



# NEWS



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## Firefighters train for water rescues off the coast near San Simeon

Alexa Bertola, KSBY News

Posted: April 5, 2017, 6:13 PM



Firefighters train for water rescues at Leffingwell Cove near San Simeon. (KSBY photo)

As more people are visiting our beaches, first responders are gearing up for the busy days ahead.

To get ready, local firefighters and lifeguards are taking part in a week-long water rescue course.

The training is at Leffingwell Cove near San Simeon, a popular spot for kayakers and small boat fishermen.

April 1 marked the first day of fishing season and that means more activity on the water, especially at Leffingwell Cove.

"There are certain days people are going to go out fishing even if it's rough, and people end up getting in trouble," said Steve Bitto, water rescue instructor.

That's where the Cambria Fire Department comes into play.

"Firefighters aren't generally lifeguards and we have almost everyone in this class are firefighters," said Bitto.

However, they are generally the first on the scene, so they're learning how to safely rescue those stranded at sea.

On top of that, the North Coast Ocean Rescue Team is expanding. This means all on-duty Cambria firefighters will need to know how to make a water rescue.

"We do hear calls for distress and sometimes they don't need help but we'll come out and assist if we get the call," said Captain Daniel McCrain of Cambria Fire.

On Wednesday, these firefighters, as well as fire personnel from San Luis Obispo City Fire, **San Bernardino County Fire**, and San Diego City Lifeguards, got hands-on training.

They learned how to deploy a rescue swimmer while aboard an inflatable boat. Also, how to safely rescue a victim in the water.

"It's extremely crucial," continued Bitto, who is also a retired Cambria firefighter.

He says the number one call over the past few years, especially on the North Coast, is kayaks or other small boats in distress.

Hypothermia is also at the top of the list.

Two people from Belize also took part in the training as the water there is also a major tourist attraction.

"We're doing this to the best of our knowledge and hope we take it back home and share this knowledge with those who do the work," said Francisco Reymundo.

Training will resume Thursday with helicopter rescues.

Two certificates are issued in the class including one for the State Fire Marshal's Office and one for the National Fire Protection Association.

<http://www.ksby.com/story/35081902/firefighters-train-for-water-rescues-off-the-coast-near-san-simeon>

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## How will rainy winter affect fire season? More summer grass fires, officials predict

Doug Saunders, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: April 5, 2017, 8:49 PM



Southern California Geographic Coordination Center came out with its fire weather forecast this week for April through July. There is a large fire potential near normal through the spring. San Bernardino County firefighter Jeremy Lindsay uses a drip torch during a training fire along Sierra Avenue north of Summit Avenue in North Fontana in 2013. FILE PHOTO

This winter, record-breaking rainfall brought California's long-lived drought closer to its final hour.

However, it also raised the probability of large wildfires this summer, particularly those fueled by tall grasses that are thriving now but will start drying out soon, fire officials say.

The potential for large fires "is expected to remain near normal through the spring, but once fine fuels dry out, there will likely be a spike in grass fire activity," according to a report by the National Interagency Fire Center.

Saying the Pacific storm track has shifted north, the agency's predictions for Southern California this spring are slightly below-normal precipitation, slightly above-normal temperatures that may fluctuate more than usual and fewer Santa Ana wind events than normal. Summer monsoons may also bring less rain than average.

Since Oct. 1, many locations across Southern California have received triple the rainfall that they got during the same time frame the year before, according to National Weather Service data. Downtown Los Angeles has received 19 inches this year, compared to 6.5 inches the year before. Santa Ana's 17 inches this year is up from 4.5 inches last year. Ontario and Riverside, which got 6 and 5 inches last year, respectively, have gotten 15 and 13 inches this year.

"All of the regional rain has fed vegetation, increasing its production," Cal Fire spokeswoman Capt. Elizabeth Brown said.

"We are seeing normal levels in temperatures but near the middle of summer, usually near the end of July to the middle of August, when the region really begins to heat up and Santa Ana winds funnel through, expect to see a rise in wildfires," she said.

"We don't expect to see a severe monsoon season due to an El Nino weather pattern ... but the tall grass will eventually cure (dry out) and become thick fuel for wildfires," Brown added.

While spring isn't expected to be as rainy as winter, "We're still not out of our wet season," Weather Service weather specialist Stuart Seto said. "We're expecting at least another inch of rain this weekend."

The current forecast calls for showers to arrive Friday evening in Southern California and continue Saturday. Temperatures will drop, but not enough to bring much snow to the mountains; the snow line will be about 8,000 feet.

All of the winter rain means moisture levels in brush and shrubs should stay "well above normal for several more weeks," the fire prediction report says.

Seasonal grasses often start drying out in April.

"The sheer height and density of this year's grass crop may keep fuels greener for a longer period of time than usual," the report says, "but ... Southern California will probably see these grasses cured out in all but the shadiest, most sheltered places by the middle of May."

While fire officials are predicting an abundance of grass fires this summer, they still want Southland residents to be cognizant that major forest fires are always possible.

"We've had good rainfall throughout the winter," Brown said. "But everyone needs to be aware that California is still seeing drought-like conditions."

