



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: September 22, 2010 REPORT NO:
ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
SUBJECT: Engine Company Brownout and Lifeguard Reductions Monthly 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 seventh report to the PS&NS Committee on the status of the Engine Company brownouts and Lifeguard reductions being administered to achieve budgetary savings in 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.

This month's report will update workload, brownout frequency, and response time statistics since the inception of the Brownout Plan on February 6, 2010 through September 15, 2010. It will also address an increase in overdue fire company inspections and reduction in training opportunities since the plan began. Lastly, it will review impacts to Lifeguard operations resulting from staffing reductions.

SUMMARY

During this reporting period (February 6 to September 15, 2010), the thirteen engines subject to brownout were out-of-service from 25% to 100% of the time. As a result, compliance with the 5 minute 90% of the time national response standard for the first due unit has declined to 24% to 80% within these districts and 54% city-wide as compared to 28% to 86% in these districts and 55% city-wide for the same period last year. Average response times have increased by 15 seconds within these districts and by 4 seconds city-wide when compared to the same period last year.

Response times for the assembly of an Effective Fire Force of 14-15 firefighters (3 engines, 1 truck and 1 battalion chief) within the 9 minutes 90% of the time national response standard was 0% to 100% within these districts and 72% city-wide as compared to 20% to 100% and 70% city-wide for the same period

last year. Average response times for the assembly of an Effective Fire Force decreased slightly (less than one minute) within these districts and city-wide when compared to the same period last year.

Service delivery impacts are felt by all requestors for emergency response whenever a response is delayed due to brownouts or other reasons. These impacts range from prolonged pain due to injury, prolonged distress due to a medical condition, and increased fire spread and damage, to the possibility of diminished probability of survival in the most severe life threatening medical or fire and rescue incidents. However, accurately isolating the specific impacts of the brownouts on victim survival probability proves to be extremely difficult and it is important to note that over the past five years an average of four persons per year have died as a result of fires in our City.

STATISTICAL DATA

Following is cumulative statistical data for the emergency response districts subject to fire engine brownouts and the response time impacts city-wide for the period indicated.

Brownout Frequency

Data in the table below reflects the percentage of total operational hours in the reporting period (days in period x 24 hours) that the indicated engine company was out-of-service due to placement in brownout status.

**Percent of Time Units Browned Out
 02/06/2010 – 09/15/2010**

Community	Engine	Pct.
College	E10	98.16%
Downtown	E201	49.55%
East Village	E4	32.39%
Golden Hills	E11	47.64%
Kearny Mesa	E28	42.27%
Lincoln Park	E12	34.87%
Midway	E20	52.79%
Mira Mesa	E44	99.37%
North Park	E14	25.04%
Pacific Beach	E21	49.69%
Rancho Penasquitos	E40	99.59%
San Ysidro	E29	47.34%
University City	E35	40.47%

Number of Emergency Responses

Data in the table below reflects the total number and type of emergency incidents that occurred within the City during the reporting period.

**Overall System Wide
 02/06 - 09/15**

	Fire	Medical	Other	Total
2009	2,208	58,586	8,205	68,999
2010	2,105	60,344	7,409	69,858
Percent Change	-4.66	3.00	-9.70	1.24

City-wide Response Time Performance

This following data reflects City-wide response time performance expressed in two formats. The first table shows the percentage of incidents where no more than 5 minutes elapsed from the time an engine or truck company was notified of an emergency response and their arrival at the scene of the emergency. The nationally accepted standard is 90% and the Department's current performance target is 55%. The second table uses the same notification and arrival time stamps, but reports response times as an average (mean). It is important to note that expressing these values as an average can obscure substandard performance in some communities.

**5 Minutes or Less Response Time
 Percentage (1st Arriving Engine or Truck)**

2009 Pct	2010 Pct	Percent Change
55.11%	53.95%	-2.11

**Average Response Time
 (1st Arriving Engine or Truck)**

2009 Avg	2010 Avg	Percent Change
0:05:03	0:05:07	1.32

Data Reported by Brownout Community

The data in the following tables uses the same criteria as described above, but breaks the data down by individual community.

