

The mission of the San José Fire Department is to serve the community by protecting life, property, and the environment through prevention and response.

FIRE

The San José Fire Department provides fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), and fire prevention services to residents and visitors within San José's city limits and some unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County. Other fire prevention services include regulatory enforcement of fire and hazardous materials codes through inspections and construction plan reviews for residents and businesses. The Department provides emergency Advanced Life Support (paramedic) first-response services, and the County of Santa Clara contracts with a private company for emergency ambulance transportation services.

In 2022-23, the Department's operating expenditures totaled \$287 million. This includes personal and non-personal expenditures. The Department was responsible for additional costs including \$1 million in Citywide expenses and \$9.7 million for workers' compensation claims. There were 852 authorized positions in the Department in 2022-23.

The Department reports it is focusing on attracting a diverse and qualified pool of Firefighter/Paramedics to keep pace with increasing call volumes and reduce delays in patient transport and escort during medical emergencies. In 2022-23, the Department reports hiring 35 Firefighters, 24 of whom are trained and accredited paramedics, to provide advanced medical service. The Department also increased the number of Support Paramedics within the Fire Engineer and Fire Captain ranks to expand coverage of paramedic functions along with Firefighters. As the number of Support Paramedics increased, the Department reports that the mandatory call-back hours for Firefighter/Paramedics decreased from almost 9,000 a month in December 2022 to less than 2,000 a month in July 2023.

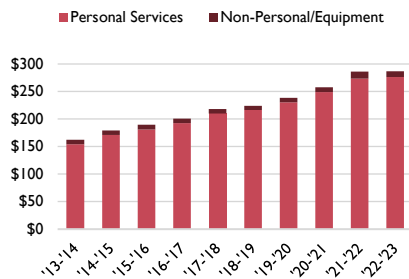


Source: San José Fire Department, photo of firefighter graduation

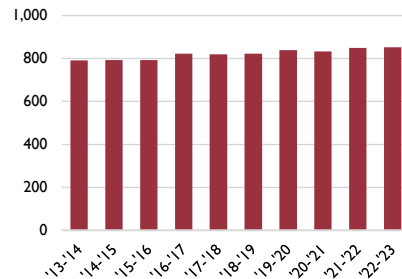
Lateral Firefighter/Paramedic Academy

The Fire Department reports receiving \$1.5 million through the Budget Office's 2021-2022 Annual Report to conduct a Lateral Firefighter/Paramedic academy for the first time since 2013. The Department reports this 10-week academy resulted in 13 Firefighters gaining full accreditation to practice paramedicine and provide Advanced Life Support services in San José. To continue addressing the shortage of paramedics being experienced nationwide, the Department plans to conduct another lateral academy in 2024.

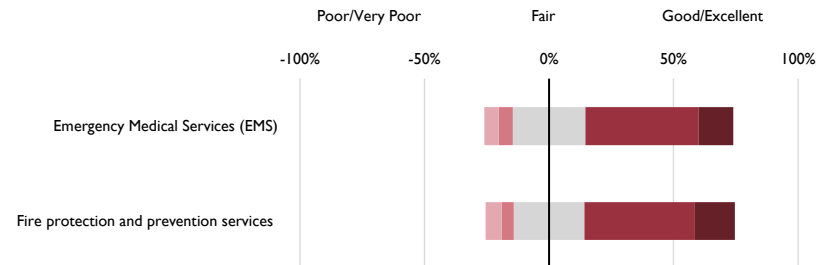
Fire Department Operating Expenditures (\$millions)



