# Tuolumne County Fire Department Monthly Activity Report



# August 2020

#### **Tuolumne County Fire Department**

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



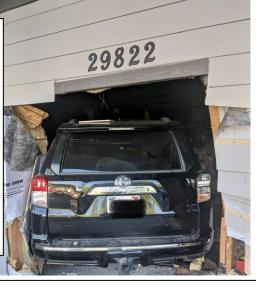
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#### **MONTH IN REVIEW**

#### August 2020

As residents in the county entered the fifth month of living with COVID, the cases of COVID began to flatten and by the end of the month the number of new cases dramatically decreased. It is important that we <u>all</u> follow guidelines and recommendations from the Tuolumne County Health Department.

Starting on August 16th, CAL FIRE hired multiple TCFD staffed Type III Engines, Type II Engines, and Water Tenders to cover CAL FIRE Tuolumne Calaveras Unit CAL FIRE Stations as well as assist in fighting the Moc Incident located in Moccasin. During a time of need, TCFD volunteers and TCFD paid staff once again stepped up to the plate to keep Tuolumne County protected. Volunteers are compensated for their time and Tuolumne County is compensated for use of the TCFD Equipment. The compensation Tuolumne County receives from the Assistance by Hire Agreement with CAL FIRE has routinely been depended on and utilized to partially offset shortfalls in the TCFD annual budget.

One of the biggest stories in world news during the month was the dry lightning storm that came into California on the morning of August 17<sup>th</sup>. Over the next few days nearly 14,000 mostly dry lighting strikes pummeled the central coast and progressed up into northern California. Over 350 new fires were reported in the next few days. Fortunately, with a record heat

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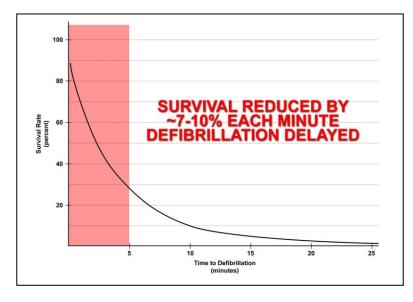
wave suffocating the region with high temperatures in some parts of the county nearing the 110-degree mark, limited lightning activity occurred in the County. However, the lightning siege did have a dramatic effect on the resources available to fight any new fires. As of the time of this writing in early September, in 2020 1,848,311 acres have burned in 7,448 incidents resulting in 7 fatalities and 3,787 structures damaged or destroyed.

On August 17<sup>th</sup> crews responded to a medical facility for a patient with symptoms associated with a heart attack. The patient became unresponsive in an exam room. E511, Volunteer Firefighters on Squad 565, and the Tuolumne County Ambulance arrived at scene at the same time. On arrival, the medical staff of the clinic was performing CPR and beginning other life-saving measures. The patient was shocked the first time as responders entered the exam room.

Firefighters and ambulance personnel relieved the staff performing compressions and airway management and prepped the area to facilitate transferring the patient to the gurney. While the paramedic administered resuscitation medications, the team performed two additional rounds of CPR and administered another shock. No pulse was found. Responders resumed CPR as the paramedic's

monitor was attached. Shortly after the patient was transferred to the gurney a pulse could be seen on the monitor screen.

During the time it took to move the patient from the exam room to the ambulance, the patient progressed from following simple verbal commands to conversing in sentences.

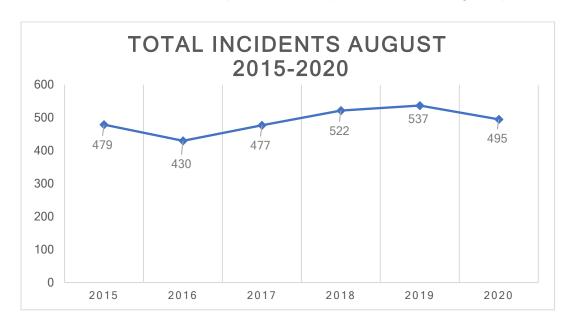


This is a real-life example of the importance of the Chain of Survival and of having first responders and advanced life support stationed strategically throughout the County.

Wildfire season is in full swing with many small fires occurring throughout the county. All of the fuels (timber, brush and grass components) are ready to burn. Please ensure you're doing your part in the fight against wildfire and ensure your properties have defensible space. For more information on how you can do that check out <a href="https://www.readyforwildfire.org">www.readyforwildfire.org</a> and

https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1162/Wildfire-Preparedness. While you're on the County website, make sure you sign up for Everbridge, Tuolumne County's emergency notification program at <a href="https://member.everbridge.net/1332612387832200/login">https://member.everbridge.net/1332612387832200/login</a>.

In August there were a total of 495 incidents in TCFD jurisdiction, a decrease of 41 incidents (-7.8%) from the same time period last year, and a slight increase from the 5-year average of 492 incidents. Of the 495 incidents in August 2020, there were 353 medical aids, 53 fires, 27 hazardous materials/fire menace standby, and 62 other incidents in TCFD jurisdiction. Between January 1 and August 31, 2020 there have been 3,688 incidents in TCFD jurisdiction compared to 3,901 during that period in 2019.



