



NEWS



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Fatal crash shuts down US Highway 395 in Victorville

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: December 10, 2018



A fatal crash on US Highway 395 prompted officials to close down the roadway. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com)— Officials shut down a stretch of busy Highway 395 Monday night following a fatal two-vehicle crash.

It happened at about 6:59 p.m. on Highway 395 just south of Luna Road in the city of Victorville and involved a white 2012 Ford Focus and a black four-door Kia sedan.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputies from the Victorville Station, AMR, and **San Bernardino County Fire** responded and located a person deceased in the roadway.

At this time authorities aren't able to confirm if the deceased individual was a pedestrian or an occupant of a vehicle.

A woman from the second involved vehicle, a black Kia, was transported to a local hospital for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

Sheriff's Spokeswoman Cindy Bachman said a pedestrian was possibly struck by a vehicle. "The details regarding this incident are not confirmed," stated Bachman.

US-395 will remain closed just south of Luna Road as officials investigate the cause of the crash.

****correction**** It was initially believed the deceased was a person ejected from the vehicle, however, authorities now believe the deceased was a pedestrian walking on 395.

<https://www.vvng.com/fatal-crash-shuts-down-us-highway-395-in-victorville/>

One person is injured in single-car collision in northwestern Fontana on Nov. 9

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: December 10, 2018



One person was injured in a single-car accident in northwestern Fontana on Nov. 9. (Contributed photo by Mike Myers)

One person was injured in a single-car accident in northwestern Fontana on Nov. 9.

The Fontana Police Department and the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department responded to the 14800 block of Foothill Boulevard at about 12:20 a.m. and found a gray Ford Mustang that was severely damaged in the roadway.

Firefighters assisted the driver to the curb and treated him for minor injuries to his arm. He was later transported to a local hospital.

According to a Fontana P.D. officer, the 26-year-old male driver was traveling eastbound on Foothill and lost control of his car and struck a cement light post on the sidewalk.

Police are investigating the collision.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/one-person-is-injured-in-single-car-collision-in-northwestern/article_8edfabb0-fcad-11e8-a624-f340584c28f5.html

Tragic day on Interstate 15 in Fontana: Two people die in separate multi-car crashes on Dec. 9

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: December 10, 2018

Two people died in separate multi-vehicle collisions on the Interstate 15 Freeway in Fontana on Dec. 9, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Here are the reports from the CHP about the accidents:

----- At ABOUT 5:25 a.m., a 2013 Toyota Prius was traveling northbound on Interstate 15, south of Etiwanda Avenue, in the No. 4 lane when a five-car collision took place.

For an undetermined reason, the Prius, driven by a male driver, collided into the rear of a Ford Escape that was heading north in the No. 4 lane. The driver of the Escape lost control of his vehicle and collided with the raised center barrier on the freeway.

The Prius came to rest straddling the No. 3 and 4 lanes, facing in a westerly direction.

Then a Honda Odyssey, traveling in the No. 3 lane, collided with the left front of the stopped Prius, causing it to slide into the No. 4 lane and come to a rest facing in a northerly direction.

A Volvo semi, driving in the No. 4 lane, collided with the rear of the Prius, ejecting the driver of the Prius onto the shoulder and causing the Prius to slide off the roadway and down the embankment east of the freeway.

During the final impact, a piece of debris struck the left rear window of a Toyota Sienna, shattering it as it was traveling northbound on I-15 passing the scene of the collision.

The driver of the Prius was pronounced deceased on scene by **Fire** Department personnel. He was identified as Ramiro Durazo, 71, of Victorville, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff Coroner's Division. No other injuries were reported.

The exact cause of this collision is under investigation.

----- THEN at 6:47 a.m., another fatal crash took place on I-15 northbound, south of Foothill Boulevard, the CHP said. This incident involved six vehicles.

A 2005 GMC was heading northbound in the No. 2 lane at 70 miles per hour, and a 2017 Ford Fusion was in the No. 1 lane and stopped for traffic in front of the GMC. Other cars approaching the scene were a Honda CRV, Toyota RAV4, Chevrolet Express, and Lexus RX350.

The driver of the GMC did initially not see traffic stopped in front of him, and then to avoid the stopped traffic, he applied his brakes and turned to the left, striking the Ford Fusion. This impact caused the other four vehicles to crash into each other in a chain reaction.

Due to the severity of the impact with the Fusion, the driver of that vehicle was pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver was identified as Renee Freih, 55, of Laguna Niguel, according to the Coroner's Division.

No other injuries were reported.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/tragic-day-on-interstate-in-fontana-two-people-die-in/article_a27e460a-fcac-11e8-a9a9-1be0d276992a.html

Half of Southern California has burned in wildfires over last 50 years, yet we fail to act

DAVID WHITING, Orange County Register

Posted: December 10, 2018



A large home is surrounded by a charred landscape in this view from Lobo Canyon road. (Photo by David Crane, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)

With tens of thousands of structures in California destroyed by wildfire and at least 125 people killed in the last two years, how dumb are we to allow developers to build neighborhoods that jeopardize safety? Pretty darn dumb.

A review of historical fire corridors as well as old and new fires is both instructive and chilling. Since 1950, excluding the relatively empty eastern border areas, about half of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties have burned.

