



Your Northstar Fire Department



Northstar Fire Department Mission Statement: Enhance the quality of life for community members and visitors through community risk reduction, aggressive response, strong mutual aid agreements, and personalized service for any type of incident.



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FIRE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Since 1972, The Northstar Fire Department (NFD) has been serving the Northstar Community. Our boundaries cover approximately 4.8 miles, with approximately 18 square miles of influence. NFD operates as an independent special district under the Northstar Community Services District. The Community Services District is managed by a General Manager. A five person elected Board of Directors governs the District. The fire department is managed by the Fire Chief.

The community of Northstar is home to one of Lake Tahoe's finest ski resorts. During peak seasons, the population at Northstar can grow to more than 15,000 people. As an all risk fire department, we accomplish our mission by providing fire prevention and suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services. In addition to these services, NFD provides public education such as First Aid/CPR classes and fire extinguisher training.

The district is protected by two stations. Station 31 is located at 910 Northstar Drive. Station 32 is located at 9100 Highlands View Road. It opened in 2009. Station 31 has three types of fire apparatus. Engine 31 is fully equipped to respond to structure fires, rescues, vehicle accidents, and medical aids. E31 has advanced life support equipment including a defibrillating heart monitor, medications, IV access supplies, and intubation equipment. Truck 31 is specially equipped with a 100ft aerial ladder for multi-story structure fires and rescue emergencies. Brush 31 is more agile, four wheel drive, has a larger water tank, and carries a full complement of wildland firefighting equipment. It is designed to respond to vegetation fires in our district and throughout the California.

Station 32 has three main apparatus. Engine 32 and Brush 32 are similar to Station 31's respective apparatus. Rescue 32 has advanced life support equipment. It responds to medical aids that are not accessible by paved roads, biking, and hiking injuries. It also has equipment for confined space emergencies. Additionally, Ranger 32 is a UTV designed to respond to medical emergencies on trails and fires "over snow".

NFD personnel are well trained, dedicated, and caring. All full time shift personnel are professional firefighters and paramedics, available 24 hours/365 days a year. Each shift consists of two captains, two engineers, and one or two full time firefighters. Additionally, in the summer and winter, two seasonal firefighters are on each shift. The personnel are divided between the two stations. Administrative staff work a normal Monday to Friday schedule, 8:00am to 5:00pm. The administrative staff consists of a full-time Fire Chief, a Fire and Life Safety Officer, Forester, Forester Assistant, and a Defensible Space Inspector. The Fire Chief is a Paramedic.



FORESTRY MANAGEMENT

The Northstar community is in a fire-dependent ecosystem. In the Sierra Nevada, thousands of years of forest fires shaped the local forests' structure and composition. Before the settlement era, natural lightning fires and deliberate Native American fires molded the forest in our region. Native Americans set slow creeping fires for travel, food, and supplies. These frequent and light intensity fires occurred fewer than every twenty years. Yet, they were intense enough to remove accumulated fuel. Early accounts from the first settlers depict a forest that was predominately open growth pine forest with large trees and little or no understory. The general absence of forest fires due to suppression efforts, the infrequency of controlled burns, and changes in forest management led to an unnatural ecological state. We live in a overstocked forest of larger species, white and red fir. There is a dense understory of seedlings, brush, and downed woody material. This type of forest is capable of catastrophic wildfire.



Northstar Fire Department (NFD) actively works to create a healthy forest. NFD has a full-time Forester and Forestry Assistant to manage our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and a Fuels Reduction Program. These programs reduce the risk of loss of life, property, and resources from a wildfire. The (CWPP) reflects the community's values, needs, environmental concerns, and opportunities. CWPP priorities are reported, reviewed, and evaluated on a biannual basis. The fuels management and forest health projects reduce fuels, combat insect and disease infestations, and restore forests to historical standards.

The Forester is available for forest health evaluations or any natural resource related questions or issues.

More information about these programs is found on our website www.northstarcsd.org, subsection 'Forestry'.

Firewise Community

The Northstar Fire Department (NFD) works with community leaders to annually secure the distinction of a Firewise Community. The Firewise Program is nationally recognized. It draws on community spirit, cooperation, determination, and a willingness to take responsibility for reducing wildfire threats. NFD and Northstar Property Owners Association (NPOA), in conjunction with Condominium Association Management Company (CAMCO), Vail Resorts, and Mountainside Builders are providing resources for fuels reduction. This creates better defensible space within Northstar boundaries. Citizen and community involvement is the cornerstone of retaining recognition as a Firewise Community. This recognition gains us an edge in securing grants and federal funding for defensible space projects. Additionally, insurance providers identify Northstar as a proactive fire prevention community. This decreases the risk of insurance denial of coverage.

