

News Release

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ODF sends 19 firefighters to New Mexico

SALEM, Ore. – This week the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) filled an order to send 19 firefighters to New Mexico to assist in fighting numerous, out of control wildfires. Many of the firefighters arrived in the state today and the rest will arrive within the next day. The two-week rotation with our New Mexico partners will allow our firefighters to brush up on their skills before Oregon’s fire season hits its peak later this summer.

The firefighters went to New Mexico under mutual assistance agreements between the states. When wildfire activity is low in Oregon, firefighters can be spared to help in places experiencing high levels of wildfire. So far in 2024, Oregon has deployed:

- 48 firefighters to Texas
- 14 firefighters to Alaska
- Five firefighters to California
- Two firefighters to Tennessee
- One firefighter to Washington
- One firefighter to Florida
- One firefighter to New Mexico (this deployment is separate from the current one)

Oregon can and has called on those same states to send firefighters and equipment when wildfires here exceed local capacity.

“These agreements help bolster the complete and coordinated fire protection system across the continent and create a cache of reciprocal resources for all of us to call on when needed.” Chris Cline, ODF’s Fire Protection Division Chief, explained.

So why does Oregon send resources to help other states? Through these mutual assistance agreements with other states, including Alaska, Hawaii and NW Canadian territories, we can share resources with one another, creating a larger, faster comprehensive fire management system.

“We do our best to answer the call when it comes in from any of our wildland partners as we’ve been on the other side of the equation and we understand how difficult it can be to need help so desperately,” said Cline. “But know that we don’t share these resources without appropriate vetting. Before committing to any out-of-state deployment, we make sure that our own fire management system is still adequately staffed and ready to respond to fires here in Oregon. Serving Oregonians is our first and primary priority.”

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