



NEWS

Aug. 21, 2020

For Immediate Release

Public Safety Officials Urge People to Keep Coastal Roads Clear for First Responders, Evacuees

Major roads closed, Half Moon Bay shuts beaches before weekend

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. – Fire and public safety officials ask people to avoid driving to the San Mateo County coast to keep roadways clear for emergency vehicles as well as residents evacuating from a series of wildfires raging through southern San Mateo and northern Santa Cruz counties.

“The number one contribution to the fire-fighting effort everyone can make is to avoid the coast,” said CalFire Deputy Chief Jonathan Cox.

“We know it’s hot across Northern California and people want some relief from the heat. But I can’t stress enough the importance of keeping roads to and from the coast open and clear for first responders and evacuees,” he said.

A cluster of fires called the “[CZU Lightning Complex](#)” have burned more than 40,000 acres across southern San Mateo and northern Santa Clara counties and show no signs of slowing. For a comparison, the charred acreage is greater in size than the City and County of San Francisco.

The City of Half Moon Bay has closed its beaches for the weekend to discourage visitors.

“I’m appealing to anyone considering driving to the coast: just don’t do it,” said Half Moon Bay Mayor Adam Eisen. “Coming to the coastside now would be foolish and pose a serious threat to the safety of others by slowing down emergency response and impeding evacuation routes. It’s time to be responsible and smart – do not come to the coast during these fires.”

As of this morning (Friday, August 21), approximately 64,000 residents have been forced to evacuate across the two counties since the fires began Monday. Major roadways including

portions of Highway 1, Highway 35 (Skyline Boulevard) and Highway 84 are [closed due to fire and wind-blown smoke](#). Additional closures are expected.

San Mateo County Sheriff Carlos Bolanos said deputies are going door-to-door in some areas to warn residents and to check on properties.

“I can’t stress enough the importance of letting our deputies do their job of protecting lives and property and to keep the roads clear for evacuations that can come at a moment’s notice,” he said. “We do not want visitors coming to the coast who may end up in the middle of an active fire and need assistance.”

That sentiment is echoed by other officials on the coast.

“Although the City of Pacifica is far from the fire zone, we are strongly urging people to stay safe and stay away from visiting the coast,” said Pacifica Mayor Deirdre Martin. “First responders from across Northern California need to focus on stamping out the vast number of wildfires and protecting lives and property. They don’t need or want to be fighting traffic so someone can enjoy a day at the beach.”

San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley, whose District 3 includes the fire zone, suggested a second way people can help.

“Show how much you care about your fellow residents by donating to the Red Cross or to Puente de la Costa Sur’s Emergency Fire Relief Fund,” he said. “Many of the residents who have been forced to evacuate and are in danger of losing their homes are farmworkers and others who struggle even in the best of times.”

Donation Links:

[American Red Cross Northern California Coastal Region](#)

[Puente de la Costa Sur Emergency Fire Relief Fund](#)

Fire Information and Road Closures:

[CalFire CZU Lightning Complex](#)

[CalFire San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Twitter](#)