

Palo Alto Fire Department Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2022



Chief's Message



My name is Geo Blackshire, and I am the Fire Chief in Palo Alto. In my 25 years of service to the Palo Alto community, I am prouder than I have ever been of the firefighters and administrative staff that have worked tirelessly through the pandemic, ensuring the quality of service to our community is uninterrupted.

As an organization, we provide the community of Palo Alto with professionalism and care, ensuring the safety of those we serve. This annual report will show us how we performed in Fiscal Year 2022.

Some of the highlights included in this report are the following:

- Call volume increased from FY2021 by 16%
- The Department responded to a total of 8,334 calls for service in FY2022
- ROSC is the resumption of sustained perfusing cardiac activity associated with significant respiratory effort after cardiac arrest. The Palo Alto Fire Department's ROSC rate is 36%, much higher than the California State average of 25%
- The PAFD Mobile Vaccination Team vaccinated 95 residents who could not get transportation to a clinic
- Thirteen new firefighters joined the Palo Alto Fire Department and successfully graduated a Fire Academy

We always strive to meet our performance standards in emergency response and prevention. We also aim to prioritize safety, diversity, equity, and firefighter wellness to foster a healthy department and serve this community with compassion and pride.

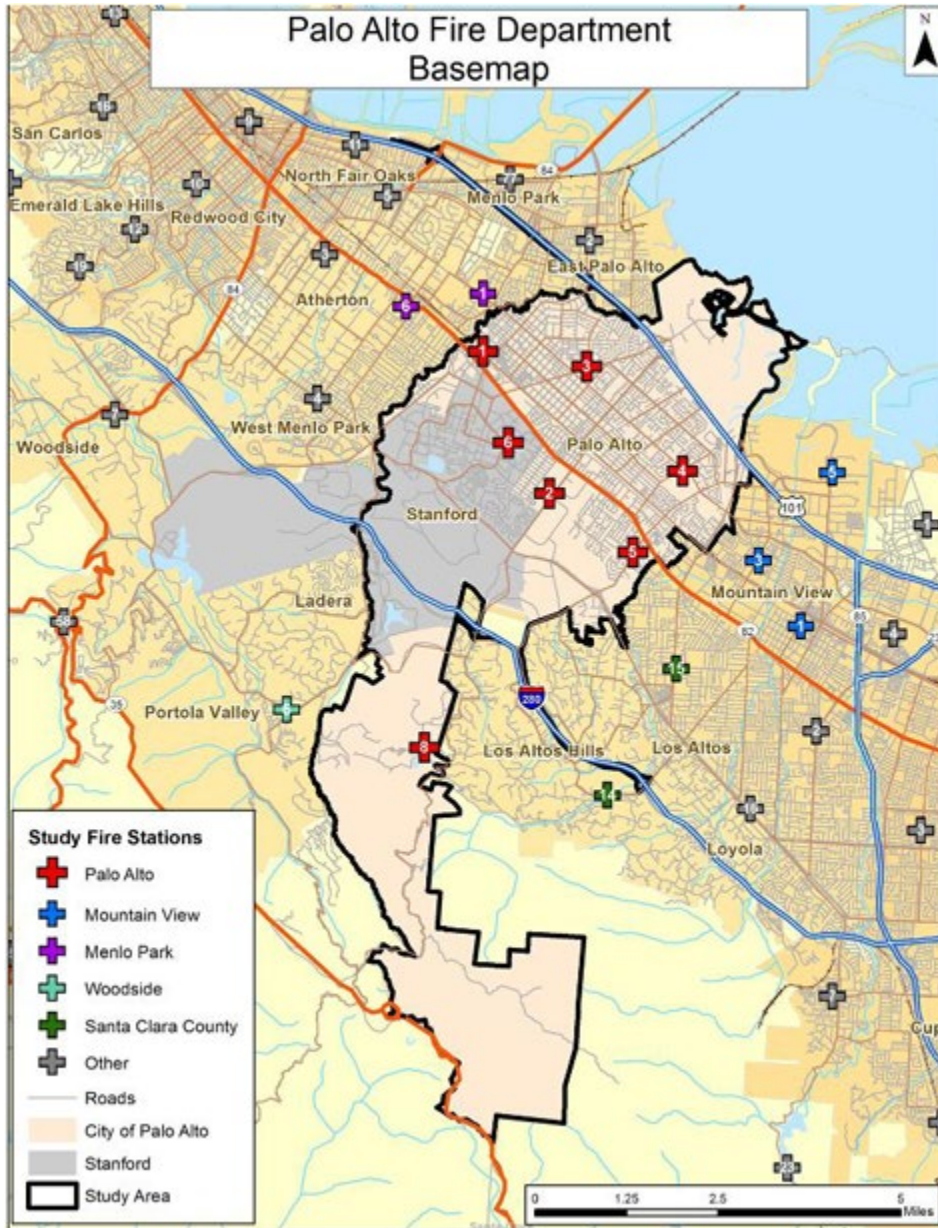
Take Care,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Geo Blackshire', written over a horizontal line.

