



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Donald W. Trapp**  
Interim Fire Chief / Fire Warden



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## Chief Walls Returns to Lead Mountain Division

Fire Chief Don Trapp announced the return of Assistant Chief Ron Walls to Division 3 (Mountain regional service zone), overseeing fire and rescue operations, and emergency medical response. Division 3 covers over 600 square miles of vegetation-covered mountains, foothills and valleys. County Fire works closely with the local communities in the mountains through the Fire Safe Councils and the multi-agency Mountain Area Safety Taskforce.

Assistant Chief Walls spent nearly 5 years in the Mountain Division prior to his appointment to the North Desert Improvement Zone 3 years ago. "After more than 30 years in the Fire Service, it is a privilege to be able to return to the mountains," said Chief Walls. "I cannot wait to get in and renew the relationships with our community and cooperators that I was able to form several years ago. I am also honored and humbled to be able to lead the Mountain Division of County Fire. The personnel in County Fire are our most valuable assets and the personnel in the Mountain Division are a clear example of the 'cream rising to the top'".

Assistant Chief Walls began his emergency services career in 1983 as a U.S. Army technical rescue climber and combat field medic. After his honorable discharge from the military, he moved to Southern California and began his civilian training for a career in fire service.

Assistant Chief Walls joined the Hesperia Fire Protection District as a Firefighter/Paramedic in 1988. Over his first 15 years he advanced through the ranks to the position of Fire Captain. He transitioned to the San Bernardino County Fire Department in 2004. He spent several years as a County Fire Captain before being promoted to Battalion Chief.

Over the next ten years, Chief Walls worked assignments in every Division in the County as a Battalion Chief. He has been responsible for the Critical Incident Stress Management/Peer Support/Chaplain team for the Department, functioned as the Operations Chief for the San Bernardino Regional Emergency Training Center (Aircraft Rescue Firefighting School), and has served as the HIPAA compliance Privacy Officer for the



Department. He also has extensive background and training in trauma care and enhanced threat scenarios including over 30 years of experience as a paramedic.

Chief Walls spent several years serving on a Type 1 Incident Management Team providing command and control for large scale events all over the western United States. Locally, he has been a part of many large-scale incidents including the Old Fire, Slide Fire, the “38 Incident” (MCI Bus Crash), the Dorner Incident, and deployed as part of County Fire’s Type 3 Incident Management team to the December 2, 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernardino. More recently he was a part of the command, control and suppression of the Pilot Fire and the Blue Cut Fire.

He has managed several large projects including the transition and annexation of Crest Forest Fire into the County Fire Department, deployment of the Mountain Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the creation of the San Bernardino County Fire Department Mountain Area Zone Operations Center. More recently, Chief Walls helped guide the North Desert Improvement Zone through a very complicated Annexation of the Hesperia Fire Protection District into the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District.

Chief Walls holds two Bachelor’s Degrees in Business and a Master’s Degree in Leadership and Management from the University of La Verne. In his off-duty time he enjoys traveling with his wife Patti, recreational shooting and teaching the use of Firearms to civilians and Law Enforcement Officers.

Chief Walls fills the recently vacated position left by Chief Kathleen Opliger, who is now serving as Interim Deputy Chief of Operations. Opliger proudly served the mountain residents for the past 5½ years.

*The San Bernardino County Fire Protection District is an all-risk/full-service fire department committed to providing the highest level of service in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. At 20,160 square miles, San Bernardino County is the largest county in the continental United States and our jurisdiction protects 19,293 square miles; with diverse environments that stretch from the Los Angeles, Riverside and Orange County borders to our south and west, the Colorado River and Arizona to the east, to the Nevada State line and Kern and Inyo counties on the north. In the middle lies the snow-capped San Bernardino mountain range. We are the local fire department for over 60 communities, from rural towns to major cities, and all the unincorporated areas of the county. San Bernardino County Fire remains committed to providing Premier Fire, Rescue and EMS Services.*

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