

Section 7001

(October 2002)

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INTRODUCTION AND POLICY STATEMENT (October 2002)

7001

Handbook 7000 (Fire Operations Handbook) is approved and issued by the Director as the current operational CAL FIRE handbook for all incident response personnel. The handbook is not intended as a training document. It contains the distillation of fact, knowledge and subjects that are provided in training programs or CAL FIRE Issuance system.

If statements in the 7000 handbook differ from official policy then the official policy will take precedence. The passage of time and the development of new or different operational procedures may cause such a situation.

All *italicized* words, statements or acronyms will be included in the glossary (coming soon).

CAL FIRE MISSION STATEMENT (No.5 February 2015)

7001.1

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California.

FIRE PROTECTION OBJECTIVE (October 2002)

7001.2

CAL FIRE's fire protection objective states that a system of basic fire protection will be provided so that damages to life, property and natural resources will be held at or below a level acceptable within social, political and economic constraints. Board of Forestry and Fire Protection designates in the Fire Plan that CAL FIRE will strive to contain 95% of all unwanted fires at 10 acres or less.

CAL FIRE RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES (October 2002)

7001.3

All of the following are references to the [Public Resources Code](#).

PRC-713. The department is responsible for the fire protection, fire prevention, maintenance, and enhancement of the state's forest, range, and brushland resources, contract fire protection, associated emergency services, and assistance in civil disasters and other non-fire emergencies.

PRC-714. The department is responsible for all of the following:

(a) Providing fire protection, fire prevention, pest control, and forest and range protection and enhancement implements and apparatus as necessary.

- (b) Maintaining an integrated staff to accomplish fire protection, fire prevention, pest control, and forest and range protection and enhancement activities as needed.
- (c) Establishing and maintaining facilities for the performance of fire protection, fire prevention, pest control, and forest and range protection and enhancement activities.
- (d) Enforcing forest and fire laws, the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973.

PRC-4103. "Forest fire" means a fire burning uncontrolled on lands covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, grass, grain, or other flammable vegetation.

PRC-4103.4. "Open fire" means any fire, controlled or uncontrolled, including a campfire, burning outside of any structure, mobile home, or living accommodation mounted on a motor vehicle. "Open fire" does not include portable lanterns designed to emit light resulting from a combustion process.

PRC-4103.5. "Campfire" means a fire which is used for cooking, personal warmth, lighting, ceremonial, or aesthetic purposes, including fires contained within outdoor fireplaces and enclosed stoves with flues or chimneys, stoves using jellied, liquid, solid, or gaseous fuels, portable barbecue pits and braziers, or space heating devices which are used outside any structure, mobile home, or living accommodation mounted on a motor vehicle. "Campfire" does not include portable lanterns designed to emit light resulting from a combustion process.

PRC-4104. The term "uncontrolled fire," as used in this division, means any fire which threatens to destroy life, property, or resources and either: (1) is unattended by any person; (2) is attended by persons unable to prevent its unrestricted spread; or (3) is burning with such velocity or intensity that it could not be readily controlled with those ordinary tools available to private persons at the fire scene.

PRC-4111. The board shall make and enforce such regulations as are necessary and proper for the organization, maintenance, government, and direction of the fire protective system for the prevention and suppression of forest fires which is provided for in this article.

PRC-4112. The department shall divide the state into a suitable and convenient number of administrative districts and shall appoint a supervising forest officer for each district.

PRC-4113. The supervising forest officers shall, under the direction of the director, have charge of the firefighting system and men in such districts, and are charged with the duty of preventing and extinguishing forest fires and with the performance of such other duties as may be required by the director.

PRC-4114. (a) The department, in accordance with a plan approved by the board, shall do all of the following:

- (1) Provide fire prevention and firefighting implements and apparatus.
 - (2) Organize fire crews and patrols.
 - (3) Establish observation stations and other necessary structures.
 - (4) Employ people to effect the plan.
 - (5) Construct and maintain telephone lines and provide other means of communication as necessary to prevent and extinguish forest fires.
- (b) The department may provide, when available and to the extent that it does not require additional funds, rescue, first aid, and other emergency services to the public in state responsibility areas. Any emergency medical services shall be in accordance with Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797) of the Health and Safety Code and any rules and regulations adopted pursuant to that division.

