

Wildfire Safety

As many as 90 percent of wildland fires in the United States are caused by people, according to the U.S. Department of Interior. Some human-caused fires result from campfires left unattended, the burning of debris, downed power lines, negligently discarded cigarettes and intentional acts of arson. The remaining 10 percent are started by lightning or lava.

From January 1 to September 8, 2020 there were 41,051 wildfires compared with 35,386 wildfires in the same period in 2019, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. About 4.7 million acres were burned in the 2020 period, compared with 4.2 million acres in 2019.

On August 17, a series of lightning strikes started hundreds of fires across Northern California, dubbed the Lightning Complex fires. As of September 8, CalFire reported that 10 wildfires were burning across California. The largest, the SCU Lightning Complex, located in five counties in northern California near San Francisco, had burned about 397,000 acres and was 94 percent contained. To date it is the second largest fire on record in the state and has destroyed 224 residential, commercial and other structures. The LNU Lightning Complex was nearly as large, burning more than 375,000 acres over four counties including Napa and Sonoma. By September 8 it was 91 percent contained. It has destroyed about 1,500 structures. The Creek Fire, ignited on September 4, burned about 144,000 acres by September 8 with no containment noted and 65 structures destroyed. The CZU Lightning fire burned about 86,000 acres in two counties and was 81 percent contained by September 8. In total, over 1 million acres had burned and California was under a state of emergency. About 3,500 structures have been damaged or destroyed.

In early September about 40 large fires were burning in Oregon, California and Washington consuming hundreds of thousands of acres. In Oregon thousands of residents evacuated their homes to escape the flames that scorched more than 230,000 acres. In California fires are burning from the north all the way down to the Mexican border, stretching across approximately 800 miles of landscape. In Washington, more acres had been burned this year than in the past 12 fire seasons. The fires are being fueled by continuing dry conditions.

Current El Dorado Facts

The El Dorado Fire has been burning for 23 days, and is currently 22,680 acres with 92% containment.

A local Red Flag Warning has been declared through 5:00 PM Monday. A Red Flag Warning is a forecast warning issued by the National Weather Service to inform area firefighting and land management agencies that conditions are ideal for extreme burning conditions and rapid fire spread.

Fire activity near containment lines continue to be minimal. Firefighters continue to search for

hidden hotspots near containment lines and conduct mop up in the Angelus Oaks, Jenks Lake areas and near the west fork of Barton Creek. Firefighters are building containment lines in the last remaining sections of fire line within the San Gorgonio Wilderness. Pockets of unburned fuel will likely still cause smoke along Hwy 38. Flames may be visible (especially at night) but, are well within containment lines.

A large pocket of burning fuel remains in the Monkey Face Creek area near San Bernardino Peak. Residents may see large columns of smoke visible from both Yucaipa and Big Bear areas. Please know that there is no threat to containment lines as a result of these fuels burning out. This fire activity is likely to last several days.

Weather: The area is under a Red Flag Warning in effect through 5:00 PM Monday September 28th. East winds and very low humidity are predicted during this period. Temperatures over the fire area will be 80-84 degrees. Winds today will be 5-10 mph with gusts to 20 mph.

Residents of Mountain Home Village, Forest Falls, Angelus Oaks, Seven Oaks and Barton Flats have been allowed to return but remain under an evacuation warning.

Residence: Damaged, 4 Destroyed: 5 Other Structures: Destroyed: 15

Defensible Space:

In January 2005 a new state law became effective that extended the defensible space clearance around homes and structures from 30 feet to 100 feet. Proper clearance to 100 feet dramatically increases the chance of your house surviving a wildfire. This defensible space also provides for firefighter safety when protecting homes during a wildland fire.

When I was a Forest Service Wildland firefighter, we were given codes to memorize and follow when we were on the scene of a Forest fire.

<https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/6mfs/10-standard-fire-orders>

<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms110>

<https://www.firesafemarin.org/defensible-space>

Defensible Space is required by law! Check with your local fire department for any additional defensible space or weed abatement ordinances.

Wildfires

<https://www.ready.gov/wildfires>

To end I am going to assign homework for all of you. I would like you to go to <https://www.ready.gov/cert> and explore this site and familiarize yourself with all of the information it provides for you.

