



# Palo Alto Fire Department Second Semi-Annual Performance Report Fiscal Year 2021

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## Highlights

- Reduction in call volume from previous year due to Coronavirus Pandemic Shelter in Place persisted
- EMS Incidents accounted for 62% of all calls, totaling 2180
- Response time goals for EMS and Fire calls were met
- Fire containment goals were not met
- 4% increase in fire incidents
- 13% increase in service calls
- The Fire Prevention Bureau completed zero State Mandated inspections and, on time reviews fell to 67% due to reduced staffing

## Fire Station 2 Brown Out

In response to the economic recession brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic, 5.0 FTE Line Firefighter positions were frozen, and Fire Station 2 (College Terrace) was browned-out. A brown-out is when a fire station is temporarily shut down. When fire suppression personnel take leave from a shift, i.e., sick leave, vacation, etc. the engine/ambulance is temporarily taken out of service to compensate for budget shortfalls instead of filling that vacancy with overtime personnel. Fire Station 2 is browned-out every weekday from 8:00 PM to 8:00 AM and on weekends. The table below shows the number of days in each month that Station 2 was shut down for this reporting period.

Month	Count of Days	Percentage
January	30	97%
February	27.5	98%
March	27	87%
April	26	87%
May	29.5	95%
June	29.5	98%
<b>6 Month Total</b>	<b>169.5</b>	<b>94%</b>

When Fire Station 2 is browned-out, response times into this district are increased as fire engines and ambulances from other districts are the first-due responding units for emergencies in Station 2's response area.

## Calls for Service

The Palo Alto Fire Department (PAFD) responded to a total of 3,531 calls for service in the second six-month period of Fiscal Year 2021. The calls include responses within Palo Alto, Stanford, and neighboring cities to provide Auto and Mutual Aid. Approximately eighty-seven percent (87%) of calls are generated from Palo Alto, eleven percent (11%) from Stanford, and the remainder from neighboring cities or requests for regional fire deployment.

The majority of calls were for Rescue and Emergency Medical Services, making up sixty-two percent (62%) of the responses. Table 1 below shows the main categories of the calls to which PAFD responded. Calls are classified based on the actual event occurred, rather than the initial call request.

Call Type	FY20 JAN-JUN	FY21 JAN-JUN
Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Incidents	2,237	2,180
Good Intent	561	512
False Alarm and False Call	405	406
Service Call	267	301
Fire	69	72
Hazardous Condition, No Fire	64	57
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,603</b>	<b>3,531</b>

Good Intent and False Alarm calls make up the second largest types of responses. Most calls for service that may be a true threat of fire, gas or other emergency hazard are actually found to be something else after Firefighters investigate the situation. These calls are coded as Good Intent calls. As well, many fire alarm activations are from causes other than fire or emergency hazard. These situations are categorized as False Alarm calls.

## Emergency Medical Services and Rescue

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) is the primary service that the Palo Alto Fire Department provides to Palo Alto and Stanford. The Palo Alto Fire Department is the only Fire Department in the County that runs its own ambulance and transport services.

Of the 2,237 Emergency Medical Service calls the PAFD responded to in the second period of Fiscal Year 2021, the overwhelming majority were for medical, trauma and cardiac emergencies that did not involve a vehicle accident.

Rescue and EMS Performance Measures	FY20 JAN-JUN	FY21 JAN-JUN
Emergency Medical Service Incident	2,201	2,148
Extrication, Rescue	26	22
Rescue or EMS Standby	10	4
Lock-In	0	6
Water and Ice-Related Rescue	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,237</b>	<b>2,180</b>
<b>Transports</b>		
Number of Transports	1,530	1,617
Percent of EMS Calls resulting in transport	68%	74%
<b>Response Times</b>		
Percent of first responder arriving on scene to EMS calls within 8 minutes	92%	93%
Percent of paramedic responder arriving on scene to EMS calls within 12 minutes	99%	99%
Average response time for first responder arriving on scene to EMS calls	5:25	5:19

This period reflects a decrease to the number of Rescue and EMS Incident calls. The number of transports increased, thus the proportion of calls resulting in a transport increased at seventy-four percent (74%) of all Rescue and EMS calls.

- ★ **Response Time Goal Met:** At least 90% of first responder arriving on scene to EMS calls within eight minutes.

This period the PAFD first responder arrived on scene to EMS calls within eight minutes, ninety-three percent (93%) of the time.