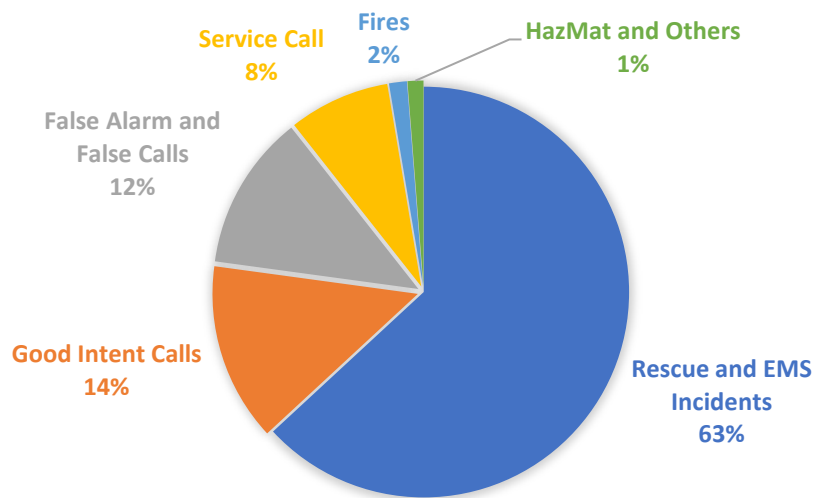
Service Area

The Palo Alto Fire Department serves an area of approximately 38.7 square miles including 12.8 square miles of Stanford University Campus. Stanford University contracts with the PAFD to provide fire response to campus and the surrounding area.

There are a total of seven Fire Stations placed throughout the City and Stanford. All are staffed 24/7, with the exception of Fire Station 8 in the Palo Alto Nature Preserve which is staffed seasonally.



FY22 CALLS FOR SERVICE



In Fiscal Year 2022, the Palo Alto Fire Department responded to a total of 8,334 calls for service. Most of these calls are medical in nature.

Rescue and Emergency Medical Incidents (63%): Most emergencies have to do with health and medical needs. These calls include heart attacks, strokes, injuries and other emergency medical situations, motor vehicle accidents, and any auto extrication or rescues.



Good Intent Calls (14%): Good Intent calls capture incidents where there could have been an emergency, but it turned out to be Non-emergent or nothing at all. For example, someone could smell smoke and call 9-1-1, but after firefighters arrive and investigate, they find that the odor was from burnt popcorn down the hall.

False Alarms and False Calls (12%): These are primarily alarms that are automatically triggered during construction or other non-emergency causes such as steam from a shower, dust, insects, or cooking. This category also covers situations where someone purposely triggered a fire alarm or made an intentionally false report.



Service Calls (8%): These calls are for situations where the department is providing a service, but it's not an emergency. This can include clean up calls for smoke, water or other hazards; assisting with falls in the home; people trapped in an elevator or elevator overrides.

Fires (2%): This covers any type of fire, where smoke and flames are present. This includes small dumpster fires, residential fires, or wildfires. There were 117 fires this fiscal year, and although it makes up a small proportion of the overall incidents that the department responds to, they are the most time consuming and resource intensive. Large fires typically require all the resources in the City, including automatic aid from neighboring fire departments.

Hazardous Materials and Others (1%): Most of these are utilities related, such as a natural gas leak, wiring problem, powerlines down, but it also includes gasoline, diesel or oil spills, chemical releases or other biological hazards.

