# Tuolumne County Fire Department Monthly Activity Report



# January 2021

# **Tuolumne County Fire Department**

Phone: (209) 533-5100

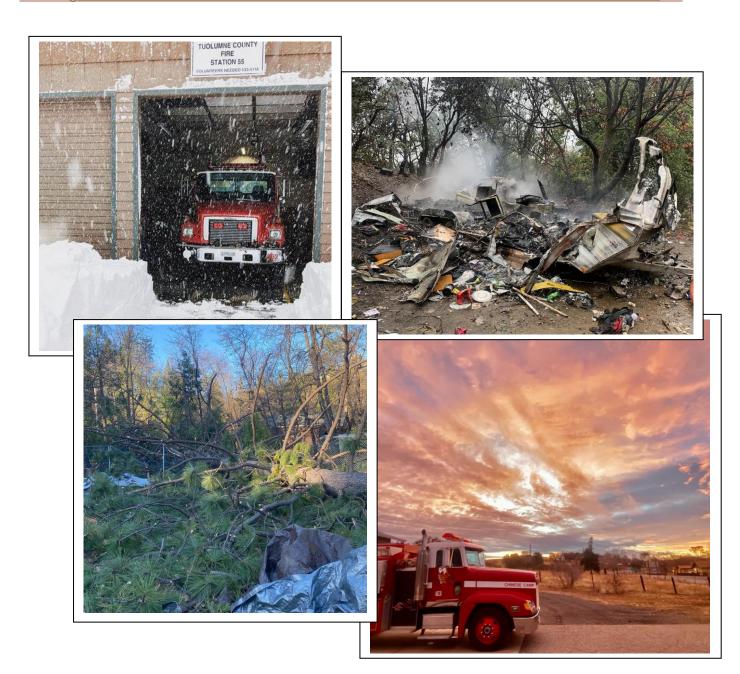
18440 Striker Ct., Sonora, CA 95370

www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/717/Fire-Department



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# **MONTH IN REVIEW**

# January 2021

We all were excited to say goodbye to 2020 and welcome in the New Year. We know this has been a difficult year for all of us, so we are encouraged to ring in 2021 with gratitude by remembering our first responders, our partner agencies, front-line healthcare workers, support staff, and our supportive community. Warm wishes for a very Happy and Safe New Year to you and yours.

In January 1981, TCFD Mono Vista Station 56 Volunteer Fire Lieutenant Doug Clark began his career

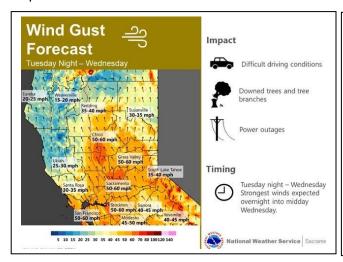
with the TCFD as a Volunteer Firefighter. While raising a family and working a full-time career, Doug has dedicated many thousands of hours to our communities through his responses to emergencies and trainings. Doug has had an impact on countless lives since he began his career as a Volunteer Firefighter, including the lives of peers and fellow citizens, changing many of them, making the injuries and losses less severe, and consoling those facing the worst moments of their lives. Doug's life continues to be marked by public service from a commitment he made over 40 years ago to serve and protect the residents and visitors of Tuolumne County with dedication and selflessness. We thank you Doug, and your family, for your collective continued service and sacrifice to Tuolumne County.

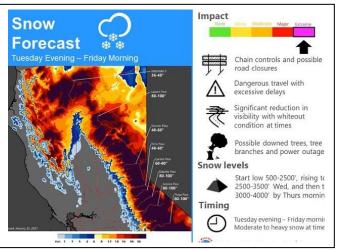


This month we saw a flurry of personnel activity and promotions. Among them included: Fire Apparatus Engineer (FAE) Danny Hausauer from Station 51 to Fire Captain (FC) at West Point; FAE Kelsie Scott from Twain Harte CAL FIRE to FC Battalion 1/3 Relief; FAE Alec Altamirano from Station 76 to FC in the Emergency Command Center in Santa Clara Unit; FC Mario Torres from Twain Harte CAL FIRE to Limited Term Battalion Chief in West Point. Congratulations to all those who have promoted. We look forward to hearing and seeing your future successes.

