



NEWS



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Three Fires Break Out in Three Communities

Heidi Fron, Reporter

Posted: Thursday, March 1, 2018, 10:31 a.m.

A structure fire in Running Springs resulted in the total loss of a home at Ferndale Drive and Live Oak on Feb. 22, and two other fires threatened structures on Feb 22 in Lake Arrowhead and on Feb. 24 in Crestline.

The Running Springs Fire Department (RSFD) was called to the Ferndale fire at 1:21 p.m. and found the incident to be a “fully involved structure fire,” according to Battalion Chief Mike Vasquez at RSFD. Vasquez said that a firefighter managed to open a back door, and the cat-in-residence made it out safely. No one else was home when the fire started.

“There was a big fire load in the structure. It had a lot of contents,” Vasquez said. However, with help from Cal Fire and the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** (SBCFD), the RSFD firefighters managed to confine the fire to just the structure itself, without any threats to surrounding homes.

During the fire, ammunition inside the house began to go off, initially causing concern to bystanders who conveyed their concerns on Facebook, since the amount of ammo inside was unknown. Firefighters initially took a defensive mode, but the ammunition subsided quickly. Vasquez said it was a minimal amount – possibly only a few bullets in a clip inside a gun went off, along with the water heater and other appliances.

Power lines reportedly were down and the fire began to spread to vegetation, but the multiple fire agencies that responded ensured that it was kept controlled and they knocked the fire out, Vasquez disclosed.

Ultimately the fire was out and cleared by 6:07 p.m. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

In Lake Arrowhead, also on Feb. 22, a fire started around 5 p.m. inside a barn at a horse farm along North State Highway 173 and Arbon Lane, according to Battalion Chief David Meddles, of SBCFD Division 6. The cause of the fire is unknown and is being investigated.

No horses were injured and 15 personnel got the fire under control within 45 minutes. It is unclear whether it will be possible to save and repair the barn or whether it will need to be demolished.

Three agencies responded to the emergency call – SBCFD, Cal Fire and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – and prevented the fire from spreading to vegetation.

In Crestline, a chimney burnout fire threatened an occupied residence shortly after 5 p.m. on Feb. 24. Meddles explained that the zero-clearance chimney fire damaged only the chimney stack, as 20 personnel brought the fire quickly under control within 20 minutes, preventing further damage.

Meddles said icy conditions presented additional challenges for the firefighters from SBCFD, Cal Fire and the USFS, who responded to the 700 block of South State Highway 138, near the cross streets of Seeley Way and Lake Drive.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_cd0d645e-1d7e-11e8-aa20-3b086125fb5c.html

Public safety agencies, airport practice for large-scale disaster

Hector Hernandez Jr., Highland News

Posted: March 1, 2018

Wednesday morning, Feb. 28, about 300 first responders from over 20 public safety agencies rushed to the scene of a simulated airliner crash at San Bernardino International Airport (SBD) to test their ability to provide a swift and effective coordinated response to a mass casualty airport disaster as well as the airport's emergency response plan.

The East Valley Multiagency Mass Casualty Incident Exercise is a yearly exercise organized by **San Bernardino County Fire**, Cal Fire and San Manuel Fire, and this year it was coordinated with the airport's full-scale emergency exercise.

According to SBD Director of Aviation Mark Gibbs, the airport is required by the FAA to conduct a live exercise testing its emergency response plan every three years, since the airport's recent upgrade to Part-139 Class I airspace. The FAA recently reclassified the airport, from a Class IV, based on the airport's projected increase in flight activity.

Tabletop exercises are held the two years between live exercises.

According to County Fire Assistant Chief Dan Munsey, the exercise provides the practicing of vital skills, protocols and systems needed in mass casualty incidents but not used on a daily basis. Such skills include communicating and coordinating responses from dozens of agencies; evaluating, treating and transporting a great number of patients; setting up large command centers and triage centers; and working with specialized equipment.

"Incidents such as the mass casualty incident we're practicing today simply exceed the capacity of any one department so we all have to practice working together," said San Manuel Fire Chief Michael Smith. To make things as realistic as possible, the exact scenario was not known by those participating in the drill, just that it was a large event on an airport.

"It literally is a surprise to many of the people coming in. They don't know exactly what they're going to face," said Munsey.

The scenario they faced was an airline crash on the tarmac with approximately 60 passengers and four crew on board.

First to arrive was a crew of airport firefighters specially trained and equipped for airport emergencies. Stationed at the airport, they came in an air rescue firefighting (ARFF) unit, a large fire engine equipped with a unique device designed to pierce the skin of an airplane and spray fire suppressing foam into the interior. The first crew is expected to be on scene within three minutes, according to Gibbs.

They report information on the incident and begin to coordinate the actions of incoming emergency crews. As they was no fire, firefighters entered the damaged airplane, a twin-engine Airbus A320 supplied by Unical aircraft recyclers, and began extrication of passengers and patients, portrayed by paramedic students from Crafton Hills College and Victor Valley College.

As the second wave of responders arrived they organized a triage center where patients were evaluated, treated and categorized according to the severity of their injuries.

Next came the ambulances, helicopters and school buses to transport patients to the area hospitals. The school buses come from San Bernardino through an agreement between the airport and San Bernardino City Unified School District.

The call first went out over dispatch at about 10:35 a.m. and the last patients were leaving the airport at approximately 12:30 p.m.

The actions of everyone involved were under the watchful eyes of a team of evaluator who will give a preliminary “Hot Wash” report within the week and a full evaluation in the months to come.

https://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/public-safety-agencies-airport-practice-for-large-scale-disaster/article_5a80ac60-1d89-11e8-8450-e3f729648df2.html

Tackling Roadside Trash on the Mountain

Staff Writer, Mountain News

Posted: Thursday, March 1, 2018 10:30 a.m.

To reduce the amount of litter that accumulates during snow events and holidays in the San Bernardino Mountains, trash bins are being made available to the traveling public. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and other governmental agencies have partnered with Burrtec and Big Bear Disposal to place the bins along state highways on the mountain.

The announcement was made Feb. 28 in the north parking lot of the county’s Government Center in downtown San Bernardino.

Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford and Third District Supervisor James Ramos represented the county, alongside Caltrans. Also scheduled to be at the announcement event were the California Highway Patrol (CHP); U.S. Forest Service; Burrtec; **San Bernardino County Fire**, San Bernardino County Sheriff, City of Big Bear Lake and Big Bear Disposal.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_a7aeae52-1d7e-11e8-8af9-a3d460d20c1d.html