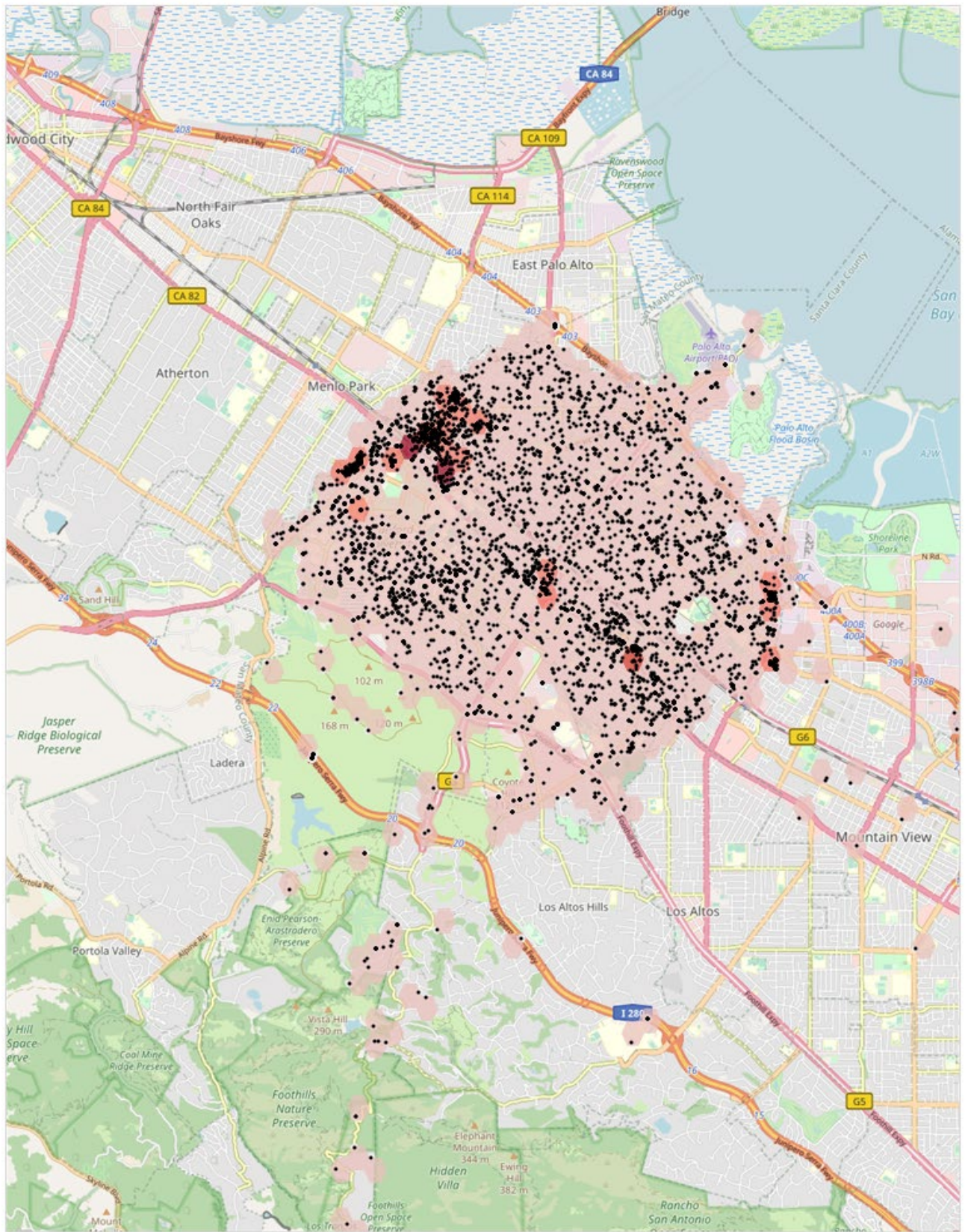


Response Times

The time it takes from the 9-1-1 call to the time a Fire Crew arrives on scene is the primary measurement of performance for Emergency Response Service. The standard is to arrive within 8 minutes 90% of the time, and for EMS calls, to have a paramedic arrive within 12 minutes.

