



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DATE:** *April 12, 2013*  
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## **RECENT ACTIVITY WARNS OF DANGEROUS FIRE SEASON**

SAN BERNARDINO - Just days into April and Southern California is already showing signs of being one of the most active fire seasons in history. With rainfall totals across the County ranging from 5-25% of average, 2013 looks to be one of the driest years in recent memory. Wildland fires have already sprouted from Ventura to San Diego county.

It's not a question of "if" but "when" the next major wildfire will occur in San Bernardino County. That's why the most important person in protecting your life and property is you. Through advance planning and preparation, we can all be ready for the next wildfire.

The time to start safeguarding your home against the devastation of wildfires is **now**. The San Bernardino County Fire Department urges you to review the following steps in order to best prepare:

**GET READY:** Create Defensible Space around your home. Defensible Space is an area that extends from the structure out to 100 feet or the property line. Initial steps to creating this space begin with clearing all dead or dying vegetation from the ground, roofs, underneath decks and around propane tanks. Cleaning out rain gutters and moving wood piles at least thirty feet from structures are also included in this space creation. This is also a time to ensure that your address is clearly visible from the street, so firefighters can easily identify your residence.

**GET SET:** Create a Family Disaster Plan that includes meeting locations and communication plans. Remember that during a natural disaster, cell towers may be overburdened with traffic; text messages are more likely to be successful than phone calls. Have several different escape routes and plan a meeting location that is outside of the fire area. If you own horses or large animals, plan on how you would evacuate them as well.

**GO EARLY:** When law enforcement advises of evacuations, please leave early. This allows firefighters to focus their efforts on battling the oncoming fire and decreases vehicle traffic which allows multiple fire engines to operate in smaller neighborhoods.

For more information on steps you can take to prepare as this early fire season gets underway, please go to [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) and click on **READY, SET, GO** on the right side of our main page. For the latest updates, be sure to follow us on Twitter at SBCountyFire.

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