

FIRE DISTRICTS

Fire protection is an indispensable municipal service with which all areas in the County, regardless of their rural or urban nature, should be provided. Fire service is provided in the County of Sacramento by the Cities of Folsom and Sacramento, and eleven fire protection districts. The Board of Supervisors governs one district: Natomas Fire Protection District, ex officio. The other districts (which includes the Cosumnes Community Services District) are independent special districts and are governed by elected Boards of Directors. Portions of the foothill areas are also protected by the State Division of Forestry, although it provides no structural protection. There is one remaining area in the County that is not within any organized fire protection agency (see map). It contains the unincorporated community of Freeport and a portion of the surrounding area.

In addition to the eleven districts and two municipalities, Folsom State Prison provides fire protection services within Folsom State Prison and does not provide public protection.

Fire districts are formed and regulated pursuant to the Health and Safety Code, Section 13801 et seq. The enabling legislation authorizes fire districts to provide fire protection and ambulance and rescue services.

Seventy years ago, when the incorporated area was significantly less urbanized than it is today, fire protection was provided strictly on a volunteer basis. By 1940, increases in population and its attendant growth in fire and fire-related problems, created a need for more organized and widespread fire protection. Thus, the fire district system began to develop in the unincorporated area and professional fire fighting forces became full-time necessity. Districts developed from 1921 (Galt) through 1951 (North Highlands).

At the time of formation, fire districts normally encompassed the general area associated with each suburban or rural community. With the post-World War II rise in population and attendant development, the old central establishments in these communities frequently gave way to large shopping centers. The old, large, rural parcels in the unincorporated areas became new housing tracts, while county roads became freeways or other major thoroughfares. New developments did not follow district boundaries, and, in a sense, made them meaningless.

Numerous attempts toward reorganizing the historical fire district formation have been made in the past. Such endeavors include studies conducted by the Spink Corporation (1968-69), Fire Service Area Study Committee (1970-72), Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission (1977), and the Local Government Reorganization Commission (1979-81).

As a result of these studies, several political consolidations occurred: Alta Mesa-Wilton (1980); Arden-Carmichael (1983); Arden and Carmichael as American River (1983); North Highlands-Citrus Heights (1984); American River-Arcade (1986); Rio Linda and Elverta (1987); Citrus Heights and Rancho Cordova as Sacramento County

(1989); Rio Linda-Elverta with American River (1990); Sloughouse with American River (1990); Fair Oaks with Sacramento County (1993); Florin with American River (1997); American River with Sacramento County to form Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (2000); Fruitridge with Pacific to form Fruitridge Pacific Fire Protection District (2006); Elk Grove Community Services District with Galt Fire Protection District to form Cosumnes Community Services District (2006).

The public protection classification designated by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) is included in this directory for each fire district in Sacramento County. The public protection classification is the ISO's rating of the district's ability to defend against the major fire that might occur in the community. (This rating is used by the Insurance industry to classify and evaluate public fire protection service.) The most recent ISO rating procedure evaluates three principal features of fire protection within a community. These principal features and their weights of importance are: water supply (40%), fire department (50%), and communications (10%). Class "10" usually indicates no fire protection, whereas Class "1" indicates high capability, and Classes two through nine represent intermediate capabilities. When two numbers are included in an ISO rating, the first number refers to the ISO rating for "watered areas" (areas with a water distribution and hydrant system in place), while the second number refers to "unwatered areas."