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San Diego Fire-Rescue Increases Staffing in Preparation for Increased Fire Activity

WEATHER FORECAST INDICATES AN INCREASE IN THE CHANCE OF WILDFIRES

SAN DIEGO – As of 8 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 27, 2017, San Diego Fire-Rescue (SDFD) will increase the number of on-duty firefighting crews, staff and fire apparatus in our city because of hot weather and low humidity forecasted for a prolonged period of time. Several years of drought coupled with heavy rains this past winter created significant fuel in the form of underbrush and grass. This fuel, combined with hot temperatures and low humidity, create conditions which are conducive to easily ignited and fast burning wildfires.

Fire weather conditions and forecasts are significant considerations in the suppression of wildland fires and firefighter safety. As such, all SDFD firefighters receive San Diego Gas & Electric's (SDG&E) 7-day Fire Potential Index (FPI) Outlook every day to provide them with wildfire risk indicators. The Fire Chief and his command staff use the FPI as a tool to prepare (staffing and increased resources) for elevated fire weather conditions in the city well in advance of the adverse weather. The FPI uses a combination of satellite data and weather information to identify areas most susceptible to fire ignition. SDG&E's meteorology team also provides information from Predictive Services' Santa Ana Wildfire Threat Index which helps in making operational decisions.

Five brush engines, with a crew of four personnel each and two water tenders will be staffed beginning Sunday and until the elevated fire weather conditions return to a normal level. Brush engines are large off-road capable fire apparatus which carry between 600 and 1500 gallons of water. SDFD water tenders carry 3000 gallons of water and provide water

supply to engines at vegetation fires. In addition, the Metro Zone Emergency Command & Data Center (ECDC) and Air Operations Section staffing will also be increased.

"Using SDG&E's Fire Potential Index to inform our firefighters of the increased potential for rapid fire spread is one way we decrease the possibility of firefighter injury or entrapment. When the FPI is also used as a planning tool, the benefit to the community is that the forecasted increase in wildland fire weather conditions can be widely communicated to the public so that they too can prepare in advance. We also use it to make staffing and resource determinations. Increasing staffing is something we do in an effort to respond quickly with additional resources to keep fires from threatening lives and property," said Fire Chief Brian Fennessy. "Residents can do their part to prepare in advance for wildfires by visiting our website for our Ready, Set, Go! guide."

Visit https://www.sandiego.gov/fire/safety/tips/readysetgo to download your personal wildland fire action guide. The guide is available in English and Spanish and includes extensive preparedness information as well as helpful photos and checklists.

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