

# Contra Costa County



# Fire Protection District

April 14, 2015

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Jeff Carman, Fire Chief

**RE:** Significant Incidents March 2015

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**DATE:** March 2, 2015 1657hrs

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Residential Structure Fire

**LOCATION:** 2520 Walters Way – Concord

**RESPONSE:** 2- Ladder trucks, 3 Engines, 2 Battalion Chiefs, 1 Training Captain

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Concord PD, Red Cross, Coast Construction

Contra Costa County Fire responded to a reported structure fire. Upon arrival, one apartment on the second floor was involved in fire and the fire had extended into the attic. Fire crews initiated interior firefighting operations and had the fire under control in approximately ten minutes. The surrounding apartments sustained minor damage. Total estimated structural damage \$200,000. There were no injuries to occupants or firefighters. The cause of the fire is under investigation.



**DATE:** March 3, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 0831 hours

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Natural Gas Line Break

**LOCATION:** 1375 Sycamore Ave. Hercules, CA

**RESPONSE:** 1 Engine Company, 1 Quint Company, 2 Battalion Chiefs, 1 Safety Officer, 1 Operations Chief, Hercules Police Department, El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department, 1 AMR ambulance, and PG&E

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Rodeo-Hercules Fire District, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, AMR, Hercules PD, Contra Costa County Sheriff Community Warning System

**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 11

Rodeo-Hercules Fire Department Quint 76 responded to 1375 Sycamore Ave. in Hercules for a reported natural gas line break. Upon arrival, Quint 76 met with construction workers on scene who stated a 4-inch, high-pressure natural gas line was struck accidentally by a worker operating a backhoe. The construction company had quickly evacuated the building after learning of the line break, as well as notifying residents directly across the street from the break. Captain 76 requested an additional Engine and Battalion Chief, as well as Hercules PD for traffic control. Hose lines were placed in strategic locations in case of ignition of the natural gas.

Due to the large risk of ignition, explosion, and subsequent fire, the Community Warning System (reverse 911) was activated by the Contra Costa Sherriff's Office, and all residents within a quarter mile of the gas break were told to evacuate by foot to a nearby park where fire and police officials would establish a safe refuge area. Unified Command with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the Hercules Police Department was utilized for maximum safety and efficiency of the incident. The line was secured at 1027 by PG&E crews.

Evacuations were cancelled 30 minutes later to allow for safe dispersion of the gas.



Pure natural gas is colorless and odorless, and is composed primarily of methane. Odorants are usually added during production, to assist in identifying leaks, and may be perceived as rotting eggs, or a faintly unpleasant skunk smell. Persons detecting the odor must evacuate the area and abstain from using open flames or operating electrical equipment to reduce the risk of fire and explosion. Explosions caused by natural gas occur a few times each year when an internal

leak builds up gas inside the structure. Frequently, the blast is powerful enough to significantly damage a building but leave it standing. Occasionally, the gas can collect in high enough quantities to cause a deadly explosion, disintegrating one or more buildings in the process. Lighter than air, the gas usually dissipates readily outdoors, but can sometimes collect in dangerous quantities if flow rates are high enough.

**DATE:** March 3, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 9:08 am

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Residential

**LOCATION:** 1338 Emerson Dr., Pittsburg

**RESPONSE:** 1 Truck Company, 4 Engines, 2 Battalion Chiefs, 1 Training Captain, 2 Fire Investigators, 1 Public Information Officer

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** AMR, Pittsburg P.D., Animal Control

**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 18

Contra Costa County Fire Engine 86 (Baypoint), Quint 83 (Antioch), Engine 85 (Pittsburg), Engine 81 (Antioch), Engine 88 (Antioch), Battalion 8 (Pittsburg), and Battalion 2 (Concord) responded to a reported Residential Structure Fire. Engine 86 and Engine 85 reported a large column of smoke from their respective stations. Upon arrival Engine 86 reported a well involved garage fire in a single story house. Everyone was reported out of the house and defensive operations commenced until E85 arrived. E85 was assigned fire attack and a two out team was in place. Firefighters initiated an offensive strategy of fire attack, victim search, and roof top ventilation. Firefighters were successful in confining the fire to the garage and laundry room area. Pittsburg police officers assisted with traffic and scene control. The cause of the fire was determined to be accidental near the water heater. After an extensive search a 7-month old Pit bull dog was found and removed by animal control. There were no injuries to residents or firefighters during this incident. PG&E arrived and secured the gas meter and electrical meter. Fire Investigators assisted with the cause and origin investigation and the PIO followed up with the media on scene.

