

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



VOLUNTEER IN PREVENTION SAN DIEGO UNIT



PATROL GUIDE

CAL FIRE - San Diego Unit
Volunteers in Prevention - Patrol Program

I GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Purpose of the Patrols - By saturating areas during critical fire weather or holidays, the Patrols provide CAL FIRE with additional “eyes & ears” for heightened awareness to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To report fires in their early stages.
2. To identify and report situations that may cause fires.
3. To be highly visible as to serve as a deterrent to arsonists.

B. Patrol Composition - The Patrol is made up of persons in radio equipped mobile units assigned to designated routes in San Diego County. Organizations providing patrol members are Amateur Radio operator’s and Citizen Band operator’s and some private citizen VIP’s.

C. Patrol Areas - Hazardous areas in the San Diego Unit are identified by the letters “A” through “J”, each area is divided into several numbered routes. Patrols will be implemented on predetermined routes where major life and property loss will result if a fire occurs. The extent & severity of fire weather conditions determines which routes require patrols & the number of patrols.

D. Patrol Activation - The decision to activate will be made by CAL FIRE, based on weather conditions. When a Patrol is determined to be necessary, CAL FIRE will contact the Red Flag Patrol Branch Director (RFPBD), explain the situation, and advise when and where the patrols are needed. The (RFPBD) will then advise individual groups to create team patrols.

E. Duration of Patrols - Patrols will operate during daylight hours, from 1000 hours to 1600 hours, unless conditions allow earlier termination. Magnetic signs on each door will identify each patrol vehicle.

F. Personal Benefits - As Volunteer State Employees, patrol participants will be reimbursed for lunch and vehicle mileage from their home, on patrol, and return. They will also be covered by Worker’s Compensation.

Volunteers in Prevention - Patrol Program

Continued

II PATROL INSTRUCTIONS

- A.** Patrols will commence and terminate at the discretion of the CAL FIRE.
- B.** Traffic laws will be obeyed at all times.
- C.** Patrols will have their headlights turned on during patrols.
- D.** Patrol members DO NOT have law enforcement authority, other than those of an ordinary citizen.
- E.** Patrol members have no authority to enter fire closure areas or other restricted areas.
- F.** Each patrol vehicle must have a minimum of two occupants.
- G.** Vehicles must be self insured.
- H.** At least one occupant must have the appropriate grade of FCC license.
- I.** Children under 18 years of age are allowed on patrol, if with a parent.
- J.** Weapons may not be carried on patrol or in vehicle.
- K.** Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on patrol.
- L.** Patrol only assigned routes and stay on designated roadways.
- M.** Patrol assigned routes as often as necessary or as otherwise instructed.
- N.** Be alert for high points that provide an overall view of your patrol area.
- O.** Attach magnetic signs and turn on headlights upon arrival at patrol route. Remove signs and turn off headlights, if appropriate, when leaving route.
- P.** Be alert to all vehicles and persons on your patrol routes. Log suspicious activities.
- Q.** Do not follow or tail any vehicle or person.
- R.** Do not leave route without permission.
- S.** Maintain a Log and return it to CAL FIRE at end of patrol.
- T.** Be aware of the locations of telephones for alternate communications.
- U.** Be familiar with roads, landmarks and other locations on the route in order to accurately report fire locations.
- V.** Travelling on private property or closed areas is prohibited.
- W.** Do not make personal contact with citizens while on patrol.
- X.** Report and log anything out of the ordinary.
- Y.** Note any abandoned vehicles on your patrol route noting the make, model, color, license plate and any distinctive description.
- Z.** Note and log any residents using powered equipment, such as tractors or mowers, the location, the type of activity and operator description. Take No Action.

Volunteers in Prevention - Patrol Program

Continued

SECTION III - FIRE-EMERGENCY REPORTS

- A.** Report fires immediately using the most rapid means of communication available.
- B.** Give accurate location (address, cross street, landmark, milepost marker, etc) type of fire (vegetation, vehicle, structure). In case of a vegetation fire, report size and if structures are threatened.
- C.** If report is made by telephone, call the Monte Vista Emergency Command Center via 9-1-1 for emergencies only. (Non-emergency calls should be made to 590-3160.)

SECTION IV - FIRE CONTROL

- A.** Report fire.
- B.** Due to safety requirements, assume no fire control responsibilities.
- C.** It is important not to destroy any evidence at the fire scene.
- D.** Log vehicles and persons in the area at the time. Get license numbers, note location of vehicles and people, and time of observation
- E.** Leave the scene as soon as possible and continue patrol of area for other fires.
- F.** If, at the scene, your assistance is requested by a California Highway Patrol Officer or a Deputy Sheriff for traffic control, or other assistance, obey the command of the requesting officer. Notify the base.

SECTION V - PATROL LOGS

- A.** Fill out the Red Flag Patrol Log sheet completely, including signature of observer.
- B.** The following information should be logged, noting time and location:
 - 1. Vehicles parked off road in remote areas.
 - 2. Same vehicle noted passing through an area several times.
 - 3. People walking along road or in brush.
 - 4. Vehicle exiting a dirt road in remote area.
 - 5. Details of fire reports.

Volunteers in Prevention - Patrol Program
Continued

SECTION V - PATROL LOGS - Continued

6. An activity which appears to create a fire hazard. Log and report to the Base Station immediately. If available, investigators or engine companies may be dispatched to check it out.
7. Situations that are a hazard to the public, other than a fire.

C. At the end of Patrols for each day, deliver log sheets to the patrol coordinator with completed heading. If fires have been occurring in the area, investigators will check Patrol Logs to determine and locate possible arson suspects or witnesses. Patrol observers may need to be contacted for additional information.

SECTION VI - PUBLIC RELATIONS - CITIZEN CONTACT

A. If contacted by citizen inquiry, advise him that you are on Patrol, acting as "eyes and ears" for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Refer them to the nearest CAL FIRE station for additional information.

B. The general public may ask questions which non-CAL FIRE personnel would be unable to answer. Any misinformation given out to the general public could be an embarrassment to CAL FIRE, the Program and the individual giving the information.

C. If contacted by the news media, report it to Base so they can notify a CAL FIRE official.

D. In case of an irate citizen, contact the Base Station immediately. Under no circumstances engage in verbal or physical action upon an irate citizen.

E. Do not discuss laws, policies, procedures, fire occurrence and causes, or any, confidential matters with the general public.

Volunteers in Prevention - Patrol Program
Continued

SECTION VII - SAFETY - ACCIDENT REPORTS

- A.** The use of seat belts is mandatory.
- B.** As a safety measure, patrols will do a radio check before leaving on the route, check in when starting route, then at least once an hour, or as directed.
- C.** Vehicles should be in a good state of repair.
- D.** Obey traffic laws.
- E.** If you have an accident:
 - 1. Report immediately to Base.
 - 2. Remain at scene until an investigator arrives.
 - 3. Get name and insurance information from the other driver.
 - 4. Note his make, model and registration number.

SECTION VIII - PATROL TRAINING

- A.** In the spring the CAL FIRE will contact the Red Flag Patrol Branch Director to schedule training of new volunteers.
- B.** Patrol members will be trained in wildland fire safety and what to look for and what action to take while on patrol.
- C.** Patrol members will be trained in what to do and what not to do, for given situations.
- D.** New members may participate as observers until they receive formal training.