



## - Commonly Used Fire Department Terminology -

**Air Attack:** Fixed-wing aircraft that directs air tanker drops on a wildland fire. The air attack orbits above all air tankers and copters and serves as an “eye in the sky” over the incident. The air attack includes the pilot and the air attack supervisor and communicates directly with the ground Incident Commander and other aircraft assigned to the incident; including media helicopters.

**Air Tanker:** Fire retardant-dropping, fixed-wing aircraft. Air tankers are “typed” similar to engines, based upon the needs of the incident and capability.

**Backfire:** A fire set along the inner edge of a fire line to consume the fuel in the path of a wildfire or change the direction of force of the fire's convection column

**Battalion:** A geographic area consisting of one or more stations supervised by a Battalion Chief.

**Brush Engine:** A mobile piece of fire equipment which carries hose, water and a pump, and is specially designed for off road wildland firefighting.

**CAD:** Computer Aided Dispatch System. Used by Public Safety Communications Officers in the Emergency Command Center. This automated system verifies address information, recommends units to respond based upon the “closest resource concept”, time-stamps all activities tied to the incident (report time, response and on-scene time and other timekeeping functions).

**Contained:** The status of a wildfire suppression action signifying that a control line has been completed around the fire, and any associated spot fires, which can reasonably be expected to stop the fire’s spread.

**Controlled:** The completion of control line around a fire, any spot fires therefrom, and any interior islands to be saved; burned out any unburned area adjacent to the fire side of the control lines; and cool down all hot spots that are immediate threats to the control line, until the lines can reasonably be expected to hold under the foreseeable conditions.

**Contract City or "Partnering Agency:** An incorporated city or municipality which contracts with the CAL FIRE or Riverside County Fire Department for dispatch, fire protection and emergency medical services.

**Demobilization:** Under the Incident Command System (ICS); this is the process equipment and personnel go through to be released or reassigned to another incident.

**Division:** A geographic area consisting of a group of battalions. Riverside County Fire Department operates under seven divisions: Northwest, Southwest, Moreno Valley, Central, Oak Glen, West Desert and East Desert. Divisions are managed by a Division Chief.

**Dozer:** A vital piece of firefighting equipment; a dozer, operated by a Heavy Fire Equipment Operator (HFEO) is used on wildland fires to cut fire breaks and construct "line" around a fire. Dozers are also used to prepare fire prone areas by constructing wide firebreaks.

**ECC (Emergency Communication Center):** The Emergency Command Center is the Department's 9-1-1 call center and the heart of the department. All initial attack, incident support functions, equipment and personnel status-keeping are all part of this 24/7 operation; carried out by highly-trained call taker, dispatch and supervisory staff.

**Engine:** An engine is a piece of emergency response apparatus that carries water, fire hose and ladders. There are several "types" of engines. A Type I and Type II engines are best suited for structural fires. A Type III engine is best suited for wildland fire suppression, due to its all-wheel drive and short wheel base to access areas where a Type I engine may be challenged. Keeping in mind that all engine types can be used on most all incident types.

**Fire Camp/Crew:** Riverside County (CAL FIRE) has three inmate camps, operated by the California Department of Corrections (CDC); where inmates incarcerated on low risk crimes are trained to fight wildland fires. A fire "crew" normally consists of 15 inmates and a CAL FIRE Captain.

**Geographic Information System (GIS):** Captures, stores and analyzes geography-based information for tactical incident management.

**Hazardous Materials:** A substance or material that potentially poses danger to life and property due to its properties.

**Helitack Crew:** Specially trained firefighters that respond to wildland fires and technical rescues on a helicopter. Their responsibilities include line construction, repelling in remote areas for rescue and maintenance of their responding copter.

**Helispot:** A designated area on an incident where helicopters take-off, land and refuel. Helispots are commonly used on large wildland fires.

**Helitender:** When a firefighting helicopter is assigned to a wildland fire, a "helitender" is assigned to support the apparatus. The helitender "crew" is instrumental in scouting and setting-up a helispot, refueling the helicopter and any other support required of the helicopter and crew.

**Incident Command System (ICS):** This is the theory and structure of which incidents are operationally managed. ICS is the result of the 1970 fire siege in Southern California and was developed under FIRESCOPE. This system is utilized on the smallest of incidents, such as a traffic collision and can expand with resources and personnel to manage the needs of a large-scale disaster. A tried and true method of incident management, ICS is used world-wide.

**Initial Attack Response:** Resources committed to the incident during the early minutes/hours of an incident.

**Mutual Aid:** Agreements between agencies to assist on emergencies and other incidents.

**Strike Teams:** A group of same kind type with common communications and a leader. Strike Teams of engines include five engines and a leader. Dozers strike teams consists of two dozers, one dozer tender and one leader. Fire Crew strike teams include two crews and one leader.

**Structure Fire:** A fire in a building (residence, commercial building, garage, etc.)

**Urban Search and Rescue Team:** Highly-trained emergency responders who carry out specialized rescue operations that can respond globally in a structured rotation. Other parts of these teams include rescue canines, specialized cameras and infrared equipment and other resources.

**Water Tender:** A fixed-tank mobile vehicle that supplies fire engines with water when other water sources are not available. Some water tenders have the capability of "side-bar" pumping, or pumping directly from the tank while mobile. Tanks on water tenders range in size from 500 gallons to over 5,000 gallons.

**Wildland:** Vegetation in hilly and mountainous terrain.

**Wildland Urban Interface (WUI):** Area between wildland vegetation and the constructed areas that cause significant exposure to structures in the event of a wildland fire.