PRC-4116. Any claim for damages arising against the state under Section 4114 or 4115 shall be presented to the State Board of Control in accordance with Part 3 (commencing with Section 900) and Part 4 (commencing with Section 940) of Division 3.6 of Title 1 of the Government Code and if not covered by insurance shall be payable only out of funds appropriated by the Legislature for such purpose. If the state has elected to acquire liability insurance the State Board of Control may automatically deny any such claim.

- PRC-4417. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) or (c), a reward of up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) shall be paid out of any state funds which are made available to the department for fire protection to any person, other than a regularly paid firefighter, peace officer, or agent or employee of the department, whose information leads to the arrest and conviction, or commitment to a public facility, of any person who willfully and maliciously sets fire to, or who attempts to willfully and maliciously set fire to, any property which is included within any state responsibility area.
- (b) If the fire, or attempt to set a fire, results in death or great bodily injury to anyone, including fire protection personnel, a reward of up to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) shall be paid.
- (c) If the fire causes substantial structural damage, an enhanced reward of up to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) shall be paid.

PRC-4119. The department, or its duly authorized agent, shall enforce the state forest and fire laws. The department may inspect all properties, except the interior of dwellings, subject to the state forest and fire laws, for the purpose of ascertaining compliance with such laws.

PRC-4426. A person shall not set a backfire, or cause a backfire to be set, except under the direct supervision or permission of a state or federal forest officer, unless it can be established that the setting of such backfire was necessary for the purpose of saving life or valuable property.

PRC-4142. (a) The department may, with the approval of the Department of General Services, enter into a cooperative agreement upon the terms and under the conditions as it deems wise, for the purpose of preventing and suppressing forest fires or other fires in any lands within any county, city, or district which makes an appropriation for that purpose.

PRC-4165. Every person is guilty of a misdemeanor who, at a forest fire, does any of the following:

- (a) Disobeys the lawful orders of any public officer or firefighter.
- (b) Offers any resistance to, or interference with, the lawful efforts of any firefighter or company of firemen to extinguish the fire.
- (c) Engages in any disorderly conduct, which is calculated to prevent the fire from being extinguished.
- (d) Forbids, prevents, or dissuades others from assisting to extinguish the fire.
- (e) Rides, drives, or propels any vehicle or conveyance upon, over, or across any fire hose or chemical hose which is used by, or in charge of, any public officer or firefighter, or injures or damages in any manner any such hose or apparatus of any kind which is in use by, or in charge of, any public officer or firefighter.

PRC-4170. Any uncontrolled fire burning on any lands covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, grass, grain or any other flammable material, without proper precaution being taken to prevent its spread notwithstanding the origin of such fire is a public nuisance by reason of its menace to life and property.

PRC-4170.5. The department or any other duly established fire protection agency may summarily abate an uncontrolled fire as a public nuisance by controlling and extinguishing the fire.

AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY SERVICES

7001.3.1

(October 2002)

PRC 4114b. The department may provide, when available rescue, first aid, and other emergency services to the public in state responsibility areas.

STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREAS (SRA)

7001.4

(October 2002)

Sections 4125-4128 of the Public Resources Code establish the criteria for the classification as being *State Responsibility Areas* (SRA) for fire protection. These code sections state that the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection shall classify all lands within the State, without regard to any classification of lands made by or for any federal agency or purpose, for the purpose of determining areas in which the financial responsibility of preventing and suppressing fires is primarily the responsibility of the State.

The criteria established by statute for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to determine which lands shall be State Responsibility Areas are as follows:

Lands covered wholly or in part by forest or by trees producing or capable of producing forest products.

Lands covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, undergrowth, or grass, whether of commercial value or not, which protect the soil from excessive erosion, retard runoff of water, or accelerate water percolation if such lands are sources of water which is available for irrigation or for domestic or industrial use.

Lands in areas which are principally used or useful for range or forage purposes which are contiguous to the lands described in subdivisions (a) and (b).

Lands owned or controlled by the Federal Government or any agency of the Federal Government are excluded, as are also lands within the exterior boundaries of any city.