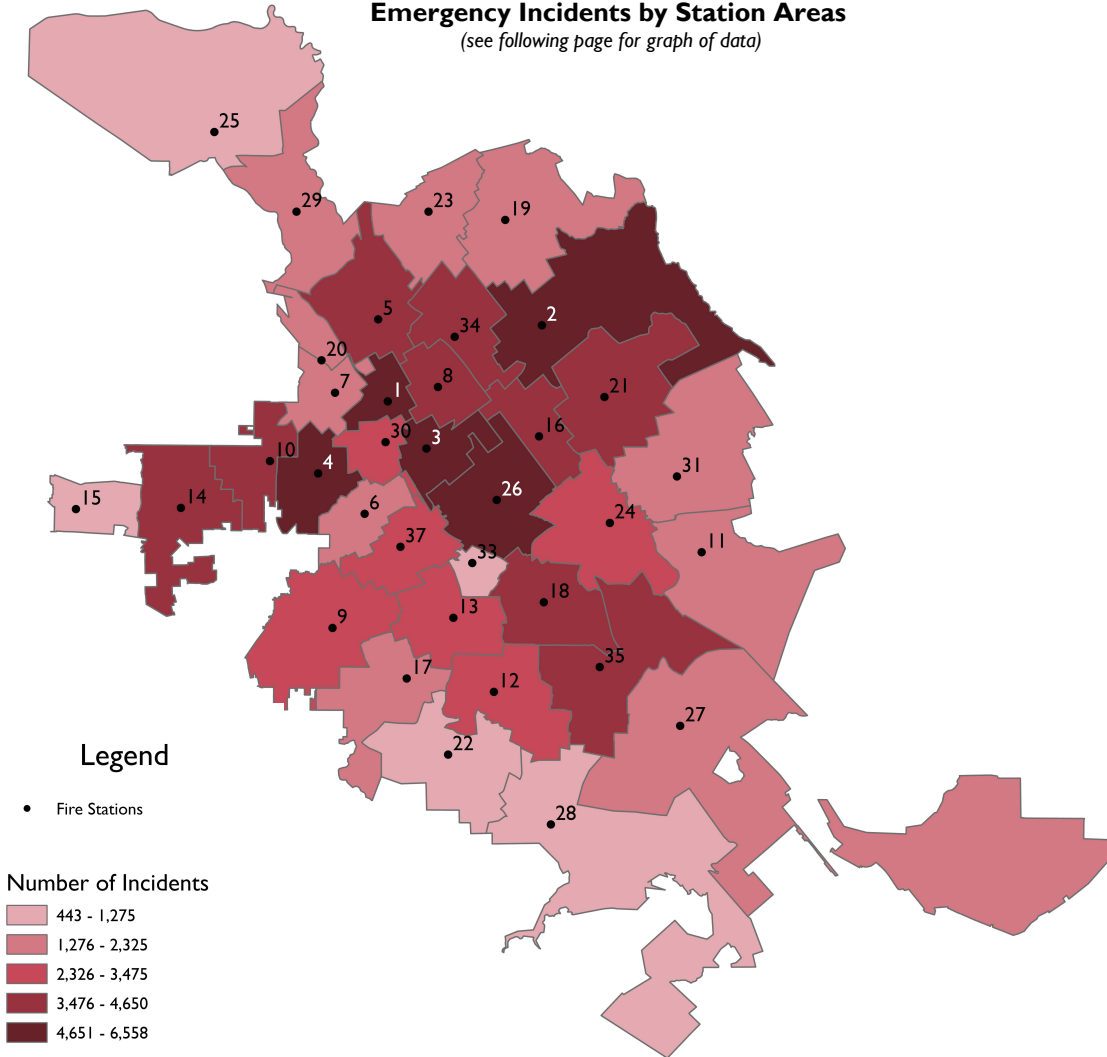
Fire Department Authorized Positions



Community Survey 2023 Ratings of Services



**Fire Stations and Number of 2022-23
Emergency Incidents by Station Areas**
(see following page for graph of data)



KEY FACTS (2022-23)

Fire stations	34
Engine companies	33
Truck companies	9
Rescue Medic units	3
Aircraft Rescue Firefighting companies	2
Urban Search and Rescue companies	3
Emergency incidents	
Emergency medical incidents	67,700
Fires	4,600
Rescue, haz mat, and non-fire	6,300
Hazards	
Other	30,500
Total	109,100

Other includes service requests, false alarms, good intent responses, and canceled en route incidents



Source: San José Fire Department, photo of Firefighter responding to a fire

Source: Auditor analysis based on incident data provided by Fire Department. Note: Data shows incidents by geographic area, not by responding unit.

* Fire Station #20 includes San José Mineta International Airport. Fire Station #33 closed in August 2010. Incidents within the district of Station #33 were handled by other stations. The Department has reserved the numbering of Fire Station #32 and #36 for future use.

