

NEWS RELEASE

CAL FIRE San Luis Obispo Unit

Unit Chief
John Owens



Tuesday, October 20, 2026

CAL FIRE ADDS A C-130H AIRTANKER TO PASO ROBLES AIR ATTACK BASE

PASO ROBLES, Calif. – Yesterday, October 19th, 2026 – CAL FIRE expanded its aerial firefighting capabilities with the arrival of a Lockheed C-130H Hercules airtanker at the Paso Robles Air Attack Base in San Luis Obispo County. The addition marks a significant milestone for the CAL FIRE San Luis Obispo Unit and strengthens the department's ability to respond aggressively to wildfires throughout the region and across the state.

The C-130H is part of CAL FIRE's expanding fleet of large airtankers, providing a substantial increase in fire retardant delivery capabilities. Equipped with a specialized Retardant Delivery System (RDS), the aircraft can carry and deliver up to 4,000 gallons of fire retardant in a single load, more than three times the capacity of CAL FIRE's S-2T airtankers.

The addition of the C-130H at Paso Robles represents an important investment in California's wildfire preparedness and reinforces the strategic role of the Paso Robles Air Attack Base in supporting aerial firefighting operations.

Unit Chief John Owens stated, *"We're excited to welcome the C130 to San Luis Obispo County and strengthen our aerial firefighting capabilities both locally and across the state."*

The C-130H is designed to support CAL FIRE's aggressive initial attack strategy, which prioritizes rapid response to new wildfires while they are still small. Working alongside existing airtankers, air tactical aircraft, helicopters, and ground resources, the C-130H provides incident commanders with an additional tool to slow the spread of fast-moving wildfires and support firefighters on the ground.

The addition of the C-130H will complement the base's existing aviation resources and enhance its ability to support large-scale firefighting operations. Although stationed in Paso Robles, the aircraft will be available for deployment to wildfires throughout California as operational needs dictate.

For more information about CAL FIRE's aviation program and wildfire preparedness, visit www.fire.ca.gov

MEDIA AVAILABILITY / AIRCRAFT INTRODUCTION EVENT DETAILS

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