



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: April 28, 2010 REPORT NO:
ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
SUBJECT: Engine Company Brownout and Lifeguard Reductions Status Report
REFERENCE: None

REQUESTED ACTION

This is an informational item only. No action is required by the Committee or the City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Report.

INTRODUCTION

This is the third monthly report to the PS&NS Committee on the status of the Engine Company Brownouts being administered as a budget reduction measure by the Fire-Rescue Department. Brownouts are defined as the temporary closures of up to eight fire engines per day in those fire stations housing more than one emergency response apparatus.

Rather than focus on response time performance, this month's report will address adjustments being made to the Brownout Plan to mitigate certain impacts. In addition, this report will provide information regarding lifeguard emergency response activities at two beaches where lifeguard coverage was reduced to achieve budgetary savings.

SUMMARY

The Brownout of up to eight engines per day to achieve budgetary savings began on February 6, 2010. As anticipated, this reduction of up to 13% of available emergency response resources resulted in an increase of response times city-wide; however, some communities have been impacted more than others because their fire station covers a comparatively larger geographic area and/or they are subject to brownout more frequently.

Concerns have been raised in these communities that delays in the arrival of an emergency response unit will negatively impact incident outcomes. In addition, the Brownout Plan has resulted in some communities being left without an immediate response unit with fire extinguishment capabilities raising concerns that initial attack fire suppression activities will be compromised and fires will grow larger and more difficult to suppress. Lastly, concerns about the response coverage impacts of hazardous materials incidents and

associated training and maintenance activities at Fire Stations 38 and 44 in Mira Mesa and Urban Search and Rescue equipment cache maintenance activities at Fire Station 41 in Sorrento Valley prompted a review to determine if the reassignment of these specialty functions to other fire stations would improve response coverage.

It should be noted that impacts of the Brownout Plan are being closely monitored and potential adjustments are being continually considered to address concerns with the Plan. However, because funding limitations prevent the permanent re-staffing of the units subject to brownout, these adjustments are limited to adjustments to the brownout schedule, the reassignment of certain response apparatus, and the possible relocation of specialty team activities. These possibilities were analyzed to determine if improvements could be made. The results of this analysis are shown below.

GOALS AND PLAN ADJUSTMENT CONSIDERATIONS, FINDINGS and OUTCOMES

Goal #1 - Improve emergency incident response times in Rancho Penasquitos, Mira Mesa and College.

Consideration – Change the brownout rotation so that the 13 participating engines are all subject to brownout every other month to improve response time performance in three communities, Rancho Penasquitos, Mira Mesa and College, whose engines are currently subject to brownout monthly.

Findings - Review of response/availability data since the inception of the Brownout Plan found that:

1. Response times in the three communities where engines are subject to brownout monthly are impacted more greatly due to the increased brownout frequency.
2. The three engines subject to monthly brownout were selected because of their relatively low incident response volumes over the past three years. The range of incident response volumes for all engines participating in the Brownout Plan is 1,184 to 3,650. Engine 40 in Rancho Penasquitos had the lowest response volume at 1,184, Engine 44 in Mira Mesa had the second lowest at 1,498 and Engine 10 in the College area had the third lowest at 2,138.
3. Changing the rotation schedule to one where all engines will only be subject to brownout monthly will marginally improve response time performance in these three communities, but will transfer response time impacts to communities with a greater incident response volumes resulting in a greater potential for undesired outcomes.
4. Changing the schedule in this manner will also result in a rotation pattern that has all units periodically being browned out for two months in a row resulting in greater response time impacts overall and difficulties in conducting and monitoring non-emergency activities such as training, fire safety inspections, and maintenance.

Outcome – Changing the brownout rotation schedule to this format is not advisable due to projected adverse response time impacts to a greater number of emergency incidents and difficulties in conducting non-emergency activities at all participating fire stations.

Consideration - Transfer Truck 40 from the Rancho Penasquitos fire station to another fire station and place Engine 40 in service in Rancho Penasquitos to improve response times. Engines are smaller and more maneuverable than trucks and therefore achieve slightly shorter response times.

