



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

DATE ISSUED: May 2, 2012 REPORT NO:  
ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee  
SUBJECT: Report on Abandoned Waste 90-day Pilot Program Findings  
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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City currently uses the Fire-Rescue Department Hazardous Incident Response Team (HIRT) to respond to and mitigate routine hazardous waste that is abandoned in the public right-of-way and on public property. Regularly assigned personnel staffing the engine and truck at Fire Station 44 in Mira Mesa are used to cross-staff the HIRT response unit. Each response to collect routine hazardous waste places the engine and/or truck and HIRT units out-of-service for emergency incidents. These routine hazardous waste responses reduce the availability of these emergency response units for extended periods of time and negatively impact response coverage in this area of the city.

On December 1, 2011, a 90-day Pilot Program was initiated to use the City's existing hazardous waste disposal contractor, Ocean Blue Environmental, for routine hazardous waste collection in lieu of dispatching the Fire-Rescue Department HIRT units. The existing purchase order with this vendor was increased from a variable amount of \$17,000 (dependent on the type of service provided) to \$20,000 for the 90-day pilot period.

The Pilot Program included use of a call screening protocol designed to determine if the reported incident fit in the abandoned routine hazardous waste profile that could be addressed by Ocean Blue Environmental and whether the regularly responding local engine company would have to be added to the response to secure the abandoned waste pending the arrival of the contractor.

Under this protocol, incident information received by the Fire Communications Center is sent directly to the on-duty HIRT Captain to be triaged based upon the protocol and known incident information to determine whether to utilize Ocean Blue Environmental or HIRT for clean up. An assessment is also made of the need for a local engine company to respond.

## PILOT PROGRAM SUMMARY RESULTS

Number and disposition of routine abandoned waste response incidents:

- Total number: 22
- Number that Ocean Blue (contractor) handled after HIRT triage: 18
- Total Cost: \$17,379.31
- Number that would have required a first responder resource: 8
- Number that required a HIRT full response: 2
- Number of times a first responder or HIRT unit was committed to a routine abandoned waste incident and missed a first responder or JPA “core mission” incident: 0 (zero).
- Most active abandoned waste communities during the 90-day period: (Logan Heights, Southeast San Diego, South Bay-US Border).

## CONCLUSIONS

- By implementing an effective call screening process, routine hazardous waste incidents could be safely and timely directed to the City’s existing hazardous waste disposal contractor.
- The City’s contractor was able to provide a rapid and effective mitigation response to these routine abandoned hazardous waste incidents.
- The Pilot Program achieved the desired result of reducing Fire-Rescue Department emergency response unit out-of-service time associated with the handling of routine abandoned hazardous waste incidents.
- Prior to implementing the Pilot Program, the average out-of-service time for emergency response units handling abandoned waste calls was 3 hours. During the Pilot Program HIRT personnel spent an average of 17 minutes addressing these incidents.

## FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

City costs for mitigation of abandoned routine hazardous waste increased by \$13,500 during the 90-day Pilot Program. Given a similar incident mix for a full year, City costs would increase by \$54,000 if this method of handling abandoned routine hazardous waste were to be adopted to reduce emergency response unit out-of-service time associated with the mitigation of these non-emergency incidents.

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTIONS

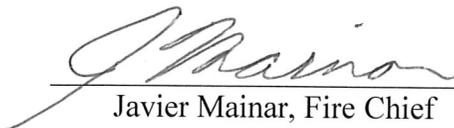
N/A

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

N/A

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS

Community and Citizens

  
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Javier Mainar, Fire Chief