



Important Open Enrollment Information and Reminders

December Brinsfield, Personnel Transactions

"The way to achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first."

-Iyanla Vanzant

CalPERS Open Enrollment Webpage is Coming. Each year, the State provides an "Open Enrollment" period for employees to make changes to their benefits as desired. Last year, the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) introduced an online Open Enrollment toolkit to educate and encourage employees to review their benefit elections and understand the upcoming changes. Within the toolkit, CalHR also provided the Benefits Calculator to help employees determine the impact to their paycheck based on the various benefit options chosen.

This year, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) will introduce the CalPERS Open Enrollment Webpage. Starting August 14, 2017, employees will be able to access health benefit information 24/7, as well as tools that will assist employees with health benefit decision-making immediately prior to and during the Open Enrollment period. As the Open Enrollment period approaches, CalPERS will send notifications to employees through their myCalPERS account (if enrolled) to inform them that the Open Enrollment webpage is available; hard-copy open enrollment information and notices will no longer be mailed to employees by CalPERS. Through this new webpage, employees will be able to access:

- 2017 and 2018 Health Benefit Summaries
- Health Plan Summary of Benefits and Coverage
- Health Program Guides
- Evidence of Coverage documents
- Medicare Enrollment Guide

Please stay tuned for additional benefit Open Enrollment information as it becomes available.

Annual Leave Open Enrollment Reminder. During April 2017, employees covered by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) were provided an option to change their leave benefit election from the traditional Vacation/Sick Leave program participation to the Annual Leave program (or vice versa). Employees in SEIU-represented bargaining units whose Annual Leave open enrollment forms were received by the assigned personnel office by April 30, 2017, will see these leave election changes reflected in their leave balance statements at the bottom of the June 2017 paystub. Employees who elected to change their participation in one of these leave programs are reminded to update the leave information on their Attendance and Program Time Report (CAL FIRE 681).

For additional information about these benefits, employees are encouraged to visit CalHR's website at <http://calhr.ca.gov/employees/Pages/new-employee-benefits-orientation.aspx> or contact their assigned Personnel Office for assistance.

What's Inside?

Important Open Enrollment Information	1
Dear Claire DeAir	2
Dates to Remember	2
CAL FIRE Heart & Stroke Team	3
Safety First	3
A Quick <i>Connect</i> : SHU and SLU	4
The Communications Operator Exam	5
DeAir (<i>Cont'd.</i>)	5
Veterans Employer of the Year Awards	6
When Using Social Media	6
Internal Audit Awareness	7
Safety (<i>Cont'd.</i>)	7
Awards (<i>Cont'd.</i>)	7
May the Force Be with You!	8

Dear Claire DeAir: What am I responsible for inventorying?

Claire Banyard, Business Services Office

Are your procurement, contract, state and federal property, or policy needs fraught with confusion? The Business Services Office (BSO) presents Claire DeAir, who will be here every month to offer advice and to ease all of your BSO burdens.

Dear CLAIRE DeAIR,

How do I know if I have purchased an item that needs to be inventoried?

- PROPERTY PETE

Dear PETE,

That is a great question, with a bit of a complicated answer. Not only are there rules and guidelines for what items need to be inventoried, but the person or program responsible for tracking that property often depends on the type of property. Let us break your question down into a few questions with more straight-forward answers: 1) Why do we need to inventory property at all? 2) What items need to be inventoried? 3) What items are *you* responsible for tracking?

Why do we need to inventory State property? Put simply, the State Property Program in CAL FIRE aims at maintaining accountability for State-owned property to ensure that State funds are being utilized effectively and State assets are safeguarded. Not only does that mean CAL FIRE must track State property, but CAL FIRE must also properly dispose of, or reuse, property at appropriate times. We do this keeping in mind our goals to restore, protect, and enhance the environment, ensure public health and ensure economic vitality to California. Not to mention, we are mandated by our governing agencies and California law to inventory State property!

When we talk about the State Property Program, we are referring to a program within the BSO that is responsible for maintaining most of this inventory. Although the inventory is centralized within the BSO, applicable property information is gathered from unit personnel like yourself on a State property tracking sheet. Let us talk about what kind of property is applicable for the State property tracking sheet.