Findings – A review of response time data and logistical issues found that:

1. Only certain fire stations were designed to accommodate the larger trucks and additional crewmembers. Truck 40 could be moved to Fire Station 37 in Scripps Ranch, Fire Station 42 in Carmel Mountain Ranch, Fire Station 46 in Santa Luz, or Fire Station 47 in Pacific Highlands Ranch and the engine in that community could be browned out instead of Engine 40.
2. Relocating Truck 40 to any of these fire stations would generally increase truck response times and impact the ability to provide a timely effective fire force assembly.
3. Some alternative assignments would result in the Poway Fire Department's truck being called in to the City of San Diego more frequently thereby unfairly relying upon our automatic aid agreement with Poway FD to mitigate response time concerns created by the Brownout Plan.

Outcome – Truck 40 is strategically placed to best serve the needs of communities in this area of the City. The movement of Truck 40 to another fire station is not advisable since it would generally create longer response times, delayed assembly of an effective fire force and impact the Poway FD's truck availability to their community.

Consideration - Relocate the Hazardous Materials (HazMat) response personnel presently assigned to Fire Station 38 in Mira Mesa to Fire Station 46 in Santa Luz to minimize out-of-service time for Engine 38 due to HazMat responsibilities. This could make Engine 38 more available to respond to incidents in Mira Mesa and Rancho Penasquitos. Concurrently shift primary responsibility for HazMat related responses from Fire Station 44 in Mira Mesa to Fire Station 46 to reduce Truck 44 out-of-service time and make the unit more available for incident responses.

Findings – Review of response/availability data since the inception of the Brownout Plan found that:

1. Engine 38 was out-of-service for HazMat related activities on 9 occasions for a total of 20.17 hours or 1% of total available time (20 hours out of 1848 hours) since the inception of the Brownout Plan.
2. Truck 44 was out-of-service for HazMat related activities on 14 occasions for a total of 22.62 hours or 1% of total available time (22 hours out of 1848 hours) since the inception of the Brownout Plan.
3. Engine 38 responded to Rancho Penasquitos for emergencies on 10 occasions and was committed for 5.12 hours.
4. Truck 44 responded to Rancho Penasquitos for emergencies on 3 occasions for a total of .84 hours.
5. Engine 46 responded to Rancho Penasquitos for emergencies on 17 occasions and was committed for 11.44 hours.

Outcome – Making this adjustment would not result in the desired effect based on low out-of-service time for Engine 38 and Truck 44 and the greater frequency of Engine 46 responses into Rancho Penasquitos.

Goal #2 - Improve emergency incident response times in University City.

Consideration – Relocate the Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) specialty function from Fire Station 41 in Sorrento Valley to Fire Station 22 in Point Loma to increase the availability of Engine 41. This unit must occasionally be removed from service and travel to the US&R equipment cache located in Engine 22's

district to perform maintenance activities. When this occurs, other units (including Engine 38 and Truck 35) must cover responses that would have otherwise been assigned to Engine 41. This reduces the availability of these units to service their own communities. By shifting these responsibilities to Fire Station 22, this unit will be able to perform the required maintenance while remaining in service in their response district.

Findings – Review of response/availability data since the inception of the Brownout Plan found that:

1. Engine 41 was out-of-service for US&R related activities on 2 occasions for a total of 3.87 hours or <1% of total available time (4 hours out of 1848 hours) since the inception of the Brownout Plan.
2. Neither Engine 38 nor Truck 35 responded to Engine 41's district during the time that Engine 41 was out-of-service for US&R related activities.

Outcome – Making this adjustment would not result in the desired effect based on low out-of-service time for Engine 41 and the lack of or minimal responses of Truck 35 and Engine 38 into Engine 41's district.

Goal #3 Increase the availability of fire extinguishment capability in University City.

Consideration – Replace the Truck (no extinguishment capability) at Fire Station 35 with the Quint (truck with extinguishment capability) from Fire Station 44.