**Browned Out Districts
 Incident Counts
 02/06 - 09/15**

	2009			2010			Percent Change		
	Fire	Medical	Other	Fire	Medical	Other	Fire	Medical	Other
College (Sta. 10)	56	1,521	176	47	1,594	163	-16.07	4.80	-7.39
Downtown (Sta. 201)	35	1,352	256	44	1,356	234	25.71	0.30	-8.59
East Village (Sta. 4)	50	2,478	330	58	2,698	269	16.00	8.88	-18.48
Golden Hills (Sta. 11)	59	1,224	132	55	1,248	105	-6.78	1.96	-20.45
Kearny Mesa (Sta. 28)	69	1,456	390	71	1,511	317	2.90	3.78	-18.72
Lincoln Park (Sta. 12)	118	2,794	241	116	2,735	172	-1.69	-2.11	-28.63
Midway (Sta. 20)	43	1,887	261	55	2,024	215	27.91	7.26	-17.62

Mira Mesa (Sta. 44)	39	977	183	33	894	164	-15.38	-8.50	-10.38
North Park (Sta. 14)	78	1,736	170	62	1,863	153	-20.51	7.32	-10.00
Pacific Beach (Sta. 21)	54	1,939	265	51	2,043	258	-5.56	5.36	-2.64
Rancho Penasquitos (Sta. 40)	28	754	110	26	731	94	-7.14	-3.05	-14.55
San Ysidro (Sta. 29)	37	2,059	114	53	2,189	85	43.24	6.31	-25.44
University City (Sta. 35)	97	1,792	552	85	1,858	565	-12.37	3.68	2.36

Minutes or Less Response Time Percentage (First Arriving Engine or Truck)		2009 Pct	2010 Pct	Pct Change
College (Sta. 10)	10	53.44%	45.63%	-14.62
Downtown (Sta. 201)	201	80.02%	80.09%	0.10
East Village (Sta. 4)	04	86.23%	79.82%	-7.43
Golden Hills (Sta. 11)	11	73.36%	67.44%	-8.07
Kearny Mesa (Sta. 28)	28	37.00%	35.52%	-3.99
Lincoln Park (Sta. 12)	12	48.93%	46.25%	-5.47
Midway (Sta. 20)	20	52.68%	49.17%	-6.68
Mira Mesa (Sta. 44)	44	40.18%	33.33%	-17.04
North Park (Sta. 14)	14	76.17%	69.09%	-9.30
Pacific Beach (Sta. 21)	21	60.72%	50.24%	-17.26
Rancho Penasquitos (Sta. 40)	40	27.52%	24.42%	-11.30
San Ysidro (Sta. 29)	29	59.28%	56.57%	-4.57
University City (Sta. 35)	35	33.30%	28.26%	-15.14

Average Response Time (First Arriving Engine or Truck)		2009 Avg	2010 Avg	Pct Change
College (Sta. 10)	10	0:05:04	0:05:19	4.98
Downtown (Sta. 201)	201	0:03:50	0:03:50	0.00
East Village (Sta. 4)	04	0:03:49	0:04:04	6.46
Golden Hills (Sta. 11)	11	0:04:14	0:04:30	6.20
Kearny Mesa (Sta. 28)	28	0:05:45	0:05:53	2.48
Lincoln Park (Sta. 12)	12	0:05:12	0:05:21	3.03
Midway (Sta. 20)	20	0:05:08	0:05:22	4.74
Mira Mesa (Sta. 44)	44	0:05:48	0:06:08	5.66
North Park (Sta. 14)	14	0:04:07	0:04:28	8.55
Pacific Beach (Sta. 21)	21	0:04:41	0:05:10	10.31
Rancho Penasquitos (Sta. 40)	40	0:06:15	0:06:36	5.74
San Ysidro (Sta. 29)	29	0:04:59	0:05:10	3.82
University City (Sta. 35)	35	0:06:13	0:06:29	4.24

Effective Fire Force

The following data reflects response time performance for the assembly of the 14-15 firefighters needed to complete the tasks necessary to combat a typical residential structure fire. In our City, this is achieved by the response of 3 engines, 1 truck, and 1 battalion chief. The table shows both City-wide and brownout district performance. The nationally accepted standard is 90% and the Department's current performance target is 72%.