What items need to be inventoried? There are a few things to consider when deciding what to inventory on the State Property Tracking Sheet, beginning with the cost of the property or purchase. ANY purchase you make that is over \$5,000 is required to be recorded and tracked on the State Property Tracking Sheet. Keep in mind, it is a purchase of \$5,000 for a single item, not multiple items that equal \$5,000. So, if you buy one chair that costs \$5,000, that is considered a State asset and needs to be tracked. However, if you buy five chairs that total \$5,000, you do not need to record them on the inventory tracking sheet based on price alone.

Now this is where it gets a little tricky; a second consideration for what property needs to be inventoried is whether that property is prone to theft. If the chair that costs \$1,000 is a fancy chair and might be prone to theft, it is a good idea to add it your inventory for tracking purposes. Other items that are considered prone to theft, such as televisions, DVD players, and digital cameras could potentially run the risk of becoming unaccounted for unless they are being tracked and accounted for each year. It is a good idea to tag this kind of property and record it on the inventory tracking sheet, regardless of the cost.

Another factor that helps to determine if property should be tracked is if it is high risk or sensitive. Maybe it is not prone to theft, but is it a valuable piece of property that should be tracked because of what it can do, where it is located, or its value to the program/unit? When making this determination keep these questions in mind: What purpose does it serve my program? Would it be detrimental if it was gone? Is it something that could easily disappear without anyone knowing? Is it just a few pennies away from costing \$5,000?

What items are you responsible for tracking? The State Property Program mentioned before is responsible for tracking most of CAL FIRE's property, but not all of it. This is because there are a few other programs within CAL FIRE that track specific property. Programs such as Information Technology Services (ITS), Telecommunications,

(Cont'd. on Page 5)

Dates to Remember

Final Filing Date(s):

Arson and Bomb Investigator
Continuous Filing

Communications Operator
Continuous Filing

Deputy State Fire Marshal
Continuous Filing

Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Spec.)
Continuous Filing

Fire Fighter II (Paramedic)
Continuous Filing

Forestry Assistant II
Continuous Filing

CAL FIRE Heart & Stroke Team and Healthier U – Sign Up Today!

Ryan Burns, Occupational Safety and Health Programs

“...growth and comfort do not coexist.”

-Ginni Rometty

CAL FIRE is proud to support the American Heart Association’s (AHA) Sacramento Heart & Stroke Walk. It is never too early to start building the CAL FIRE Heart & Stroke Walk team, and now is the time to help show support for emergency staff who put their lives on the line every day. Sudden death from a heart event is the most common cause of death among firefighters, and the fact is that most heart disease can be prevented.

If you are interested in registering with the CAL FIRE Team or donating to the AHA, click on [2017 CAL FIRE Heart & Stroke Walk Team](#).

Registration is easy and free. You can choose to “[Join This Team](#)” or “[Donate to This Team](#).” For those who do not live in the area, donating is a great way to support the cause.

The AHA’s Sacramento Heart & Stroke Walk is taking place on **September 21st at 11:30 a.m. on the West Steps of the State Capitol!** CAL FIRE will be taking a group picture prior to the start of the walk at 11:15 a.m., on the West steps of the State Capitol (please wear a red shirt if you have one). Snacks, health screenings, a vendor fair, and more await you at the village.

If you are not able to participate as a walker, please consider making a \$25 (or more!) donation to help reach the goal. If everyone contributes a small amount, we can make a BIG difference!

Your donation will support such life-saving efforts as research, education, advocating for better health, improving patient care, and reaching populations at risk. Thank you for your support and efforts to help make the CAL FIRE Heart & Stroke Walk team a success.

CAL FIRE has also been given the opportunity to participate in CalHR’s beta release of Healthier U Connections. This is a wellness platform being offered to CAL FIRE, along with a group of other departments selected to participate. Healthier U Connections can be accessed via computer, smart phone or tablet. CAL FIRE currently has 211 employees registered! Participating is the Heart and Stroke Walk is a great way to get activity points!

Registration has been open since April 3rd. Just go to www.calhrwellness.com and follow the prompts to set up an account. Once you are in, you can start a team, join an existing team or participate on your own. Teams can be anywhere from 1-12 people. We hope everyone will use this tool to create and maintain healthy habits and to encourage and challenge each other in a fun, friendly way. So, do not forget to register at www.calhrwellness.com!

