

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ngsd-pao@ng.army.mil
Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SD Guard joins the Myrtle Fire fight

CUSTER, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard, along with approximately 300 firefighter personnel, are on scene working to contain and suppress the 7,000-acre Myrtle Fire, located approximately one mile east of Pringle, while protecting life, property, and natural resources.

The SDARNG is utilizing two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to conduct water-bucket drop operations, along with several trucks helping to haul supplies from Rapid City to the Myrtle Fire and other fires throughout the hills. There are 17 Soldiers on state active duty orders providing support, which includes helicopter crews, truck drivers and other operations personnel.

A Type-III Incident Management Team continues to strategize fire suppression tactics while monitoring fire behavior, the terrain and weather forecasts. According to incident command officials, all firefighting strategies will prioritize the safety of the firefighters and the public.

We've called in all forces from all agencies," said Matt Spring, incident commander. "The National Guard, Black Hills National Forest, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service... It doesn't really matter, if you're a firefighter, we want to utilize you."

For the past two days, SDARNG helicopters and personnel have been battling fires throughout the Black Hills, providing support to the River Bend and Cactus Flat fires.

"Bucket drops really support the firefighters on the ground, cool off hot spots, save structures and help get some containment on the fire," said Spring. "Helicopters won't put a fire out by themselves but help ensure the firefighters' safety by knocking the intensity down so it's manageable for the firefighters."

The Myrtle Fire was reported July 19, at 1:30 p.m. and is currently five percent contained.

"Historically in the Black Hills, we reach containment of most large fires in five-to-seven days, but this one could take longer," said Spring. "It's all dependent on the weather and the next few days there is no relief in sight as far as precipitation."



120710-A-CW157-001: A South Dakota Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk conducts water-bucket drop operations to help contain the 7,000 acre Myrtle Fire, located approximately one mile south of Pringle, S.D. (SDNG photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)



120720-A-CW157-002: A South Dakota Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk conducts water-bucket drop operations to help contain the 7,000 acre Myrtle Fire, located approximately one mile south of Pringle, S.D. (SDNG photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)
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FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail ngsd-pao@ng.army.mil.