



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: April 13, 2011 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 twelfth monthly 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 from April 1, 2010 through April 31, 2011. This data will be compared to a one-year period immediately preceding brownouts (February 6, 2009 through February 5, 2010). The report will also address overdue fire inspections, and the impact of the new contract for beach coverage at Blacks Beach.

SUMMARY

During this reporting period (April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011), the thirteen engines subject to brownout were out-of-service from 38% 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 53% city-wide as compared to 29% to 86% in these districts and 55% city-wide during the pre-brownout comparison period. Average response times increased by 4 to 31 seconds within the brownout districts and by 7 seconds city-wide when compared to the pre-brownout comparison period.

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 38% to 100% within these districts and 79% city-wide as compared to 50% to 100% and 84% city-wide for the pre-brownout comparison period. Average response times for an Effective Fire Force decreased slightly (less than one minute) within these districts and city-wide when compared to the same period last year.

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

4/1/2010 to 3/31/ 2011

Community	Engine	Pct.
College	E10	98.84%
Downtown	E201	48.29%
East Village	E4	36.75%
Golden Hills	E11	49.48%
Kearny Mesa	E28	42.22%
Lincoln Park	E12	37.85%
Midway	E20	52.37%
Mira Mesa	E44	99.25%
North Park	E14	51.54%
Pacific Beach	E21	48.51%
Rancho Penasquitos	E40	99.50%
San Ysidro	E29	47.07%
University City	E35	42.85%

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

	Fire	Medical	Other	Total
2/6/09-2/5/10	3,675	96,451	13,264	113,390
4/1/10 -3/31/11	3,293	92,911	11,743	107,947
Percent Change	-10.39	-3.67	-11.47	-4.80

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).

4/1/2010 to 3/31/ 2011

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

2009-2010 Pct	2010-2011 Pct	Percent Change
55.47%	53.14%	-4.19

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

2009-2010 Avg	2010-2011 Avg	Percent Change
0:05:03	0:05:10	2.46

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. This provides a far more accurate assessment of the brownout impacts since it negates the effect of "averaging".

**Browned Out Districts
 Incident Counts
 4/1/10 -3/31/11**

	2009-2010			2010-2011			Percent Change		
	Fire	Medical	Other	Fire	Medical	Other	Fire	Medical	Other
College (Sta. 10)	72	4025	508	91	3968	386	26.39	-1.42	-24.02
Downtown (Sta. 201)	82	2500	290	77	2532	268	-6.10	1.28	-7.59
East Village (Sta. 4)	98	2090	216	88	1938	154	-10.20	-7.27	-28.70
Golden Hills (Sta. 11)	206	4567	392	151	4287	305	-26.70	-6.13	-22.19
Kearny Mesa (Sta. 28)	137	2918	295	105	2791	238	-23.36	-4.35	-19.32
Lincoln Park (Sta. 12)	78	3073	410	74	3150	361	-5.13	2.51	-11.95
Midway (Sta. 20)	52	2170	386	56	2082	372	7.69	-4.06	-3.63
Mira Mesa (Sta. 44)	97	3127	406	84	2971	398	-13.40	-4.99	-1.97
North Park (Sta. 14)	120	2444	634	114	2408	608	-5.00	-1.47	-4.10
Pacific Beach (Sta. 21)	63	3335	179	72	3443	120	14.29	3.24	-32.96
Rancho Penasquitos (Sta. 40)	168	3010	915	134	2924	833	-20.24	-2.86	-8.96
San Ysidro (Sta. 29)	50	1256	183	46	1211	158	-8.00	-3.58	-13.66
University City (Sta. 35)	77	1587	299	54	1404	243	-29.87	-11.53	-18.73

4/1/2010 to 3/31/ 2011

5 Minutes or Less Response Time Percentage (First Arriving Engine or Truck)	2009- 2010 Pct	2010- 2011 Pct	Pct Change
College (Sta. 10)	53.51%	46.25%	-13.57
Downtown (Sta. 201)	80.82%	80.28%	-0.66
East Village (Sta. 4)	86.48%	79.62%	-7.94
Golden Hills (Sta. 11)	73.76%	66.80%	-9.44
Kearny Mesa (Sta. 28)	39.63%	35.59%	-10.21
Lincoln Park (Sta. 12)	49.38%	44.64%	-9.60
Midway (Sta. 20)	52.03%	51.66%	-0.71
Mira Mesa (Sta. 44)	40.09%	31.79%	-20.69
North Park (Sta. 14)	75.72%	68.62%	-9.37
Pacific Beach (Sta. 21)	59.70%	48.30%	-19.10
Rancho Penasquitos (Sta. 40)	28.82%	23.67%	-17.88
San Ysidro (Sta. 29)	60.29%	56.60%	-6.12
University City (Sta. 35)	34.81%	27.92%	-19.78

Average Response Time (First Arriving Engine or Truck)	2009- 2010 Avg	2010- 2011 Avg	Pct Change
College (Sta. 10)	0:05:03	0:05:16	4.45
Downtown (Sta. 201)	0:03:48	0:03:52	1.76
East Village (Sta. 4)	0:03:47	0:04:06	8.48
Golden Hills (Sta. 11)	0:04:15	0:04:36	8.42
Kearny Mesa (Sta. 28)	0:05:42	0:05:53	3.43
Lincoln Park (Sta. 12)	0:05:12	0:05:26	4.72
Midway (Sta. 20)	0:05:10	0:05:14	1.52
Mira Mesa (Sta. 44)	0:05:51	0:06:11	5.73
North Park (Sta. 14)	0:04:07	0:04:30	9.44
Pacific Beach (Sta. 21)	0:04:42	0:05:12	10.87
Rancho Penasquitos (Sta. 40)	0:06:11	0:06:42	8.43
San Ysidro (Sta. 29)	0:04:58	0:05:06	2.81
University City (Sta. 35)	0:06:10	0:06:38	7.57

