

# CalFire worried about early, bad fire season

By Kate Mather, Los Angeles Times

CalFire is beefing up its staffing in anticipation of a fire season officials worry could be affected by an “extremely” dry winter, the agency announced.

CalFire has hired and trained seasonal firefighters that will help staff seasonal stations and some helicopters “around the clock,” according to a department statement.

The agency announced Monday it had begun “transitioning into fire season” in San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The agency said a snow survey conducted in late March indicated low snow levels, as the Northern Sierra Nevada received only 5.5 inches of rain between January and March – a potential record low. CalFire officials are “concerned about the impact to this year’s fire season.”

Officials asked Southern California homeowners to take recommended precautions, including: clearing 100 feet of defensible space around their homes; removing needles and leaves from roofs and rain gutters; trimming branches 6 feet off the ground, and using powered lawn and landscaping equipment in cooler morning hours.