Effective Fire Force*
02/06 - 09/15

		2009	2009	2009	2010	2010	2010
Community	Engine	Percent 9 Min	Average (Minutes)	Count	Percent 9 Min	Average (Minutes)	Count
College	10	84.62%	8.12	13	70.00%	7.95	10
Downtown	201	91.67%	8.96	12	90.91%	5.27	11
East Village	04	100.00%	4.33	22	78.95%	5.67	19
Golden Hills	11	100.00%	5.58	12	100.00%	6.03	14
Kearny Mesa	28	40.00%	9.24	5	92.31%	7.64	13
Lincoln Park	12	76.47%	7.43	17	77.27%	7.73	22
Midway	20	60.00%	8.29	5	71.43%	8.20	7
Mira Mesa	44	20.00%	10.18	5	0.00%	11.66	5
North Park	14	94.12%	6.56	17	100.00%	6.65	14
Pacific Beach	21	54.55%	8.76	11	57.14%	8.99	7
RanchoPenasquitos	40	66.67%	8.89	3	0.00%	11.38	5
San Ysidro	29	75.00%	8.69	4	75.00%	7.53	4
University City	35	33.33%	10.79	18	52.38%	9.50	21
City Wide		69.51%	7.94	387	71.82%	7.73	362

* 21 incidents originally dispatched as single engine responses and later upgraded were not included in this EFF calculation

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPACTS

There is ample scientific data to support that the more quickly the right type and number of resources can be brought to bear on an emergency incident, generally speaking, the better the outcome. Under the best of circumstances, multiple concurrent calls for service, routine maintenance, training, community educational outreach events, administrative activities, and unit location at the time of an incident dispatch can all impact incident response times.

Because many variables can influence incident outcomes, it is very difficult to isolate changes in incident outcomes resulting solely from brownouts. However, it can be safely assumed that any emergency receiving a delayed response for any reason will result in undesired impacts. In the case of fires, the most likely impact is increased fire spread and damage and the increased possibility of injury or death. In the case of a medical emergency, the impact may be prolonged pain from an injury, distress from a medical condition, or greater risk of permanent injury or death.

Non-emergency impacts include a noticeable increase in the number of fire inspections performed by our engine and truck companies that are late in being completed and increased difficulty in conducting manipulative training due to the number of units committed to incidents or out-of-service status.

To address the late inspections impacts, light duty personnel have been assigned to assist in completing these assignments when they are available. Currently, fewer personnel are available in this category, and crews are experiencing difficulty in keeping up with assigned inspections due to increased activity as well as fewer available units to perform inspections. In April of this year, 12% of the inspections performed by companies were more than 90 days overdue. Currently, 20% are overdue. These overdue inspections increase risk associated with not identifying and correcting fire code violations and slow the collection of inspection fee revenues.

To address the challenges in freeing units from emergency response status to conduct required training, the number of units permitted to be temporarily out-of-service at one time was recently increased from 12 to 14. In addition, the number of units removed from service to attend manipulative training sessions for 4 hours in the morning and afternoon at the Regional Public Safety Training Institute has been reduced from 5 (or 4) to 3 (or 2) units. When possible, these training sessions have been reduced by sending an instructor to the fire station or delivering the training in an online format to increase unit availability.

Ripple Effect of Brown-Outs on Emergency Response System

When an emergency response unit is unavailable for response for any reason, including brownouts, another unit must be sent to the incident. When there are multiple concurrent incidents (a common occurrence), a ripple effect occurs that can impact several communities as units move throughout the City to provide the best coverage possible. While the Brownout Plan exacerbates this situation, these types of response delays occurred before the Plan was implemented and are aggravated by the fact that the City has less than the optimal number of fire stations and crews needed to serve our communities.

Significant Emergency Response Impacts during this Reporting Period

On July 20, 2010 at 8:29 p.m., a 9-1-1 call reporting a two-year-old child choking in a Mira Mesa home located approximately ½ mile from Fire Station 38 was received. Engine 38 was already assigned to another emergency incident, as was the second closest unit, Engine 44. In addition, Medic Ambulance 38 was not available due to its being moved to fill a coverage gap in another part of the city.

While police officers arrived at the child's side in 5 minutes from the time the call was received, they found the child unresponsive and initiated CPR. Engine 38 was the first unit with a paramedic to arrive at 9.5 minutes after the 9-1-1 call and Medic Ambulance 41 arrived within seconds of the engine. Despite the best efforts of all first responders involved, they were unable to revive the child and he was later pronounced dead in the hospital's emergency department.

