

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRESTS CAL FIRE EMPLOYEE ON SUSPICION OF ARSON

On September 20, 2024, at approximately 8:00 AM, CAL FIRE Law Enforcement Officers arrested Robert Hernandez, age 38 of Healdsburg, at the Howard Forest Fire Station on suspicion of arson to forest land in the areas surrounding Geyserville, Healdsburg, and Windsor. Hernandez, a CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineer, is suspected of igniting five fires while he was off duty: the Alexander Fire on August 15, 2024, the Windsor River Road Fire on September 8, 2024, the Geysers Fire on September 12, 2024, and the Geyser and Kinley fires on September 14, 2024.

All five fires combined burned less than an acre of wildland due to quick actions of residents and fire suppression resources. Hernandez will be booked into Sonoma County Jail on charges of arson to forest land. "I am appalled to learn one of our employees would violate the public's trust and attempt to tarnish the tireless work of the 12,000 women and men of CAL FIRE", said Director/Fire Chief Joe Tyler.

CAL FIRE would like to extend our thanks to the residents of the affected communities for their vigilance and information which helped in the apprehension of the suspect.

Residents should be vigilant in their preparedness and aware of suspicious persons when a fire does start. Suspicious activity should be reported including the time, individual's physical description, and a vehicle description, including the license plate number. Always contact law enforcement, never approach a suspicious person. Anyone with information about arson is urged to contact the CAL FIRE Arson Hotline at 1-800-468-4408. Callers may remain anonymous.

CAL FIRE Law Enforcement Officers have arrested 91 suspected arsonists as of September 1, 2024, and 923 since 2016 as part of the Department's ongoing commitment to fire prevention efforts.

For more information, visit the CAL FIRE website at www.fire.ca.gov.

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