Legislative intent was to include within State Responsibility Areas nearly all timbered, brush, and wildland grazing areas. Most mountain and foothill areas, if not covered by trees capable of producing forest products, are sources of water available for irrigation, domestic or industrial use, or at least are grazing lands contiguous thereto. Therefore, most mountain and foothill lands fit the classifications specified. Excluded as far as privately owned lands are concerned are areas that contain mostly agricultural lands (cultivated or irrigated land) or relatively flat grassland areas separated from watershed areas by significant strips of agricultural land. Desert areas, which do not receive sufficient rainfall to be considered principally used for grazing or water production, are also excluded. ([Handbook 7700, Section 7721](#) and [Public Resources Code 4125-4128](#))

DIRECT PROTECTION AREAS (DPA)

7001.5

(October 2002)

The area in which an agency has the financial responsibility to provide fire suppression. *CAL FIRE Direct Protection Area (DPA)* can include any combination of SRA, *Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)*, or *Local Responsibility Area (LRA)*, depending upon the contractual situation. For wildland fire protection DPA excludes LRA lands not intermingled in small blocks with SRA.

In State Responsibility Areas (SRA) not served by local government fire protection entities, CAL FIRE may respond and use state resources, under the authority of PRC §4103 or 4170, for a fire in a structure, vehicle, or other improvement that could cause a forest fire or be a hazard to the natural resources. In these areas where the public recognizes the state as a fire department "in being" and expects CAL FIRE to respond as a fire department, CAL FIRE shall inform the public that the landowner has the primary responsibility to provide structural fire protection.

When an emergency incident occurs within another jurisdiction, CAL FIRE will respond under mutual aid, assistance-by-hire, or under the terms of a local agreement, as appropriate. If, in CAL FIRE's judgment, the incident represents a substantial threat to SRA, CAL FIRE will respond as if to a normal SRA wildfire. (HB 7100, Section 7100-4)

CONTRACT COUNTIES

7001.6

(October 2002)

The term Contract County applies to those counties, which the CAL FIRE annually allocates state funds for providing wildland fire protection to SRA (Marin, Santa Barbara, Kern, Ventura, Orange and Los Angeles). These counties provide direct fire protection to SRA with their own fire organization under the supervision of a County Fire Warden (Sec. 4129, Public Resources Code).

The CAL FIRE has the primary financial responsibility for providing fire protection to these lands. The CAL FIRE and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection must first assure themselves that the County will perform the job at least as well as the CAL FIRE could with the funds provided by the Legislature. (The fact that the county may be willing and able to spend a great deal more for its own organization has nothing to do with the basic legal responsibility placed upon the CAL FIRE).

Each fiscal year an agreement is negotiated between the CAL FIRE and the county. The amount of state funds provided for this purpose is based upon the same type and level of organization the CAL FIRE would provide to SRA under direct protection (Section 4132, Public Resources Code).

The expenditure of Emergency Funds in Contract Counties is permitted as long as such expenditures are under the direction of CAL FIRE official.

Reference: ([Section 7724, 7700 Handbook](#)).

FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS

7001.7

(October 2002)

Fire districts are governmental entities established in conformance with state law for the purpose of preventing and suppressing fires within a designated area. This includes Fire Protection Districts, County Service Areas and Community Services Districts and all such agencies having legal authority to initiate the collection of special taxes, service charges, etc., for fire protection purposes whether or not the agencies perform the actual work of fire protection.

The primary purpose for creating fire districts is to protect life and property values from unwanted fire. Therefore, a dual responsibility exists within fire districts in SRA. The CAL FIRE is responsible for protecting the natural resource values, i.e., timber, watershed and rangeland, and the fire district is responsible for protecting life and property values.

When a local fire district requests technical advice, the CAL FIRE official should provide it to the best of his ability. However, this assistance should not unduly interfere with his regular duties, and he should not place himself in the position of a partisan in some heated local discussion. The CAL FIRE official should naturally avoid giving the impression of being an expert on some subject in which he cannot rightfully qualify as an expert.

When a CAL FIRE official assumes the position of supervisor or executive officer to a fire district, this is an entirely different situation. This could result from a specific contract, or possibly by specific request of County Board of Supervisors acting under the general county-state (Schedule A) local government fire protection contract. ([See Section 7001.5](#))

CAL FIRE officials should adhere to the following guidelines for fires burning on SRA in fire districts:

(1) The CAL FIRE's job must be accomplished even though it is contrary to the desire of the local agency.

