

## WHAT'S NEW FIRE SEASON 2021: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

It is no secret that wildfire season in California has begun. As California continues to heat up and the land dries out, the susceptibility for wildfires increases. Especially on our beautiful reservation, it is important to be aware and prepared in case of a fire.

Rincon Fire Chief Ed Hadfield has a message for those on the reservation: "While wildfires are a natural part of California's landscape, the fire season in California and across the West is starting earlier and ending later each year. In 2020 we have seen a big uptick in fires across the region even more than we saw the same months in 2019. Couple a warmer spring and summer temperature, and reduced snowpack; we can estimate the drier fuel moisture will contribute to faster and more devastating fires across the region and state. This year firefighters will also have to work around specific COVID-19 regulations and procedures while fighting these mega fires. The Rincon Fire Department is one of the only agencies in the County that staffs their apparatus with four personnel at all times. This provides a great impact on the initial attack on the wildfires and helps to reduce the potential of rapid spread."

Even if your area, town or city has never caught on fire, it is important to understand that a wildfire can happen at any time and any place with the right factors. The San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association warn, "It's not if, it's when" wildfires are exactly as its name suggests: wild. They are as unpredictable and as changing as the wind.

Fire Chief Hadfield urges residents to follow a universally accepted practice of "Ready, Set, Go", a wildfire action plan that helps to limit the loss of life and property in the event of a wildfire at the reservation.

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Fire Chief Hadfield explains the **Ready, Set, Go** action plan:

## READY

The first portion of this plan focuses on limiting potential property damage to your home. According to Chief Hadfield, homeowners should focus on ensuring that their homes are defensible. That means all dry brush and branches are cleared from at least 100 feet of houses and other structures. This creates an area, which firefighters can easily operate during a fire. Make sure to clear leaves, branches and other debris and combustible materials away from vents, gutters and other areas where embers may reach.

## SET

Chief Hadfield advises that all members and their families assemble an emergency kit with important supplies and valuables. This kit should include: important documents, computers, cash, flashlights, chargers and medication for you and your pets. It is a good idea to have a kit stored in every vehicle. A grab-and-go bag should be packed to allow you to survive away from your home for roughly a week. It is advised that you always update the bag and make sure you have enough food, water, medication and hygiene supplies. If a wildfire is threatening the reservation, act quickly and prepare to leave. This is the time to retrieve the prepared kits and grab-and-go bags. Anything you aren't taking that is important, should go into a fireproof safe. If possible, remove flammable item from around your house, including outdoor furniture, decorations, plants and firewood.

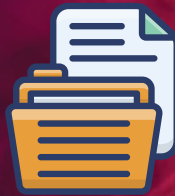
## GO

As soon as you and your family are prepared to leave, do so. Do not wait around. Newer fire guidelines suggest that people should leave as early as possible to avoid being caught in congested roads, smoke and fires. It is important to remain calm and think clearly in the face of fire danger. While many feel the desire to stay and help protect their homes from the fire, firefighters can work much more effectively if they do not need to worry about civilians in danger.

Before evacuating, the Rincon Fire Department suggests residents check that they have the six "P's":



**PEOPLE AND PETS**



**PAPERS, PHONE  
NUMBERS AND  
IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS**



**PRESCRIPTIONS AND  
EYEGLASSES**



**PICTURES AND OTHER  
IRREPLACEABLE ITEMS**



**PERSONAL COMPUTERS  
AND HARD DRIVES**



**PLASTIC (CREDIT  
CARDS) AND CASH**