

Before you go on Patrol

DEFENSIVE DRIVER TRAINING-ONLINE

Information can be found on the
VIP Red Flag Patrol Website.

VIP RED FLAG PATROL TRAINING COURSE

For the next available class infor-
mation, please visit the website
or contact:

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For More information please visit
<http://www.lakesidearc.org/calfirevip/VIP.php>



CAL Fire VIP Red Flag Patrol

Volunteers In Prevention



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What is the VIP Red Flag Patrol?



The VIP Red Flag Patrol is Volunteers who set aside time to do patrols in the back county looking for smoke, fire, hazardous conditions and

suspicious activities. They also report any hazardous weather condition to include lightning strikes, rain storms, hail, humidity reading and wind speed. They use Amateur Radio to report these conditions and/or incidents back to Monte Vista Headquarters to inform the CAL Fire personnel in order to help make their decisions if additional units may need to be called in or units may need to be called out to an incident that has been reported.

In the past, reports have been relayed back to headquarters about a crashed military aircraft, vehicle accidents, and suspicious activities. The patrol is usually on the 4th of July and on Labor Day, but if Santa Ana winds with dry conditions occur, volunteers may be called out to patrol the back country looking for smoke, fire, suspicious activities and advise CAL Fire personnel of same.

This is a fun way to volunteer your time, taking a leisurely Sunday drive, using your Ham Radio, and calling in any incidents that you may come across. A VIP Red Flag Patrol sign will be attached to your vehicle to help identify you as a volunteer in this program. Just you driving around in the back country may prevent a fire from happening if a suspicious individual is planning to start an incident.

How it got Started

CAL FIRE VIP Red Flag Patrol began in 1976 a few years after the Laguna Fire. Amateur Radio Operator Art Smith, W6INI "SK" was approached by Battalion Chief Doug Allen about helping with the Red Flag Patrol. From there they devised that Amateur Radio Operators would use their equipment on patrols looking for suspicious activity to include vehicles not fitting in, people being where they should not be, and the "proverbial person walking into the dry brush with a lighter and a can of gas." Most of the patrols happen on July 4th or Labor Day when there are lots of people out enjoying the scenery.



A Typical Patrol

You show up and attend a briefing. CAL Fire personnel will brief you on conditions and situations that may be pertinent to the days patrol. You will fill out paperwork and then you will go outside to get into a line to receive your box of gear for your patrol. As you walk through the stations receiving your magnetic VIP Red Flag Patrol signs, your tote with ice chest, maps, paper and Kestrel Weather Meter, you are given your route to patrol, frequencies to use, and your time to report in.

You go to your vehicle, attach the sign firmly to a clean spot on your vehicle, make sure that your radio is programmed to the correct

frequencies, drive to the designated spot to check your radio before leaving on patrol, and head off on patrol. Once you have arrived on your route, you notify HQ that you are on your route. You take your hourly weather readings and report them at your scheduled time. If you happen to run across an incident, i.e., traffic accident or suspicious character, the radio operator/observer will call in the report and/or advise the CAL Fire personnel of the situation. You may be advised to keep an eye on the situation, or use your camera telephone to take photos of the incident, or stand by for first responders. Then you may end up breaking for lunch, and you would get an hour lunch. Be sure to advise headquarters that you are taking lunch. When lunch is over, be sure to advise headquarters that you are continuing your route. The farthest patrols from headquarters will be called in first because they take the longest to return to headquarters. All of the time the communications are done by the observer using the Amateur Radio and the driver drives the vehicle in a safe manner. You are to be seen. This is why you have a sign firmly attached to your vehicle, thus helping to deter anyone from starting an incident.