(2) The fire district should be encouraged to do the full share of its own job. (This would be the entire job, with the CAL FIRE providing mutual aid in the case of a structural fire, and the district providing mutual aid assistance to CAL FIRE on State Responsibility fires). If the district refuses or neglects to do this, then the CAL FIRE's official is obliged to perform whatever work is necessary to accomplish the CAL FIRE's job.

(3) When a fire district is entirely capable of and willing to perform its full share of the suppression job, the CAL FIRE still has the responsibility to determine that the suppression effort is satisfactory.

With such a possibility of variable circumstances, it is obvious that the common sense approach to developing a proper relationship between the CAL FIRE official and each fire district is the establishment of individual informal agreements or understandings.

Since these mutual agreements should be put in writing, the CAL FIRE official must be extremely careful that he does not commit the state to some action beyond his authority. The agreements should embrace only the strategic action contemplated by both agencies in the event of fire and other emergencies and also such prevention activities as each could undertake. If any unusual expenditure (paid or received) is contemplated, or any exchange of property or funds is made, then it is mandatory that the Director of Finance approve the agreement prior to the event.

Reference: [Section 7725 Fire And Other Special Districts](#)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WATERSHED CONTRACTS

7001.8

(October 2002)

The Director is given broad authority to enter into fire protection contracts. These may be for the purpose of contracting the protection of SRA to other fire protection agencies, or for the purpose of the State providing a fire protection service that may be the financial responsibility of other government units.

National Forest System lands, public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park lands, other federal lands and SRA lands are intermingled in many areas of California. In order to avoid costly duplication of facilities, equipment and personnel, CAL FIRE and various federal agencies cooperate in sharing fire protection resources. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 4141, CAL FIRE contracts with federal agencies for the purpose of providing or receiving wildland fire protection services.

The major agreement between CAL FIRE and the federal agencies is the cooperative agreement between CAL FIRE, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service. This agreement provides for the exchange of direct protection areas to provide for efficient wildland fire protection services on intermingled state and federal lands within California. It also enables the state and federal agencies to assist each other on fires and bill for such services in accordance with the agreement.

By virtue of authority granted the Director in Section 4142, Public Resources Code, the Director may enter into contracts with counties, districts, and cities to furnish fire protection to structures and rural areas that would otherwise require the establishment of some type of fire department by the local government. These are titled Cooperative Fire Protection Services Agreement for Local Agencies (Schedule A).

The Director may also enter into agreements titled Agreement for Protection of Wildlands within Local Agency (LRA Wildland). These agreements are also pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 4142. They provide for protection of local responsibility area wildlands in accordance with department policy.

Public Resources Code Section 4144 allows the Director to enter into cooperative fire protection agreements (Amador Plan) with local agencies to provide for the non-fire season use of CAL FIRE equipment, personnel and buildings for fire prevention and suppression.

In accepting the duty of direct protection of local values for a proper payment consideration, the State has not permanently assumed any of the basic responsibility of the private owner or local government; it is serving simply as a paid contractor.

MUTUAL AID (October 2002)

7001.9

The California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan is an extension of, and supportive document to, the California Emergency Plan. It derives its authorities from the California Emergency Services Act (Chapter 7 of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code) 1970 Statutes; the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement; Labor Code, State of California (Section 3211.92, Disaster Service Worker); and Government Code, State of California (Section 8690.6).

A major purpose of the plan is to provide comprehensive and compatible plans for the expedient mobilization and response of available fire and rescue resources on a local, area, regional, and statewide basis.

The plan defines mutual aid and assistance by hire and states that local needs not met by the California Fire Service and Rescue Mutual Aid Plan should be resolved through development of local automatic or mutual aid agreements.

