

# Memorandum

**To:** Deputy Directors  
Region Chiefs  
Assistant Deputy Directors  
Assistant Region Chiefs  
Staff Chiefs  
Unit Chiefs  
Program Managers

**Date:** April 6, 2009  
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**From:** DEL WALTERS, Director  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

**Subject:** CAL FIRE 2009 FOCUS ON SAFETY

The safety and well being of every CAL FIRE employee has been, and always will be, paramount. As such, the Department Safety Program has once again completed the annual Focus on Safety. In preparation for its release, I ask that you take time to reflect on the following staggering statistics released by the Fire Analysis and Research Division of the National Fire Protection Association for the calendar year 2007 (most recently available information);

- **103** firefighter fatalities in the United States (**29** from sudden cardiac death, **27** from vehicle accidents, **1** from being struck by a vehicle)
- **80,100** firefighter injuries with the most common being a strain, sprain, or muscular pain. **48%** of these injuries occurred on the fire-ground
- Assuming each injury represents a different firefighter (meaning one firefighter only suffered one injury and not multiple injuries during the course of the year), your chances of receiving one of these injuries was nearly **1 in 14**
- CAL FIRE sustained nearly **1,400** reportable illness and injuries in 2008
- There is no way to determine the number of non-reportable injuries or illnesses but consider the number of cuts, abrasions, aches and pains suffered by just the employees you know during the last year

CAL FIRE is required to implement and maintain an effective Injury and Illness Prevention Program. One element of that program is "Communication." The 2009 Focus on Safety is to serve as a form of communication, reminding employees that their safety and well being is the priority in our day-to-day operations and every attempt should be made to reduce the frequency and severity of injury and illnesses in the workplace.

With that, it is required that every employee take the necessary time to carefully review the prepared material and document such by signing a Departmental IIPP-6 form.

DEPUTY DIRECTORS, et al

April 1, 2009

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In knowing that not all of the provided information is applicable to all of our employees, Unit and Program Managers are directed to develop at least one additional component focusing on the specific safety and health needs of their employees. These components may focus on ergonomics, worksite safety, general health and well being, or any other applicable topic.

Current employees shall complete and document such on the Department's IIPP-6 form on or before **Wednesday July 1, 2009**. Employees hired or returning from approved leaves after that date, will be required to complete the 2009 Focus on Safety within 14 days of their appointment or return.

Thank you in advance for your support and commitment to bettering the health and safety of our employees. I look forward to each and every one of you gaining the most from this information.

Cc: Kate Dargan, State Fire Marshal  
Crawford Tuttle, Chief Deputy Director  
Bob Wolf, President – CDF Firefighters