

Corte Madera Fire Department

Standard of Coverage

HISTORICAL RESPONSE EFFECTIVENESS

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This section reviews the types of emergencies the fire department has historically responded to, as well as the pattern of incidents, the community risk, and the overall impact this has on the department's effectiveness.

The following data identifies Corte Madera's call volume for the preceding five years, for the various types of emergency incidents.

INCIDENTS	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Structure Fires	31	24			
Vehicle Fires	7	12			
Trees/Brush/Grass Fires	1	10			
Refuse Outside Fires	1	6			
Other Outside Fires	7	8			
Not Classified Fires	1				
Air/Gas Ruptures	2	2			
Excessive Heat/Overheat Scorch Burns	2	3			
Emergency Medical Calls	599	600	606	672	733
Emergency Medical Assists	26	12			
Lock-Ins	1	4			
People Trapped/Caught/Buried	1				
Hazardous Conditions	3				
Hazardous Conditions, Unable to Classify Further		1			
Hazardous Conditions Not Classified		4			
Flammable Gas/Liquids	6	5			
Electric Arcing	9	9			
Toxic Condition		1			
Vehicle Accidents/Potential Vehicle Accidents	42	30			
Illegal Attempted Burning		1			
Service Calls	2	4			
Persons in Distress	17	15			
Water Problems	27	15			
Smoke/Odor Problems	38	39			
Animal Problems	3	1			
Public Service Assistance	47	21	47	52	51
Unauthorized Burning	1				
Cover Assignments/Standby at Fire Stations	12	19	190	240	250
Service Calls Not Classified	3	3			
Good Intent Calls Unable to Classify Further	3	2			
Incidents Cleared Prior to Arrival	49	90			
Wrong Locations		2			
Vicinity Alarms	15	1			
Steam/Other Gas Mistaken for Smoke	15	10			
EMS Calls/Left Scene Prior to Arrival	4	4			
Hazmat Investigations/No Hazardous Condition Found	2	4			
Good Intent Calls Not Classified	5	11			
False Calls Unable to Classify Further	2	3			
Malicious/Mischievous False Call		1			
System Malfunctions	36	32			
Unintentional	12	22			

False Calls Not Classified	10	5			
Natural Disaster Unable to Classify Further	1				
Flood	2				
Wind Storm	2				
Natural Disaster Not Classified	1				
Investigate/Enforcement			158	169	222
Extinguish Control			34	33	25
Restore Systems/Services			33	38	48
Rescue			15	15	26
Identify/Confine Hazardous Condition			12	16	19
Search and Rescue			6	3	
Other			1	1	
TOTALS	1,048	1,036	1,102	1,239	1,374

Note: The fire departments records management system changed in 2000, which accounts for the variances in the above table.

The chart above shows that medical calls have increased by approximately 20% from 1998 to 2002. Of the total calls in 2002, 53% were medical calls, with a projection of 60% medical calls in 2003. This is an increase of 5% per year in medical calls. During the same period, total calls for service increased 24%, an average of 6% per year.

Though the calls for service have increased 24% over the previous five years, the number of fires has remained fairly consistent, through a comprehensive range of fire prevention, educational, and community fire servicing programs.

We are also able to maintain a code 3 level of response of EMT-D's and paramedics, based on total reflex time, that will ensure the arrival of an engine within five minutes of receipt of a 911 call, in 90% of requests for service in all areas serviced.

The ability of the department to handle multiple emergencies (primarily medical) has been clearly demonstrated during 2002, where overlapping calls for service occurred. Through the calls are handled primarily by department resources, automatic aid ambulances are required.

There is also the issue of paramedic ambulance availability. Though the department staffs one ambulance, it may be delivering a patient at one of the area hospitals and unavailable for immediate response. Paramedic ambulances are, however, dispatched from hospitals, with a delayed arrival time. Reciprocal cover-in with a neighboring department provides paramedic ambulance backup. Presently, we are handling calls for service within our allocated resources, including mutual aid engines and ambulances from neighboring departments when severe overlapping of calls occurs.

The number of structure fires in single- and multi-family occupancies has shown a small decline over the years. Fires in commercial structures have been limited

to one or two fires during the last five-year period. RHAVE scoring indicates that the town is primarily a moderate risk community, with only a few FMA's considered significant risk.

The existing deployment policy of calls for additional resources (second alarm) on arrival of a working fire is to contain fires to their area of origin. This practice though requires the response to the scene and cover-in of stations by mutual aid companies along with cover-in for medical emergencies and may, in the long term, cause an equity issue with neighboring departments.

Unlike medical emergencies, the handling of two simultaneous structure fires will require immediate mutual aid dispatches to the scene. However, this situation is a very rare occurrence, based on the number of fires per year.

Corte Madera's wildland fire problem can best be described as high, when considering risk factors of fuel, resistance of control, and potential for living units lost. The department's present deployment is predicated on fire weather severity information, and ranges from two engines, a paramedic unit, and a chief officer, to six engines, a paramedic unit, four chief officers, and mutual aid.

A wildland fire of any consequence is an automatic request for Marin County Fire Department resources. These resources include Type 3 engines, a bulldozer, and an aircraft. Mutual aid resources, as defined in the Countywide Mutual Aid Plan, respond to the scene or provide station cover-in.

Historically, as in the future, the majority of incidents handled by the department will be medical in nature. This trend should increase, as it has in the past years, at about 7% per year. Structure and wildland fires should remain below the five-year average. Risk factors in the community should remain moderate, as suggested in the RHAVE scoring. Deployment to medical emergencies will need periodic review as the type and numbers of incidents occur. Review of all deployment practices should become an on-going process.

HISTORICAL RESPONSE EFFECTIVENESS MULTIPLE UNITS

The time differential for the first arriving units at different emergencies is a factor of location. Multiple unit responses to medical emergencies are usually highway accidents, where access is hindered by traffic and location.

Response to a vehicle accident is presently determined by the information received by the reporting party. This could be from the California Highway Patrol through a 911 call to their communication center. Without specific information as to the number of patients, our present policy is to dispatch one engine and a paramedic unit. Once on scene, the number of patients is determined and additional resources are requested, if necessary. This, in fact, causes a delay in

the arrival of the second engine. An alternative may be to have a second engine code 2 to shadow the first and stage close to the reported incident.

Wildland fires are usually accessible by narrow roads on the outer fringes of town. Many times the location of a wildland fire is not the location where resources must begin their attack. Fire spreading uphill toward structures may require backtracking to arrive on scene for structure protection rather than the point of origin. Arrival times may be prolonged due to this type of event. Structure fires are usually in residential areas, easily accessible to responding units, thus an improved arrival time over medical and wildland fire emergencies.