



North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



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PRESS RELEASE

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Don't Be Fooled by Mild Temperatures... Fire Season is Here.

Tahoe City, Calif. Sept. 6, 2019 – A wet winter and late spring may have provided the Lake Tahoe Basin a graceful entry into wildfire season, but don't let this week's cooler temperatures fool you into thinking that fire season passed anyone by. It's only just beginning as crews in North Tahoe have been busy with everything from campfires, structure fires, and even a [barge fire](#).

Business picked up for fire crews with North Tahoe Fire this summer, making it their busiest July and August on record. Firefighters responded to a number of fires, some of which spread into the wildland. These fires resulted from illegal and unattended camp fires, ashes that were improperly disposed of in garbage cans, and discarded cigarettes. In addition to these preventable fires, crews were busy attacking a number of structure fires this month, and North Tahoe Firefighters provided mutual aid on the Pallet Fire in Stead, and on the Long Valley Fire in Washoe County.

Summer may not be over, but Lake Tahoe's peak visitor season went out with a bang (no pun intended), as the Labor Day Holiday bid farewell with a substantial barge fire after an annual fireworks display. North Tahoe Fire is currently without marine assets to battle offshore fires. Many thanks are owed for the assistance from Marine 24 from Tahoe-Douglas Fire on the south shore, who provided mutual aid on the fire while North Tahoe Fire's UAS provided live FLIR imagery that could be relayed to the crews on Marine 24 in real time. This thermal imagery allows firefighters to see aerial footage of where the hottest spots are and how the fire is behaving, which aids in tactical decision making from the ground... or from the water in this case. Crews from the US Coast Guard were first on scene, unfortunately that vessel is not equipped for fighting fires.

"This is the second barge fire on Lake Tahoe in less than 18 months," said North Tahoe Fire Chief Mike Schwartz. He went on to say that an incident like this highlights that marine resources should be available for firefighters and hazmat teams on the lake. "Our firefighters should have been able to get on the water right away, put out a boom and attack the fire. The safety of the public, our firefighters, and the environment are everyone's priority." The annual fireworks display is an important fundraiser for local schools.

Chief Schwartz wanted to remind residents that this is only the beginning of fire season in the Tahoe Basin. "We just sent a brush engine out on a strike team with two line medics on out-of-district assignments to assist CAL FIRE," Schwartz said. "Fire season is picking up, and we all need to stay on top of our defensible space, keep our families prepared to evacuate, and maintain our situational awareness. This is particularly true on Red Flag Days where we face especially high fire danger."



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For additional information on how to stay prepared for wildfire, stay informed and become involved, visit www.tahoe.livingwithfire.info/.

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