



## News Release

Six Rivers National Forest  
Eureka, CA 95501  
(707) 442-1721  
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### Fuel Issue on Smith River Complex South Temporarily Affected Fire Operations

**Eureka, CA. September 9, 2023** – On Thursday, September 7 around 2 p.m., a fuel vendor mistakenly filled one of two fuel tenders at the Gasquet Base Camp with incorrect fuels—diesel instead of gasoline and vice versa. An operations chief began receiving reports of vehicle malfunctions midafternoon on Friday, September 8. He notified incident management, who assembled a contingent of incident and agency personnel and cooperators to respond to the situation. By 4 p.m. the issue had been identified and all crews were directed by radio to immediately pause all fire operations and not operate any vehicle. The team determined that between 2 p.m. on September 7 and noon on September 8, 42 vehicles had received a large enough quantity of incorrect fuel to have an effect. There are more than 700 vehicles on the incident. The operational pause by all fire personnel on the fireline had been necessary because disabled emergency vehicles would have been unable to respond to a medical emergency had there been one.

By 6 p.m. on Friday September 8, the operational pause was lifted. Apart from potential vehicle issues, there were no negative consequences to fire operations. Most fire personnel without functional vehicles were shuttled to one of the three incident camps, and crews who remained in place had hot meals delivered to them and camped overnight. Firefighters who were scheduled to be demobilized from the incident are being transported to their home units.

Local tow-truck operators are in the process of retrieving 24 vehicles and delivering them to the southern incident command post in Crescent City. The remaining 18 vehicles were driven to the nearest incident camp. Local mechanics are involved in the initial repair process: Rubber, walled catchment tarps have been installed on a bed of gravel. The fuel will be pumped into 55-gallon drums, which will be loaded onto pallets and, along with the tarps, given to the responsible fuel contractor. The contractor will follow the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's disposal guidelines.

Questions can be directed to Smith River Complex South Fire Information: 707-383-9727.

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