

CALIFORNIA MILITARY DEPARTMENT HAND CREWS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION

HAND CREW PROGRAM



In April 2019, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) partnered with the California National Guard (CMD) in response to the need for additional fuel reduction work throughout the state. While the CMD hand crews were initially utilized for fuel reduction work, they are now also used to fight wildfires and other emergency incidents.

The CMD hand crew's primary responsibility while assigned to a wildfire is constructing firelines with chainsaws and hand tools. This is done by removing vegetation to bare mineral soil or burning vegetation with a drip torch ahead of the oncoming fire. CMD hand crews are also used to defend structures during a fire.

CMD hand crews are also available to assist in efforts to contain and mitigate any of California's major disasters, including floods, earthquakes, heavy snow, and search and rescue operations.

When not assigned to a wildfire or emergency incident, the primary mission of the CMD hand crews is fuel reduction projects and vegetation management project work.

CMD HAND CREW DETAILS

- Staffing: 1 CAL FIRE Captain, 1 Fire Apparatus Engineer, 12-15 CMD service personnel.



April 2025