Findings – Review of resource capabilities and availability of surrounding resources found that:

1. On the months that Engine 35 is browned out, Truck 35 is required to cover a very large response district with many target hazards while providing no extinguishment capability.
2. Longer than desired response times for surrounding community fire engines means that Truck 35 may be at the scene of a fire for a prolonged period without benefit of extinguishment capability.
3. Reassignment of Truck 44 to Truck 35 is possible because Truck 44 will be replaced by Truck 21 from Fire Station 21 (see below). While the new Truck 44 will have no extinguishment capability, units from surrounding fire stations can more quickly provide this resource than is possible in either University City or Pacific Beach.

Outcome – The greater availability of support engines surrounding Mira Mesa, coupled with the longer response times, larger response district and target hazards in University City make this reassignment beneficial to fire protection in University City while minimizing impacts in Mira Mesa.

Goal #4 - Improve availability of fire extinguishment capability in Pacific Beach when Engine 21 is browned out.

Consideration – Replace the Truck (no extinguishment capability) at Fire Station 21 with the Quint (truck with extinguishment capability) from Fire Station 46.

Findings – Review of resource capabilities and availability of surrounding resources found that:

1. On the months that Engine 21 is browned out, Truck 21 is required to cover a very large response district while providing no extinguishment capability.
2. Longer than desired response times for surrounding community fire engines means that Truck 21 may be at the scene of a fire for a prolonged period without benefit of extinguishment capability.

3. Reassignment of the Quint from Fire Station 46 to Truck 21 is possible because this Quint has been used primarily as an engine company due to limited weight carrying capacity. This Quint can be replaced by an engine to service the Santa Luz community.

Outcome – The availability of an engine to service the Santa Luz community makes this reassignment beneficial to the Pacific Beach community while minimizing impacts to Santa Luz.

LIFEGUARD DIVISION UPDATE ON TORREY PINES BEACH

Budget reductions to Torrey Pines Beach included the elimination of two full-time lifeguard positions assigned daily during the fall, winter and spring; the elimination of one full-time lifeguard position daily during the summer; the elimination of three (3) hourly lifeguard positions on weekdays during the summer; the elimination of four (4) hourly lifeguard positions on weekends during the summer; and the elimination of hourly lifeguard positions during Spring Break and weekends in the spring and fall.

Two hourly lifeguards will remain at Torrey Pines Beach during the summer months to function as a patrol unit to provide immediate response to reports of water rescues. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed to address response protocols to reports of emergencies at Torrey Pines. Meetings have been conducted with City Lifeguards, Fire Operations, Fire Dispatch, and State Lifeguards to ensure common understanding. The Lifeguard Communication Center has added the State Lifeguard Dispatch radio to facilitate immediate communication with them during reports of emergencies.

The Lifeguard Division is an emergency operation designed to allow for units to respond to outside calls for service. Similar to how Fire units are moved to provide coverage (“move ups”), Lifeguard units are shifted to ensure coverage. Lifeguard Units responding to Torrey Pines respond from La Jolla Shores, La Jolla Rocks and the Boating Safety Unit. Units that remain at these locations are augmented by Lifeguard units shifting up from Mission Beach and/or Pacific Beach.

The following incidents have been recorded for Torrey Pines City Beach:

2010 Torrey Pines City Beach Responses	Jan	Feb	Mar	April*	Total
Medical Aids (via 911 or Call Box)	0	0	1	0	1
Water Rescues	0	0	0	0	0
Cliff Rescues/Recoveries	3	2	0	4	9
Preventative Actions (cliff warnings/non-rescue calls)	0	10	0	1	11
Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0
Other Calls for Service	1	2	0	3	6
Total Incidents	4	14	1	8	27

*Incidents as of 4/20/10

There have been additional incidents recorded for the non-City sections of Torrey Pines Beach:

2010 Torrey Pines Beach Response (non-City sections)	Jan	Feb	Mar	April*	Total
Medical Aids (via 911 or Call Box)	2	4	2	1	9
Water Rescues	0	0	0	3	3
Cliff Rescues/Recoveries	0	1	0	3	4
Preventative Actions (cliff warnings/non-rescue calls)	0	0	0	0	0
Enforcement	0	1	0	0	1
Other Calls for Service	0	0	0	0	0
Total Incidents	2	6	2	7	17

*Incidents as of 4/20/10

Following is the nature and description of the incidents listed above:

January

Location: City of San Diego

- 1/5 Call for Service. Person reporting a male on the cliff yelling for help.
Response: 3 LG units, 2 SDPD units, Fire & Medics, FD Copter. Unable to locate on cliff.
Outcome: victim found safe on beach.
- 1/14 Cliff Recovery. Report of missing person, car found in Glider Port parking lot.
Response: 3 SDPD units, 2 LG units, Fire, FD Helo. Fire Helo spots a body on the cliff face. The victim was deceased after presumed fall.
Outcome: Medical Examiner transports body after safely removed from cliff.
- 1/31 Medical Aid. Male with neck injury in the water.
Response: LG unit, LG PWC, State LG, Fire, Medics, FD Copter 2.
Outcome: Fire Helo transported to Scripps LJ Hospital.

Location: UC Property

- 1/12 Medical Aid. Report of person being pulled from water.
Response: 2 LG units, Fire & Medics, UCPD, SDPD.
Outcome: victim regained respirations, transported to Scripps LJ Hospital, ICU.

Location: State Park and City of San Diego

- 1/30 Cliff Rescue. Female & Male victims (2) stuck on cliff.
Response: 2 LG units, State Ranger
Outcome: safely rescued.

February

Location: City of San Diego

- 2/3 Call for Service. Report of paraglider in the ocean.
Response: LG unit, LG surfboat.
Outcome: surfboat picked up unmanned glider in water, no injuries.
- 2/8 Preventative Act x 2. Report of persons (2) near edge of cliff off trail.
Response: LG unit.
Outcome: warnings, no injuries.
- 2/14 Cliff Recovery. Report of body on cliff face.
Response: 3 LG units, 3 SDPD units, Fire, Medics, County ME, FD Helo.
Outcome: Fire Helo transports deceased victim off cliff for Medical Examiner.
- 2/15 Call for Service. Lifeguards perform cliff evolution to retrieve belongings of deceased victim from 2/14.
Response: 2 LG units, 2 SDPD units.
Outcome: victim's items retrieved for PD investigation.

- 2/15 Cliff Rescue. Male victim stuck on cliff.
Response: 2 LG units, State Ranger.
Outcome: safely rescued.
- 2/15 Preventative Act x 8. Report of large group of people near cliff edge.
Response: LG unit.
Outcome: eight (8) tourists located in dangerous area warned to move out of the area.

Location: UC Property

- 2/13 Medical Aid. Report of injured surfer on beach.
Response: LG unit, State LG, Medics, Fire.
Outcome: Fire & Medics canceled, lifeguards treated injury and released.
- 2/20 Medical Aid. Injured male on beach, possible fractured ankle.
Response: LG unit, Medics.
Outcome: Medics transport patient to hospital.

Location: State Park

- 2/8 Medical Aid/Enforcement. Report of male throwing rocks at beach patrons from cliff & self inflicted injuries.
Response: LG unit, State Rangers, SDPD Helo, 3 SDPD units, Fire, Medics.
Outcome: Medics treat, PD transports to jail.
- 2/11 Cliff Rescue. Paraglider hits the side of cliff, reported injured.
Response: 3 LG units, State LG, Fire, Medics.
Outcome: Patient transported to Scripps LJ Hospital with multiple injuries.
- 2/22 Medical Aid. Report of injured hang-glider from hard landing on beach.
Response: 2 LG units, Fire, Medics.
Outcome: patient treated for head injury, refused transport.