EMS	
Percent of first responder arriving on scene to EMS calls within 8 minutes	95.1%
Percent of paramedic responder arriving on scene to EMS calls within 12 minutes	99.9%
Average response time for first responder arriving on scene to EMS calls	04:58
Fire	
Percent of first responder arriving on scene to Fire calls within 8 minutes	88.5%
Average response time for first responder arriving on scene to Fire calls	05:44
HazMat	
Average response time for first responder arriving on scene to Rescue & Hazardous Materials calls	06:47

Map of Call Locations



Mutual Aid

The Palo Alto Fire Department provides emergency response to neighboring jurisdictions in the case of large-scale events, or to our direct neighbors when their own resources are depleted. The Department receives the same benefit from these Fire Departments which are outlined in Mutual Aid Agreements.

Mutual Aid Provided FY22	
<u>Agency</u>	
Santa Clara County Fire	96
Mountain View Fire	45
San Mateo County Fire	1
San Mateo Consolidated	1
<i>All Fire Mutual and Auto Aid Provided</i>	143

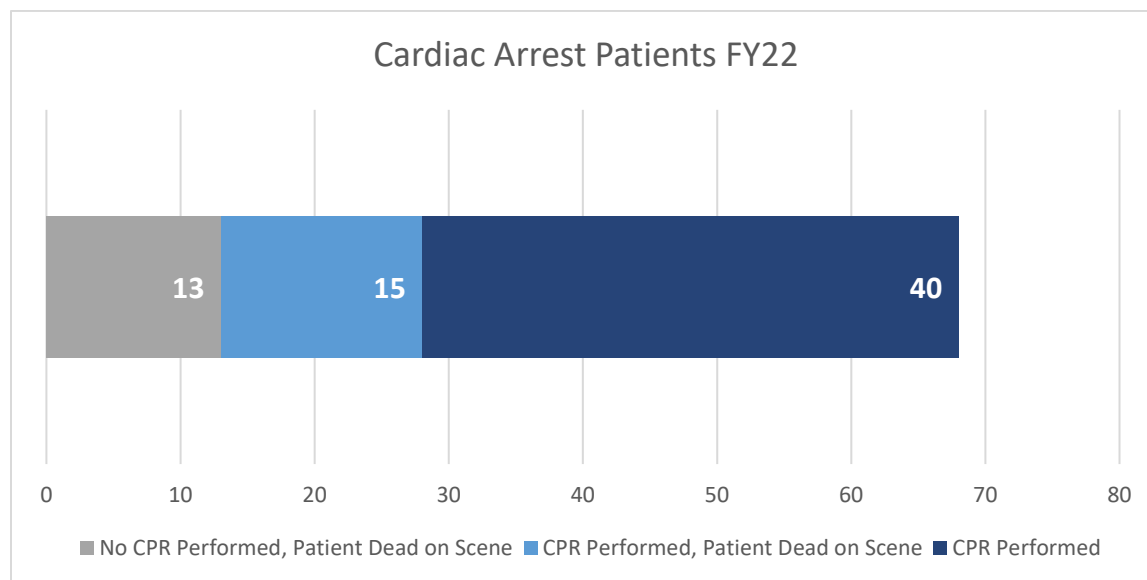
Mutual Aid Received FY22	
<u>Agency</u>	
Mountain View Fire	63
Menlo Park Fire	23
Santa Clara County Fire	20
Woodside Fire	3
<i>All Fire Mutual and Auto Aid Provided</i>	109
Santa Clara County Ambulance	397



Medical Services and Programs

Cardiac Arrests

There were a total of 68 Full Cardiac Arrest incidents in Fiscal Year 2022. Our Fire Crews are trained multiple times each year on High Performance Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation Techniques (HPCPR). This County standard requires a team of 5 people, with specific roles for all personnel on scene. Each Firefighter performs HPCPR for no more than two minutes before another member of the team takes over for the compression quality to remain consistent.