**DATE:** March 3, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 12:22 pm

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Medical – Multi-Casualty Incident

**LOCATION:** 1750 Harbor St., Pittsburg

**RESPONSE:** 1 Engine Company, Ambulance, 1 AMR Supervisor, 1 Battalion Chiefs

The first call for service came in at 12:22 for an unknown medical. This patient was transported by AMR unit# 183. A Second call came in as another unknown medical with 3 patients. Upon the arrival of the AMR supervisor Engine 85 was on scene with AMR units #193, 184, 185. Before his entry he was advised that someone was selling “pills” on campus and possibly cookies with marijuana. He was told at that time that one patient had already left against medical advice. AMR units # 184 and 193 transported two patients to the hospital and unit 185 was canceled because there were no more patients. After conferring with Captain 85 and

Battalion 8 a Tier Zero Multi-Casualty was transmitted. A suspect was located and detained by Pittsburg Police officer Arturo Fernandez. Officer Hernandez stated that suspect admitted to selling 5 packs of two pills each of Xanax and some marijuana cookies. Engine 85 and AMR Supervisor Malarky stayed on scene and we met with the principal. Principal Todd Witmeyer sent an email to all staff to observe all students and to report immediately if any were acting strange. During the wait, two more patients arrived to be treated. One patient was transported by AMR unit #190 and the other was released to her father after an AMA was completed.

**DATE:** March 15, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 0153 hours

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Fire Apparatus Struck By Vehicle

**LOCATION:** Eastbound Interstate 80 at Willow Ave. Rodeo, CA

**RESPONSE:** 1 Engine Company, 1 Quint Company, 2 Battalion Chiefs, 3 CHP units, 1 AMR ambulance, 1 CHP Helicopter, 1 Reach Helicopter

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Rodeo-Hercules Fire District, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Crockett-Carquinez Fire Protection District, AMR, California Highway Patrol, Hercules PD, Contra Costa County Sheriff

**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 9

Rodeo-Hercules Fire Department Engine 75A responded along with T78 and E79 for a reported vehicle rollover on Interstate 80 Eastbound near Cummings Skyway. Upon arrival, Captain 75 positioned his apparatus to block the scene from oncoming traffic while vehicle stabilization and patient care were taking place. Once the patients were loaded into the ambulance, Captain 75 directed his Engineer to reposition the apparatus to allow for smoother traffic flow, while still protecting the scene for the CHP investigation and towing of the vehicle.

Engine 75A was positioned about 200 feet back from the accident scene in the #3 lane of the 4-lane section of I-80. CHP was blocking the #4 lane and had placed a flare pattern approximately 300 feet to the rear of E75A to warn approaching motorists of the lane closures. At approximately 0153, Captain 75 reported that E75A had been struck by an oncoming vehicle, and that no emergency workers had been injured. The driver of the vehicle that struck E75A suffered major injuries and was airlifted to John Muir Walnut Creek. The driver of E75A was transported to Kaiser Vallejo as a precaution, treated and released back to full duty. Engine 75A sustained major damage to the rear of the apparatus and is no longer in service.

Highway incidents are some of the most dangerous and unpredictable events that emergency workers face. The industry's best practices, including blocking lanes with fire apparatus and closing roadways, are done for the safety of the emergency workers and the people they serve. In this case, everything was done correctly, but an inattentive motorist needlessly threatened the lives of everyone on scene.



**DATE:** March 15, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 2253 hours

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Structure Fire

**LOCATION:** 3692 Remuda Way, Pinole

**RESPONSE:** 4 Engines, 1 Truck, 1 Training Captain, 1 Fire Investigator and 2 Battalion Chiefs

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Pinole Fire Department, Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department, AMR West, PG&E, Pinole PD, Contra Costa County Animal Control, American Red Cross

**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 21

Pinole Fire Department Engine 73, Contra Costa County Fire Engine 69 (El Sobrante), Engine 70 (San Pablo), Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District Engine 75 and Truck 76, Contra Costa County Fire Battalion 7, and El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department Battalion 71 responded to a reported residential structure fire at 3692 Remuda Way in Pinole. Engine 73 was first to arrive and found heavy smoke and flames from the front and left side of the house, with reports of an occupant and dog inside. During initial size-up, it was determined that all human occupants were out of the house, but the dog was still unaccounted for. T76 provided a water supply to E73, who was assigned fire attack with E75. After a water supply was established, T76 performed vertical ventilation, cutting two holes in the roof to allow heat and smoke to exit the structure. E69 performed a search of the house and found a deceased canine. E70 stood by outside as a rescue team in case an unforeseen accident occurred to the firefighters inside.

