



Wildfire Safety

Following the recent wildfires in Southern California, communities across the state are rightfully concerned and have questions about their fire risk, how to prepare for potential wildfires, and how their fire service providers are mitigating risk and preparing for the same. In response, Santa Clara County Fire Department (County Fire) has prepared the following wildfire safety information.

Wildfire Preparation & Prevention

The quickest and most effective step you can take now to prepare for wildfire is to create [defensible space](#) around your home. County Fire has resources available on our website to guide you on how to harden your home. This consists of clearing dry or dead vegetation from your property, hardening your landscaping with certain materials and plants that are fire resistant, trimming trees, and more. To learn more about preparing your home and family to survive wildfire, visit sccfd.org/rsg.

Emergency Preparedness

We encourage community members to [create an emergency go-bag](#) for each member of the household with water, food, and essentials including important documents and identification. Take time now to create a [family communication plan](#) so that if you're not with your family members when disaster strikes, you all know the plan on where you will reunite.

Evacuation Warnings and Orders

No fire or law enforcement agency takes evacuation warnings or orders lightly. Know that if you receive an evacuation notice, you need to take immediate action to prepare for an imminent evacuation or leave without delay. An evacuation order is a lawful order to leave immediately – this is for your own safety, and for the efficiency and safety of emergency responders. If first responders must leave their current assignment to help you, critical resources will not be available to fight the fire. Property and objects can be replaced, your life cannot.

Register to Receive Emergency Alerts

AlertSCC is the official emergency alert and warning system used in the County of Santa Clara. Notifications are delivered based on your preference (phone, text, email) and will contain important safety messages to help you make an informed decision on what actions to take during an emergency. Register now at AlertSCC.org.

Know Your (Evacuation) Zone

Genasys Protect, formerly known as Zonehaven, provides specific, timely, and accurate information regarding evacuations. Visit protect.genasys.com today, record your evacuation zone, and return anytime to view evacuation orders, warnings, or other advisories.

Take Wildfire Prevention Further

County Fire implements the Fire Code for the safety of the community. However, as you embark on home improvements, consider going beyond the fire code. While there is no such thing as being fireproof, there are new products on the market worth exploring and your landscaping can have a large impact on your homes' survivability from wildfire. If you are planning to replace your roof or looking into other exterior home improvements, consider metal roofs and other fire-resistant materials and design elements. Alternatives to wood siding are fire resistant gypsum board with a high fire rating. Dual or triple pane windows can reduce heat transfer from exterior flames, offering more protection from radiant heat causing contents inside the home to catch fire. Wood shake roofs can be replaced with roof materials like metal, slate, or concrete tiles. Fire rated vents will help prevent embers and heat from entering the attic space.

Attend a Training

County Fire offers many complimentary and low-cost trainings ranging from CPR and fall prevention to wildfire workshops and community emergency preparedness academies. We encourage you to browse our [2025 trainings](#), register for a training of interest, and bring a friend or family member. Course listings are available at sccfd.org.

Water Supply

Firefighting tactics, in a wildland environment, are adapted to working with limited water. Many fire apparatus (engines and trucks) do carry a water supply to conduct firefighting operations with the ability to refill using specialized equipment to draw water from static water sources described below. Water Tenders are specialized apparatus that not only carry water but also have portable tanks that can be dropped off at strategic locations to provide a water source. Each fire apparatus has mapping software that identifies fire hydrants and alternative water sources including creeks, reservoirs, water tanks, pools, and other potential static water sources.

Further details regarding domestic water supply infrastructure and supply should be directed to the appropriate water purveyor in your area.

Mutual Aid

During fire season or declared emergencies, the Department participates in the State of California Mutual Aid System, which allows us to provide assistance to outside jurisdictions that may request additional resources when their agency is overwhelmed during large-scale emergencies. When we deploy resources in the mutual aid system,

we back staff the vacancies with off-duty personnel to provide uninterrupted service and so as to never take an engine company or fire station out of service. Our participation in the Mutual Aid System also allows us to request assistance should the need ever arise.

Staffing

County Fire has 156 budgeted Firefighter positions for standard staffing. Currently, the Department has 148 Firefighter positions filled, with 8 Firefighter Trainees in an academy that will complete in March 2025. The Department will also be participating in two Joint Fire Academies starting in March 2025 with approximately 9 Firefighter Trainees placed in these academies. The Department has 71 of the total available 72 Fire Captain positions are filled. The Department has 12 budgeted Battalion Chief positions with all 12 currently filled.

The Department also has a Hand Crew program that is led by a full-time Battalion Chief and has one full-time fuels crew supervisor and 8 seasonal fire fuels crew members. The work of this program includes fuels mitigation/reduction work along public right-of-way areas, operational pre-positioning during high fire danger weather events such as Red Flag days or strong wind events, operational deployment within the County of Santa Clara, hydrant/water supply inspections and essential training to increase the capacity of their duties. The Department anticipates adding 2-4 additional seasonal hand crew members in the next 12 months.

Daily emergency response staffing consists of 66 firefighters per day operating 19 companies, plus 3 battalion chiefs, all operating from the Department's 15 fire stations. County Fire employs a form of "peak-load staffing" by staffing brush patrols and other apparatus during high fire danger periods, during storms and anticipated flooding, for special events, etc.