

Tuolumne County Fire Department Monthly Activity Report



April 2020

Tuolumne County Fire Department

Phone: (209) 533-5100

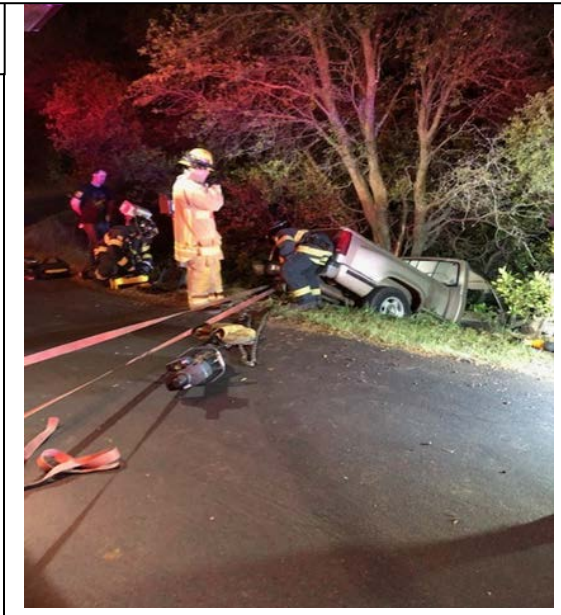
18440 Striker Ct., Sonora, CA 95370

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



TABLE OF CONTENTS

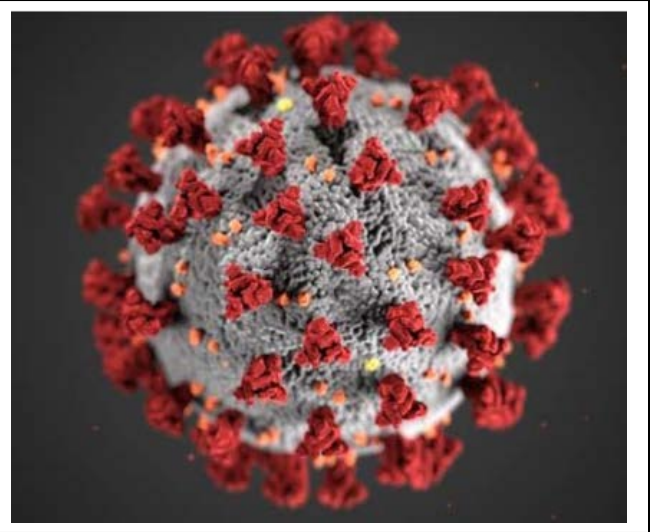
Month in Review_____	3
Station Responses_____	5
Significant Incidents_____	7
Fleet_____	8
Prevention/Education_____	9
Training_____	9



MONTH IN REVIEW

April 2020

The month of April continued to focus on the COVID worldwide pandemic. Locally, a state of emergency is still in effect as declared by the Board of Supervisors, a California State of Emergency was declared by Governor Newsom, and a National State of Emergency was declared by President Trump. As most of the residents of Tuolumne County continued to follow “stay at home” orders, it seemed that many parts of daily life came to a near stand-still. Still, your fire department continued responding to incidents, training to hone skills at the station level and online, learning with the rest of the world to better utilize technology including online meetings, and performing as many normal station routines as allowed. Additional personal protective equipment continued to be utilized for medical incidents and caused some changes in the “normal” responses and equipment used to protect your first responders without compromising patient care. A supply chain for personal protective equipment is still in place through the Tuolumne County Office of Emergency Services and the Public Health Department as the Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC-called Mohawk).



Due to the above mentioned COVID-19 “Stay at Home” orders, CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit transitioned to an online system to issue burn permits to citizens for residential debris burning. Property owners will review a three-minute educational video, fill out an online application and print the permit. Residents are still required to call the Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District prior to burning at 209-533-5598. The link for the CAL FIRE burn permit is www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov.

TCFD continues to provide exceptional learning and career opportunities for our Volunteer Firefighters. In April two Volunteer Resident Firefighters accepted seasonal firefighting positions with our local CAL FIRE Tuolumne Calaveras Unit...a huge step in their career continues. Congratulations to Resident Firefighters Diniz and Gross. Also, in the last month, in TCU and adjoining Units, five former TCFD Volunteer Firefighters promoted to Chief Officer positions with CAL FIRE. When thinking about the positive effects of the volunteer firefighter program with TCFD, one doesn't have to go far to see the benefits for the fire service as a whole and the contributions that former (and current) TCFD volunteers have on our greater community!