Response Time Analysis

- SDPD Officers trained in CPR arrived in 5 mins. There is no response time goal for SDPD medical responses.
- Engine 38 (Mira Mesa) response time of 9.5 minutes is longer than City's goal of 5 minutes 90% of time and the County's requirement of 8 minutes 90% of time for medical calls.
- Medic 41 (Sorrento Valley) response time of 10.5 minutes is within City contract and County requirements of 12 minutes 90% of time for medical calls.

Engine Availability Analysis

- Engine 44 (Mira Mesa) was not available to respond to a skull fracture call in its district due to being browned out.
- Truck 44 (Mira Mesa) was not available to respond to the skull fracture call in its district due to its assignment to a call involving illegally discarded hazardous materials in Nestor (south bay).
- Engine 38 (Mira Mesa) was not initially available to respond to the child choking call in its district because it was assigned to the skull fracture call in Station 44's district. Engine 38 released from the skull fracture call, leaving the patient in the care of the ambulance paramedics, to respond to the child choking call.

Ambulance Availability Analysis

- Medic 38 (Mira Mesa) was not available to respond to the skull fracture call due to being moved into another area of the City to fill a coverage gap.
- Medic 37 (Scripps Ranch) was not available to respond to the child choking call because it had been assigned to the skull fracture call.

Conclusions

- The Engine response time delay resulted from:
 - Multiple incidents occurring at the same time (this occurs frequently throughout the City)
 - Brownout of Engine 44 (Mira Mesa)
- Engine 38 would have been available in station to respond to this choking incident if not for brownouts and Engine 38's response time would have been approximately 2 minutes
- It is not known whether an earlier arrival of the engine crew would have saved the child's life; however, earlier paramedic intervention in these cases is highly desirable due to a paramedic's higher level of medical training and the availability of specialized medical equipment.
- Dispatchers, police officers, paramedics, and fire fighters did all they could do to save the child's life.

Status of Adjustments Made to Mitigate Brownout Plan Response Time Impacts

No adjustments to improve response times are possible without shifting impacts to busier units or re-staffing browned out units. Re-staffing of browned out units can only be accomplished by the allocation of additional revenues to offset the anticipated budgetary savings that would be lost.

Projected/Actual Savings

Savings targeted to be realized during the last half of FY 2010 were projected to be \$4.2 million dollars. The program began on February 6, 2010 following the completion of implementation negotiations with Local 145. The savings that are directly attributable to the brownouts for this period are \$4,174,806.

Savings of \$11.5 million are to be realized in FY 2011. A system has been developed within our personnel scheduling program that will allow for the more accurate real-time tracking of savings generated during this period and comparisons to data from Financial Management, when available.

It is worthwhile to note that the savings are driven by the actual vacancy rates that occur within the Department. We have achieved the brownout of eight engines most days during the reporting period, but not every day. The difference in the amount will be small, but there will be a difference between projected and actual savings at the end of the fiscal year.

LIFEGUARD DIVISION

The Lifeguard Division contributed to budgetary savings via a number of reductions. Impacts from reductions taken have been felt in several areas of lifeguard operations: lifeguard coverage, training activities, increased workloads for supervisors, personnel schedules and Reductions in Force (RIF). These impacts are discussed below.

Budget Reduction Impacts on Lifeguard Training

To achieve budgetary savings for Fiscal Years 2010-2011, dedicated training on Wednesdays was eliminated and employee schedules were altered to create additional relief shifts. These relief shifts allow the Lifeguard Division to cover open operational shifts on straight time rather than with overtime. Additionally, the River Rescue Team had its annual training reduced by half. Both of these changes resulted in a reduction in the overtime budget. The Lifeguard Division also eliminated one Lifeguard II position dedicated to developing, organizing, and conducting training. Budgetary savings achieved by these reductions are \$236,000 in overtime and \$68,912 for the LGII FTE.

While these reductions have decreased training opportunities overall, and are a negative impact, minimal critical training required for employees to maintain essential skills is being attempted through in-service training, as well as a series of modules offered at the start of employee shifts. A training plan has been developed and will be implemented beginning October 2, 2010. This plan will continue to be evaluated and revised throughout the winter months.