FIRE

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In 2022-23, the Fire Department responded to over 109,000 emergency incidents. This is up from the prior year, which the Department reports is because of medical emergencies, including calls pertaining to the unhoused and aging populations in the city.

There were 86,900 Priority 1 incidents (red lights and sirens) and 22,200 Priority 2 incidents (no red lights or sirens). Of the total incidents:

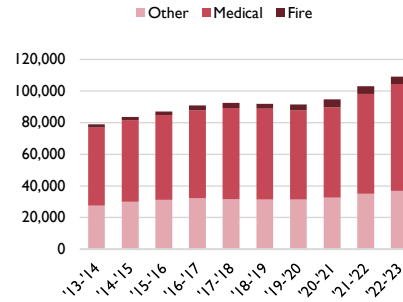
- 62 percent were medical emergencies (67,700 total)
- 34 percent were other types of incidents, including good intent calls, rescues, and false alarms (36,800 total)
- 4 percent were fires (4,600 total). Of these, 460 were structure fires, 420 were vehicle/aircraft fires, and 640 were vegetation fires. The remaining were categorized as other fires, which could include rubbish fires or fires in dumpsters or encampments.

A breakdown of all incidents by fire station is provided below.

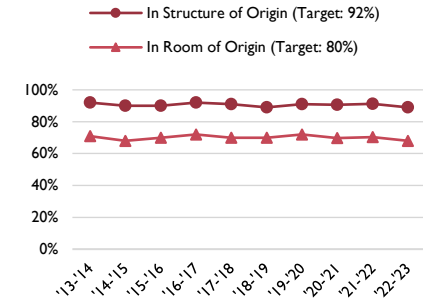
In 2022-23, the Department contained 89 percent of fires to the *structure* of origin (target: 92 percent). The Department contained 68 percent of fires to the *room* of origin (target: 80 percent).

There were 12 civilian fire injuries and four civilian fire deaths in 2022-23.

Emergency Incidents



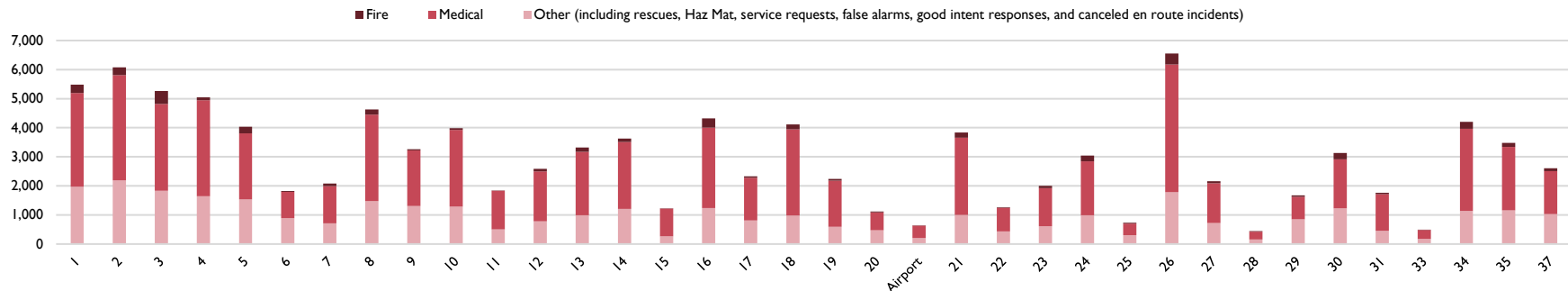
Percent of Fires Contained



Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Fire Department provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) first response services under an agreement with the County of Santa Clara Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency. The agreement requires the Department to arrive on-scene within eight minutes 90 percent of the time for qualifying EMS calls to receive funding. The Department met this performance standard for all 12 months after adjustments. In 2022-23, there was a reported decrease in ambulance availability for medical emergency response. The Department reports adapting by increasing the frequency of rescue medic transports and cases where firefighter/paramedics ride to the emergency room to maintain advanced-level care. The Department reports deploying 700 rescue medic transports and 800 ambulance ride-alongs.