Continuing our required annual testing and recertification plan, following the ladder and fire pump testing in March, in April all fire extinguishers and hydraulic rescue equipment for the department were tested and recertified for the next 12 months according to National Fire Protection (NFPA) Standards. TCFD has a total of 11 hydraulic power units, over 25 hydraulic tools and a total of 73 fire extinguishers



including 12 - 2 ½ lb., 17 - 5 lb., 21 - 10 lb., 15 - 20 lb. (all Dry Chemical), and 8 - 2 ½ gallon water extinguishers. The annual costs exceed \$18,000 but are required to keep the tools in service and our firefighters and the public safe. Estimated costs of replacement of all these vital fire department tools is several hundred thousand dollars but annual testing and recertification enables your department to maximize their lifespan.

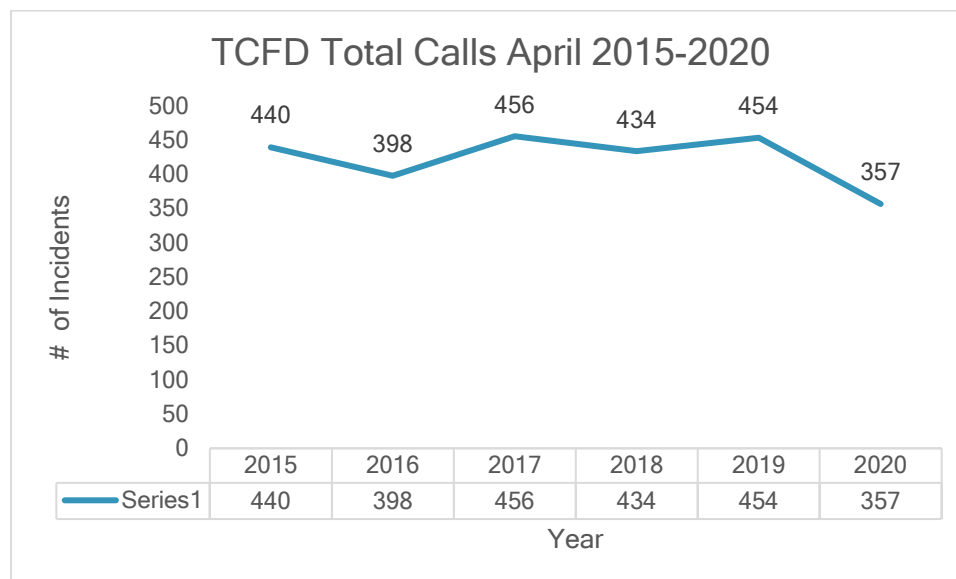
Annual hose testing is being completed at the station level. The stations test their fire attack and supply hose by filling full of water at a specified pressure for a specified period, also according to NFPA Standards. Testing is the best way to ensure the hose, of varying age, will not fail during emergency use when lives and property depend on everything to work the way it was intended. To give you

an idea of how much hose is out in the fire stations, one station tested 2,200 feet of large diameter water supply hose line and 2,350 feet of fire attack hose line.

TCFD continues to seek out all applicable grant opportunities and several grants opened up in the month that staff began to work on. They included a FireHouse Subs Grant, CAL FIRE Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grant, and two Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Grants including the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant and also the FEMA Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. The FireHouse subs and VFA grant is for needed equipment and personal protective equipment. The SAFER grant is for the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters and, if awarded, would help pay for many items needed to recruit new Volunteer Firefighters and includes incentives to retain current Volunteer Firefighters. We're also awaiting the response to our two FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant that were submitted in March. All told, in the last 20 months, your firefighters have been awarded over \$800,000 in grant funds and we're awaiting the determination on another \$1.5 million worth of grant awards later this year.

TCFD is continuously looking for ways to streamline fiscal and actual operations. Over the last several months, firefighters have been conducting extensive research and testing and re-evaluating the current personal protective equipment (PPE) purchased and issued by TCFD. Advancements in materials and technology have been implemented in PPE that allows greater safety and the financial impact of the improvements has lowered the cost of future PPE purchases. A new structural PPE specification was built at no cost to TCFD and is currently in the wear testing process to ensure materials and design are appropriate for the needs of TCFD before finalizing the specifications. The structure gear being tested will **save approximately \$291 per set** compared to the PPE issued previously.

We continue to see a slight decrease in call volume since mid-March. We believe this is largely due to the overall decrease in community demand for medical and other non-emergency assistance during the COVID pandemic as most residents are staying at home and visitors to the County are encouraged to stay at their homes. Overall, there were 357 incidents within TCFD's jurisdiction in April 2020 compared to 454 in 2019, a 21% decrease from 2019 and 15% decrease from the 5-year average. Many hospitals and emergency rooms are also seeing a significant decrease in patients during the pandemic. Of the 357 calls in April 2020, there were 263 medical aids, 31 fires, 16 hazardous materials/fire menace standby, and 47 other incidents in TCFD jurisdiction. Between January 1 and April 30, 2020 there have been 1,766 incidents in TCFD jurisdiction compared to 1,845 in 2019.