To meet these needs, CAL FIRE units have entered into local mutual aid, automatic aid and/or assistance by hire agreements. CAL FIRE has also entered into the Cooperative Agreement for Local Government Fire Suppression Assistance to Forest Agencies between CAL FIRE, the Office of Emergency Services and the federal Forest Agencies. This agreement enables CAL FIRE and the federal Forest Agencies to request assistance from local government fire departments through the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System. This assistance is assistance by hire unless the total time out is less than 12 hours in which case the assistance is mutual aid (no cost). The exception is for resources ordered to a mobilization center, where the total time is assistance by hire.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACCESS
TO CAL FIRE RESOURCES
(Seven Points of Light)
(October 2002)**

7001.9.1

Provisions of the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid System's Mutual Aid Plan, that provide for assistance without reimbursement, may apply to state resources prior to a declaration of "local emergency" (as defined in the California Emergency Services Act), when a local government entity determines that a fire is likely to exceed its ability to control. Applicability will be based on the following guidelines:

From the time of initial attack to the point of determination that an incident is likely to exceed the ability of a local government entity to control, state resources can be made available to local fire agencies through a variety of agreements (e.g., automatic aid, wildland protection, mutual threat zone, etc.)

In the absence of an emergency that is beyond the ability of a local government entity to control, mutual aid shall not be used to shift the costs of fire suppression to another political entity.

Mutual aid fire suppression resources committed to an incident, under the provisions of the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid System's Mutual Aid Plan, should only be used during the period of the emergency. The period of emergency constitutes the time during which mutual aid resources are necessary to prevent imminent or perceived imminent threat to life and property. As the emergency condition de-escalates, the mutual aid resources should be released, based on a preplanned demobilization process.

Entities should make maximum use of locally available facilities, equipment and services.

Requests for firefighting resources, for response to an emergency that is beyond the ability of a local government entity to control, are to be based on the "closest resources" concept and initiated through proper mutual aid channels.

Federal fire suppression resources, which may be the "closest resources", are not part of the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid System. Assistance provided by these resources will be on an assistance-by-hire arrangement, unless obtained through other pre-existing agreements.

Local government agencies receiving mutual aid are responsible for providing logistical support to the mutual aid personnel and equipment.

**EMPLOYEE RULES OF CONDUCT,
UNIFORMED EMPLOYEES**
(October 2002)

7001.10

Each uniformed CAL FIRE employee is expected to understand and follow the Employee Rules of Conduct, Form PO-31, which is to be included in the orientation packet given to new employees. Each uniformed employee will sign, date, and return the form to his/her unit personnel office. The signed form will be kept in the employee's official personnel file.

The uniformed employee rules of conduct are as follows:

1. Possession of firearms, non-lethal chemical agents, or any deadly weapon by state personnel is forbidden on state property. The only exceptions to this rule will be CAL FIRE peace officers designated by the Director pursuant to PRC 4156.
2. The use of intoxicating beverages or dangerous and restricted drugs during work or standby time, or appearing on the job or at stations under their influence, will be considered grounds for immediate adverse action.
3. Intoxicating beverages and dangerous or restricted drugs will not be brought into state camps, barracks, offices, or buildings, nor carried in official vehicles.
4. All personnel residing in barracks are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that recognizes their responsibility for common courtesy and consideration to others that share the facility. Everyone is expected to be appropriately quiet after lights out.
5. Employees are expected to meet grooming and uniform standards and present a neat, clean, well-groomed appearance at all times. Occasional dirty work is not an excuse for lack of personal cleanliness.
6. Buildings and grounds will be kept neat, clean, and attractive at all times. Beds will be made up in military style each morning before work and will be kept in a neat condition when not in use.
7. There will be no loitering in the kitchen. State-provided food will not be taken from the kitchen or storeroom for individual consumption.
8. Meals will be served promptly at designated hours except when fires or other emergencies justify a departure from schedule.
9. State property must be used properly and accounted for. Employees have a personal responsibility in the use and care of tools and equipment. Tools will be cleaned and returned to their proper places after use.
10. Lawful orders of supervisors will be obeyed promptly.

11. Both male and female employees will be accorded socially acceptable privacy in both barracks and field environments. Employees will always respect the rights and privacy of others. This will include:

- Separate use of restrooms or shower facilities;
- Appropriate attire for sleeping, exercising, changing into safety clothing or other regular activities where the regular uniform is not required; and
- In areas where both men and women are present, nudity will not be permitted.

12. Interpersonal relationships during work and standby time are expected to conform to accepted standards of professional conduct free from sexual harassment or displays of affection.

13. The use of vulgarity, sexually suggestive comments or gestures, whether intended to be offensive or not, the display of explicit obscene photographs, pictures or posters or the use of any audio/visual equipment to produce such vulgarity will not be permitted.

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

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

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