

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready?

Cottage Grove fire crews head to California wildfires



PHOTO COURTESY INCMWB

Fire crews battle the Thomas Fire in California on Dec. 9. Cottage Grove crews expected home from California this week.

By Caitlyn May
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The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, has activated its Operation Operations Center and 10 strike teams with equipment and personnel who are enroute to assist with the latest wildfires in California.

South Lane County Fire and Rescue (SLFR)

sent one fire engine and three staff to the fires that were sparked early this week and continue to grow.

"They were headed down and it's zero percent contained," SLFR Division Chief Joe Raade said.

California fire officials submitted a request asking for assistance yesterday evening from Oregon. The OSFM activated its emergency mobilization plan, sending out the request for assistance to all Oregon fire agencies.

"Oregon fire agencies have again answered the call and we are honored to assist our neighbors for the second time this year, said Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple. "California helped us with the fires in southern Oregon this year, we assisted them in October and I am proud that we can again assist them in their time of need."

SLFR were joined by equipment and personnel from Siuslaw, McKenzie and Lane Fire Authority.

"It's the first year the state of Oregon has provided mutual aid to California," Raade said.

Under the agreement, SLFR can remain in California for up to 14 days. However, according to Raade, California is footing the bill for personnel to fill-in for local staffers fighting the blaze in California, as well as renting the time of SLFR's engine.

Both Oregon and California have had hectic wildfire seasons with Oregon's coming to a close earlier this year. The latest fire in California, burning in the Ventura area is being spread by the Santa Ana winds and dry conditions.

State fire marshal gives holiday safety tips

Urges residents to include safety planning this holiday season

With the holiday season in full swing, State Fire Marshal Jim Walker urges citizens to remember fire prevention when decorating and entertaining.

From 2012 through 2016, Oregon fire agencies reported there were 3,510 residential fires during the holiday period from November 22 through January 15. These fires were reported to have resulted in 14 deaths, 194 injuries, and more than \$61.2 million in property loss.

"This season is a busy and exciting time of year, but don't let that distract you from keeping your family and friends safe from fire," says Walker. "By following a few important prevention tips for Christmas trees, decorations, and candles, you can help ensure your holidays remain happy."

Tree care and decorating tips:

- * Choose a fresh, healthy tree with a deep-green color and flexible needles.
- * When you get the tree home, cut off the bottom two inches of the trunk. This creates a fresh, raw cut for the tree to soak up water.
- * Water your tree daily. A tree may consume between a quart and a gallon of water per day.
- * Place the tree at least three feet away from any heat source such as a fireplace, woodstove, space heater, heating vent, baseboard heater, or radiator.
- * Use only noncombustible or flame resistant materials to trim a tree.
- * Always unplug tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- * If using a woodstove or fireplace, keep it screened at all times. Keep ribbons, boughs, and other decorative materials at least three feet away.
- * After the holiday season or whenever your tree dries out, promptly dispose of it and other

dry greenery. Burning a tree in a stove or fireplace is extremely dangerous; proper disposal includes recycling or pick-up by a disposal service.

- * Never burn wrapping paper in the fireplace or wood stove. Wrapping paper burns at higher temperatures than wood and can cause a chimney fire.

Electrical safety

- * Maintain your holiday lights. Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, and broken or cracked sockets.
- * Do not overload electrical sockets. Do not link more than three light strands, unless the manufacturer's directions indicate it is safe.
- * Protect electrical cords from damage. To avoid shock or fire hazards, cords should never be pinched by furniture, placed under rugs, located near heat sources or attached by nails or staples.
- * Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations used outdoors are marked for

outdoor use.

Candle safety

- * Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look and smell like real candles.
- * Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish candles when you go to bed, leave a room, or before leaving the house.
- * Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn. Keep candles at least one foot from combustibles including clothing, curtains, upholstered furniture, greenery, and decorations.
- * Always use a sturdy non-combustible (metal, glass, or ceramic) candleholder. If a sturdy non-combustible candleholder is not available, the candle can be placed on a non-combustible plate.
- * Place candles out of reach of small children and pets.
- * Avoid candles with items embedded in them such as twigs, flowers, or leaves. These

items can ignite or even explode.

- * Always use a flashlight -- not a candle -- for emergency lighting.

General fire safety

- * Keep combustibles at least three feet from heat sources.
- * For increased protection, have working smoke alarms on every level of your home (including the basement), in each bedroom, and in the hallway outside each bedroom.
- * Make a home fire escape plan and practice it with your family and any overnight guests.
- * Keep escape routes clear of clutter so you can escape quickly in case of fire.

For more information on fire safety visit: http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/pages/com_ed_section.aspx

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Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.
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