Reduction in Force (RIF) and Utilization of Out-of-Class (OCA) Assignments

Eight full time equivalent (FTE) positions were eliminated from the Lifeguard Division budget. Four of these positions were unfilled at the time of the budget reductions, including a Marine Safety Lieutenant and a Lifeguard Sergeant. Administrative assignments for these two positions were shifted to other supervisors; most notably Division-wide scheduling and other operational and personnel support. Additionally, four of the positions were filled. The four impacted employees were demoted as a result of the RIF and returned to open positions in the classification of Lifeguard I. Lifeguard I is an hourly position with no benefits. The Lifeguard Division has traditionally employed approximately 200 Lifeguards I.

The four positions associated with the RIF represent a budgetary savings of approximately \$256,476. As a result of negotiating RIF impacts with Teamsters, it was agreed that the four employees impacted by RIF would receive priority for filling out-of-class (OCA) assignments as Lifeguards II for temporarily unfilled positions caused by reasons such as sickness or long term injury. One of the employees has been re-hired as a Lifeguard II, filling behind a retirement that occurred within the Division.

Lifeguard Division Update on Torrey Pines Incidents

Prior to the FY2010 mid-year budget reductions, Torrey Pines was staffed in the following manner:

- Following Labor Day thru Mid June, two (2) full time lifeguards daily.
- On the weekends in fall and spring and all of Spring Break, three (3) additional seasonal lifeguards would augment the two full time lifeguards for a total of five (5).
- From mid June thru Labor Day there was one (1) full time lifeguard daily; an additional five (5) seasonal lifeguards on the weekdays; and an additional six (6) on the weekends.

Beginning in January of 2010 and extending to June 10th, lifeguard coverage was eliminated at Torrey Pines. From June 11th through September 6th (Labor Day) staffing was reduced to only two seasonal lifeguards per day. On September 7th, lifeguard staffing was once again eliminated, and emergency responses now come from lifeguards assigned to La Jolla Shores or other districts.

The following is an update of incidents recorded for Torrey Pines City Beach from July 16, 2010 to September 15, 2010:

2010 Torrey Pines City Beach Responses 07/16/2010 to 09/15/2010	Total
Medical Aids (via 911 or Call Box)	29
Water Rescues	0
Cliff Rescues/Recoveries	5
Preventative Actions (cliff & water warnings/non-rescue calls)	511
Enforcement	1
Other Calls for Service	7
Total Incidents	553

The following is an update of incidents recorded for the non-City sections of Torrey Pines Beach from July 16, 2010 to September 15, 2010:

2010 Torrey Pines Beach Response (non-City sections) 07/16/2010 to 09/15/2010	Total
Medical Aids (via 911 or Call Box)	88
Water Rescues	0
Cliff Rescues/Recoveries	0
Preventative Actions (cliff & water warnings/non-rescue calls)	470
Enforcement	0
Other Calls for Service	5
Total Incidents	563

Lifeguard Division Update on Wind'n'Sea Beach

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 in January, February and March, except for Spring Break. Wind'n'Sea is guarded on Spring Break and weekends following Spring Break by hourly employees. A Lifeguard II would have been assigned to this beach beginning in mid June, when daily staffing would have resumed. However, due to the need for budget reductions, the Lifeguard II position assigned to this location was eliminated.

Following Labor Day, staffing at this beach was eliminated on weekdays. However, weekend staffing will continue through September.

The following incidents have been recorded for Wind'n'Sea Beach between July 16, 2010 and September 15, 2010:

Lifeguard Response 07/16/2010 to 09/15/2010	Total
Medical Aids	58
Water Rescues	97
Cliff Rescues/Recoveries	0
Preventative Actions (warnings/non-rescue calls)	1,052
Enforcement	0
Other Calls for Service	0
Total Incidents	1,271

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

The brownouts are projected to achieve an FY2011 budgetary savings of \$11.5M. Brownout Plan savings during the last half of FY 2010 were projected to be \$4.2 million. Savings realized for this period were \$4.17 million.

The Lifeguard Division elimination of eight (8) FTE, reductions to overtime, Torrey Pines operations, Wind 'n' Sea operations and operational relief hours are projected to achieve an FY2011 budgetary savings of \$721,915. Lifeguard reductions during the last half of FY 2010 were taken as a prorated share of this amount.

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