Across the country on January 9th each year, citizens take the lead to show support on National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. Law Enforcement Officers of every rank and file have chosen a profession that puts their life on the line every day for their communities. We thank our valued partners and tip our hats to them to express appreciation for their dedication and sacrifice in protecting our communities today and every day.

Two significant weather events would take place during the month including a severe wind storm and a series of significant winter storms that included high wind, low snow, and blizzard warnings down to the Twain Harte area and would cause the County to declare a local state of emergency. On Tuesday, January 19, clear skies, lowered humidity and wind gusts up to 85 mph from an east wind event wreaked havoc mostly above the 2,500-foot elevation. This day would prove to be one of the busiest days for Tuolumne County resources in nearly a decade. Though there were ten homes with trees falling on them, and various other utilities and outbuildings damaged, fortunately there were no serious injuries reported.

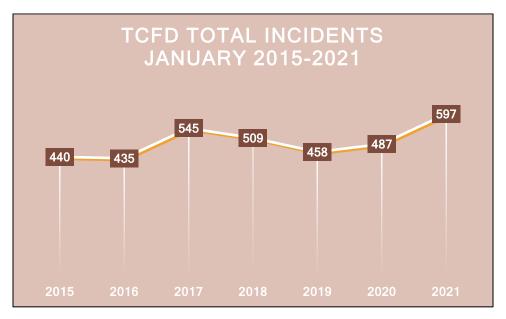




The next week another serious series of storms blew in with predictions of 6-8' of snow over the Sierras and up to 7" of rain predicted in the Sonora area. Thousands of residents were impacted by the significant snow accumulation and effects of the storm including power and communication outages. Most residents did not report being "trapped" however their family members outside of the area were concerned when several days had passed without contact. This led to several requests for "welfare" checks and the residents were found to be in good condition with adequate supplies. During this series of storms, the CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Emergency Command Center dispatched 340 incidents from 1/26/2021 to 1/29/2021 throughout both Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties.

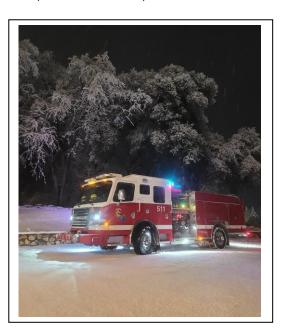
Work continues through a \$10,000 State Fire Assistance grant on the Demonstration Garden in front of the Standard CAL FIRE station. A demonstration garden is meant to be able to share with the community what a fire-resistant landscape looks like. It will have various types of gardening/landscaping methods, sitting areas, ADA accessibility, and incorporate interpretive panels. There is consideration for also including a Blue Star and Fallen Firefighter Memorial area in the design. This project will be a joint community project between CAL FIRE Tuolumne Calaveras Unit, Tuolumne County Fire Department, Tuolumne County Garden Club, UCCE Master Gardeners, Native Plant Society, FireWise Community members, Highway 108 Firesafe Council, local Scout and other service clubs.

In January there were a total of 597 incidents in TCFD jurisdiction compared to 487 in 2020, and a significant increase of 18% from the five-year average of 487 incidents. Of the 597 incidents this month there were 362 medical aids, 77 fires, 73 hazardous materials/fire menace standby, and 85 other incidents.



# **TCFD Station Responses**

Station 51 Mono Village Fire Station responded to 172 incidents in the month of January including 107 medical calls (of which 15 were vehicle collisions with one pin-in), 25 public assists, 15 fires (9 structure fires, 2 vehicle fires, 1 commercial structure fire, 1 vegetation fire), 10 false alarms, and 15 other



incidents. 132 incidents were within their primary response area and 40 were not. Volunteers responded to 35 of the 172 incidents and through the Tuolumne County Automatic Aid Agreement, aid was given to three agencies eight times and received by two agencies two times.

