

LEVELS OF RELEASING DAILY INCIDENT NEWS (September 1991)

0615

Someone must be responsible for daily incident news releases at various locations throughout CAL FIRE, so the following locations and classifications are suggested as a guide to routine incident news releases.

Sacramento Headquarters

The Office of Information issues daily news releases about incidents affecting the state as a whole, involving serious incidents in one or more regions, or requiring assistance from the U.S. Forest Service, BLM, or other agency. Inquiries about single incidents or within one region will be referred to the regional information personnel.

Region Office

The region office provides an overview of all incidents within the region but refers the media to the Incident Information Office for specific information. The Fire Prevention Program Manager or designee handles releases at the region level. A fire or other incident drawing broad attention may best be handled at the region level, but this procedure will not be instituted without prior coordination with the unit.

Conservation Camps

For daily news releases about Conservation Camps, CAL FIRE and the California Department of Corrections (CDC) use news release policies outlined in the Camps/California Youth Authority (CYA) and Camps/CDC Procedures Handbooks (numbers 6200 and 6400).

Unit Headquarters

The Emergency Command Center (ECC) is the most logical place for the news media to obtain daily incident news. The media normally contacts ECC in the morning as part of their "beat check." In most cases, they are looking for an overview of the previous 24-hour period (see ECC Media Format) ECC always attempts to accommodate media inquiries, but when ECC is unavailable, the Fire Prevention office or the unit receptionist assumes this responsibility.

Battalion Headquarters

Since many radio stations and newspapers are located some distance from unit headquarters but are within or adjacent to a battalion, the Battalion Chief may supply information to the media.

The Battalion Chief, or his or her qualified representative, should prepare an Incident Fact Sheet, CAL FIRE-Form-130, or an Incident Status Summary, Form ICS-209 (see Section 0616 Forms Used in Daily Incident News), as a basis for a news release.

Fire Stations

It may be unrealistic for remote communities to receive information from the unit or battalion headquarters, so fire stations can be a source of daily news releases. However, the unit chief and battalion chief should use discretion about releasing information at this level and give strong consideration to individual abilities and to the practicality of releasing news at each location.

DAILY NEWS TIPS

0615.1

(September 1991)

The following words of advice will aid in releasing daily incident news:

- Be courteous to the media at all times. Obtaining information from CAL FIRE is their job, and releasing it is ours. Always be professional.
- Do not be abrupt. If you are too busy, take a number and return the call or have someone else call later. Remember to be prompt; they do have deadlines.
- Always release preventive information. For example, when a debris fire occurs, release a review of burn permits and standards; when a wood stove causes a structure fire, issue cautions about cleaning and maintaining wood stoves.
- The law enforcement function is encouraged or required to release the violator's names after law enforcement action is taken (see Section 0622, Statutes and Guidelines). Take the time to reaffirm with the investigating officer that the specifics of the investigation are releasable.
- When sensitive or negative news (fatality, accident, etc.) occurs, additional help may be needed. ECC may consider establishing an information office. For more information about the release of sensitive news, see Section 0662.2, Special Incidents/Adverse News.
- If difficulties arise with the media, let the Unit Information Officer know. The Unit Information Officer will take steps ranging from no action to an official complaint to the News Director.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR NEWS RELEASE

0615.2

(September 1991)

This section describes training requirements for personnel releasing routine daily news and general non-incident related news.

Emergency Command Center officers, unit administrators, conservation camps, state forest management personnel, and other personnel responsible for daily information will receive an 8-hour module which includes:

Daily Information News	4 hours
Media Relations	<u>4 hours</u>
Total	8 hours

[\(see next section\)](#)

[\(see HB Table of Contents\)](#)

[\(see Forms or Forms Samples\)](#)