On a larger scale and more recently, according to my math, since the millennium our Golden State has witnessed 23,109 square miles scorched by wildfire.

That comes close to burning the entire state of West Virginia.

To be sure, some of the destruction was arguably unavoidable and off the grid with millions of acres of backcountry burned. But as fire officials reported after studying the destruction in Paradise, in developed areas man-made structures provide much of the fuel.

Photographs of rows of homes burned to the ground yet surrounded by pine trees haunt. They also offer a visible clarion call for change.

Consider that the considerably lax state fire codes in official “very high fire hazard” zones are more than a decade old.

More troubling is that many regulations go unenforced.

Here’s one that most of us — including homeowner associations — ignore regularly: “The law requires that homeowners do fuel modification to 100 feet (or the property line) around their buildings to create a defensible space for firefighters and to protect their homes from wildfires.”

If you’re like me, you only need to walk outside or look out a window to see that code trashed.
Billions up in flames

We pat ourselves on the back for having strict building codes for earthquakes. But bizarrely, that’s not so for fire prevention codes.

New homes go up with roof vents that can suck in burning bits of wood (screens should have 1/8th-inch holes, not the standard 1/4-inch). Vinyl windows and rain gutters are allowed, although fire officials recommend

metal. Landscape architects ignore firefighters' pleas to keep combustible plants at least five feet from structures.

The unsafe list goes on and turns into a mishmash of California code and firefighter advice. We are supposed to use landscape pebbles instead of wood chips, never build wood decks, or use stucco, metal or stone siding instead of wood.

Homeowner associations, developers, even municipalities go gaga over palm trees. Yet without regular trimming, dry fronds combined with a spark or two can quickly turn into what firefighters call flamethrowers. The cost of land damaged and structures destroyed is astronomical.

Real estate tracker CoreLogic estimates that the recent Woolsey fire in Los Angeles and Ventura counties will cost some \$5 billion. Add the Camp fire in Butte County that saw around 20,000 structures destroyed and this year's hit is staggering.

What's especially troubling is that we keep doing the same thing over and over.

Wildfires repeat and repeat

I was four years old on Dec. 31, 1958, and living in Topanga Canyon, when my Dad pointed to a ridge of flames and assured we were safe from the glow in the night.

But by morning, Santa Ana winds had picked up. Ash and embers swirled. Mom ordered everybody into the car and sped toward the beach. We came to call it the New Year's Eve fire.

Our house survived but more than 100 homes burned and some of my preschool classmates had nothing but pajamas.

Sound familiar? There's more where that came from.

The New Year's Eve blaze wasn't Topanga's first or last baptism by fire. Topanga burned on Sept. 12, 1926. It burned again on Nov. 4, 1948. It burned again on Nov. 3, 1993. In that inferno, 359 homes were destroyed and three people died.

By now, we all know it's the same story throughout Southern California, that there are more structures, more people and that wildfires are only growing more dangerous.

Yet, unbelievably, we behave as if we live on a verdant prairie, not in a semi-arid area marked by long stretches of drought, dry chaparral in foothills and dead and dying pine trees in mountains.

Take San Bernardino County, for example. In the last 15 years, the country has suffered scores of so-called "minor" fires and four "significant" wildfires: 2003, 2015 (two) and 2016.

Total damage in San Bernardino from those life-threatening big boys: 163,890 acres.

But did Sacramento recognize something needed to change?

Nah.

Tougher building codes

Like my Dad, most of us love mountain views. We enjoy being enveloped in the natural world and having the feeling of individuality coupled with freedom.

But nature can be darned dangerous.

Particularly vexing to firefighters is the continuing spike in urban-wildland interface. Many quietly share they shouldn't be placing their lives in harm's way to save structures.

Still, they walk into hell.

Nineteen hotshots, including several from Southern California, were killed June 30, 2013, trying to save a ranch in Arizona. As recently as July, firefighters Braden Varney and Brian Hughes were killed battling the Ferguson fire near Yosemite National Park.

Yet throughout the state, land use officials appear to have little regard for the very real threat of wildfire.

Homes continue to be jammed into dead-end box canyons such as Silverado in Orange County. Heck, entire neighborhoods go up in historical fire corridors throughout the state.

A decade ago, CalFire, also known as the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, designated fire hazard severity zones.

Not surprising, my old home in Topanga Canyon is deep in the heart of a "very high fire hazard" zone. But what may be surprising is how many other areas are in red zones.

In 2009, just two years after hazard zones were plotted, the Station Fire burned in the San Gabriel Valley foothills. That arson fire consumed 160,00 acres, took 209 structures and caused the deaths of two firefighters.

Fire zone maps reveal that much of the destruction was predictable.

Less than a month ago, the Woolsey fire claimed 1,643 structures and killed three people. Again, much of the area was labeled "very high fire hazard."

Without serious change, we'll see the same thing next year. And the next.

But do we really want to keep practicing shoulda, woulda, coulda?

Or will we enforce the laws we have and make better ones?

<https://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/2018/12/10/half-of-southern-california-has-burned-in-wildfires-over-last-50-years-yet-we-fail-to-act/>