Station 76 Jamestown Fire Station had one of its busiest months ever responding to 167 incidents. Of those 167 incidents, there were 109 medical aids (of which 18 were vehicle collisions and one required extrication), 14 public assists, 11 false alarms, 18 fires (6 vegetation, 6 residential structures, 2 commercial structures, and 4 others), and 15 other incidents. Of the 167 incidents, 139 were within their

primary response area and 28 were not. Volunteers responded to 7 of the 167 incidents. Automatic aid was given to 2 agencies 7 times and received from 4 agencies 16 times. Station 76 again responded to one residential care facility 12 times.

Twain Harte CAL FIRE Station is funded to respond in the winter months through the agreement with Tuolumne County. This month, Twain Harte responded to 111 incidents including 55 medical aids (including 11 vehicle collisions), 9 structure fires, 4 debris fires, 2 wildland fires, 21 emergency standbys, 13 public assists, and 7 other incidents. 91 calls were within their primary response area and 20 were not. Volunteers responded on 23 of the 111 incidents. Automatic aid was given to 2 agencies 22 times and received by 2 agencies 3 times.



# Tuolumne County Fire Department Station Incident Responses January 2021

Mono Village Station 51 (6 career / 6 volunteers) 197 incidents Ponderosa Hills Station 53 (1 volunteer) 0 incidents Long Barn Station 54 (<u>0 volunteers</u>) 27 incidents absorbed by other stations Pinecrest Station 55 (7 volunteers) 24 incidents Mono Vista Station 56 (6 volunteers) 104 incidents Crystal Falls Station 57 (<u>0 Volunteers</u>) incidents absorbed by other stations Cedar Ridge Station 58 (12 volunteers) 18 incidents Chinese Camp Station 61 (1 volunteer) 35 incidents Smith Station Station 63 (0 Volunteers) incidents absorbed by other stations Don Pedro Station 64 (3 volunteers) 14 incidents Jamestown Station 76 (5 career / 1 volunteer) 174 incidents Columbia College Station 79 (6 student firefighters) 60 incidents Blanchard CAL FIRE Station (Amador) – 34 incidents Twain Harte CAL FIRE Station (Amador) – 124 incidents Groveland CAL FIRE Station (Amador) – 37 incidents Standard CAL FIRE Station – 80 incidents

\*\*Incident totals include incidents that the fire station was dispatched to, and may have been automatic aid to other agencies through the

Tuolumne County Automatic Aid Agreement\*\*

Total station responses (some to the same incident depending on type of call) for the month included 36 for vegetation fire, 45 for structure fire, 158 for other fires, 500 for medical aids, 92 for hazardous situations, and 98 others for a total of 929 station responses to 597 total incidents for the month of January. An example where multiple engines could be counted for the same incident is a structure fire

when four engines and two water tenders are dispatched would be counted as one incident, but multiple responses. This total of 929 is a good reminder of how much the equipment is used and the importance of a properly funded and maintained fleet.

# **Significant Incidents**

#### January 4, 2021 - Vehicle Collision, Chicken Ranch Road

Firefighters arrived to find a vehicle that had rolled over with a patient pinned in. Crews used specialized equipment called a reciprocating saw to cut out the front window of the small vehicle. The patient was safely extricated out of the vehicle and flown to a valley trauma center for treatment.

#### January 4, 2021 - Vehicle Fire, Gunsight Road

Fire crews were dispatched to a possible debris fire and instead found a small travel trailer totally involved. The trailer was a total loss but did not spread to the dry vegetation. This is the second fire at the same location within just few weeks.

January 4, 2021 – Vehicle Collision, Highway 49 x Highway 120 Firefighters arrived to find a vehicle that had rolled over multiple times and ended up off the highway. Fortunately, the occupant was not injured. Another reminder for us...seatbelts save lives!



#### January 9, 2021 – Structure Fire, Mt. Brow Road

Upon arrival firefighters were able to quickly recognize and extinguish a creosote buildup fire (flue fire) in the stove pipe and prevent extension into the attic space.

#### January 11, 2021 – Vehicle Collision into a Structure, Highway 108 x Main Street

Firefighters responded to a vehicle into a structure in Jamestown. The structure and vehicle sustained moderate damage and the driver of the vehicle fled the scene.