#### **TCFD Station Responses**

Station 51 Mono Village Fire Station responded to 105 incidents in the month of August which included 70 medical calls, 6 vehicle collisions, 10 fires, 11 public assists, 4 alarm soundings, and 4 other incidents. 84 incidents were within their primary response area and 21 were not. Volunteers responded to 21 of the 105 incidents and through the Tuolumne County Automatic Aid Agreement, aid was given

to one agency eight times and received by two agencies five times.

Station 76 Jamestown Fire Station responded to 139 incidents in August including 87 medical aids, 18 vehicle collisions (with 2 requiring extrication), 12 fires, 9 public assists 7 smoke checks, 4 alarm sounding and 2 other incidents. Of the 139 incidents 116 were within their primary response area and 23 were not. Volunteers responded to one incident. Automatic aid was given to two agencies 11 times and received from one agency 11 times. Of note, Station 76 responded to one residential care facility 18 times in the month of August.

Residential care facilities have an increased impact on the emergency services that are provided to the community. In calendar year 2018, five residential care facilities accounted for over 500 incidents for one station which was nearly 25% of that station's incidents for the year. We are very proud and



honored to serve our community wherever they reside. However, when projects are being considered, it is important to properly mitigate all new development and their impacts to emergency services and to ensure those private facilities have the staff and equipment to limit the impacts on publicly provided services.

#### **Tuolumne County Fire Department Station Incident Responses**

Mono Village Station 51 (6 career / 6 volunteers) 125 incidents
Ponderosa Hills Station 53 (1 volunteer) 11 incidents
Long Barn Station 54 (<u>0 volunteers</u>) incidents absorbed by other stations
Pinecrest Station 55 (6 volunteers) 34 incidents
Mono Vista Station 56 (6 volunteers) 78 incidents
Crystal Falls Station 57 (<u>0 Volunteers</u>) Incidents absorbed by other stations
Cedar Ridge Station 58 (12 volunteers) 15 incidents
Chinese Camp Station 61 (1 volunteer) 44 incidents
Smith Station Station 63 (<u>0 Volunteers</u>) Incidents absorbed by other stations
Don Pedro Station 64 (3 volunteers) 15 incidents
Jamestown Station 76 (5 career / 3 volunteers) 149 incidents
Columbia College Station 79 (6 student firefighters) 52 incidents

#### **Tuolumne County CAL FIRE Station Incident Response Information**

Blanchard CAL FIRE Station - 45 incidents Twain Harte CAL FIRE Station - 92 incidents Groveland CAL FIRE Station - 62 incidents

## Standard CAL FIRE Station - 74 incidents Green Springs CAL FIRE Station - 49 incidents

\*Incident numbers above may not match actual engine responses. These numbers above indicate calls that were in the station's first due.

#### **Significant Incidents**

#### August 1, 2020 - Structure Fire, Sonora Avenue

Firefighters assisted Sonora City Fire Department on a structure fire with extension into the vegetation. One structure was fully involved with multiple structures immediately threatened. Firefighters coordinated a fire attack by deploying multiple hose lines to the living quarters and basement of the involved structure to extinguish the fire. The fire in the vegetation was contained to less than 1/10th of an acre.

#### <u>August 1, 2020 – Vegetation Fire, Harvard Mine</u> <u>Road</u>

Firefighters responded to a vegetation fire on Harvard Mine Rd. Fire was contained to 2.3 acres with one outbuilding destroyed.

<u>August 8, 2020 – Vegetation Fire, Red Hills Road</u> Firefighters responded to a vegetation fire on Red Hills Rd. in Chinese Camp. Fire was contained to .6 acres.

<u>August 15, 2020 – Fire/Medical Aid, Don Pedro</u> Firefighters responded to a boat fire on Lake Don Pedro. A short time after the fire was brought under



control another boat brought three patients with burn injuries to the marina. Two of the patients ended up refusing medical treatment however one patient had 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns on both lower legs and thigh. The patient was flown to a burn center in the Sacramento area.

#### August 17, 2020 - Medical Aid - CPR, Mono Way

Highlighted above. Firefighters were dispatched to a medical aid with CPR in progress. Emergency personnel administered highly quality and effective CPR to the patient upon arrival. The patient was shocked several times from an automated external defibrillator throughout multiple rounds of CPR. After several minutes of medical treatment, the patient had a return of spontaneous circulation. The patient's condition continued to improve and eventually became alert, speaking to responders on scene. The patient was transported to a hospital for further evaluation and is expected to make a full recovery.