Safety First

Lynnette Round, Communications Office

Are you doing the right thing the wrong way? When you are in your yard creating defensible space around your home, make sure to use your equipment responsibly. Lawn mowers, weed whackers, chain saws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire, especially when it is dry. So how can you do your part in being safe? Make sure to do your yard maintenance that requires a gas or electrical motor before 10:00 a.m., not in the heat of the day, or when the wind is blowing! Your lawn mower is designed to mow lawns, and that is it. I know it is tempting, but never use your lawn mower in dry vegetation – only use a weed trimmer to cut down dry weeds and grass. Try and remove rocks in the area before you begin operating any equipment. A rock hidden in grass or weeds is enough to start a fire when struck by a metal blade. In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment including tractors, harvesters, chain saws, mowers, motorcycles, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires you would not even see, until it is too late. Do not pull off into dry grass or brush if you are having car problems, and always check the brush before you leave.

As June rolls in quickly, we also want to encourage the safe use of fireworks this Fourth of July. Two out of five fires on the 4th of July are caused by fireworks, more than any other cause of fires. Most of these incidents are related to the use of

(Cont’d. on Page 7)

A Quick Connect: SHU and SLU

Mike Hebrard, Shasta-Trinity Unit and Scott Jalbert, San Luis Obispo Unit

The Quick Connect feature provides snapshots of the 21 Units located out of the Northern and Southern Regions. Provided by staff at these locations, these articles give readers a glance of Unit facts, including unique characteristics.

Unit Information:

The Northern Region
The Shasta-Trinity Unit (SHU)
875 Cypress Avenue
Redding, California 96001



Unit Chief Mike Hebrard

County/Counties Served:

- Shasta
- Trinity

Geography:

SHU has Interstate 5 running north/south through the middle of Shasta County and Hwy 299 running east/west through both Shasta and Trinity Counties.

Infrastructure:

- 15 Fire Stations
- 18 Volunteer Companies
- 1 Airbase (Redding Air Attack Base)
- 1 Emergency Command Center (Redding Interagency Command Center)
- 2 Camps (Sugar Pine Conservation Camp and Trinity River Conservation Camp)
- 1 State Forest (LaTour Demonstration State Forest)

Cooperative Agreement(s):

- Shasta County Cooperative Agreement to operate the Shasta County Fire Department (SCFD)
- Shasta College Cooperative Agreement—Amador funded engine at the college
- Trinity County Cooperative Agreement—Amador funded Training Officer

Employees:

Roughly 300 including seasonals.

Unique Characteristic(s) of the Unit:

- SHU also runs the SCFD which is made up of both Schedule A engines and 18 Volunteer Companies (200 Volunteers). As part of the SCFD, SHU also operates two Fire Boats on Lake Shasta.

Check Them Out:

- Twitter – [@CALFIRESHU](#)

Unit Information:

The Southern Region
The San Luis Obispo Unit (SLU)
635 N. Santa Rosa Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93405



Unit Chief Scott Jalbert

County/Counties Served:

- San Luis Obispo
- Contract counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura

Geography:

Consists of the San Luis Obispo County that is located along the central coast intermixing with the Los Padres National Forest. Mostly a rural coastal area with lots of wineries.

Infrastructure:

- 21 Fire Stations
- 1 Airbase (Paso Robles)
- 1 Emergency Command Center (San Luis)
- 2 Camps (Cuesta and Ventura)
- 2 Training Centers (South Bay)

Cooperative Agreement(s):

- Serve as San Luis Obispo Fire Department and Pismo Beach City Fire Department
- Protection of all of the unincorporated areas not served by special districts

Employees:

Roughly 225 permanent and 67 seasonal.

Unique Characteristic(s) of the Unit:

- CAL FIRE under the Pismo Beach Contract, manages a Lifeguard and Junior Lifeguard Program.
- Supports the Military Crew Advisor and military crews from Camp Roberts in addition to Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System operations from Point Mugu.
- Has many specialized operations such as aircraft rescue and firefighting, urban search and rescue, regional Haz-Mat Team, and surf and water rescue teams.