#### January 12, 2021 – Structure Fire, Middle Camp Road

Firefighters arrived to smoke showing. Conditions at the scene presented with an unusual amount of smoke coming from the chimney. The fire was contained to the fire box and stove pipe.

#### January 15, 2021 – Vehicle Fire, Camp Hope

Crews arrived to find a fully involved vehicle fire in the back of the encampment. The fire was contained with no extension.

#### January 16, 2021 - Vehicle Fire, Gunsight Road

First arriving engines found a vehicle fully engulfed with spread into vegetation in a homeless encampment. Fire units contained the fire to ¼ acre within two hours.

#### January 19, 2021 – Significant Weather Event (Wind), County-Wide

Over the 24-hour period TCFD resources responded to 64 incidents in TCFD jurisdiction including 7 vegetation fires, 3 structure fires, 16 other fires, 11 medical aids, 19 hazardous situations (i.e. lines down), and 8 other incidents. Between all fire departments in the county, there were a total of 103 incidents dispatched.

#### <u>January 19, 2021 – Vegetation Fire, Elmore Road x Highway 120</u>

During the strong wind event affecting the western slopes of the Sierra, firefighters responded to this incident with the advisement that there were powerlines down. Firefighters arrived to find a 160+ foot tree had broken into three large pieces under the strain of the wind, knocked powerlines down, and started a small vegetation fire.



#### January 19, 2021 – Structure Fire, Curtis Circle

Firefighters arrived and found a working fire in a residential structure. An aggressive, multi-agency, offensive attack was utilized to combat significant fire in the second story and attic of a single-family residence. The fire occurred during a significant strain on emergency response resources during the significant weather event mentioned above.

#### January 20, 2021 - Structure Fire/Medical Aid, Old Don Pedro Road

Units arrived to find a fully involved 2,000 square foot garage fully engulfed by fire and a burn patient. The garage was a total loss, but even though the home was a direct exposure and suffered minor heat damage, there was no spread to the home. The homeowner used his backhoe to remove the breezeway that connected the two and in doing so received multiple burns to his feet, hands, chest, and head. The homeowner was transported to a burn center for treatment.

#### <u>January 20, 2021 – Vegetation Fire, Elder Lane</u>

Firefighters arrived and found a portion of a tree had fallen into power lines causing a fire. PG&E shut down the line and cut the tree loose. Firefighters went to work extinguishing the tree and the smoldering fire that remained.

#### <u>January 21, 2021 – Rescue/CPR – Dodge Ridge</u>

One of the impacts of the significant weather was an increase in recreation related incidents. This day crews responded to Dodge Ridge Ski Resort for a snowboarder who was trapped in the snow, head first. Ski Patrol and bystanders along with firefighters freed the snowboarder who was down for 12 minutes and performed CPR. The patient was revived, transported down the hill to a waiting ambulance, and later flown by air ambulance from the Chinese Camp Fire Station LZ. Due to weather, this was the best LZ for the safety of the crew, patient, and first responders. *The patient was released from the hospital a few days later and has made a full recovery.* 

#### January 21, 2021 - Vehicle Collision, Soulsbyville Road

Crews responded and found a vehicle had crashed into a power pole, breaking the pole off and creating a precarious situation with the possibility of the lines coming down. Firefighters assessed the scene and after determining the occupants were uninjured, they secured the roadway until PG&E could replace the pole.

### <u>January 22, 2021 – Vehicle Collision, Highway 108 x</u> <u>Rock Shop</u>

Crews responded to a major injury accident and found a vehicle rollover with a patient that was pinned in. The crews used specialized equipment called Rescue Struts and the Jaws of Life to free the patient. The patient was transported by air ambulance to a valley trauma center.



#### January 24, 2021 - Structure Fire, Fountain Court

Firefighters from the County funded CAL FIRE Amador Station at Groveland assisted Groveland CSD Fire Department and arrived to find a working attic fire. After an aggressive attack by the GCSD and CAL FIRE engine companies, the fire was quickly contained, minimizing damage to the remainder of the home. The cause of the fire was determined to be a buildup of vegetative debris around the flue pipe. This is a good reminder to have your flue cleaned and inspected annually.