#### August 20, 2020 – Vegetation Fire, Highway 49 x Highway 120

A fire started and quickly spread consuming hundreds of acres within the first few hours. The state was already at an extreme drawdown with nearly 14,000 lightning strikes, mostly dry, igniting over 350 fires in the previous 3 days. At the time the fire started there were 29 major fires already burning in the state. Nonetheless, with the efforts of resources from all over the state including your TCFD, the fire's movement was slowed by the third day and by the 27<sup>th</sup> the fire was nearly 100% contained.

Another tremendous example of the Chain of Survival...Firefighters and Tuolumne County Ambulance responded to a Medical Aid with CPR in progress on Railbed Road. Upon arrival firefighters witnessed

a bystander performing CPR and a patient with no palpable carotid pulse. Tuolumne County Ambulance, Station 76 and City of Sonora personnel performed life saving measures. Before transport, return of spontaneous circulation was achieved in the field and the patient was loaded and transported to Adventist Health Sonora. The patient was flown to a Sacramento area hospital for further care.

August 22, 2020 – Rescue, Chabroullian Lane Fire Department personnel responded to an assisted living facility for a resident who became trapped in an elevator in between upper floors when the local power was



disrupted and the backup generator failed to start. The elevator car was manually lowered down in a controlled manner by fire department personnel to the first floor where the resident was safely rescued.

#### <u>August 26, 2020 – Vegetation Fire, Camp Hope</u>

Firefighters responded to and quickly contained a vegetation fire at Camp Hope to less than 1 acre.

#### August 28, 2020 - Vegetation Fire, Mono Way

Firefighters were dispatched to a vegetation fire behind Jack in the Box restaurant in the Junction Shopping Center. The fire's spread was limited by restaurant employees and completely extinguished by fire crews before impacting the restaurant or nearby Sierra Pacific Railroad.

#### August 30, 2020 - Vehicle Collision, Phoenix Lake Road

Firefighters responded to a vehicle accident involving two vehicles on a blind corner of Phoenix Lake Road. Multiple occupants were fortunate with no major injuries.

#### **Fleet**

Our one Heavy Equipment Mechanic continues to keep busy with a fleet of over 50 vehicles. This month while checking the equipment he found the following: Water Tender 768 throttle was sticking; tires on Engine 761 needed replacing; tires on rear of Water Tender 618 needed replacing; tires on Fleet Services Vehicle R4435 needed replacing; vacuum pump and power steering needed replacing on R4435. All repairs were completed. Additionally, throughout the month he was assigned to various fires and when the lightning ignited fires across the state he was



dispatched to the Santa Clara Unit Lightning Complex and remained there through the beginning of September. One of the benefits of the cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE is that while our HEM is

assigned out of the area on fires or off shift or on vacation, CAL FIRE HEM's from TCU fill the gaps at no cost to the County.

#### Prevention/Education

As mentioned last month, the \$15,000 California Fire Foundation/PGE Grant the TCFD was awarded in late 2019, allowed us to hire two part-time temporary Defensible Space Inspectors. The goals of the program are to educate and inform residents about how to ensure their home has protection from wildfire by reducing vegetation buildup around their homes. The grant funds were completely utilized and during their time the Inspectors were able to complete nearly 1,500 inspections. We were pleasantly surprised to see some of the biggest violations were completely mitigated within 30 days. The community remains very receptive and glad to see the fire department doing inspections and the property owners



are happy to get the education and clarification for the work they have completed to protect their home and community. Many residents stated that they have never had an inspection before and that the education was very helpful.

Fire Investigators/Inspectors were able to conduct 24 site inspections during the month and 47 plans reviews. Also, Camp Berkeley initiated their rebuilding project after the losses caused by the Rim Fire.

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**

One of our Volunteer Firefighters spent a 24 hour shift at Station 51. He learned advanced skills and knowledge to increase his abilities as a Volunteer Firefighter and Driver/Operator through training and mentorship from Station 51 staff.

One of the CAL FIRE Fire Apparatus Engineers attended a fire instruction class in Oakdale. The class teaches students how to utilize and tailor lesson plans to develop audio visual presentations and manipulative skills evolutions in a teaching role. This class is one of the required trainings to achieve Journey Level Status as a Fire Apparatus Engineer through the California Joint Apprenticeship Program. The valuable skills acquired will be utilized throughout his career to pass along information through teaching and instruction for the advancement and progression of the fire department.

Staff routinely perform frequent trainings to maintain and acquire new skills, knowledge, and abilities demanded by the variable types of incidents responded to. Topics include: fires (residential and commercial structure, wildland, passenger and commercial vehicle, etc...), hazardous materials, technical rescue (rope rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, urban search and rescue, swift water rescue, etc...) equipment and appliance malfunction, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents and auto extrication, severe weather and natural disasters, and aircraft emergencies, to name a few.

Firefighters are keeping up to date with the latest safety measures to protect the citizens and TCFD personnel during the current viral pandemic. These efforts are keeping Tuolumne County First Responders healthy and ready to serve Tuolumne County in any situation.

#### **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 <a href="mailto:TCFDMuster@gmail.com">TCFDMuster@gmail.com</a> or by calling 209-533-5118.





