



## ***California Prison Industry Authority***

www.calpia.ca.gov

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### **Inmates Produce Fire-Fighting Nomex Suits at Record Pace**

*overtime shifts double a normal year's output in less than a month*

Sacramento.....As forest fires ravaged the northern and central regions of the state, the California Prison Industry Authority delivered more than a year's worth of inmate-manufactured fire protection suits to CalFire and other firefighting agencies in less than a month.

Inmate crews have worked extra shifts in three prisons to keep up with the demand, delivering nearly 20,000 sets of the familiar orange and yellow Nomex gloves, pants, jackets and fire shrouds, more than double the normal demand for an entire fire season.

"This heavy demand for fire gear this early in the summer is a testament to how fierce California's fire season is expected to be," said Chuck Pattillo, general manager of CALPIA. "But we have stockpiled enough fire resistant material to guarantee that every firefighter who needs this life-saving gear will have it, no matter how bad the fire season gets," he added. "And our inmates are willing to work extra hours a day, just like the firefighters themselves, to make sure we meet everyone's needs."

The fire resistant clothing is manufactured to the unique specifications of CalFire, the state agency responsible for fighting forest fires, by inmates in three prisons. Pants and jackets are produced at Mule Creek State Prison in Lone and at the California Institution for Women in Chino. Fire resistant gloves are manufactured at the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo.

CalFire is CALPIA's largest customer and other customers include local fire and sheriff departments and other public safety agencies who put personnel on the fire lines. Forest fire fighting agencies in other states also purchase fire-resistant protection gear from CALPIA.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) also purchases protective suits for inmates who work on the fires lines alongside civilian crews. Approximately 2,000 prison inmates are dispatched to fire sites across the state each day during fire season.

CALPIA is a self-financed state agency that receives all of its revenue from the sale of products it manufactures, and that provides inmates with job skills that can enhance their rehabilitation when they are released on parole. Recent research shows that the recidivism rate among CALPIA inmates is 25 percent lower than the general prison population, a success attributed to the job skills that they receive by working on the assembly line.

Ed Note: Tours of the CALPIA manufacturing facilities in Lone, San Luis Obispo or Chino, including interviews with CALPIA managers and inmates on the assembly lines, can be arranged by calling 916 445-4950.

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