Check Them Out:

- Website – [calfireslo.org](#)
- Twitter – [@CALFIRE_SLO](#)

The Communications Operator Exam

Tiffany Harris, Examination Unit

*"It is our choices,
that show what we
truly are, far more
than our abilities."*

-J.K. Rowling

The Communications Operator classification is crucial to CAL FIRE's ability to function effectively and efficiently. The Department is extremely excited to now be using CritiCall software. This computerized software allows the Department to test Communications Operator candidates utilizing a performance examination. In recent years, the CAL FIRE Examination Unit, with the assistance of subject matter experts, did their best to create an oral examination that featured dispatch elements and tested candidates' ability to multi-task. However, that style of examination never truly encompassed the many intricacies of the job, and extreme pressure placed on Communications Operators daily. With this new examination tool, we are confident that the eligible candidates who successfully pass the examination will be highly qualified and ready to step into the role of a CAL FIRE Communications Operator.

In addition to changing the format of the examination, the filing status has also changed. This examination is now being offered on a continuous filing basis. Simply put, candidates can apply at any time, and their applications will be retained until the next examination administration. Also, if you take the examination and are not successful, you can immediately reapply, and your application will be retained. Once there is a need from the field and/or enough applications received, performance examinations will be scheduled, and candidates will be notified via mail. It is anticipated that the Department will schedule two examinations each year. The frequency could increase with need.

The minimum qualifications for this classification are entry level and do not require dispatch experience. Prospective candidates with both direct contact and telephone contact with the public are encouraged to apply. When filling out applications, it is important to be thorough and specific. Examination Analysts reviewing applications need to see that candidates meet the minimum qualifications as specified by the classification specification, which can be found online. If duties vary, it is crucial that candidates specify the percentage of time spent performing the duties being considered. Always read the examination bulletin thoroughly and completely

before applying for any classification. As much as the bulletin is an examination announcement, it is also a tool for the candidate.

DeAir (Cont'd.)

Mobile Equipment, Technical Services, and Law Enforcement have their own tracking, but that is for very specific items. When any items are purchased that fall under these programs' inventory, you most likely had to go through that program to make the purchase to begin with. For example, ITS tracks computers, laptops, and monitors. You would not have been able to purchase those items without ITS approval. It is important to note that ITS ONLY tracks those items. Anything else that is ITS-related can be tracked on the State Property Inventory if you deem it sensitive or prone to theft. Telecommunications tracks all items that are telecommunications-related, such as portable radios, mobile radios, repeaters, etc. Telecommunications has an online database called the Telecommunications Radio and Inventory Systems Database (TRAIS) that helps track inventory. Technical Services tracks all property (buildings) and land, Mobile Equipment tracks all the mobile equipment (e.g., cars, vans, trucks), and Law Enforcement tracks weapons, body armor, and other classified pieces of property that relate to this field of work.

So, when you have a piece of property, and you are not sure if property needs to be tracked, remember these steps: 1) Is another program already tracking it? 2) Did a single item cost over \$5,000? 3) Is it likely to be stolen? 4) Is it valuable to my program or unit?

You can also refer to the CAL FIRE 2800 State Property Management Handbook on the Intranet for more details on each program's inventory responsibility, the types of property to be inventoried, and the inventory process itself.

-CLAIRE DeAIR

Veterans Employer of the Year Awards

Windy C. Bouldin, R.V.E.T.S.

On May 4, 2017, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), along with several other government/public section and private businesses (large and small), was awarded the prestigious 2017 Veterans Employer of the Year Award from the California Employer Advisory Council (CEAC).

The CEAC is a nonprofit organization working in partnership with the California Employment Development Department (EDD) with a mission to develop and maintain mutually beneficial and close working partnerships with government agencies that have the authority to effect change in employment and other workforce development areas.

The Veterans Employer of the Year Awards recognize employers who consistently demonstrate positive policies toward U.S. veterans in hiring and promotion, as well as through employee retention efforts, ongoing training, and benefits. CAL FIRE was nominated for this award by Dennis Pearson, Local Veteran Employment Representative, EDD Roseville, in part due to the ongoing partnership between CAL FIRE and EDD and the Department's collaboration with the EDD's VetNET program. However, this award would not be possible were it not for the support of individuals, programs, and units throughout the entire organization—thank you!

