



FIRE DEPARTMENT SANTA CLARA COUNTY

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Media Information Sheet

Santa Clara County Fire Stations Raise Red Flags to Warn of Extreme Fire Weather

Red flags will fly at all Santa Clara County Fire Department fire stations to alert the public when the National Weather Service has issued a “Red Flag Warning” for Santa Clara County. Use of the red flags is one element of Santa Clara County Fire Department’s comprehensive effort to enhance our community members’ knowledge regarding fire prevention and defensible space requirements.

A “Red Flag Warning” is a forecast warning issued by the United States National Weather Service to inform area firefighting and land management agencies that conditions are ideal for wildland fire ignition and propagation. After drought conditions when humidity is very low, and especially when high or erratic winds which may include lightning are factors, the “Red Flag Warning” becomes a critical statement for firefighting agencies: agencies often alter staffing and equipment resources dramatically to accommodate the forecast risk. To the public, a “Red Flag Warning” means high fire danger with increased probability of a quickly spreading vegetation fire in the area within 24 hours.

Fire season becomes especially severe when a lack of rain results in dry vegetation. However, there are steps that community members can take to protect their homes, their property, and themselves. Santa Clara County Fire Department urges everyone to follow these guidelines:

- Be careful with fire. It is estimated that people cause 90% of wildfires.
- Create a defensible space around all structures by clearing flammable vegetation to a minimum of 100’ or to the property line.
- Remove tree limbs within 10’ of chimneys and stovepipes.
- Remove pine needles and leaves from roofs, eaves, and rain gutters.
- Remember that lawnmowers are for use on lawns. Do not use them on dry grass or weeds; doing so can start a fire.
 - Always mow before 10 a.m. Dry grass has the highest amount of moisture during the morning hours.
- Dispose of cigarettes properly. Do not discard cigarettes on roadsides or in dry grass.
- Be alert: Immediately report small fires by calling 9-1-1.

Organized as the Santa Clara County Central Fire Protection District

*Serving Santa Clara County and the communities of Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos,
Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, and Saratoga*

- Avoid activities in or adjacent to dry grass or brush covered areas, such as weed mowing or disking, metal cutting, grinding or welding, using chain saws or any other activity that could produce a spark or flame.
- Park vehicles with hot catalytic converters only on paved or dirt areas; not on grass.
- Most important: Have a plan for gathering family members, pets, and valuables in case an approaching wildfire requires evacuation.

Santa Clara County Fire Department and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Santa Clara Unit participate in alerting the community of “Red Flag Warnings.”

- In addition to flying red flags on extreme fire weather days, the Santa Clara County Fire Department is teaching wildland fire safety awareness to community members as part of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

For additional information about fire safety and fire resistant landscaping, contact Santa Clara County Fire Department or log onto the following websites:

- Santa Clara County Fire Department: www.sccfd.org
- CAL FIRE: www.fire.ca.gov
- Santa Clara County FireSafe Council: www.sccfiresafe.org

Santa Clara County Fire Department is an Internationally Accredited, full-service fire agency that provides fire and emergency medical services to a population of 210,000, in a region that covers over 100 square miles. For additional information about Santa Clara County Fire Department, visit the organization’s website: www.sccfd.org