



2018 National Fire Season Themes

The safety of firefighters and the public is always the highest priority during wildfires.

- During wildfires, agency administrators and incident managers make choices to minimize risk and focus on areas where firefighters can be the most effective.
- No structure or resource – cultural or natural – is worth a human life.
- Law enforcement officers and wildland firefighters work together to provide timely evacuation notices so the public can act quickly and safely. It is very important for the public to heed these notices, as people often perish in wildfires when they disregard evacuation orders or when they decide to evacuate too late.
- It is critical for homeowners to have escape plans and materials ready in the event of a wildfire evacuation. Learn more about Ready, Set, Go! at <http://www.wildlandfirersg.org/>
- During periods of high wildfire activity, it is not uncommon for wildfire suppression asset requests to exceed supply. During these periods, fire managers work together to prioritize incidents – those that threaten lives, property, community infrastructure and valuable natural and cultural resources receive assets first. All other incidents receive suppression assets as quickly as possible.

Wildfire behavior is largely contingent upon weather and fuel conditions.

- The 2017 fire season was near normal for the number of reported wildfires (102 percent of the 10-year annual average), though more than 10 million acres burned, which is well above normal (153 percent of the 10-year average).
- Though an average number of wildfires occurred last year, high temperatures, prolonged wind events and lack of precipitation created above normal wildfire behavior for firefighters.
- Fire activity began early in 2017; by the end of March, more than 1.6 million acres burned in the southeastern U. S. Intense fire behavior continued throughout the year, as large wildfires consumed above normal acreage throughout the western states.
- The U.S. Forest Service and other wildland fire specialists are beginning to use the term “Fire Year” instead of “Fire Season,” because fire activity is occurring year-round.

Partnerships at local, regional, and national levels help us be more effective fire managers.

- Together, we can be more effective than as individual agencies.
- Projects that reduce vegetation across land management boundaries help protect communities and create ecosystems that are more resilient to wildfire.

Homeowners and communities can help firefighters by creating defensible space around homes and structures.

- Taking individual responsibility to reduce flammable materials around homes and communities before a fire occurs can help keep the public and firefighters safe.
- We will not risk firefighters’ lives to save indefensible homes.

Unauthorized use of unmanned aircraft, also known as UAS, “drones,” or remote controlled model aircraft, in a fire area endangers the lives of pilots and firefighters.

- Never fly unmanned aircraft over or near fires.
- Learn more about the No Drone Zone and find outreach tools and resources at <http://www.nifc.gov/drones/>