



Fire protection is a top priority for Montecito Water District as part of its commitment to supplying water to meet this community's needs every day. The District remains ready and prepared to provide water for fighting fires across Montecito and Summerland, and ongoing projects are improving resiliency.

Water Supply is Abundant and Reservoirs are Full

The District's robust and diversified water portfolio ensures water supplies are readily accessible in local storage, rain or shine. Regional and District reservoirs can hold more than 20 million gallons. Additionally, real-time production capability from combined water sources is as much as 15 million gallons daily. As a point of reference, peak summer demand on a hot day is about six million gallons for the entire District. In an emergency situation, the District has the capacity to produce and supply more than five times this demand.

NEW in 2025-2026

Record-setting Rainfall

More than 25 inches of rainfall since the start of October 2025 has replenished summer use, filling and spilling both Jameson and Cachuma Lakes. The water supply outlook is excellent.



Infrastructure is in Service, Operational, and Continuously Monitored

District assets include extensive pipeline systems, reservoirs, pumps, emergency generators, and 880 public fire hydrants District-wide that are maintained regularly in collaboration with Montecito and Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Departments. Comprehensive modeling and field testing ensure that the water system complies with fire flow requirements. Backup power generators are in place, maintained, and regularly exercised at important infrastructure locations, e.g. pump stations, treatment plants, and District headquarters. These generators are designed to activate automatically upon power failure, averting water service interruptions.

NEW in 2025-2026

Hydrant Additions, Replacements, and Maintenance

With input from Montecito Fire Department, four new hydrants were added at District facilities including Terminal Pump Station, Romero Pump Station, Picay Hydro Power Facility, and East Valley Pump Station. Golden Gate Avenue in Summerland also gained a new hydrant. Across the District, three aging hydrants were replaced and five more are scheduled for replacement in March 2026. Functional maintenance on all hydrants is conducted by Water District staff over a three-year cycle. Hydrant maps, flow test results, and maintenance records are all shared with Montecito Fire Department.

Building Hardening & Defensible Space Improvements

Eight critical District facilities including the office, multiple pump stations, and reservoirs were freshly evaluated in coordination with Montecito Fire Department to assess our infrastructure's resiliency to wildfire impacts. Extensive structure hardening work was completed over the past year including replacing a roof, repairing roof flashing, installing wire mesh vents and gutter screens, and clearing gutters. Efforts to improve our facilities' defensible space included trimming trees, and removing leaf litter, vegetation and tree limbs within 10 feet of building perimeters for enhanced fire protection.

Staff

A dedicated team of certified and trained professionals carefully monitors the water system and current conditions, including weather events, taking precautions as needed. For example, when forecasts indicate increased fire risk, reservoir levels are adjusted to increase local water storage and availability. Staff are prepared to respond quickly, at all times of day, and have equipment and resources to make timely repairs if needed.

NEW in 2025-2026

District staff assigned to Montecito Fire Department Incident Command Post (ICP) during incidents for enhanced communication and coordination.



Partnerships

Montecito Water District communicates regularly with Montecito Fire Department, Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Department, and additional regional partners for the safety of this community.

NEW in 2025-2026

Updated Modeling for Wildfire Scenarios and System Hydraulics for Residential Structure Fires

District engineering staff and consultants completed updated modeling of wildfire scenarios in coordination with Montecito Fire Department and analyzed fire flows at all hydrants across the District to ensure adequate fire flow per residential structure fire flow rates.



Montecito Water District and Montecito Fire Department jointly complete the Public Protection Classification survey and are rated by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) every five years. In 2023, Montecito Fire Department improved to a 2/2X rating. When rating an agency, the ISO considers needed fire flows, emergency communications, water supply, location of fire hydrants, department staffing levels, training, location of fire stations, community risk reduction, outreach and fire prevention efforts. ISO ratings range from 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest score an agency can earn. This latest rating makes Montecito Fire one of just over 1,900 fire departments in the United States, and one in 173 in California, to achieve a 2/2x rating.

Community-Wide Resilience

Through planning and actions, the District constantly improves its practices using lessons learned from local and regional fire history. Above are specific examples of how special collaboration over the past year between Montecito Water District and our neighboring fire departments accelerated improvements with a focus on community protection and improving fire resiliency. While we make every effort to provide robust, resilient, and redundant water service, it is important to note that public water systems may not be sufficient under all conditions. Urban systems are built to supply water for fighting fires in residential areas of limited scale and may become stressed in large-scale, fast-moving wildfire scenarios. Community safety is a collective effort – please stay alert and take every precaution to stay safe.



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2026 Waterwise Garden Recognition Contest

www.WaterWiseSB.org/GardenContest

View contest rules and apply online by April 30, 2026

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