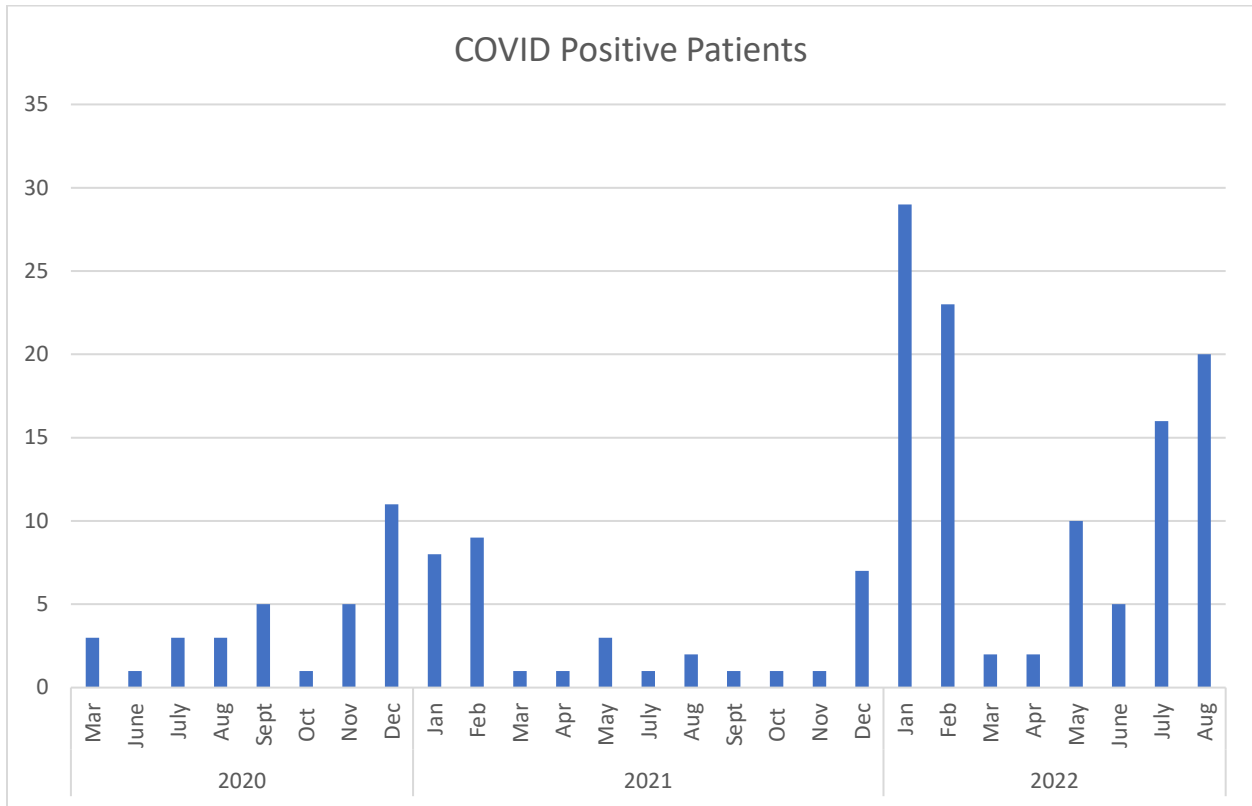
Of the 53 Cardiac Arrest Patients when High Performance CPR was performed, 19 gained return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC). ROSC is the resumption of sustained perfusing cardiac activity associated with significant respiratory effort after cardiac arrest. The Palo Alto Fire Department's ROSC rate is 36%, which is much higher than the California State average of 25%.

Return of Spontaneous Circulation (ROSC)	
HPCPR Performed	53
Number of Patients with ROSC	19
PAFD ROSC Rate	36%
CA State Average	25%

COVID Calls

The Department continues to track COVID related calls and follow up on COVID status of the patients. The number of positive patients increased in early 2022 and we continue to see higher numbers of COVID positive patients.

All PAFD Staff are trained on proper COVID safety protocols and wears complete Personal Protective Equipment when interacting with potentially COVID positive patients.



Mobile Vaccination Clinic

Many residents that are the most at risk for the dangerous impacts of COVID are those that have the most challenges traveling to obtain a vaccine. In order to help protect those most vulnerable residents in our community the Palo Alto Fire Department partnered with Santa Clara County to provide a mobile vaccination clinic.

The PAFD Mobile Vaccination team included 5 Paramedic Firefighters trained to give COVID vaccines. The team successfully vaccinated 95 residents during the year, including boosters once available.



Palo Alto FireMed Program Launch



The Department launched a new savings program for ambulance transport services, called Palo Alto FireMed. Even with medical insurance, an emergency ambulance ride can cost between \$250-700. The Palo Alto FireMed Program for residents and businesses makes sure participants are not stuck with a bill during an emergency. Palo Alto FireMed is convenient and cost-effective, covering unlimited ambulance rides per household for a low cost of \$8 per month, which is only \$96 a year. The Department has enrolled over 100 residents in this program, with some of them already saving money. If you're interested in enrolling check out the Palo Alto FireMed Program Website at cityofpaloalto.org/firemed.

