

2020 National Fire Season Themes



The public plays a valuable role in preventing wildfires.

- More than 95 percent of wildfires are contained in the first few hours, meaning tens of thousands of fires are extinguished before becoming large wildfires.
- On average, human-caused wildfires make up 87 percent of all wildfire occurrences annually. Many of these wildfires occur close in proximity to roadways, communities and recreational areas, posing considerable threat to public safety.
- Taking individual responsibility to reduce flammable material around homes and communities before a fire occurs can help keep property, the public, and firefighters safe.
- Creating a buffer between your home and trees, shrubs, or other wildland areas, is essential to improving your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. Not only does this space help slow or stop the spread of wildfire, it also provides a safe place for firefighters to defend your home if conditions allow.

Firefighter and public safety is always our highest priority during wildfires.

- No amount of protection for a structure or resource is worth the loss of human life.
- With each new fire start, fire managers engage in a comprehensive risk analysis to identify the safest and most appropriate management options.
- Firefighters may not directly engage with a fire until risks can be mitigated to an acceptable level.
- Use of unauthorized unmanned aerial systems (UAS), or drones, in a fire area endangers the lives of pilots and firefighters. Never fly unmanned aircraft over or near a fire. Remember, if you fly, we can't.
- Wildfires can produce high quantities of smoke. In the midst of fire activity, firefighters can do little to reduce smoke impacts. Affected communities should remain aware of smoke advisories and conditions. Learn more at <https://airnow.gov>

Vegetation management treatments can save lives, property, and natural resources.

- Firefighters and land managers use vegetation treatments, such as prescribed fire, mechanical thinning, and biological and chemical spraying to reduce vegetation buildup. These proactive actions protect communities and other values from wildfires.
- Fire can be a land management tool. As such, wildland firefighters are trained to use wildfire and apply prescribed fires across the landscape when it is safe and reasonable.
- When safe to do so, firefighters will manage naturally occurring wildfires to improve habitat and restore the ecological balance to natural landscapes.

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Interagency fire managers develop and evaluate fire-related technology.

- The Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service are collaborating to develop and evaluate fire-related technology projects funded through the Wildfire Suppression Funding and Forest Management Act section of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (2018 Omnibus Bill).
- Fire managers are evaluating new technology to improve operations and safety. These technology solutions provide potential for real-time imagery of fire activity, faster and more dependable communication and data transfer, fire suppression resources tracking, and aerial resources to improve firefighter situational awareness and decision making.

Wildland fire program funding provides consistency in budget.

- The 2018 Wildfire Suppression Funding and Forest Management Activities Act became effective in 2020 to address Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service wildland fire management funding.
- The Omnibus Bill provides a new funding structure from fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2027. Beginning in fiscal year 2020, the Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture will have \$2.25 billion of new budget authority. The budget authority increases by \$100 million each year, ending at \$2.95 billion in new budget authority by fiscal year 2027.
- This new budget framework delineates consistent wildland fire program management funding to alleviate “fire borrowing,” from other land management programs.

International mobilizations are mutually beneficial to fire management agencies.

- At the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, Australia experienced unprecedented wildfire activity. As wildfires burned for months, Australia requested assistance from the United States and over a three month period, the U.S was able to provide over 340 personnel to assist with suppression efforts.
- Fire personnel from the U.S. federal agencies have been providing operational and technical support in wildland fire management internationally for more than 50 years. Generally, the countries involved in exchange of personnel and knowledge benefit from each other’s experience in wildland firefighting. Wildland fire management cooperation is delineated in policy and support agreements signed by each nation.
- The USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior provide fire personnel who assist in international wildfire suppression efforts.
- Using international agreements, the United States calls upon support from and provides assistance to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The U.S. has also provided assistance to other countries including Haiti, Russia, Mexico, and Israel.