TCFD Station Responses

Station 51 Mono Village Fire Station responded to 114 incidents in the month of April which included 77 medical calls (including 2 vehicle collisions), 13 public assists, 10 fires, and 12 other incidents including alarm sounding, odor investigation, and smoke checks. 99 incidents were within their primary response area and 15 were not. Volunteers responded to 26 of the 114 incidents and through the Tuolumne County Automatic Aid Agreement, aid was given to two agencies five times and received by one agency

three times. During the month, Station 51 responded to 7 false alarm calls, including 3 at the same residence. Tuolumne County is exploring avenues to curb the regular occurrence of false alarms by encouraging property owners and alarm companies to keep their alarm systems in proper working order. Fire engines responding to false alarms creates risk to the public and the firefighters in several ways. By encouraging property owners and alarm companies to keep their systems working accurately, this will reduce risk, reduce the unnecessary financial impact to the fire department, and keep firefighters available for actual emergencies.

Station 51 is the receiving and restock facility for TCFD's personal protective equipment (PPE) related to COVID-19. Orders are placed through the Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator mentioned above. PPE particular to COVID-19 includes gloves, N-95 respirator masks, splash goggles, splash gowns, face shields, and safety glasses. The PPE is distributed to TCFD facilities as needed. Staff have been tracking the consumption rate for PPE used in the county on a weekly basis to generate an accurate order to restock TCFD needs.

Station 76 Jamestown Fire Station responded to 109 incidents in April including 77 medical aids (including 5 vehicle collisions and 1 extrication), 15 public assists, 5 fires, and 12 other incidents including alarm sounding, hazardous materials, odor investigations, smoke checks, and powerlines down. Of the 109 incidents 95 were within their primary response area and 14 were not. Volunteers responded to one incident. Automatic aid was given to two agencies 8 times and received from two agencies 8 times.

CAL FIRE and TCFD transitioned out of the "Amador" period on April 20 as CAL FIRE staffed all its fire stations in the Unit, bringing on additional seasonal firefighters to start getting ready for the 2020 fire season. Amador Stations are staffed through a cooperative fire protection agreement allowed in the California Public Resources Code known as an Amador Agreement and typically are funded by the County from late November through mid-April.

The Blanchard CAL FIRE Station is an Amador Station. TCFD and Mariposa County Fire share the cost of the Amador Agreement each year. During the month of April, Blanchard Station responded to 28 incidents; 14 incidents were in Mariposa County and 14 were in Tuolumne County. Of the 28 incidents there were 18 medical calls (including 3 vehicle collisions), 3 fires, and 7 other incidents.

The Twain Harte CAL FIRE Station is also part of TCFD/CAL FIRE Amador Agreement. The Twain Harte Station responded to 54 incidents, including 39 medical calls (including 2 vehicle collisions), 6 public assists, 2 structure fires, 3 other fires, and 4 other incidents. Automatic Aid was given to 3

agencies 7 times and received by 5 agencies a total of 12 times. 43 incidents were within their primary response area and 11 were not. Volunteers responded to 28 of the 54 incidents.

Tuolumne County fire stations are located in the following communities*:

Mono Village Station 51 (6 career / 6 volunteers) 126 incidents
 Ponderosa Hills Station 53 (1 volunteer) 23 incidents
 Long Barn Station 54 (0 volunteers) Incidents absorbed by other stations
 Pinecrest Station 55 (6 volunteers) 10 incidents
 Mono Vista Station 56 (6 volunteers) 63 incidents
 Crystal Falls Station 57 (0 Volunteers) Incidents absorbed by other stations
 Cedar Ridge Station 58 (12 volunteers) 20 incidents
 Chinese Camp Station 61 (1 volunteer) 16 incidents
 Smith Station Station 63 (0 Volunteers) Incidents absorbed by other stations
 Don Pedro Station 64 (2 volunteers) 9 incidents
 Jamestown Station 76 (5 career / 3 volunteers) 116 incidents
 Columbia College Station 79 (8 student firefighters) 35 incidents
 Blanchard CAL FIRE "Amador" Station (7 career) 24 incidents - CAL FIRE Mission 4/20/20
 Twain Harte CAL FIRE "Amador" Station (7 career) 54 incidents - CAL FIRE Mission 4/20/20
 Groveland CAL FIRE Station (7 career) 26 incidents - CAL FIRE Mission 4/20/20
 Standard CAL FIRE Station (10 career) 40 incidents - opened for CAL FIRE Mission 4/20/20
 Green Springs CAL FIRE Station (7 career) 6 incidents - opened for CAL FIRE Mission 4/20/20

**Incident numbers above may not match actual engine responses. These numbers above indicate calls that the station was dispatched to, but another resource responded or were in other jurisdictions.*

Groveland CSD Fire Department

GCSD funds a career engine at Station 78 and the Groveland CAL FIRE Amador station. There was a total of 58 responses out of the two GCSD funded engine companies including 36 medical aids (including 2 vehicle collisions), 14 public assists/fire menace standby, 4 fires, and 4 other incidents. 50 responses were within the GCSD jurisdiction and 4 calls were in the TCFD area.



