

**CALIFORNIA FIRE FORCES 50 FIREFIGHTERS
TO DEPLOY SHELTERS**

AUGUST 29 -- MORGAN HILL, CA: About 50 firefighters on the Devil Fire in southeastern Alameda County deployed shelters early today in a flare-up that injured two people. At about 2 a.m., according to the Contra Costa Times <<http://www.bayarea.com/mld/cctimes/6650711.htm>> , hand crews with the state Department of Corrections were working near a ridge when the fire flared up. They moved to a safety zone and deployed shelters. George Hoyt with CDF said two firefighters suffered minor burns; the rest returned to work after the incident.

According to the Morgan Hill Times <<http://morganhilltimes.com/news/newsview.asp?c=72046>> , at least 25 fires were ignited in the Diablo Range east and northeast of Morgan Hill into Alameda and Stanislaus counties. The Devil Fire yesterday was at 487 acres with about 15 percent containment, the Hamilton Fire was at 462 acres with 50 percent containment, the 3,832-acre Jump Fire was 30 percent contained, the 60-acre Kincaid Fire was 40 percent contained, and the Annie Fire was 40 percent contained at 3,874 acres.

Strong afternoon winds and steep, inaccessible terrain were slowing containment efforts. The incident command post was established in Dublin, with 800 firefighters in base camp at Christmas Hill Park in Gilroy. The Annie Fire, burning off Highway 152 near Henry Coe Park, has been a major challenge.

"It's remote, the access is horrible, extreme," said Chris Morgan, fire prevention specialist for CDF. "The firefighters have had to walk quite a distance just to get to the fire. Our needs are crew and aircraft." Jeff Harter, CDF division group supervisor, said when they got to the fire at 11 a.m. Wednesday, it was at 500 acres. By 4 p.m., the fire had quadrupled in size. Local residents said the Upper Quinto Canyon Creek area hadn't burned in several decades.

The Santa Clara Complex was at over 18,450 acres by this morning and was estimated at 50 percent containment. More than 2,300 firefighters are assigned. The worst of the fires in the complex is the Annie Fire, north of State Highway 152 and east of Henry W. Coe State Park near Morgan Hill. "The winds are extremely changeable," said Hoyt. "It's really, really wicked wind in some of those areas."

About 55 homes and other buildings are threatened by the fires. According to an AP story in the Herald-Tribune <<http://www.heraldtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20030829/APN/308290792>> , the grass fires burning in rural areas around the San Francisco Bay area have doubled in size to nearly 20,000 acres. The fires were ignited last Monday when a lightning storm -- unusual for this time of year -- rolled over the Bay Area.