

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

Southern California Geographic Area Coordination Center

August 18, 2025



Subject: Continued lack of monsoon moisture and return of warmer temperatures have caused dead fuel moistures to reach record dry levels across the mountains and deserts of Southern California.

Discussion: Relatively cool temperatures moderated fire activity through the early summer over Southern California. However, after a drier than normal winter, the region has seen very little monsoon moisture this summer, causing persistently drier than normal conditions inland of the marine layer influence. Temperatures have now turned near to above normal, exacerbating the drying trend. Continued near to above normal temperatures are likely over the next 10 to 14 days. It is unlikely that any strong or prolonged surges of monsoon activity will provide beneficial moisture through the middle of August. Any weak or short-lived monsoon surges may do more harm than good via potential lightning ignitions with limited moisture.

Difference From Normal Conditions:

Dead fuels of 100 hr and finer size classes over the Southern California mountains and deserts are at or near record dry levels, and 1000 hr dead fuel moistures are trending in the same direction. ERC values are near the 97th percentile and will remain around and at times above that level. Live fuel moistures are in the 55% to 75% range below 5000 feet and will continue to decline. Fires such as the nearby Gifford Fire have exhibited high resistance to control amidst aggressive fuel and terrain driven runs in an increasingly dry landscape, and the background dryness will only worsen further.

Concerns to Firefighters:

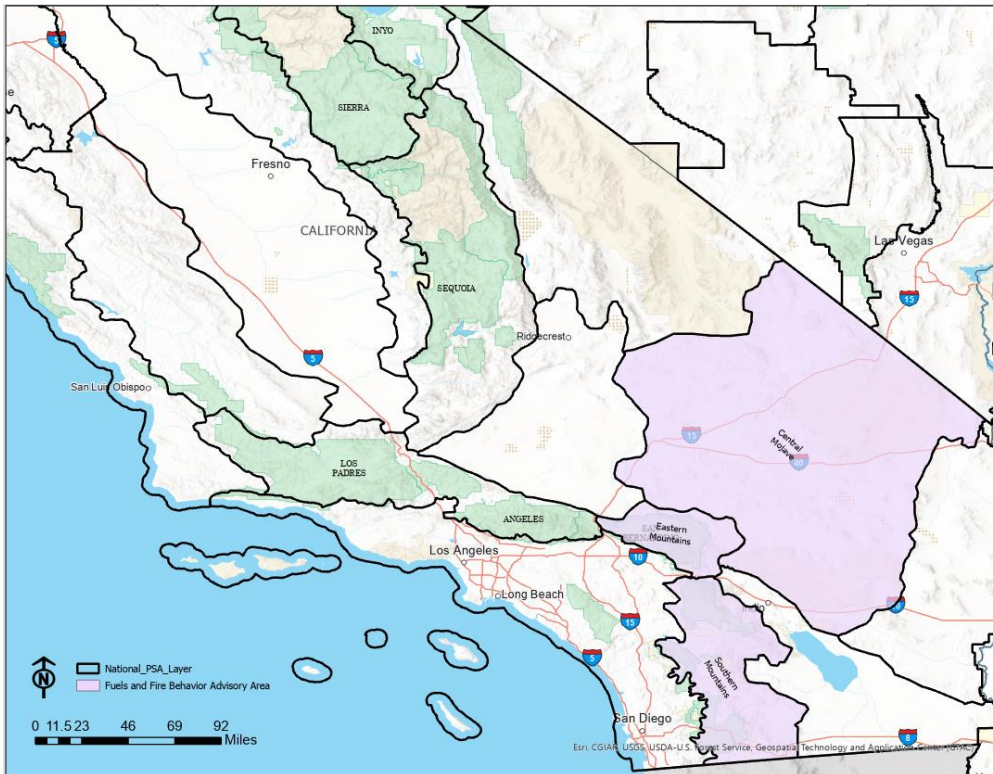
- Fire behavior will exceed normal conditions over the Southern California mountains and deserts at a time of year when monsoonal moisture usually brings some beneficial effects.
- Extreme fire behavior with short- and long-range spotting and aggressive topography driven runs will be possible even in the absence of critical fire weather due to the very dry fuels.
- Any lightning that does occur in the coming weeks could be highly problematic due to the dry fuels being highly receptive to ignition. New lightning fires can move quickly and erratically due to outflow winds.

Mitigation Measures:

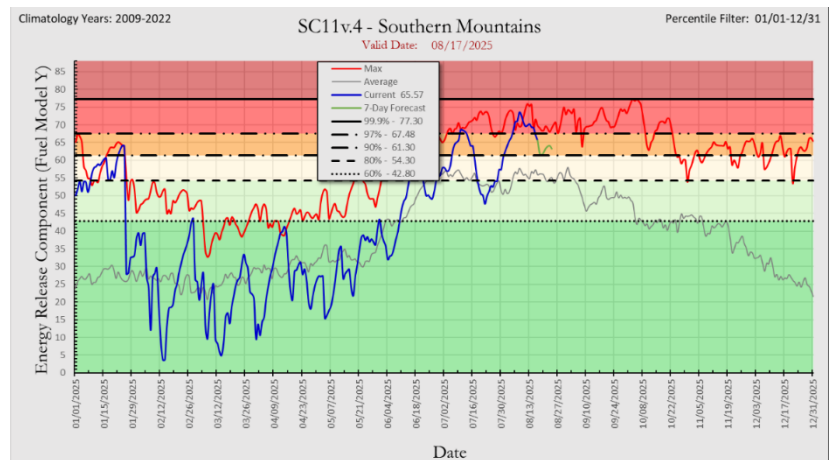
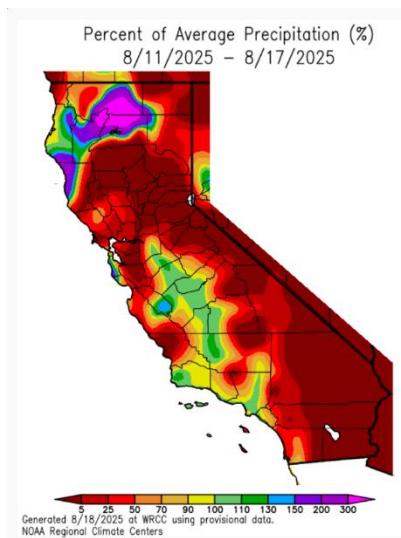
- Resources, both local and arriving from out of region, need to be aware that fire behavior will exceed normal expectations. **Briefings should highlight high fire danger conditions via tools such as pocket cards and charts of ERC's and live and dead fuel moistures.** Closely monitor weather forecasts.
- Plan for extended shifts and heat exposure – rotate crews and hydrate often.
- PPE, including shrouds and eye protection shall be utilized during suppression operations.
- Suppression actions need to be based on good anchor points, escape routes, and safety zones. **Remember LCES. Utilize experienced lookouts.**
- **Base all actions on current AND EXPECTED behavior of the fire.** Augment initial attack resources as incident activity dictates.
- **Boost Prevention** messaging and patrol high risk areas.

Area of Concern: This advisory is **valid through 09/01/25** for the following PSAs...**Eastern Mountains (SC10), Southern Mountains (SC11), and Central Mojave (SC14).**

Issued: August 18, 2025 (Note this advisory will be in effect for 14 days and will be reviewed/updated at that time.)



Areas in purple are the affected PSA's



Gold and Gifford Fires