- ★ **Response Time Goal Met:** At least 99% of paramedic responder arriving on scene to EMS calls within 12 minutes.

This period, the PAFD paramedic responders arrived on scene to EMS calls within 12 minutes ninety-nine percent (99%) of the time.

## Fire Suppression

Very few of the potential fire calls coming into dispatch turn out to be a real fire once PAFD investigates the scene and cause of the concerning elements. The total of calls this period was seventy-two (72) whereas fifty-eight (58) calls where fire was present originated from Palo Alto. Nine (9), occurred in Stanford. There were nine (9) building fires that the Department responded to in Palo Alto and the fire was contained to the room of origin in three of those fires. Here are the descriptions of the significant fires for this period:

**1/5/21:** 400 block of Bryant Ave. Garage fire in Sublevel A, possible homeless encampment.

**2/18/21:** 100 Block of Seal Ave. Structure Fire in Garage, fire was contained to Garage area.

**3/3/21:** 3500 Block of Deer Creek. Battery Fire and subsequent Hazardous Materials Event

**3/26/21:** 300 Block of Everett. Structure Fire House Fire in Carport with minimal extension into other areas.

**4/16/21:** Foothills Expressway. Vehicle Rollover with patient extrication required.

**5/6/21:** 3800 Block of Miranda. Diesel spill, clean up and investigation ongoing.

**5/14/21:** 3300 Block of Hillview. Hazardous Materials incident with Chemical smell. Multiple entries in full hazardous materials protective equipment. No contamination found.

**6/5/21:** 3100 Block of Flowers. Structure Fire. Fire isolated to room of origin.

Fire Suppression Measures	FY20 JAN-JUN	FY21 JAN-JUN
Structure Fire	17	29
Outside rubbish fire	21	17
Natural vegetation on fire	14	11
Fire, Other	10	9
Mobile property (vehicle) fire	3	4
Special outside fire	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Response Times</b>		
Percent of first responder arriving on scene to Fire calls within 8 minutes	87%	90%
Average response time for first responder arriving on scene to Fire calls	5:43	5:37
<b>Fire Containment</b>		
Percent of building and structure fires contained to the room or area of origin	50%	33%



**Response Time Goal Met:** At least 90% of first responder arriving on scene to Fire calls within eight minutes.

This period the PAFD first responder arrived on scene to Fire calls within eight minutes was ninety (90%) of the time.



**Fire Containment Goal Not Met:** At least 90% of building and structure fires contained to the room or area of origin.

This period there were five building or structure fires within Palo Alto or Stanford, of which thirty-three percent (33%) were contained to the room or area of origin. Crews arrived on scene in under 8 minutes for all but two incidents. The maximum response time was 8 minutes and 32 seconds.

## Hazardous Materials

The Fire Department responded to a total of sixty-four (64) emergencies related to hazardous materials. The two primary categories of calls continue to be for Spills and Leaks or Electrical Problems, making up sixty-four percent (64%) of all Hazardous Materials calls this period.

Hazardous Materials Response Measures	FY20 JAN-JUN	FY21 JAN-JUN
Combustible/Flammable spills and leaks	24	22
Electrical wiring/Equipment problem	17	16
Hazardous Condition, Other	10	5
Chemical release, reaction, or toxic condition	8	5
Accident, potential accident	3	4
Biological hazard	1	5
Attempted burning, illegal action	1	0
Total	64	57
<b>Response Times</b>		
Average response time for first responder arriving on scene to Rescue & Hazardous Materials calls	7:03	6:07

## Mutual and Automatic Aid

The Fire Department previously held automatic aid agreements with five regional Fire Departments, including Mountain View, Menlo Park, Woodside, Cal Fire, and Santa Clara County Fire. At the request of the City of Mountain View, the automatic aid agreement was modified at the beginning of January 2018 resulting in a significant decrease in the number of calls compared to the prior fiscal year. The Palo Alto Fire Department continues to advocate for the closest unit response and collects objective data to support improved services to all of our communities under the previous automatic aid agreement.

Santa Clara County Fire received the highest amount of aid from the Department this period accounting for fifty-eight percent (58%) of all mutual and auto aid provided. The Department required thirty-onepercent (31%) more Aid from other jurisdictions this period compared to the prior year, with the majority received from Mountain View with a total of thirty-six (36) incidents.

