

CAL FIRE FIREFIGHTER HAND CREWS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION

HAND CREW PROGRAM



In August 2020, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) received funding for the inception of the Firefighter Hand Crew program. Following the 2020 fire season and the successful implementation of the program, it was permanently funded in July 2021. The firefighter hand crews are now utilized throughout the state to respond to emergency incidents.

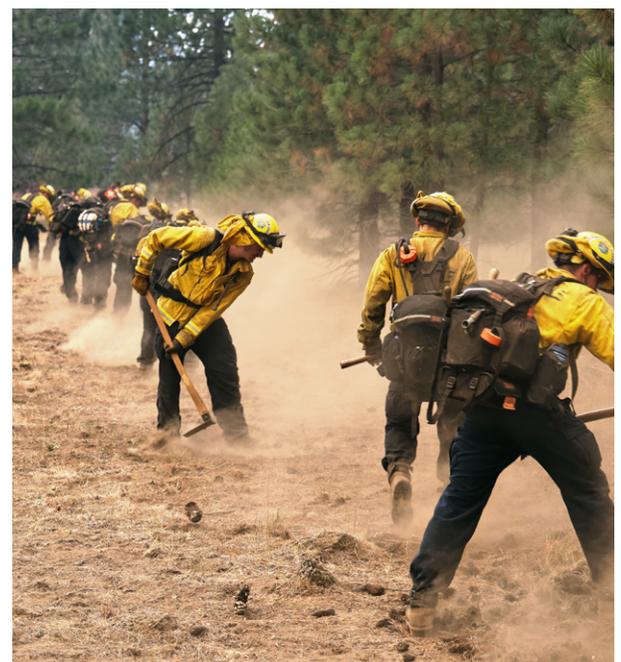
The firefighter hand crew's primary responsibility while assigned to a wildfire is constructing firelines with chainsaws and hand tools. This is done by removing vegetation to bare mineral soil or burning vegetation with a drip torch ahead of the oncoming fire. Firefighter hand crews are also used to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

Firefighter hand crews can also 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 firefighter hand crews is fuel reduction and vegetation management project work.

FIREFIGHTER HAND CREW DETAILS

- Staffing: 1 Fire Captain, 1 Fire Apparatus Engineer, 12-15 firefighters.
- Applying to become a Firefighter 1:
- Firefighter hand crews video:



April 2025