Fire Prevention

The Fire Prevention team ensures that all life and safety codes are being accurately implemented with new construction, remodeling projects, and commercial development. The team also conducts annual building and hazardous materials safety inspections.

State Mandated Building Inspections	
Number of Buildings	532
HazMat Inspections for CY2021	395

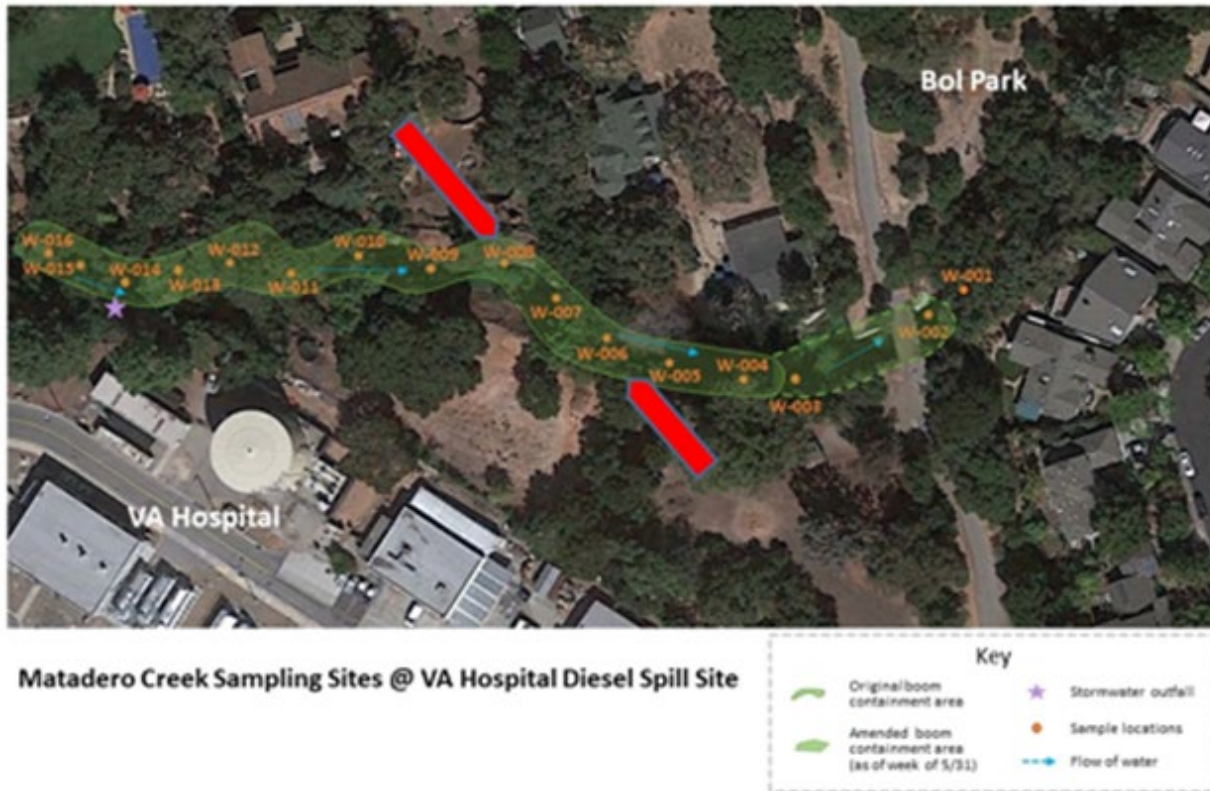
California state requires annual inspections on certain public buildings with high capacities, such as schools, hospitals, research facilities, places of worship, entertainment centers, etc. These are tracked and reported to the State annually. In 2021, due to staffing shortages only 74% of required buildings were inspected.

Hazardous Materials Inspections	
Number of HazMat Facilities	950
HazMat Inspections for FY22	194

The total number of facilities in Palo Alto that store hazardous materials continues to grow each year. The Fire Code requires that these facilities adhere to strict safety measures, and requires an annual inspection. These are tracked and inspected annually, and in FY22 due to staffing shortages only 20% of facilities were inspected. In FY23, Fire Prevention is adding two additional Fire Inspectors to address this backlog and improve the rate of inspection in our City.