March

Location: City of San Diego

- 3/17 Medical Aid. Report of medical aid on the main cliff trail.
Response: LG unit, Fire, Medics.
Outcome: Medics treated and transport the patient to hospital.

Location: UC Property

- 3/4 Medical Aid. Injured person reported on the beach.
Response: LG unit, Medics, Fire.
Outcome: Lifeguards treat the patient, cancel Medics.

Location: State Park

- 3/27 Medical Aid. 911 call for person injured on the beach.
Response: LG unit, State LG.
Outcome: State Lifeguards treat medical aid, cancel SD Lifeguards.

April (*Incidents as of 4/20/10)

Location: City of San Diego

- 4/5 Cliff Rescue. Person on beach reported a male and his dog stuck on the cliff.
Response: 2 Lifeguard units, State Lifeguards.
Outcome: Victim and dog safely rescued.
- 4/8 Cliff Rescue x 3. Report at sunset of three persons and a dog stuck on the cliff.
Response: 3 LG units, Fire, FD Helo.
Outcome: all victims safely rescued from cliff. Fire Helo provided lighting for rescue.
- 4/10 Preventative Act. Report of person climbing cliff in unsafe area.
Response: Lifeguard unit.
Outcome: subject advised not to climb cliffs.
- 4/15 Call for Service. Report of a person stuck on cliff.
Response: Lifeguard unit, State Lifeguard & Ranger.
Outcome: victim self cleared himself; all units canceled.
- 4/18 Call for Service. Glider Port staff reports 3 persons climbing cliffs in unsafe area.
Response: 2 Lifeguard units.
Outcome: victims made it safely to the bottom on their own.
- 4/20 Call for Service. Lifeguards and fire receive 911 calls of numerous manned gliders blown off course by sudden strong winds. One paraglider reported stuck in tree at Torrey Pines Golf Course.
Response: 3 Fire units, 3 LG units, Medic.
Outcome: uninjured pilot rescued from tree, all other gliders land safely.

Location: UC Property

- 4/3 Medical Aid. Report of an injured person on the beach.
Response: LG unit, Fire, Medics.
Outcome: patient treated by Lifeguards; Medics & Fire canceled.
- 4/10 Cliff Rescue x 2. Two persons reported stuck on the cliff.
Response: 3 Lifeguard units, State Ranger & Lifeguards, UCSD PD.
Outcome: victims safely rescued.
- 4/10 Water Rescue x 3. Three persons witnessed struggling in a rip current.
Response: Lifeguard unit, State Ranger, UCSD PD.
Outcome: victims rescued (all UCSD students); UCSD PD advised for report.

Location: State Park

4/17 Cliff Rescue. Beach patrons report male stuck on cliff.
Response: 2 Lifeguard units, State Lifeguard & Ranger.
Outcome: victim safely rescued off cliff.

LIFEGUARD DIVISION UPDATE ON WIND 'N SEA

Budget reductions to Wind 'n Sea Beach included the elimination of the one (1) full-time lifeguard position daily during the summer months. The hourly lifeguard staffing for this beach will remain throughout the summer. An SOP will be developed prior to the start of summer to address operations

Wind 'n Sea Beach is an area guarded on a seasonal basis. There has never been year-round lifeguard protection at this beach. Historically, it is an unguarded area during the fall, winter and most of spring. Wind n' Sea is guarded on Spring Break and weekends following Spring Break by hourly employees. There was no Lifeguard II assigned to Wind 'n Sea Beach until middle June.

To date, there has been no unusual impact on Lifeguard operations caused by the budget reductions to Wind 'n Sea Beach. Any impacts from these budget reductions would occur during the summer.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

The brown-outs are projected to achieve an FY2011 budgetary savings of \$11.5M.

The reduction of lifeguard services at Torrey Pines is projected to achieve an FY2011 budgetary savings of \$348,091.

The reduction of lifeguard services at Wind 'n Sea is projected to achieve an FY2011 budgetary savings of \$68,912.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTIONS

N/A

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

Ongoing

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS

Community and Citizens



Javier Mainar, Fire Chief