Emergency Incidents by Station Area (2022-23)



Note: Fire Station #20 includes San José Mineta International Airport, but incident numbers are separated in this graph. Fire Station #33 closed in August 2010. Incidents within the district of Station #33 were handled by other stations. The Department has reserved the numbering of Fire Station #32 and #36 for future use.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (continued)

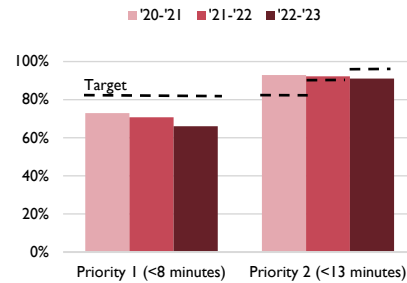
In 2022-23, the Department responded to 66 percent of Priority 1 incidents within its time standard of 8 minutes (target: 80 percent), a decrease from the prior year which the Department attributes to increased medical calls and ambulance response delays. The Department responded to 91 percent of Priority 2 incidents within 13 minutes (target: 94 percent, up from 90 percent last year).

The Department disaggregates Priority 1 response time into three segments: dispatch (call processing) time, turnout time, and travel time. In 2022-23, the Department met its dispatch time standard 84 percent of the time (target: 87 percent within 2 minutes) and turnout time standard 83 percent of the time (target: 85 percent within 2 minutes). It met its travel time standard for only 38 percent of Priority 1 incidents (target: 50 percent within 4 minutes).

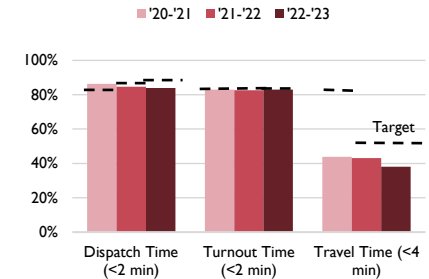
The Department anticipates that the installment of a 6th Battalion will help provide adequate command and control in Central and East San José, areas which they report have been historically harder to serve due to minimal resources. The battalion installment seeks to increase operational capacity by reducing travel distances and improving response times while improving the quality of life, health, and safety of residents in these areas.

A breakdown of Priority 1 response times by fire station is shown below. One fire station met the Priority 1 response standard of 8 minutes for 80 percent of incidents in 2022-23, compared to four stations last year.

Emergency Response Time Compliance



Time Targets of Priority 1 Response Time

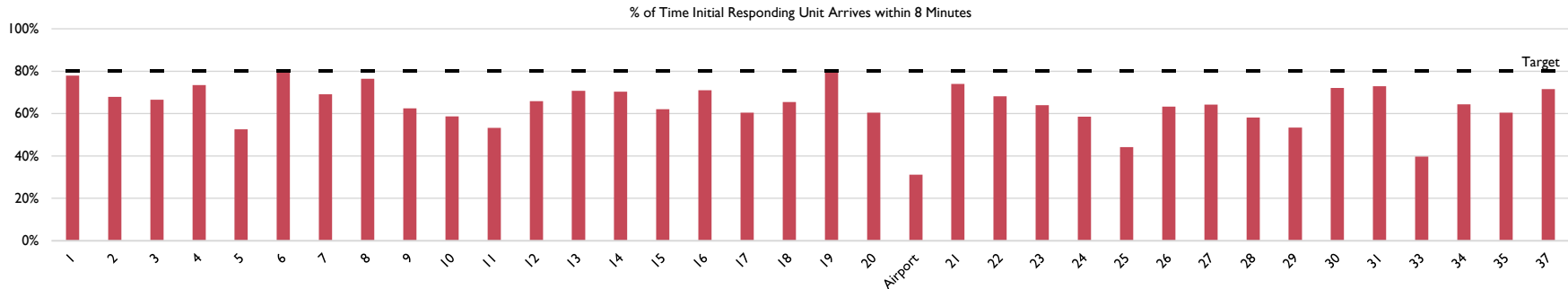


Note: In 2022-23, the target for Priority 2 response time increased from 90 percent to 94 percent of calls within 13 minutes. The target for Priority 1 dispatch time increased from 85 percent to 87 percent within 2 minutes.



