



Forest Service Fire Information Update

Horton Fire Update - Payson Ranger District

December 24, 2024

Size: 898 acres

Cause: Human caused and under investigation

Containment: 15%

Total personnel: 139

Start Date: December 14, 2024

Location: Payson Ranger District, Arizona

Fuels: Ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, chaparral

Highlights: The Horton Fire is currently 898 acres with 15% containment. A weather shift is expected through Christmas Day, with cooler temperatures and increased humidity forecasted. Crews will remain on-scene throughout Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Operations: Fire activity remained moderate yesterday with personnel observing smoldering conditions and minimal spread across the fire area. Crews patrolled the area and identified several areas of containment on the northwest and western perimeter. Firefighters also conducted additional prep work on the north end of the fire and completed fireline around the Christopher Creek Community to Highway 260.

Today, crews will focus efforts on the north and western portions of the fire, monitoring conditions and taking action as needed. Firefighters will patrol and hold the line, cold-trailing and extinguishing hot spots where present throughout the holiday. Fire is expected to make continued, though minimal, growth in east Horton drainage.

Weather: Temperatures will continue to drop through mid-week as a cold front moves into the region. Temperatures will remain in the mid-50s to low 60s today, dropping to low 40s-mid 50s by Christmas day and lows in the 20s at night. Winds will increase to 10-20mph with higher gusts possible. Relative humidity will also increase, bringing with it a potential for light precipitation (tenth of an inch of rain in lower elevations and snow in higher elevations). No snow accumulation or significant wetting rain is expected.

Closures: An emergency closure order for the Horton Fire is in effect from Dec. 18, 2024, to Jan. 31, 2025. The public is asked to avoid the fire area. The purpose of the closure order is to protect public health and safety during the Horton Fire, and to protect assigned firefighting personnel engaging in wildland firefighting operations. Learn more at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/tonto/alerts-notice>.

The Tonto Creek Fish Hatchery is also closed due to the Horton Fire.

Safety: The communities of Tonto Creek Estates, Tonto Christian Camp, Tonto Fish Hatchery, and Zane Grey Cabins remain in SET evacuation status. The health and safety of firefighters and the public are always the priority. Members of the public are asked to avoid the fire area.

Smoke: Smoke from the Horton Fire may be visible in the surrounding areas for many days. Smoke will be heavier in the mornings as it settles into the lower elevations and will lift as temperatures increase. More information is available on the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality website at <https://www.azdeq.gov/>.

Information Links and Contacts:

Tonto National Forest <https://www.fs.usda.gov/tonto>

InciWeb <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/aztnf-horton-fire-2024>

Fire Email 2024.horton@firenet.gov

Fire Information Line (602)-551-7327 • Office Hours: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.