

# My property is not within a Fire Protection District. What's that mean?

## Answers for owners of properties located outside a Fire Protection District

Like many rural areas, not all private property in Plumas County is located within a fire protection district. If you own a home outside a district or are planning to build one, here are some things you should know about residential fire protection.

### **Who is responsible for residential fire protection in Plumas County?**

Residential Fire protection is provided by one of 20 local Fire Departments in Plumas County. Depending on where your property is located, your local fire department may have paid staff or be strictly volunteer.

### **What are the levels of service provided by the local departments?**

Each department offers different fire protection service levels. These are based on the fire equipment, training, staffing levels and other specifics like the presence of fire hydrants. These differences affect the ISO (Insurance Service Office) ratings, which then affect rates and availability of homeowners' fire insurance. If your home is not in a district, you may find it difficult or expensive **to get fire insurance**.

Doesn't the US Forest Service or CALFIRE provide residential fire protection ?

No. USFS will only protect forest lands and try to keep fires from spreading to nearby structures. There are no CALFIRE fire stations in Plumas County.

### **Does this mean no one will come if I have a fire?**

Plumas County 911 will dispatch the nearest fire department whether you are in a district or not. The department will respond if they have enough personnel and resources. In most cases, the response to out-of-district calls can be delayed and only a limited response, such as one fire truck, may be sent. The Fire Departments' primary obligation is to the residents of their district who are paying for this service through their property taxes and often through a special tax assessment. If you're not in the district, your taxes do not support them.

### **Will I get a bill for service?**

It depends. Most departments will send a bill for fire or medical calls that are outside of their district. Departments follow specific guidelines on when and how to send a bill for out-of-district calls.

### **Can I join a district?**

Perhaps. Your first point of contact should be with the Fire Department closest to you. Find out if they are willing to provide those services by contract or annexation. Fire Districts will look at things like access to your property, closest water sources and basic infrastructure of your area. Many rural areas like Warner Valley or the Feather River Canyon have no nearby structural Fire Departments. In these areas, residents may want to start their own volunteer department like the one recently started at Bucks Lake.

### **What is the benefit if I annex or get a service contract with a Fire District?**

If you annex or get a service contract, you are supporting the district and helping ensure its future. Without adequate funding, some departments may be forced to stop responding outside of their district. In addition, you will not be charged if the department needs to respond to your home. Finally, the Fire Department will know where you are located, understand your access, water supply options, and be much better prepared to respond to emergencies at your home.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Contact your local fire department, or visit one of the following websites:

Plumas County Office of Emergency Services [www.countyofplumas.com](http://www.countyofplumas.com)

Plumas Firesafe Council [www.plumasfiresafe.org](http://www.plumasfiresafe.org)