In addition to their regular and annual station skills training, Groveland CSD Fire staff also prepared to submit for the same grants mentioned above

and trained on wildland firefighting, water supply operations, vehicle extrication, low angle rope rescue, and many other topics. GCSD has several Resident Firefighter opportunities available. If interested contact GCSD or look on their website at <https://www.gcsd.org/current-openings>.

Significant Incidents

April 5, 2020 - Hazardous Situation, Hillsdale Drive

Firefighters responded and found a tree had fallen onto a 250-gallon propane tank near a residence, knocking the tank off the supporting foundation. Firefighters secured the shutoff valve mitigating the hazard and confirmed the propane gas was dispersed by using a hazardous gas monitor.

April 10, 2020 - Vehicle Collision, Rawhide Road

Crews responded to a reported vehicle over the embankment with possible rescue. On arrival crews found the patient with minor injuries and prepared them for transport by Tuolumne County Ambulance.

April 16, 2020 - Hazardous Situation, Tuolumne Road

Firefighters were called for a hazardous situation with the possibility of carbon monoxide gas in a home. Carbon monoxide is a byproduct of combustion and is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that kills. Carbon monoxide in a home is usually from improperly vented appliances, fuel-burning heating devices, or engines, particularly in a tightly sealed or enclosed space. Firefighters confirmed unsafe



levels of carbon monoxide were in the residence with a gas monitor. The house was ventilated, and one patient was treated and transported for signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

April 17, 2020 - Vehicle Collision, Parrots Ferry Road

Firefighters responded to a head-on collision with two vehicles involved. On arrival firefighters discovered one patient with significant injuries and two with minor injuries. Firefighters treated the injuries and prepared the patients for transport and secured the vehicle to protect from fire.

April 21, 2020 - Vegetation Fire, South Creekside Drive

Firefighters responded to a vegetation fire in the community of Crystal Falls. The fire was extinguished with a progressive hose lay and contained to 1/10th of an acre. Minimal damage was sustained to an adjacent liquid propane vessel and fencing. There were no injuries.

April 30, 2020 - Vehicle Collision, Rough & Ready Trail

Firefighters responded to a reported vehicle over the embankment with pin-in with a patient with major injuries. Crews extricated the patient within 15 minutes of arrival and the patient was transported to the hospital.

Fleet

Annual maintenance continued on the fleet with service and repairs occurring on many pieces of the TCFD fleet. During the month, work continued on the 2016 Type 1 fire engine Engine 511 stationed at Mono Village with



significant repairs to the engine buildup, rear-end, and motor. We are also seeing more and more issues with leaks due to rust through in the plumbing/pipes and water tank due to age of the fleet and also experiencing difficulty making repairs due to the difficulty of finding parts on the older engines.

Prevention/Education

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:

 Tuolumne County Fire Department

 |  tuolumnecountyfire

 @tuolumnecofire

Despite COVID restrictions, Fire Investigators/Inspectors were able to conduct 18 site inspections during the month of April. Fire inspections continue at County owned/leased buildings with the assistance of County Facilities. The new dorms at Camp Tawonga were finalized and Camp Sylvester's first fire inspection was completed at their request (non-State-mandated). There was a significant reduction in individual plans reviews with 19 being conducted in April compared to 99 in March due to COVID.

Training

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.

While the Volunteer Firefighter Basic Academy was halted for the ten new Volunteer Firefighters in March due to COVID social distancing, firefighters were able to continue with some aspects of their training online. It is anticipated that the group will start in person training again with proper social distancing in early June with a graduation date in late June or early July.

On April 16 firefighters assisted in teaching the CAL FIRE Company Officer Academy for new Fire Apparatus Engineers at Standard CAL FIRE Station. The Company Officer Academy is normally held at CAL FIRE Training Center in Inyo or Riverside. However, due to COVID-19 and the necessity to practice social distancing, the academy is now being taught at the Unit level. Topics covered were pumping operations, hydraulics, water supply, and fire ground operations.

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 as well. 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 are \$15 and adult sizes are \$20. Hats are \$25 and both items are pictured below and can be ordered from TCFDMuster@gmail.com or by calling 209-533-5118.

