood that fires will be detected sooner, contained and controlled while they are still small will be improved, which reduces suppression costs, improves firefighters safety and ability to protect communities and resources.

For more information about the District's Fire Defense Plan, visit our website at www.cypressfire.org or contact Fire Captain Kim Bernheisel, Fuels Management Officer, at 831 601-7628.

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Dedicated to Cooperative Fire Protection.

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Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

CERT is a program that prepares you to help yourself, your family, and your neighbors in the event of a disaster. During a large scale incident, emergency service personnel may not be able to reach everyone right away. By getting CERT program training, you will develop skills to provide the first critical assistance to victims. You may also work under the direction of emergency responders, either individually or as part of a CERT team, to provide crowd control, evacuations, shelter support, damage assessment, search and rescue, or other important functions. CERT members are known and trusted resources to emergency responders and their communities.

Would you know what to do in the event of an earthquake? CERT basic training consists of an eight module program in which you will learn about disaster preparedness, how to extinguish small fires, basic first aid, disaster medical operations, search and rescue of lightly damaged buildings, CERT organization, disaster psychology, and terrorism. The course concludes with a disaster simulation in which you apply what you have learned. The course takes approximately 20 hours to complete.

Additional training is available on many other emergency activities such as flood control response, staffing call centers, evacuation of pets and large animals, incident management, and other topics.

The objective of CERT is to do the most good for the most people. Becoming a CERT member is a way to make a meaningful donation of your time.

If you have questions or are interested in becoming a CERT member, visit our website at www.cypressfire.com or call the Cypress Fire Protection District CERT Coordinator, John Spooner at 831 624-2374.