

Wildfires raging through Northern California cause at least 5 deaths

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Dozens of wildfires raging through Northern California have reportedly killed at least 5 people this week, including a Pacific Gas & Electric worker who was helping first responders and a pilot on a water-dropping mission who was killed in a crash.

Three civilians have died in Napa Valley and one in Solano County, Cal Fire said in an update. It wasn't immediately clear if the power company worker was included in the count of civilians.

At least 30 civilians and firefighters have been injured in the fires, which have also destroyed hundreds of structures and threatens hundreds of homes. Thousands of residents have been evacuated and at least two people were missing.

"Please keep the family and PG&E in your thoughts and prayers," Cal Fire said in a statement, adding the PG&E employee was taken to the hospital after he was found unresponsive in his car, according to KPIX-TV in the Bay Area. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

"If you are in denial about climate change, come to California," California Gov. Gavin Newsom said during an address at the Democratic National Convention Thursday, after re-recording his speech to speak about the fires.

CALIFORNIA GOV. NEWSOMSAYS 367 WILDFIRES, 23 OF THEM MAJOR, CONTINUE TO BURN IN STATEWIDE EMERGENCY

Multiple fires burning in Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Lake, and Yolo Counties, known collectively as the LNU complex fires, were sparked Monday by lightning strikes and grew by 60% Thursday from 131,000 acres to 215,000 acres by 6 p.m., according to the San Francisco Chronicle.



Flames from the LNU Lightning Complex fires jump Interstate 80 in Vacaville, Calif., Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020. The highway was closed in both directions shortly afterward. Fire crews across the region scrambled to contain dozens of wildfires sparked by lightning strikes as a statewide heatwave continues. (AP Photo/Noah Berger)

The Hennessey Fire, the largest of the group, has grown to 192,000 acres with zero percent containment, Cal Fire said.

NEWSOM SCORCHES TRUMP IN ABBREVIATED DNC APPEARANCE AS WILDFIRES RAGE

Still, Cal Fire Division Chief Charlie Blankenheim said firefighters are making steady progress. “We’re doing really good in there,” he told reporters Thursday. “We’re fairly confident that we stopped the spread and hopefully there won’t be any more push further into Vacaville, we’ll be able to keep it where it is, and we’ll keep any more structures from being lost.”

More than two dozen major fires have scorched the state, taxing California’s firefighting capacity, sparked by the unprecedented lightning siege that dropped nearly 11,000 strikes over several days.

Upwards of 10,000 firefighters are on the front lines, but fire officials in charge of each of the major fire complexes say they are strapped for resources. Some

firefighters were working 72-hour shifts instead of the usual 24 hours. The state has requested 375 engines and crew from other states.

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“That’s going to allow our firefighters that have have been on the front line since this weekend to have an opportunity to take some rest,” Daniel Berlant, an assistant deputy director with the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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