



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: *October 5, 2016*
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SBCoFD Activates Hand Crew to Year-Round Duty

In July 2012, San Bernardino County Fire Department (SBCoFD) announced the creation of its first Hand Crew known as "Old Cajon." Since its inception, the need for a year-round Hand Crew has increased. Today SBCoFD is proud to announce that a 15-member Old Cajon Hand Crew is activated to year-round duty. This crew is available on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Under the leadership of one superintendent and two foremen, Old Cajon is ready to provide full-time year-round assistance and support on all incidents within San Bernardino County, including vegetation fires, structure fires, floods, search & rescues, and other all-risk incidents as well as local fuel reduction projects. A hand crew primarily fights fire by cutting, chopping and scraping away vegetation with chain saws, axes and other hand-held tools.

Hand Crews play a vital role in recovery efforts during major flooding events, most recently in Forest Falls, Mt. Baldy and Wrightwood. They also support firefighting efforts during major structure and commercial fires.

All Hand Crew members undergo rigorous training including wildland fire behavior, advance wildland firefighting tactics, saw and hand tool techniques, helicopter operations, confined space awareness, structure protection techniques and Haz-Mat responder functions. All members are Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) or first-responder trained. SBCoFD hand crews also participate in annual readiness drills which certify their abilities and qualifications.

SBCoFD hand crews have become more frequently deployed during incidents over the last year in both wildland and urban areas. Hand Crews serve multiple roles in fire suppression as they can create firelines, defensible space, and conduct mop-up operations which improve efficiency and relieve firefighters and medic engines to return back to service.

In addition to their year-round availability, Old Cajon Hand Crew is augmented by 12 seasonal hand crew members six months out of the year for a total of 27 members.

High resolution photos of Old Cajon members can be found at sbcofd.smugmug.com

About San Bernardino County Fire: The San Bernardino County Fire Department is an all-risk/full-service fire department committed to providing the highest level of service in the most efficient and cost effective manner to the citizens and communities that we serve. Our jurisdiction encompasses 19,278 square miles of extremely diverse environments that stretch from the Los Angeles County line on the west, to the Colorado River on the east, to the Nevada State line and Kern and Inyo counties on the north. We provide services to more than 60 communities/cities and all unincorporated areas of the county.

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