The award ceremony, hosted at the McClellan Conference Center in Sacramento, was a small gathering and allowed participants the opportunity to share their appreciation, transitional stories, and insight into issues that continue to face veterans, active service members, and their families.

"I am extremely proud of the efforts put forth by our Department that have led to this recognition," said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE Director. "Supporting those who serve our country, as well as having the opportunity for them to continue their path in public service with CAL FIRE is an honor. We benefit from the knowledge, skills and determination they bring from their military service."

(Cont'd. on Page 7)

When Using Social Media...

Ron Ralph, Information Technology Services

Social networking has drastically changed the way people interact with their friends, associates, and family members, and is of enormous benefit to many people. Although social networks like Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat can play a major role in our day-to-day lives, these products have inherent privacy risks.

When using these social media sites, it is important to know and understand the privacy risks involved. It is now very common for identity thieves to gather personal information from social media sites. Many identity thieves tend to hack their victims' email accounts by simply using the personal information available on a social media profile. Your personal email tends to be the most important online thing you need to protect, as once a bad actor accesses your email account, that person basically has access to all of your personal information and can change your online profile at will.

Social media sites also often utilize mobile apps and location based services to allow users to advertise their whereabouts so their friends and family can participate in life's events. The information posted can be easily used by malicious people to track your whereabouts. Moreover, telling the online community where you are or where you are going to be can end up inviting burglars and thieves to your home while you are away.

When information gets posted online, it is no longer private and may end up falling into wrong hands. You should also be clear that once posted, the information never really goes away, even if you think you have deleted it. Even if you have put in place the highest possible security measures, some of your family and or friends with whom you interact on social media can end up leaking your personal information as well. Therefore, you need to be very careful about what you post online, or you may end up giving burglars, stalkers, cyber bullies, and identity thieves the information they require to cause you or your family harm.

Internal Audit Awareness

Cecilia Lau, Office of Program Accountability

*“My best successes
came on the heels
of failures.”*

-Barbara Corcoran

May was the International Internal Audit Awareness Month. So, what is internal auditing? According to [the Institute of Internal Auditors \(IIA\)](#), a global professional association for internal auditors who promulgates professional standards and guidance for the industry, internal auditing is an independent, objective activity designed to add value and improve an organization’s operations.

At CAL FIRE, the Office of Program Accountability (OPA) is the Department’s internal audit entity and provides assurance, insight, and objectivity to management related to governance, risk, and internal controls. The mission of OPA is to assist management in fulfilling its responsibilities to the public by offering guidance in developing, maintaining, and enhancing accountability. OPA utilizes the IIA’s globally recognized Code of Ethics and International Professional Practices Framework to perform audit-related activities, with stringent accountability, to provide independent and objective feedback to managers responsible for operations by working with all employees supportively and cooperatively.

Some of you may wonder, why is my program being audited? Did we mess up and something went wrong in my area? Not necessarily. Audit areas are selected using a risk-based approach. Annually, OPA facilitates a risk assessment process to identify barriers that could prevent the Department from achieving its mission and strategies. Those results are utilized to identify high-risk areas within the Department. These high-risk areas in addition to governmental trends, prior audit/compliance review history, etc., are compiled. High-risk areas generally have a governance structure (authority, decision-making, accountability) in place as well as internal controls (preventive and detective) to eliminate or mitigate risks/threats. These areas are then tested through audit. Ultimately, auditable areas are selected by Executive Management, and OPA develops an annual audit plan.

Besides audits, the audit plan also includes other audit-related activities, such as consulting engagements and special projects that OPA anticipates accomplishing in the fiscal year.

In addition to conducting audits and providing services internally for the Department, OPA serves as the central point of contact for all external compliance reviews and/or audits and works collaboratively with the respective programs as well. Moreover, OPA provides presentations on audit-related topics at trainings and workshops and publishes articles, templates, and tools on its [Articles, Presentations, and Publications](#) page on the CAL FIRE Intranet to add value to the organization.

For more information about OPA and internal audit, please visit OPA’s main page on the CAL FIRE Intranet at <http://calfireweb/organization/directorsoffice/programaccountability>.