#### January 24, 2021 - Illegal Debris Fire, Gunsight Road

On arrival fire crews found the property owner burning improper items. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time crews have been to this address for illegally burning garbage in the recent past. No responsible party was at scene and the incident information has been forwarded to the air pollution control district.

#### January 26-29, 2021 - Significant Weather Event (Snow), County-Wide

Over the 72-hour period TCFD responded to 99 incidents including 1 structure fire, 5 other fires, 48

medical aids, 31 fire menace standbys (including lines down), and 14 public assists. County-wide, fire departments were dispatched to 131 incidents.

#### January 29, 2021 – Medical Aid, Don Pedro Market

Firefighters arrived and found a patient with an altered level of consciousness following a two-minute seizure. Patient was conscious but not alert. Paramedics arrived and ordered an air ambulance which was landed at the Don Pedro Dam LZ. A firefighter accompanied the patient in



the ambulance to assist the paramedics maintaining the airway and assisted respirations. The air ambulance landed and flight medics intubated the patient and transported to a valley hospital.

#### **Fleet**

This month, while en route to a reported structure fire, one of the engines broke down due to an EGR cooler issue. The crew was able to transition into the reserve engine within a few hours. This is a critical example of the issues that are faced with a fleet with an average age of 21 years, 6 years past their recommended replacement date. This engine was repaired within two days.

Other repairs included: replacing charger for Mono Village Engine 511, repairing the charging system for Repair 4435, fixing an air leak on Chinese Camp Engine 612, replaced the fuel tank on Mono Vista Water Tender 569, repaired the transfer case on Mi Wuk Engine 772, replaced the tank to pump piston



on Twain Harte CAL FIRE engine 4465, and multiple other repairs on TCFD engines.

#### Prevention/Education

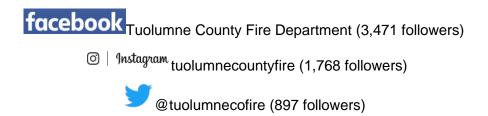
With Fire Inspector II Caleb Flanagan accepting a position with a Bay Area fire department, this month we welcomed our second new employee in as many months. Fire Inspector II Jeff Santos began employment with TCFD on January 4. Jeff has over 28 years of fire service experience with a valley fire department and many certificates along with an advanced

degree. His experience with the Stanislaus County Fire Investigative Unit as well as experience in

private industry as a fire inspector and plans reviewer will be a tremendous asset to the Department. Jeff has a great attitude, is very motivated, and is a great addition to the team. Welcome Jeff!

Despite COVID restrictions and going through onboarding of the new team-member, our Fire Investigators/Inspectors were able to conduct 6 site inspections during the month and 33 plans reviews.

Social media continues to provide a great opportunity to spread the fire prevention/education message and keep the community informed on events occurring within County Fire's jurisdiction. If you haven't already, follow us:



# **Training**

All staff are required to attend mandatory training each year. This includes medical recertification, hazardous materials refresher, fit-testing to wear the breathing apparatus, skills testing (donning SCBAs, ladders, pumping), and more. This year due to COVID, nearly all of the training was successfully conducted virtually.

Additionally, our annual Joint Basic Volunteer Firefighter Academy started with 12 students, following all COVID guideliness. There are also 9 students taking their Emergency Medical Responder training and the students also completed the required Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations and Confined Space Awareness (huge thanks to Bill Dies and Jeff Breshears). Two Volunteers also completed their fire apparatus Driver testing at Station 55 Pinecrest.

# **Tuolumne County Fire Department Muster Association**

The TCFD Muster Association is a benevolent non-profit organization that receives donations to support the firefighters of the TCFD in need and supports firefighters in obtaining additional training. The TCFD Muster Association is proud to offer "We Support TCFD" t-shirts in children's and adult sizes and Tuolumne Co. FD Richardson snapback hats for a donation. Children's shirts have been reduced to \$10 and adult sizes are \$15. Hats are \$20 and both items are pictured below and can be ordered from TCFDMuster@gmail.com or by calling 209-533-5118.