Mutual Aid Performances		FY20	FY21
		JAN-JUN	JAN-JUN
<b>Mutual and Auto Aid Provided</b>			
<u>Agency</u>			
Santa Clara County Fire		33	51
Mountain View Fire		15	16
Menlo Park Fire		4	3
San Jose		0	1
San Mateo City		1	-
San Mateo County		2	-
Morgan Hill		1	-
Gilroy		1	-
<i>All Mutual and Auto Aid Provided</i>		<b>57</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Mutual and Auto Aid Received</b>			
<u>Agency</u>			
Mountain View Fire		36	13
Menlo Park Fire		16	5
Woodside Fire		10	5
Santa Clara County Fire		1	2
<i>All Mutual and Auto Aid Received</i>		<b>63</b>	<b>25</b>

## Fire Prevention

The Fire Prevention Bureau ensures compliance with the local and State Fire Codes for the safety of occupants and protection of property. Fire Inspectors perform fire sprinkler and fire alarm plan checks, permitting, and field inspections with the goal of ensuring all construction complies with local and national codes.

This period saw a significant decrease in the number of permits, inspections and plans reviewed on time due to staffing reductions and vacancies. One-third of Fire Inspectors were eliminated as part of the budget reductions resulting from the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic in Fiscal Year 2021. With reduced resources, the Bureau has seen a sharp decrease in the number of fire and life safety plan reviews completed on time – almost one-third of plans are being reviewed late.

In addition to delays in plan reviews, the Bureau has not been able to conduct any annual State Mandate or State Regulated Inspections this year. All State Mandated inspections reported have been completed by engine crews on shift.

Prevention Bureau Performance Measures	FY20 JAN-JUN	FY21 JAN-JUN
<b>Permits</b>		
Fire Permits Issued	160	98
Sprinkler Permits Issued	103	92
Solar Permits Issued	62	130
Electric Vehicle Permits Issued*	-	-
<b>Inspections</b>		
Fire Inspections	3,758	3,511
Hazardous Material (HazMat) Inspections Completed	44	51
Number of HazMat Facilities Inspections for the year	716	716
Percent of Hazardous Material Facilities Inspections Complete	6%	7%
State Mandated Inspections Completed	41	153
Number of State Mandated Inspections for the year	535	532
Percent of State Mandated Facilities Inspections Complete	8%	29%
<b>Fire and Life Safety Plan Review</b>		
Plans Reviewed	716	813
Percent of Reviews Completed On-Time	97%	67%

*\*The data collection system is currently malfunctioning and not capturing Electric Vehicle Permit statistics, when this is resolved the Department will update reports retroactively.*

## Workforce Planning

The Department operated daily emergency response operations with a total of 78.00 FTE suppression personnel for the second period of FY21. This includes three battalions of crews that staff six fire stations in the City and Stanford 24 hours each day. Over the last period, the Department has operated with 2 positions vacant due to separations and retirements. The Department continues to struggle with rising injury rates with 8 personnel out on lightduty or leave. This creates a total of 10.0 FTE positions that required backfill with overtime.

The Training Division shows an increase in training hours, however, this is due to a change in methodology for capturing training hours. Crews conducted wildland fire drills, rope rescue, required EMS trainings, and specialized trainings on COVID procedures during this period.

Vacancies and Off-Line Employees FY21 JAN-JUN					
<u>Classification</u>	<u>Budgeted FTE</u>	<u>Vacancies</u>	<u>Off-Line Employees (Workers Comp/Light Duty)</u>	<u>Personnel On Line</u>	<u>Percent of Personnel On Line</u>
Battalion Chief	3.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	100%
Fire Captain	20.0	0.0	3.0	17.0	85%
Fire Apparatus Operator & Fire Fighters	55.0	2.0	5.0	48.0	87%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>87%</b>

<b>Succession Planning</b>	<b>FY20 JAN-JUN</b>	<b>FY21 JAN-JUN</b>
<b>Personnel</b>		
Number of Shift Staff Currently Eligible to Retire	23	17
Number of Shift Staff Eligible to Retire in Five Years	15	15
Percent of all Shift Staff Eligible to Retire within Five Years	44%	41%
Number of Acting Battalion Chief Hours	0	324
Number of Acting Captain Hours	2,451	1,890
Number of Acting Apparatus Operator Hours	12,992	9,273
<b>Training</b>		
Hours of Training Completed	10,960	17,706
Average Hours Per Line Personnel	132	227