

About the California Firefighters Memorial

What is the California Firefighters Memorial?

The California Firefighters Memorial is a unique and stunning tribute to more than 1,500 California firefighters – paid and volunteer -- who have died in the line of duty since California became a state in 1850. It is located in Capitol Park, the grounds adjacent to the State Capitol in Sacramento, California.

How did the Memorial come about?

Legislation authorizing the construction of the Memorial in Capitol Park was approved in 1992. The site was dedicated in 1995. In the late 1990s, work began on two statues that frame the Memorial. Formal construction began in late 2001, and the Memorial was unveiled on April 6, 2002.

How many names are on the Memorial Wall?

This year's 35 honorees will bring the total number of names on the Memorial Wall to 1,544. The first name on the Wall is that of James Welsh, a San Francisco firefighter who died in a catastrophic blaze on May 4, 1851, less than a year after California became a state.

What does the Memorial look like?

The California Firefighters Memorial features three elements, all of which work together seamlessly while maintaining the beauty and integrity of the park:

- **The Memorial Wall:** A two-sided polished limestone wall on which is inscribed the names of every firefighter who has died in the line of duty since California became a state. The wall is flanked by bronze statues of firefighter "turnouts" – the protective garments worn by firefighters in action;
- **"Fallen Brother"** – a bronze statue, directly adjacent to the wall, depicting an anguished firefighter removing a lifeless colleague from the flames;
- **"Holding the Line"** – another bronze statue, this one honoring the profession of firefighting. It depicts four firefighters in action, working a hose line.

How much did the Memorial cost and how is it funded?

The \$2 million cost of the California Firefighters Memorial – as well as the ongoing expenses of maintaining it – is raised privately, without a penny of government money. It is the only completely self-sustaining memorial in Capitol Park. An estimated 80 percent of the money to build the Memorial was raised from

firefighters and their families, through the Firefighter License Plate and the Firefighters Memorial Tax Check-Off.

Who qualifies to be on the California Firefighter Memorial Wall?

The California Firefighters Memorial honors federal, state and local firefighters -- professional and volunteer -- who served for a public fire department operating within California who died in the line of duty. The criteria for determining a line-of-duty death include:

- Any death of a firefighter (past or present) due to traumatic injury or injuries that occurred on the job or as a result of the job.
- Any death of a firefighter where the family of the deceased qualifies for a line-of-duty death benefit under the regulations of the U.S. Public Safety Officers' Benefits program.
- Any death of a firefighter, where the family of the deceased qualifies for a line-of-duty death benefit under California's Workers' Compensation regulations.

Why are there names of people who died in earlier years being added now?

The 855 names that were inscribed on the Memorial when it was unveiled in 2002 were produced after three years of research. In the years since, many departments, local unions and even individual firefighters have taken it upon themselves to do their own research to verify additional line of duty deaths. When the Foundation verifies any new line-of-duty death, that name is added to the wall. In 2014, three such names are being added.

What is the California Fire Foundation?

The California Fire Foundation is a non-profit charitable 501(c)(3) corporation, established in 1987 by California Professional Firefighters. Its mandate includes an array of survivor assistance, public education and victim assistance projects. The Foundation raised the funds to build the Memorial and coordinates the annual Memorial ceremonies. www.cafirefoundation.org.

What is California Professional Firefighters?

California Professional Firefighters (CPF) is the largest state firefighter organization in the U.S., representing more than 35,000 career firefighters in some 180 affiliated local unions. Through its California Fire Foundation, CPF has been the central organizing force behind construction and maintenance of the California Firefighters Memorial.

How do I find out more about the Memorial?

In addition to the Memorial web site – cafirefoundation.org/memorial – the California Fire Foundation also has a toll-free phone number for more information: (800) 890-3213. You can also follow the Foundation on Facebook, Twitter/X and Instagram (@CAFireFound).