Effective Fire Force

This 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*
4/1/10 -3/31/11

		2009-2010	2009-2010	2009-2010	2010-2011	2010-2011	2010-2011
Community	Engine	Percent 9 Min	Average (Minutes)	Count	Percent 9 Min	Average (Minutes)	Count
College	10	94.74%	5.90	19	95.00%	6.44	20
Downtown	201	80.00%	6.66	20	100.00%	4.46	14
East Village	04	100.00%	4.70	34	88.57%	5.78	35
Golden Hills	11	100.00%	5.26	23	95.45%	6.50	22
Kearny Mesa	28	88.89%	6.98	9	73.53%	8.10	34
Lincoln Park	12	97.30%	6.04	37	90.91%	6.44	33
Midway	20	84.62%	7.30	13	92.31%	7.03	13
Mira Mesa	44	100.00%	6.46	8	64.29%	8.94	14
North Park	14	100.00%	5.57	35	100.00%	5.47	23
Pacific Beach	21	85.71%	7.72	21	81.82%	8.70	11
RanchoPenasquitos	40	50.00%	8.96	6	37.50%	9.87	8
San Ysidro	29	66.67%	8.36	6	80.00%	8.71	5
University City	35	70.59%	8.65	34	67.50%	8.89	40
City-Wide		83.83%	6.98	711	79.16%	7.38	715

* 41 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.

Service delivery impacts are felt by all requestors for emergency response whenever a response is delayed due to brownouts or other reasons. 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.

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.

The Department has recently converted from a paper-based inspection documentation program to a computer-based automated Field Collection Unit (FCU) program. Due to the change in methods for collection of inspection data and the "cross-over" between the two systems, reliable data is not yet available to report on current overdue status. It is felt by staff that the overdue inspections may be reduced significantly when the inspection status report is verifiable. The FCU program will transmit automatically the status of any inspection that is in the system. Previously, the system had to be updated manually.

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 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 was 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.

The implementation of the contract with the University of California San Diego (UCSD) for coverage at Blacks Beach has already resulted in significant improvements in life safety at that location, with specific information included in the Lifeguard Division section of this report.

Significant Emergency Response Impacts

There were no significant incident impacts due to brownouts during this reporting period.

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

Prior to the mid-year budget reductions implemented in January 2010, all permanent Lifeguards, other than those assigned to the night crew, were scheduled to be on-duty on Wednesdays. With the Lifeguard Division split into two shifts, on Wednesdays, one shift would be assigned to training while the other would be assigned to operations. Thus, the two shifts would rotate between operations and training allowing for ten hours of training on alternate Wednesdays during the six months of the year when beach attendance was at its lowest levels.

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.

These budget impacts have reduced training opportunities. Refresher training for essential skills is being provided, albeit in a manner that is overall less effective than in years past. Additionally, other training important to ensure long term effectiveness and succession planning of Lifeguard Services is difficult to achieve. A modified training plan was developed and implemented beginning October 2, 2010. This plan will continue to be evaluated and revised throughout the winter months.

Lifeguard Operations Return to Black's Beach

The University of California San Diego (UCSD) and the City of San Diego have an approved contract that provides lifeguard coverage at Black's Beach. This service began on March 14, 2011 and will remain in effect until February 28, 2012. The Fire-Rescue Department will provide lifeguard services and UCSD will reimburse the City. The value of this reimbursement contract is approximately \$502,000. There are options for two one-year extensions to the contract.

Restored Lifeguard operations at Black's Beach have already made an important impact on the safety of the public. From March 14, 2011 through April 3, 2011, lifeguards have performed:

Black's Beach Responses – March 14, 2011 to April 3, 2011	Total
Water Rescues	17
Medical Aids (Minor and Serious)	6
Cliff Rescues	1
Preventative Acts	550

One rescue of three people performed on March 29, 2011 illustrates the importance of providing lifeguard coverage at this beach. A large rip current was present near the foot of Blackgold Road. This rip current was wide and extremely turbulent on this day when three friends entered the water at about 4:10 pm. Within the first minute of entering the water, all three swimmers, equipped in full wetsuits and small swim fins, started to drift rapidly toward the middle of the rip current. They stated that they felt the effects of the current right away and tried to move toward shore to get out of the area. Two lifeguards stationed down the beach observed the three people in the water and the rate at which they were drifting away from shore. The lifeguards immediately started toward the victims, upgrading their response to Code 3 as they began to lose sight of them in the choppy surf conditions.

When they arrived on scene, both lifeguards entered the water. One lifeguard on a rescue board moved to the first two victims. One victim was holding up the other trying to keep her head above the water. The other lifeguard entered the water and rescued the third victim. Additional lifeguards responded from La Jolla Shores to assist. All three victims were brought in to the beach through a very strong current where the depth of the water was overhead within 25 yards of the shoreline. All victims presented with some physical exhaustion yet showed no sign of significant inhalation of saltwater. All declined further medical attention, yet stated that they were scared and very relieved that lifeguards were present. Cyrus Jahanian, a U.C.S.D. student stated, "We would have been goners if you guys weren't there."

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

The brownouts are projected to achieve an FY2011 budgetary savings of \$11.5M.

The Lifeguard Division reductions to overtime, Blacks Beach (Torrey Pines) operations, Wind 'n' Sea operations and operational relief hours are projected to achieve an FY2011 budgetary savings of \$721,915.

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