Dense stands of trees in the San Bernardino National Forest compete for a limited water supply while being besieged by bark beetles that kill trees by boring in and sucking out the nutrients, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** spokeswoman Tracey Martinez said.

Those trees, lacking significant moisture, burn more easily. Trees tend to die from the top down, increasing the likelihood that flames will jump from treetop to treetop faster than firefighters can keep up.

"We are now seeing fire activity that gives residents less time to evacuate their homes," Brown said. "This is why homeowner preparedness is key to a good defense. Firefighters will provide the offense."

The San Bernardino County Fire Department has 700 firefighters ready to respond 24 hours a day, along with bulldozers, hand crews and several air resources, officials said.

"We are not seasonal and we don't downsize," Martinez said. "We bring in additional staffing when fire conditions warrant based on heightened red-flag warnings and increased fire dangers."

"Wildfires are a year-round reality in San Bernardino County," Martinez added. "This means that both firefighters and residents have to be on a heightened alert for the threat of wildfire."

Fire is, and always has been, a natural part of the California landscape. Wildfires are now a year-round reality in many areas, and that means residents need to be proactive to protect their homes.

All local fire authorities promote the wildfire action plan "[Ready, Set, Go!](#)". The program educates residents on how to protect themselves before, during and after a wildfire event.

The plan informs residents to create a defensible space between a fire threat and their home and offers plenty of advice people may need if a fire approaches homes.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170405/how-will-rainy-winter-affect-fire-season-more-summer-grass-fires-officials-predict>

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## **Fire at vacant San Bernardino duplex possibly connected to squatter activity**

**John M. Blodgett, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin**

Posted: April 5, 2017, 10:11 PM



San Bernardino County firefighters fight a fire in an abandoned duplex at 693/695 Evans St. in San Bernardino Wednesday night. PHOTO BY JOHN M. BLODGETT

**SAN BERNARDINO >>** Firefighters took 22 minutes to knock out a fire in an abandoned duplex Wednesday night.

No one was injured in the fire that was reported 7:59 p.m. at 693/695 Evans St., said **San Bernardino County** Battalion Chief Gary Jager.

The fire appeared to have started in an outside patio aside one half of the duplex and went inside, he said. The building was boarded up tightly, which Jager said delayed firefighters from entering.

Jager said there was evidence and reports from neighbors of squatter activity at or around the structure, but did not know if that was to blame. The fire was still under investigation at 9 p.m., he said.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170405/fire-at-vacant-san-bernardino-duplex-possibly-connected-to-squatter-activity>

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## Car Slams Into Back of Trailer on I-15 Freeway

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: April 5, 2017



A blue Jaguar slammed into the rear of a truck hauling a trailer on the southbound 15 freeway near Stoddard Wells Road. (Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) A man was badly injured when his 2004 Jaguar slammed into the rear of a 5-ton work truck Wednesday afternoon.

At 2:44 p.m. **San Bernardino County Fire** and the California Highway Patrol responded to the southbound I-15 freeway near Stoddard Wells Road reference a traffic collision.

For reasons still unknown, the car hit the rear of the trailer and went halfway underneath it smashing through the windshield. The driver sustained major injuries and was removed from the vehicle with assistance from firefighters.

The driver, and sole occupant, of the vehicle was airlifted to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. His condition remains unknown.

Based on preliminary investigation reports, both vehicles were traveling in the no. 3 lane. The Jaguar was behind the truck traveling at a high-rate of speed. Attempting to pass the truck the Jaguar entered the no.2 lane but didn't get over in time and smashed into the back of the trailer, CHP officials said.

The driver of the truck was not injured.

Southbound traffic on the freeway was backed up due to crash.

The Victorville CHP is investigating the cause of the collision.

<http://www.vvng.com/car-slams-back-trailer-15-freeway/>

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## Pallet fire erupts in Fontana

Beatriz Venezuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: April 6, 2017, 9:54 AM



Firefighters are battling a pallet fire Thursday, April 6, 2017, on the 8400 block of Sultana Avenue in Fontana. (Google Earth)

FONTANA >> Firefighters battled a pallet yard fire in Fontana Thursday morning.

The blaze, reported just before 9:30 a.m., erupted in the 8400 block of Sultana Avenue, according to a **San Bernardino County Fire** Twitter post.

A trailer with pallets on it and a building were burning, and officials say there are propane tanks in the vicinity.

Officials said one person has been burned in the blaze, and additional ambulances have been requested.

The Rialto and Rancho Cucamonga fire departments are also assisting with the pallet fire.

More to come.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170406/pallet-fire-erupts-in-fontana>

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## Small Fire In Yucca Valley Thursday Morning

Z107.7 News

Posted: April 6, 2017

Yucca Valley firefighters were called to a fire in a storage container in Yucca Valley this morning. **County** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said the call came in at 6:33 for the fire near Cobalt Road and Cholla Avenue. The 20-foot container was filled with engine blocks and car parts. Firefighters had the fire under control in about 10 minutes; the cause is still under investigation.

<http://z1077fm.com/small-fire-in-yucca-valley-thursday-morning/>