California
Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

Subject: **Potential for extreme fire behavior due to low live and dead fuel moistures, persistent drought, sudden oak death, and elevated fire danger rating values across much of the state, particularly at elevations below 5500 feet.**

Discussion: Fires burning in steeply dissected terrain with heavy fuels have exhibited rapid rates of spread and erratic fire behavior under favorable weather conditions. The extraordinary number of acres that have burned so far this summer highlights how aggressively fires have been behaving.

Concerns to Firefighters:

- Energy Release Component (ERC) values at numerous weather stations have been running well above average since early June. Some are above the 90th percentile or have set record highs. Ignition potential remains very high and new fires or spot fires can rapidly grow and out pace suppression efforts. **Know what your fire is doing at all times!**

- Fires burning under the influence of inversions often exhibit low to moderate fire behavior. When inversions break, these same fires can become extremely active, burning intensely with rapid rates of spread under favorable weather conditions. **Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts** and **Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.**

- Be mindful in areas of unburned or incompletely burned fuels. These fuels are now pre-dried, very vulnerable to re-burning, and are extremely hazardous. **A common denominator of fire behavior on tragedy and near-miss fires: Flare-ups generally occur in deceptively light fuels, such as grass and light brush or islands within fire perimeters of unburned or partially burned fuels.**

- Localized sudden oak death (SOD) has affected a number of oak species in southern California. **Fire behavior in areas affected with SOD is often more intense due to increased fuel loadings. These fuelbeds are very receptive to spotting.**

Mitigation Measures:

- Share site specific information on fuels and fire behavior to local and inbound fire personnel. Ensure they understand local conditions and are aware of known hazards.

- Remind firefighters not to get complacent with low to moderate fire behavior under inversion conditions. Things change rapidly and experienced firefighters have lost their lives this summer. Ensure firefighters have good anchor points, escape routes, and safety zones. Practice **LCES!**

- Consult the latest Fire Weather Forecasts, Monthly Fire Weather / Fire Danger Outlooks, Pocket Cards, and the recently updated California Fire Season Assessment (July-October) posted at:
  http://gacc.nifc.gov/oncc/predictive/index.htm
  http://gacc.nifc.gov/oscc/predictive/index.htm

Area of Concern:
Southern California: Central Coast Mountains and Valleys and Sierra Foothills
Northern California: All areas except a portion along the North Coast extending eastward across the very top of northern and Eastside PSAs
A map showing the areas of concern described in this advisory can be found at:

http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive/fuels_fire-danger/fuels_advisories.htm
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