



## NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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*Fire Chief*

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### **County Fire Hand Crew Ready to Respond**

It is with pride that San Bernardino County Fire Department announces the creation of the first County Fire Hand Crew. The 18 person Hand Crew is comprised of Paid-Call Firefighters (PCF) who volunteered for this assignment. Team members go through rigorous training including wildland fire behavior, advance wildland firefighting tactics, saw and hand tool techniques, helicopter operations, confined space awareness, structure protection techniques and Haz-Mat responder functions. All members are Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) or first-responder trained.

For the past six months, Crew 40 as they are being called, have trained hard to obtain their local certification as a Type 2 Hand Crew. Over the past three months alone, Crew 40 has put in over 100 hours of training and has already seen its share of action, playing an active role in several emergency responses.

Under the leadership of two full-time firefighters, Crew 40 are ready to provide assistance and support on all incidents within San Bernardino County, including vegetation fires, structure fires, floods, search & rescues, and other all-risk incidents. Crew 40 may be available to relieve company fire crews on extended assignments, allowing those units to go back into service. The Crew is available 24 hours and ready to assist local agencies, including local federal and state agencies.

"There is a need for a Hand Crew to be readily available within our County at all times. Crew 40 will help meet this need and is an additional County Fire resource of trained firefighters who are available to respond wherever needed in the County; providing additional manpower not only to fight wildland fires but assist with any all-risk department response", stated Fire Chief Mark Hartwig. "The Hand Crew Program is another step in providing the citizens we serve with premier services".

To be a member of the County Fire Hand Crew Team, you must be a San Bernardino County Fire Paid-Call Firefighter. The PCF Program is an opportunity for those wishing to become a career firefighter to gain on the job experience and learn by firsthand experience what it takes to become a full-time professional firefighter. In many areas of our County, communities still cannot afford to provide for full-time firefighter response, but have citizens that still want to help in their respective community and make their hometown a safer place to live – these are our San Bernardino County Fire Department Paid-Call Firefighters. The foundational concept for these PCF companies is that these are citizen firefighters that are there to help their fellow residents within their community and within our County any time there is a need. Trained and responding many times from their own home, these firefighters come together to assist our communities against fire and accidents, and to provide emergency medical aid as needed. San Bernardino County Fire Department currently has over 260 PCFs valiantly serving their community and the County.

Photos of Crew 40 are available at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) under latest news.

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