For more information about a Firewise Community, visit the website www.firewise.org.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

May to October, NFD has a full time defensible space inspector. The inspector's job is to help homeowners properly assess if their home has adequate defensible space. We need the community's help to keep our forests healthy. Quality defensible space is the most important factor in limiting the spread of a wildfire and protecting homes. It provides a healthier environment for the trees and shrubs. In drought years, it is important to maximize the available water. More water per tree or shrub means a healthier ecosystem, able to fight insects and disease. Fire spreads slower in healthier forests with proper spacing. This allows firefighters to more safely and effectively defend homes. In addition, defensible space improves property value. To this end, the NFD in cooperation with CAL FIRE reminds all homeowners to maintain their property in compliance with Public Resource Code 4291, California Code of Regulations 1299, and local ordinance 26-09.



A Green Waste Recycling Program is available to assist homeowners with the defensible space requirements. The district provides the most convenient, efficient, and environmental options to homeowners. The program varies from curbside pick up to a designated drop off location.

Specific guidelines outlining regulations and the Green Waste Pick-up program can be found on our website www.northstarcsd.org, subsection 'Green Waste Disposal Options'.

INSURANCE SERVICES ORGANIZATION

What is an "ISO Rating"?

The Northstar Fire Department (NFD) is proud of its Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class 2 rating. The ISO rating of a community has a direct effect on the homeowner and commercial insurance premiums. Virtually all U.S. property insurers use ISO's Public Protection Classification (PPC) in calculating premiums. Generally, lower PPC ratings on a scale of 1 to 10 typically mean better insurance rates. Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection. Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

A Community's PPC depends on:

- **Fire alarm and communications systems** (10% of the overall rating): Telephone systems and lines, staffing, and dispatching systems.
- **The Fire Department** (50% of the overall rating): Pumping capabilities, aerial ladder capabilities, number of staff training hours provided and participated, number of members per call, commercial fire pre-planning, number of fire stations, boundary served, hose, and pump testing.
- **The water supply system** (40% of the overall rating): Amount of available water compared to the amount needed for fire suppression, and hydrant distribution, condition, and maintenance.

Class 2 is an exemplary ISO rating for a fire department of our size. This rating is a confirmation that NFD has kept pace with the demands of the community. Everyone who lives and works in Northstar can be confident their Fire Department meets the highest protection standards.

For more ISO rating information, visit www.northstarcsd.org/fireISO.html or www.isomitigation.com.

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MUTUAL AID

In emergency services, mutual aid is an agreement between neighboring departments to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries. Additional responders are needed when an emergency's needs exceed local resources, such as a wildland fire or natural disaster. NFD has entered into mutual aid agreements with local, state, and federal fire service providers. Departments include Truckee Fire, North Tahoe Fire, Olympic Valley Fire, CAL FIRE, and the U.S. Forest Service. The NFD has a close working relationship with all neighboring agencies.

The California mutual aid system is based on an incremental and progressive mobilizing system of fire and rescue resources. No community has sufficient resources to cope with extremely large events. The California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA) is a statewide system of mutual aid. It provides assistance when a jurisdiction's resources are not enough, such as an extremely large scale fire or natural disaster. The California Mutual Aid Plan, when activated, provides statewide systematic mobilization, organization, and operation.

Mutual aid also means NFD resources are available to other fire departments. We regularly respond to incidents in areas surrounding Northstar. We work closely with our neighboring fire departments to provide timely and efficient services. This effective system protects our district, region, and state.



NORTHSTAR'S WATER SYSTEM

Northstar Community Service District (NCS D) provides a water system of exceptional capacity and capability. The Northstar Utility Department is responsible for operating and maintaining the water system. Over the years, Northstar and Truckee-Tahoe areas have grown considerably. Northstar's excellent water system is the result of adapting to our changing community, improved technology, and a progressive district-board attitude.

Northstar's water primarily comes from a mountain spring on Northstar California's property. The spring can be supplemented by a well field, located north of the golf course. The well field draws from one of the largest aquifers in California, the Martis Valley Aquifer. Two wells, TH-1 and TH-2, are capable of pumping 1,600 gallons per minute (gpm). The mountain spring and well field are capable of refilling at a rate of approximately 2,300 gpm. Additionally, the NCS D Utilities Department operates and maintains a 180-acre-foot reservoir. Water is collected from the Big Springs and Sawmill Flat spring systems and treated at the state-of-the-art Northstar Water Plant. The water is delivered through over 30 miles of water line and 13 pressure reducing stations serving 12 pressure zones. Water service is provided to approximately 1,000 residential and commercial services.



Water is stored in seven water tanks with a capacity of 3.6 million gallons. One-third of the capacity, 1.2 million gallons, is dedicated to fire suppression. All fire hydrants in our district are tested to 500 psi. They have working pressures up to 250 psi. The Northstar community has a total of 232 hydrants. Approximately 95% of those hydrants are within 300 feet of each other. Northstar has outstanding hydrant pressures, 97.4% supply over 1,000 gpm and 83.6% supply over 1,500 gpm. Thanks to ample water storage, high water pressure, and the commitment of our Utilities Department; Northstar has an exceptional water system for fire suppression.

The Northstar Water Ordinance can be found in its entirety at: www.northstarcsd.org/watersystem.html

Want More Information? Check out these websites for additional information on topics discussed in this newsletter:

☒ www.northstarcsd.org

☒ www.firewise.org

☒ www.isomitigation.com