Source: San José Fire Department, photo of Fire Training Center

Priority 1 Response Time Compliance by Station (2022-23)



Note: Fire Station #20 includes San José Mineta International Airport, but compliance rates are separated in this graph. Fire Station #33 closed in August 2010. Incidents within the district of Station #33 were handled by other stations. The Department has reserved the numbering of Fire Station #32 and #36 for future use.

FIRE

FIRE PREVENTION

The Bureau of Fire Prevention provides regulatory enforcement of fire and hazardous materials codes, investigates fire cause, and educates the community to reduce injuries, loss of life, and property damage from fires and other accidents. Both Firefighters and Fire Prevention Inspectors conduct inspections to check for compliance with fire codes. In 2022-23, about 87 percent of initial inspections were code compliant, and therefore did not require a follow-up inspection. The Department performed 10,600 initial fire inspections during the fiscal year. Firefighters conducted 5,600 of these initial inspections and Fire Prevention Inspectors conducted the remaining 5,000.

The Bureau of Fire Prevention also conducts investigations based on complaints received from residents or businesses. In 2022-23, 100 complaints were investigated. In 2022-23, the Department's Arson Investigators conducted 360 investigations and were able to determine that 190 of those incidents were caused by arson. In addition, the Department conducted 310 plan reviews for special events.

FIRE SAFETY CODE COMPLIANCE (DEVELOPMENT SERVICES)

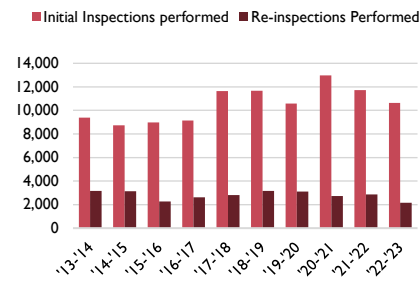
Fire Safety Code Compliance enforces the City's fire and health and safety codes during the development plan review and inspection processes, in coordination with the Development Services partners in the Permit Center (see *Planning, Building & Code Enforcement Department chapter*). This includes both engineering and hazardous materials reviews. In 2022-23, Fire Safety Code Compliance staff performed 6,400 fire plan checks and 5,600 inspections for Development Services customers. Fire plan reviews were conducted within established time targets for 94 percent of projects in 2022-23.

Following the 2020 [Audit of Fire Development Services](#), the Department sought to improve inspection times by developing new policies and guidelines around when inspections are canceled, fail, or partially pass through compliance reports, thus enabling the Department to better measure its performance. Additionally, the Adopted 2023-24 Fees and Charges report establishes a tiered cancellation fee schedule contingent on when the cancellation occurred, with the intended outcome of encouraging timeliness and availing appointment slots for other customers.

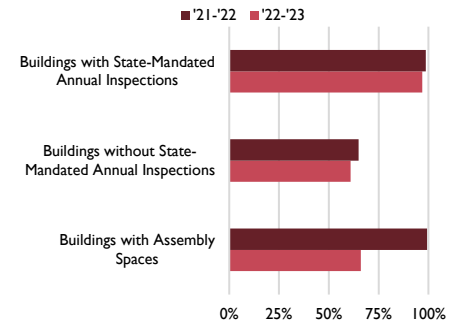
Fire Safety Inspections

The Department inspects existing and newly-constructed buildings to ensure compliance with the fire code. As of June 2023, San José had approximately 12,400 buildings that were eligible for a fire inspection, including 90 high-rises, 650 educational facilities, and 5,500 multi-family residences and hotels/motels. The frequency of the inspection cycle depends on a building's use and type. For example, the State Fire Marshal requires high-rises, schools, and multi-family residences to have annual inspections. In 2022-23, the Department completed 97 percent of state-mandated inspections.

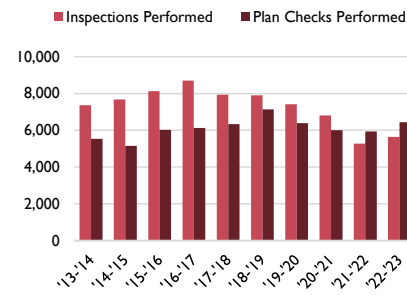
Fire Prevention Inspections (on existing buildings)



Completion of Initial Fire Inspections



Fire Safety Code Compliance - Workload (Development Services)



Arson Investigations

