



SENT TO COUNCIL:

Distributed on:

FEB 24 2011

City Manager's Office
Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: William McDonald
Fire Chief

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 22, 2011

Approved

Deana Silva

Date

2/24/11

SUBJECT: MONTHLY OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE DATA, JANUARY 2011

This memo provides the operational performance of the San Jose Fire Department for the month of January 2011, and presents an aggregate analysis of the emergency response performance for medical aid incidents over the six-month period since the implementation of the FY 2010/11 operating budget, in anticipation of proposed changes by the County of Santa Clara Emergency Medical Services Agency. City Councilmember comment and input would be appreciated regarding the format, relevance and usefulness of the information provided in this document.

As shown in the table below, emergency response performance for January was above the minimum standard of arriving at the scene of a reported emergency within eight (8) minutes, 80 percent of the time. Response time performance reached a high of 92 percent on January 10th, but fell below the standard on three (3) days (January 5th, 18th and 24th), one of which (January 5th) coincided with the occurrence of a multiple alarm incident.

OPERATIONAL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

January Emergency Performance Data	
Response Time Performance ¹	83.52%
Number of Fires	
Fire Incidents	121
Structure Responses	45
Medical Responses	3,960
Multiple Alarm Incidents ²	5
Total Incidents	5,339
Dispatched Emergency Incidents	
Highest Number	210 on 1/13/2011
Average Number	172
Move-ups ³	
Highest Number	9 on 1/30/2011
Average Number	2

¹ Response Time Performance Goal is 80%. ² Includes 2nd alarm or greater, large wildland and hi-rise responses. ³ A move-up is defined as the temporary re-assignment of an available fire company and the return trip to their home fire station. Data is based on a day or shift, which begins at 8 a.m. and ends the next morning at 7:59 a.m.

SUMMARY

Contract terms with American Medical Response (AMR) require that a first responder company arrive at the scene of a medical emergency within seven (7) minutes: 59 seconds a minimum of 90 percent of the time. Due to the City's integration into the Santa Clara County Prehospital Care System, AMR has a relaxed emergency response time requirement of arriving at the scene of a medical emergency within 11 minutes: 59 seconds, 90 percent of the time. For both first responders and the responding ambulance crews, the clock begins after they are dispatched by their respective communications centers.

If the City cannot achieve the County performance response standard for first responders, it would be considered to be in breach of the agreement and the City would be subject to monetary fines. Conversely, if the City maintains a response time performance with an arrival time at or above 95 percent, the City would be forgiven the fines.

The San Jose Fire Department had achieved a response time performance of 95 percent or better every month with one exception of December 2009 since the inception of the contract in September 2001 through June 2010. Since then, performance has fallen below the requirement every month and the department has been assessed monthly fines totaling \$85,342.00. Considering the current level of performance and that the potential for further staff reductions could exacerbate the situation further, immediate change in the deployment system and strategy will be critical.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND ACTIVITY

January 11th at just after 3 A.M.: The Department dispatched five engines, three truck companies and three Battalion Chiefs (second alarm) to a reported structure fire near the intersection of Auzurais Avenue and Drake Street. The first arriving fire unit reported a working fire in a one story Victorian home with live wires down in the front. The house was determined to be a marijuana dispensary and the fire was determined to be suspicious in nature. SJPD was requested to investigate. No injuries were reported.

January 14th at approximately 3:50 A.M.: The Fire Department responded to a second alarm fire in an apartment building in the 300 block of Seventh Street. Upon arrival there were flames showing from the front side of the structure. An initial search of the involved building cleared the living units of occupants and the fire was located in the basement. Four families that were displaced as a result of the fire damage however, no injuries were reported. The incident was deemed under control at 5:07 A.M.

January 15th at 11:20 A.M.: The Light Unit Crew assigned to our Alum Rock station (Fire Station 2) contacted the Fire Dispatch Center to report that a propane tank was brought to the fire station that had been altered and possibly used in a methamphetamine drug lab. Upon consulting by phone with the Hazardous Incident Team (HIT) and Battalion 29, and the HIT unit and SJPD responded to the station for further investigation. The substance in the tank was identified as a very strong acid which was a by-product of the methamphetamine lab cooking process. The tank was packaged and sealed inside a 55 gallon drum and detonated at the bomb disposal facility by the SJPD Bomb Squad. This situation was placed under control at 1:50 P.M.

February 22, 2011

Subject: January 2011 SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Page 3

January 29th at approximately 8:00 A.M.; the Fire Department received numerous calls of a house on fire on January 29th and immediately dispatched a full-first alarm assignment (three (3) engines, two (2) trucks and two (2) Battalion Chiefs) to the 1800 block of Foxworthy Avenue near Ross Drive. With the report of people possibly trapped and trying to escape the home, a second alarm was requested and an ambulance also dispatched. Upon arrival, Engine 9 reported heavy smoke and fire. Arriving companies worked very quickly to knock the fire down and to ensure that the structure was free of occupants making a primary search the highest priority. The emergency was placed under control at 9:37 A.M. with one civilian being transported to a local hospital for minor smoke inhalation. The structure sustained major damage as a result of the fire.

COMMENTS

The Department responded to five (5) second or greater alarm fires this month and through very aggressive actions, was able to bring each of the incidents under control while minimizing injuries and further property damage to the structures after their arrival at the scene. Emergency response performance continues to be the focus of the Department's efforts and while we have been successful in meeting our City and Department standards, we have begun to realize an impact on our ability to maintain response performance on medical emergency. As the City continues to work with the County EMS Agency and prepare for the transition to a new ambulance provider, it will be critical to consider staffing and response options both to maintain an acceptable level of capacity for multi-company incidents and respond appropriately to emergency medical requests based on priority dispatch criteria and level of patient severity. It is clear that deployment changes are necessary given the current situation and our obligation to ensure that the community is receiving the highest possible level of emergency services with our limited resources. Staff is working very closely with all levels in the Department to identify alternatives that best address current and projected conditions.

/s/

WILLIAM MCDONALD, Fire Chief

For questions, please contact William McDonald, Fire Chief, at 408-277-5488.

