

# STATE FIRE MARSHAL

## Special Points of Interest:

- MAY is Wildfire Awareness Month
- MAY 1 - 7 is Wildfire Awareness Week



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

The diversified landscape of the State of California includes more than 5 million homes located in the wildland-urban interface. As more homes are built within these areas, the danger to life and property will continue to increase, unless significant actions are taken in the wildland-urban interface to prevent fires, mitigate a fire's damage, and eliminate injuries and deaths caused by these fires. Of the 20 largest fires in California's recorded history, over half have occurred in the last decade and nearly half have occurred in just the last four and half years. Since 2003, wildfires have claimed the lives of over 25 civilians and firefighters, destroyed over 8,000 homes and buildings and have caused over 2.6 billion dollars in damage.

The first step to preventing these devastating fires is to beware of the hazards and the risks; and more importantly know what to do to prevent and mitigate. This month is "Wildfire Awareness Month" with the first week of the month designated as "Wildfire Awareness Week". Wildfire Awareness Week is designed to remind Californians of the dangers wildfires pose, and provide information on how to prepare their property. That awareness level includes our community and firefighting force. As the California weather patterns change and elevates the probability for wildfires, we intensify and urge our citizens to look for the resources that provide the tools that will enhance community safety. Community Wildfire Protection Plans, vegetation management ordinances, CAL FIRE and Firewise websites, and the California Fire Plan assist in raising community awareness and provide helpful information to enhance a Community Risk Reduction Program for wildfire prevention and mitigation. The Institute for Business and Home Safety ([www.IBHS.org](http://www.IBHS.org)) has a great website that can be used to assist in sharing this important fire safety information. These resources have provided ideas and methods that a homeowner can easily do to reduce risk and fire devastation.

Our fire service operational workforces are gearing up, and focusing their training on the many aspects of wildland firefighting. We must adapt our methods and capabilities to combat wildfires as fiscal and resources are being reduced. Therefore, it is important to convey the message to our citizens that they are a key component to our firefighting success and we need them to assist and share in the responsibility and success. We take our responsibility seriously to prepare everyone for the conditions they will be up against when engaged in the wildland fire; and collaborate with our surrounding responders in order to maintain the strength of our mutual aid system. Our fire service resources are shrinking; and we must be ready to work with even more effectiveness and efficiency than ever before.

Those efficiencies may be attained from free training resources such as the Underwriter's Laboratory at [www.uluniversity.us](http://www.uluniversity.us); click on Fire Safety – Online Courses. The website includes firefighter training components (e.g. fire behavior in a single family occupancy; impact of ventilation on fire behavior) as well as the more code related training and education (e.g. fire alarm, special extinguishing systems).

Be safe!

TONYA L. HOOVER  
Acting State Fire Marshal



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