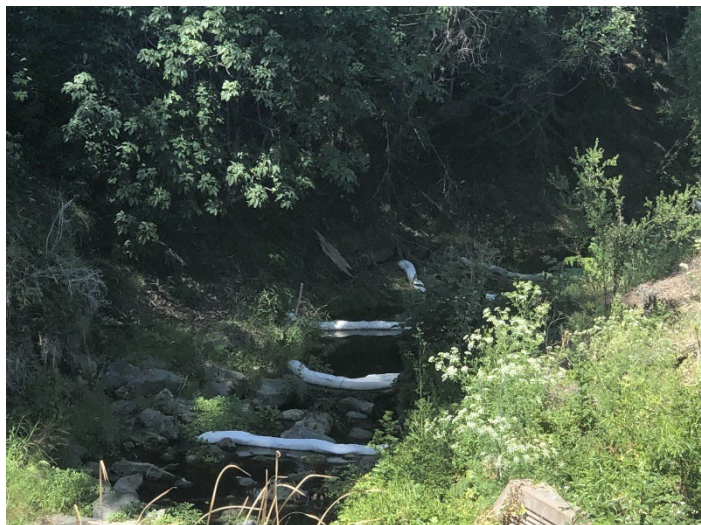


Veterans Affairs Incident



In May of 2021 a diesel fuel spill from the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System flowed into Matadero Creek. The Department oversaw all aspects of the incident including mitigation and code enforcement , action plan approvals, decontamination, containment, testing and monitoring over the year. Throughout the incident, the Palo Alto Fire Department Hazmat Team worked as a cohesive unit with the VA Palo Alto Health Care System, City of Palo Alto Stormwater staff, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the San Francisco Regional Water Board, the Santa Clara Valley Water District and third-party remediation experts and environmental scientists.

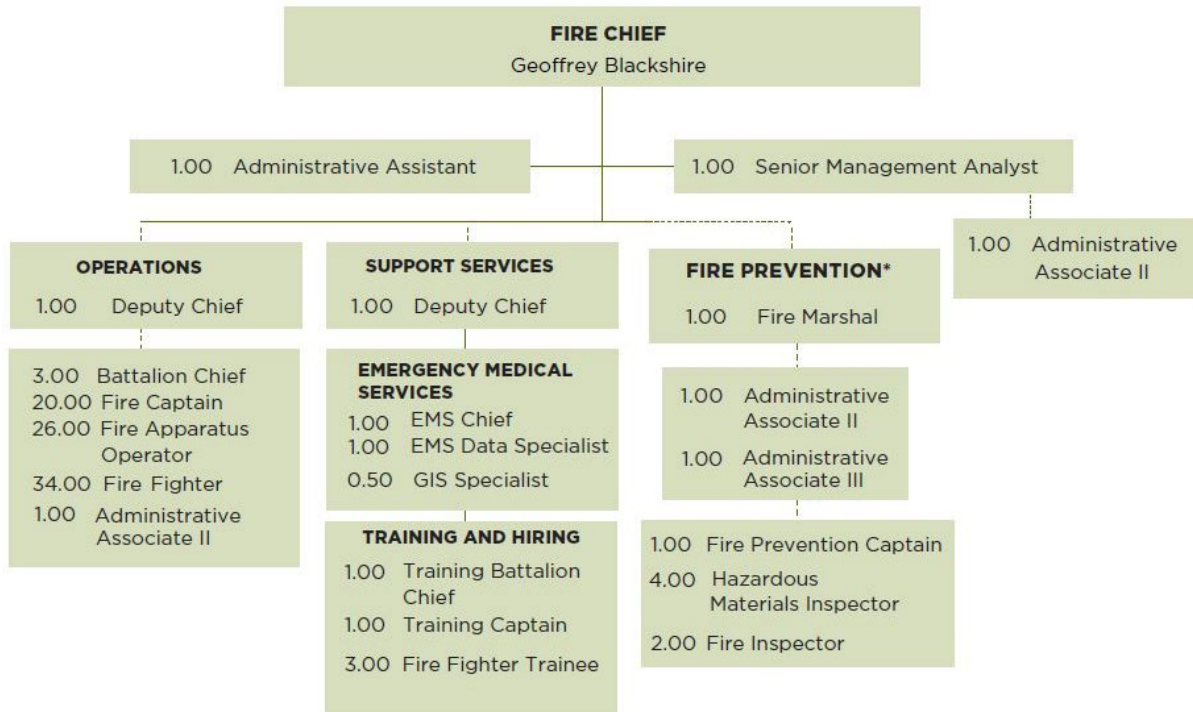
As of late February 2022 the site was successfully remediated prior to the commencement of the rainy season, with no observable ecosystem impact, ending the largest hazardous material release to surface waters that City staff have ever managed. Representatives from regulatory agencies continue to meet at a reduced frequency to continue observations and communication throughout the rainy season, and to close out the last portion of the remediation effort.



