



**State Fire Marshal
Monthly Report to the California
Fire Prevention Officers**



**Kate Dargan
State Fire Marshal**

Fire Protection Partners;

This time of year, as the days get shorter and cooler and the nights get longer, it is easy to get complacent about fire prevention, especially wildfire prevention. In most of our state, it just doesn't feel like "fire season." However, we know from Octobers past, that a dry north wind, plus a warm afternoon, plus one spark can create a catastrophic and deadly wildland fire. As we remember too well, Southern California has been especially hard hit in recent years by October fires.

We in the fire service use the month of October to remind all of our citizens of the responsibilities we all have to provide fire safety in our environment and in our structures. Fire Prevention Week is October 5 through 11. This year's theme is "Prevent Home Fires". Throughout the week (and the month) fire safety advocates will be spreading the word that a little extra caution can prevent the leading causes of home fires – heating, cooking, electrical and smoking (NFPA, 2008).

For more information on the leading causes of home fires in California, visit the CAL FIRE website.

If a fire should start in a home, a sure way to reduce structure damage and loss, and save lives is through the use of a **residential fire sprinkler system**. In late September, a historical event took place that was brought about by the collaboration of the fire service throughout the country. On September 21st at the International Code Council (ICC) Final Action Code Hearings in Minneapolis, the membership body voted to establish the requirement for all new residential structures to be provided with a residential fire sprinkler system. This means that each model code (NFPA and ICC) have the same requirement for this important life safety system.

California stood proud with membership from around the country to vote “yes”. There is still much work to be done to see this requirement in our own state code. In the effort to move this important life safety project forward, the Office of the State Fire Marshal has established a task force. This group will address providing water to fire sprinkler systems and conflicting state laws associated with domestic water and residential fire sprinklers (from the street to the meter).

Fire prevention is a key component of a complete fire protection system. That complete system involves all aspects of our California fire service – fire prevention and mitigation, fire incident operations, and training/education. Each component is important to providing a fire safe environment that not only protects the citizens we serve but protects our own firefighters. We stand together during these challenging times. Thank you for your continued support of the California Fire Service.

BE SAFE!



SFM Kate Dargan
Assemblyman Ted Gaines is on her left.

Chief Dargan spoke to a **Wildfire Preparedness News Conference** on October 3, 2008, in Sacramento, sponsored by Farmers Insurance and California Firesafe Councils. The group acknowledged that some of the worst wildfires in our state’s history have occurred in October.

Pipeline Safety

Derailment Threatens Pipelines

Pipeline Safety Engineer Dan Le responded to a **train derailment** in the City of La Mirada on Oct 2, 2008. The 5-car derailment occurred in the vicinity of two hazardous liquid pipelines. Representatives of the pipeline operators had requested our assistance in persuading the railroad's cleanup crew from running heavy machinery over the pipeline rights-of-way without placing protective steel plates. Dan stayed on site to verify that no damage occurred to either of the pipelines and to ensure the cooperation of all parties.



Can It Be True?

Dave Hillman is Retiring!



He started as a seasonal firefighter back in 1968 and for the past four decades he has devoted his time and energy to making California a safer place to live. At the end of this month Dave Hillman is retiring. Chief Hillman has had a brilliant career with CAL FIRE culminating with his current position as Deputy Director for Fire Prevention and Law Enforcement. Much of his work has been in Fire Prevention over the years, so we know that many FPOs have worked with Dave. If you would like to say hail and farewell you can still contact him at david.hillman@fire.ca.gov. On October 30, his staff and colleagues will have a potluck (and maybe a bit of a roast) to celebrate an amazing career. Thank you for your service Dave and best wishes.

WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION ENGINEERING

Changes to Government Code and PRC

Senate Bill 1595 makes **significant changes to defensible space requirements** and other wildland urban interface topics. The changes go into effect January 1, 2009. Some of the main changes include:

"Fuel management" means the act or practice of controlling flammability and reducing resistance to control of fuels through mechanical, chemical, biological, or manual means or by fire, in support of land management objectives.



The requirements for 100 feet defensible space have been combined into one section. (Existing GC 51182 and PRC 4291 separated the requirements for the two zones).GC 51182(a)(1)and PRC 4291(a)(1): "Maintain defensible space no greater than 100 feet from each side of the structure, but not beyond the property line unless allowed by state law, local ordinance, or regulation and as provided in paragraph (2). The amount of fuel modification necessary shall take into account the flammability of the structure as affected by building material, building standards, location, and type of vegetation. Fuels shall be maintained in a condition so that a wildfire burning under average weather conditions would be unlikely to ignite the structure. This paragraph does not apply to single specimens of trees or other vegetation that are well-pruned and maintained so as to effectively manage fuels and not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from other nearby vegetation to a structure or from a structure to other nearby vegetation. The intensity of fuels management may vary within the 100-foot perimeter of the structure, the most intense being within the first 30 feet around the structure. Consistent with fuels management objectives, steps should be taken to minimize erosion. <H:\My Documents\SB 1595 Changes to Code.pdf>

Insurance Companies can only require more than 100 feet defensible space if a fire expert, designated by the fire chief or fire official from the authority having jurisdiction, provides findings that such a clearing is necessary to significantly reduce the risk of transmission of flame or heat sufficient to ignite the structure, and there is no other feasible mitigation measure possible to reduce the risk of ignition or spread of wildfire to the structure."

New on-line Defensible Space Guidelines will be posted by CALFIRE which include regionally appropriate vegetation management suggestions that preserve and restore native species, minimize erosion, minimize water consumption, and

permit trees near homes for shade, aesthetics, and habitat; and suggestions to minimize or eliminate the risk of flammability of non-vegetative sources of combustion such as woodpiles, propane tanks, wood decks, and outdoor lawn furniture. More information will be available soon on the CAL FIRE Webpage under Fire Prevention.

Power Line Fire Prevention Field Guide

The draft of the new power line guide is almost complete. It will go through a review process and hopefully be ready for distribution in early January. The equipment handbook is complete and can be ordered through P&GE, Edison or SDG&E.

Fire and Life Safety

Congratulations to...

Kim Kirkpatrick who promoted from Deputy State Fire Marshal to Deputy State Fire Marshal III Specialist October 1, 2008.



And

Cindy Moore from Deputy State Fire Marshal III Specialist to Supervisor in the Fire & Life Safety Division effective October 1, 2008.

CAL FIRE Office of the State Fire Marshal

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov>