Safety (Cont’d.)

illegal fireworks as well as State-approved fireworks that are lit by amateurs. To help keep you and your family safe, make sure to buy only State Fire Marshal-approved (Safe and Sane) fireworks. Have a bucket of water and a hose handy, and read the directions before lighting. Always have an adult present when lighting fireworks, and use them outside only. Make sure you do not try to relight fireworks – if you have a dud just put it into a bucket of water and move on. Did you know that sparklers can reach a temperature of 1,200°F? That is a hot item to place in a small child’s hand. Always watch children closely when you have fireworks close by.

Award (Cont’d.)

The Department has increasingly grown in its awareness of issues facing the military community—this award serves as motivation to keep that momentum moving forward toward ongoing, continuous improvement.

For additional information on veteran-related issues (e.g., Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, military leave, support services), visit the R.V.E.T.S. Intranet page located under the Employee Center at <http://calfireweb.fire.ca.gov/employeecenter/rvets/>.

May the Force Be with You!

Windy C. Bouldin, Office of Program Accountability

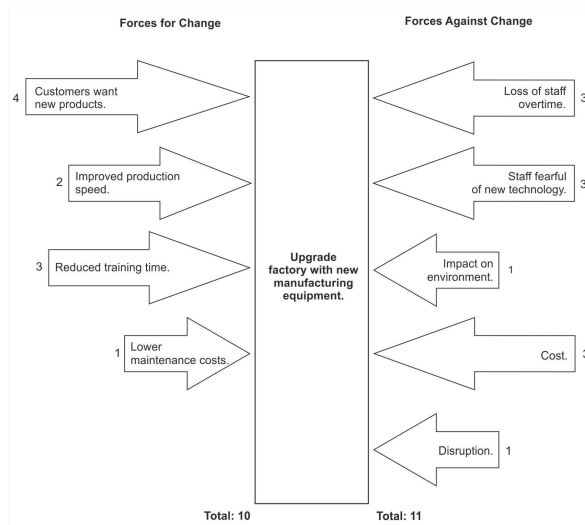
Recently, Office of Program Accountability staff attended a Kaizen (KAI=Change ZEN=Good) Group meeting led by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). This group, like many others sprouting up throughout State service, focuses on improvement of governmental processes. Although largely comprised of DHCS employees, there are no restrictions on attendees. In this meeting, facilitators promoted a long-standing change management tool—the Force Field Analysis. A Vader fan at heart—I was intrigued.

So, what is a Force Field Analysis? Unfortunately, it has nothing to do with Star Wars, but it is useful for understanding forces and assisting with the decision-making process. Considered a change management technique, it sets out to recognize forces (factors) driving toward and away from the identified issue. Best served as part of a collaborative brainstorming process, forces are analyzed and rated, and strategies are developed.

The exercise can be carried out on a whiteboard or a worksheet and follows these simple steps:

1. Like many other analysis tools, the team must first *define the change*. For example, a new legislative mandate has created additional workload without additional funding and/or staffing.
2. Next, *determine the ideal state or goal*. What would the ideal scenario look like?
3. *Identify driving forces*. Consider everyone and everything driving the change forward (e.g., people, the mandate, politics). Who supports the change? Who benefits from it?
4. *Identify restraining forces*. Same as above, but remember that these are opposing forces. Who is against the change and why? What resource limitations are there?
5. *Rank or weight the force factors for magnitude/impact*. Assign a score to each force (factor). To keep it simple, consider using 1 – weakest through 5 – strongest. Sum the scores for each force (i.e., for and against).

[Mind Tools](#), a career development website, credits Social Psychologist Kurt Lewin for creating the Force Field Analysis in 1940. In addition to ranking



the forces, the Editorial Team suggests illustrating factors with arrows. Larger arrows represent greater influence and smaller ones least. They also caution that although a Force Field Analysis helps with understanding impacts of different factors (forces) on decisions—it is subjective. Overall, it can be useful in deciding whether to move forward and/or how to strengthen the forces that support change and weaken others.

For more information and/or a free downloadable [Force Field Analysis Worksheet](#), visit the Mind Tools website.

Provided by
Management Services

Tony Favro,
Deputy Director for
Management Services

Executive Editor

Windy C. Bouldin
Managing Editor
windy.bouldin@fire.ca.gov

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