



Serving the communities of Castle Creek, Champagne Village, Deer Springs, Hidden Meadows,
Jesmond Dene, Rimrock, The Welk Resort, and West Lilac Since 2004

Fire Safety News

September 21, 2019

It's That Time

Yes, it's that time. School is back in session, football is in full swing, and it is only few weeks until the World Series. It is also time for Santa Ana wind season. The period September through December is "the usual" Santa Ana season in Southern California and with Santa Ana events come very low humidity, strong winds from the east or northeast and the dire Red Flag Warnings.

*American essayist Joan Didion called them "incendiary dryness." Author Raymond Chandler wrote in his novella **Red Wind** that the winds "come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair and make your nerves jump and your skin itch."*

THE TECHNICAL STUFF

Santa Ana conditions occur when there is a high-pressure area to our northeast (typically over the Nevada/Utah basin) and low pressure off our coast. The greater the difference in pressure, the stronger the winds are likely to be. The winds result as dry air from the high-pressure area flow towards lower pressure areas. The temperatures become even higher as these winds descend into the lower elevations and their velocity increases as they are squeezed through mountain passes and canyons.

If the forecast conditions meet established criteria for severity and duration of winds and low humidity, the National Weather Service (NWS) will issue a Red Flag Warning indicating that we are having, or soon will have, weather conditions that create a "critical risk" of wildfires. Wildfires that ignite will be capable of rapid spread will be difficult to control.

***Santa Anas** are a Southern California topographic phenomenon. Other parts of the country have similar canyon winds, but Red Flag Warnings can be issued anywhere whenever humidity, temperature and winds combine to create an increased threat of wildfire.*

Red Flag Warnings put most everyone on edge. The humidity lowers, often into single digits, sucking the last bit of water from vegetation already stressed by summer heat. Strong winds will fan any fires that may ignite. The extreme fire behavior and resultant destruction seen in communities beyond the usual wildland-urban Interface in recent years heightens anxiety among both residents and first responders.

DEER SPRINGS FIRE SAFE COUNCIL GEARS UP

Red Flag Warnings serve to alert everyone to the increased danger of wildfire. They remind us to exercise caution, and to plan accordingly. Once a Red Flag Warning is issued, the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council gears up to keep our residents aware and informed on a local basis. Red flags are posted on our fire danger warning signs at eleven locations throughout the district. We also issue "Fire Safety Alerts" via email, post the warning on our website and issue recorded information on a dial-in hotline for residents.



FIRST RESPONDER PREPARATIONS

At the local level, our own Deer Springs Fire Protection District (DSFPD) has had a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE since 1994. The cooperative agreement benefits the District with additional personnel and equipment provided at no cost to the District. In anticipation of vegetation fires that could occur in a Red Flag situation, our first responders are prepared to aggressively deal with any vegetation fires that should ignite. Depending on weather conditions and staffing levels, CAL FIRE can provide funding for the District to staff additional fire engines. Additional personnel staff reserve engines and other equipment so they can be mobilized quickly before and during a critical risk condition. Other fire jurisdictions put similar plans into effect.

On the regional level, CAL FIRE will implement enhanced staffing patterns that augment normal response with additional personnel. The added personnel are utilized to staff equipment and increase the number of fire engines, aircraft, handcrews, dozers and water tenders available to the community. These additional resources are often pre-positioned in areas likely to be most at-risk.

There are several different versions of the origin of the name "Santa Ana" winds but the most reasonable, to meteorologists and Orange County residents, seems to be that the winds funnel through Santa Ana Canyon with great velocity and spill out onto the Orange County floodplain. It also sounds more California-like than "Fullerton" Winds or "Tustin" Winds.

NO CHEATING

"But wait", you say, "I'm in the Red Flag zone but it is dead calm here. Why all the fuss? I think I'll go fire up the mower and get rid of those weeds before there is a fire." Sometimes it seems like the weather forecast for your location has missed the mark. Forecast tools are getting better at predicting the weather in general but when it comes to wind on a local scale, geography and topography can play an important role in determining the intensity and direction of offshore winds

NWS forecast zones often encompass an entire county. As a result of geography, topography and localized weather character complexities, many counties (especially in the southwest US) are subdivided into multiple zones. The San Diego County forecast area is divided into four zones. These range from the coast on the west through the inland valleys, mountains and finally through the desert to the Imperial County line on the east.

The weather, of course, doesn't care about zones or maps. Similar conditions can straddle boundaries between zones and significant variation can be found within a zone. For example, San Marcos and Valley Center are in the same forecast zone and during a strong Santa Ana event offshore winds can penetrate all the way to the coast and out to sea. During a weaker event, even though a Red Flag Warning may be in effect, eastern Valley Center can experience conditions that easily meet Red Flag criteria while western San Marcos residents enjoy a sea breeze.

The Deer Springs Fire Safe Council's mission is to educate and encourage residents to be fire safe. When you see the red flags posted on the DSFSC fire danger signs (deployed by volunteers within a few hours of the official Red Flag beginning and end times) please know that Red Flag warning conditions **are** occurring and extreme fire danger exists in portions of San Diego County even if it is dead calm in your back yard. The wind can quickly change from calm or light to strong and gusty so please be more vigilant, extra fire safe and put that mowing or other potentially fire-risky activity aside for another day.

Deer Springs Fire Safe Council members Greg Lorton and Steve Kerrin as well as Deer Springs Fire District Chief Rick Johnson contributed to this article.

DEER SPRINGS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT CELEBRATING 38 YEARS

FIRE PREVENTION OPEN HOUSE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2019
FROM 10AM TO 1:00PM
STATION 3-HIDDEN MEADOWS
10308 MEADOW GLEN WAY E.



Something for Everyone – Come and See:

Fire Engines, Helicopter, Ambulances, Fire Dozer



Also on Hand:

Deer Springs Fire Safe Council
Deer Springs CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)

“Hear the Beep When You Sleep”
Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm





CAL FIRE/San Diego County Fire Authority
@CALFIRESANDIEGO



CAL FIRE
@CAL_FIRE



Ready San Diego
@ReadySanDiego

No one wants to face an on-coming wildfire and have to leave their home in an evacuation. Click on the image at the right to go to CAL FIRE's Ready-Set-Go website where you will learn or be reminded of ways you can be ready should the time come.

Yes, there is a app for that. Check out the website for more information.



Helpful phone numbers

Immediate Emergency Assistance: 911

Deer Springs Fire Safe Council Information Hot Line: 949-472-1401

Alert San Diego (cell phone alerts): <http://www.readysandiego.org/alertsandiego/>

Emergency & Non-Emergency County Information Hotline (road closures, shelter locations, evacuation sites, fire related information, recovery assistance and more): 211

San Diego County Sheriff, San Marcos Station: 760-510-5200

San Diego Animal Services Emergency Dispatch: 619-236-2341

Deer Springs Fire Stations

Station 11

8709 Circle R Drive

Escondido, CA 92026

760-749-8001

Station 12

1321 Deer Springs Road

San Marcos, CA 92069

760-741-5512

Station 13

10308 Meadow Glen Way East

Escondido, CA 92026

760-751-0820

We gratefully acknowledge ...

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<https://www.DeerSpringsFireSafeCouncil.com>

Or you can mail your donation to:

DEER SPRINGS FIRE SAFE COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 460097
ESCONDIDO, CA 92046-0097

DISCLAIMER: This information will provide a high level of protection to structures built in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area. However, there is no guarantee or assurance that compliance with these guidelines will prevent damage or destruction of structures by fires in all cases.

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Our mailing address is:

Deer Springs Fire Safe Council
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Escondido, CA 92046-0097

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