The People of the Palo Alto Fire Department

The 107 people that make up the Department serve the community with a great deal of pride and an attitude of excellence. The Department has 83 operations staff that are the firefighters, apparatus operators and fire captains that work in the stations and provide the direct services to the community.

In the Fire Prevention Bureau, there are 8 Fire Inspectors and Managers to ensure buildings and facilities are up to code and adhere to all new laws to prevent the instance of fires and reduce the impact of fires if they occur. The remaining 16 employees make up Fire Administration and include executive managers and support staff.



New Recruits

It can take more than a year from the time a job announcement is posted before an Entry Level Firefighter begins work on a Fire Engine or Ambulance. Candidates complete a rigorous selection process including a physical fitness exam, mental health screening, and background check. Once a candidate is hired, they complete an intensive 21 week joint fire academy.

In Fiscal Year 2022, the Fire Department experienced an unusual amount of turn-over with retirements and current employees taking competing job offers. The Department hired 6 new firefighters in December of 2021.



All 6 had already completed their Firefighter 1 Certification and were fast-tracked into an 8 week in-house academy. One candidate left for another agency during the academy, and one did not pass the academy. These four below remain with the Department as Firefighters.



Niko Fortino

Hometown: Gilroy, CA
Hobbies: Football, MMA, weightlifting, hiking, camping, snowboarding.



Daniel Jensen

Hometown: San Lorenzo, CA
Hobbies: Baseball, mountain biking, fishing, and camping.



Audrey Romo

Hometown: Tracy, CA
Hobbies: Drawing, painting, roller-skating.



Eric Yousef

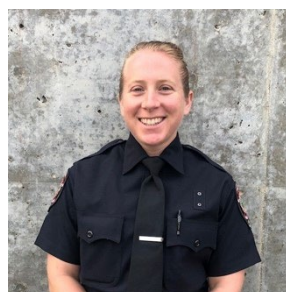
Hometown: San Mateo, CA
Hobbies: Concerts, rooting for all the SF sports teams, remodeling his house.

In April of 2022, the Department hired 10 new Firefighters. Half of the group was fast-tracked to a shorter in-house academy having completed their Firefighter 1 Certification, and the other five successfully completed a 21 week joint fire academy. All 10 new Firefighters graduated in July, and one has since left the department leaving these nine still working as Firefighters.



Chad Glaser

Hometown: Bakersfield, CA
Hobbies: Anything outdoors, backpacking, traveling.



Maryann Holliday-Rutledge

Hometown: San Francisco, CA
Hobbies: Trail running, SF Giants



Patrick Joyner
Hometown: Ventura County, CA
Hobbies: Reading, spending time with friends and family, learning anything new.



Kevin Kazzaz
Hometown: Germany
Hobbies: Working on cars/motorcycles, playing sports.



Mike Little
Hometown: San Bruno, CA
Hobbies: Outdoors, fitness, dirt biking, motocross.



Marc Muzzi Jr.
Hometown: Sunnyvale, CA
Hobbies: Soccer, camping, rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, snowboarding.



Franky Palmer
Hometown: San Jose, CA
Hobbies: Working out, hiking, playing/watching sports.



Hailey Scola
Hometown: Saratoga, CA
Hobbies: Crossfit, running, hiking, horseback riding.



Danny Villicana
Hometown: Salinas, CA
Hobbies: Soccer, music, surfing, traveling

Promotions

Mark Muzzi, Battalion Chief



Retirements

Marcus Arana

Fire Captain

22 Years of Service



Charles Ferry

Fire Captain

23 Years of Service



Manny Macias

Firefighter

28 Years of Service



John Parks

Fire Inspector

24 Years of Service



Jorge Salazar

Apparatus Operator

23 Years of Service

