



RANCHO SANTA FE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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STATE ANNUAL SRA FEE

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif. — The Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District homeowners, along with all other State homeowners residing within State Responsibility Areas (SRA) should be receiving their annual SRA Fee bills. In early 2011, The California Legislature adopted legislation that required the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) to develop and implement a program to assess a fire prevention fee on homeowners within the SRA. In November 2011 the BOF voted to adopt regulations to implement the fee mandated by the Legislature. The mandatory annual fee on habitable structures based on the County Assessor rolls or as recorded on the records of the California Department of Housing and Community Development, will go to help fund prevention activities on SRA lands. A credit will be given to those who live on SRA lands but pay for fire protection from a second agency, such as the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD). There have been attempts to overturn it, but thus far they have proven unsuccessful.

The Board of Equalization is now sending out the notices for this year's billing cycle. The SRA bill, which will be separate from your property tax bill and is collected by the State of California, will be used for fire prevention services and programs provided by the state. The Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District do not receive any of the fee nor have control as to how it is used. According to Cal Fire's website, this may include "brush clearance around communities on public lands, along roadways and evacuation routes; and activities to improve forest health so the forest can better withstand wildfire." Most of the communities covered by the RSFFPD, including The Covenant, Fairbanks Ranch, Cielo, The Crosby, The Lakes, The Bridges, Elfin Forest, and Del Dios, are on SRA lands, while most of 4S Ranch is not on SRA lands.

The decision to assess the SRA fee was not an immediate one. In 2004, SB 1049, was enacted and imposed an annual fee, to be collected on the county level to fund fire prevention activities, on all parcels of land located within SRAs. However, before any money was collected, the fee was repealed by SB 1112. The fee was revisited during the 2007-2008 budget process at the suggestion of the Legislative Analyst

Office (LAO) as a means of recovering costs for services provided to private beneficiaries and the BOF voted in favor of the fee during their November 2011 meeting.

CAL FIRE has developed a web site with information about the SRA fee. The site includes a number of helpful links, as well as the phone number to the SRA Fee Implementation Center. The web site can be accessed at www.firepreventionfee.org.

The mission of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District is "To serve the public through the protection of life, environment and property from fire and other emergencies through prevention, preparedness, education, and response." Formed in 1946, the Fire District now spans approximately 50-square miles and protects over 32,000 citizens. The Fire District currently operates out of six fire stations and serves the communities within and surrounding Rancho Santa Fe, Fairbanks Ranch, 4S-Ranch, Elfin Forest, and Harmony Grove.

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