

# COLUMBIA HELITACK BASE

The Columbia Helitack Base was established in 1971 and is located in the CDF Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit in the town of Columbia.

Columbia responds to an average of 165 calls per year ranging from fires to rescues. Staffing at Columbia consists of two pilots, four fire captains, two seasonal fire apparatus engineers, and 10 firefighters. Columbia Helitack operates a UH-1H helicopter. Also operated out of Columbia Helitack Base is the helitender, which serves as a support vehicle for the copter. The helitender contains 1,000 gallons of fuel, along with foam, backup tools, out-of-county bags, an extra bucket, paperwork, Meals Ready to Eat (MRE's) and many other items that are necessary to support the \*helitack crew.



The base provides initial attack for the CDF Madera-Mariposa-Merced and Amador-EI Dorado Units and the Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite Park. This area spans north to the town of Plymouth, south to the town of Mariposa, east over the Sierras and west to the Unit's state responsibility area (SRA) boundary.

\*CDF helitack crews consist of highly trained and experienced firefighters who are assigned to and respond to wildland fires aboard CDF helicopters. Once arriving on an incident the crew, typically 5 to 6 firefighters along with a fire captain, are let off with fire fighting hand tools and initiate fire suppression actions. Helitack crews also perform other helicopter support operations when not assigned to direct fire line operations such as helibase operations and support.

*For information about other helitack bases,  
visit the [Air Program](#) page of the  
CDF website:  
[www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)*



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