Two adult residents were home at the time of the fire, and exited the house, but their dog perished. During this incident, Contra Costa County Engine 13 (Martinez) covered West County (El Sobrante and San Pablo). PG&E responded to assist with gas and electric utilities, Contra Costa Animal Control handled the deceased canine, and Pinole Police assisted with traffic and scene



control. The American Red Cross responded to provide housing to the displaced residents.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District is currently investigating the cause of the fire. One firefighter had a minor injury during this incident.

**DATE:** March 16, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 8:25 am

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Commercial Strip Mall Fire/Tractor Trailer into the Building

**LOCATION:** 3821 Railroad Ave, Pittsburg

**RESPONSE:** 11 Engine Companies, 3 Truck Companies, 1 Rescue Company, 3 Battalion Chiefs, 1 Assistant Chief, 2 Training Captains, 1 Breathing Support/Rehab Unit

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Pittsburg PD, CHP, AMR Ambulance, Paul Davis Building Construction

**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 48

At 8:25 am on Monday, March 16, 2015, a tractor trailer carrying a full load of gravel crashed into a strip mall located at 3821 Railroad Ave in Pittsburg. The vehicle burst into flames, exploded, damaged and burned 70% of the building. The first arriving companies encountered heavy fire conditions, explosions, and portions of the building near collapse. The aggressive efforts of the initial on-scene crews saved the building from being a total loss. The vehicle crashed into the Lupitas Mexican Food Restaurant and destroyed that business. There were a total of 6 occupancies/businesses in this building; 3 businesses were saved. The driver of the truck was deceased when fire units arrived—this was the only fatality. Luckily, this popular restaurant is closed on Mondays and the entire building was unoccupied. When the fire was under control, portions of the building were shored by specialty companies located in Concord to allow safe access for an extensive auto extrication of the driver of the vehicle.

One factor that contributed to the success of this incident was the extra personnel that responded to assist. This fire started during the morning shift change and several of our personnel that were relieved from duty responded on the fire engines to provide extra help. The extra personnel allowed us to initiate an offensive attack and deploy additional hose lines to quickly extinguish the fire. If it weren't for the extra bodies on scene, we would have had to initiate defensive operations and the entire building would have been lost.



This incident was very labor extensive and over half of our District's resources were committed on scene which made County coverage very challenging. Fire companies responded from the cities of Antioch, Pittsburg, Bay Point, Clayton, Concord, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, and Oakley. One

Fire Captain suffered a dislocated shoulder during the incident, was treated, released, and is doing well. The cause of the accident is under investigation by the California Highway Patrol and the Pittsburg Police Department.

**Arson Arrest**  
**March 17, 2015**

This morning at 1029 hours a commercial structure fire was reported at the Starbucks located at 2285 Railroad Avenue in Pittsburg. E-85 arrived to find nothing showing and determined a roll of toilet paper had been set on fire in the dispenser of the men's room. I was called to the scene and assisted PPD in developing a lead on a possible suspect. The suspect was believed to be a person that frequented the area and was homeless. PPD Officers believed they may have known the person from previous contacts. The FIU has had numerous fires between Railroad and Atlantic Avenues and from Bliss to Harbor Street over the past several months.

At 1315 hours, I was contacted by PPD and told that they had located 29 year old Evelyn Toledo of Pittsburg. She had returned to the Starbucks store, employees called police and she was identified from the earlier incident. She admitted to the officer she did set the fire in the men's room and was arrested. Toledo was taken to PPD and then booked into the jail in Martinez on felony arson to property and will have bail set at \$50,000. Before I could talk to her about any other fires she may be responsible for she requested a lawyer. She does have a minor criminal record.

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**DATE:** March 19, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 5:54 am

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Vehicle Accident with Rescue

**LOCATION:** Davidson Dr @ Burwood Way, Antioch

**RESPONSE:** 1 Engine, 1 Truck, 1 Battalion Chief, 4 AMR Ambulances, 1 AMR Field Supervisor

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Antioch PD, American Medical Response, Tri Delta Transit & CCCSO

**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 6 Con Fire with additional 15 assisting agency personnel

This morning just before 6 AM, units from Contra Costa County Fire responded to a vehicle accident in Antioch. A passenger car ran through a stop sign directly into the path of a Tri Delta Bus. The impact of the crash caused the bus to cross all lanes of Davison Dr ending up precariously on the embankment. Unfortunately the driver of the vehicle that ran the stop sign did not survive the crash and was pronounced deceased at the scene. There were several minor injuries sustained by passengers on the bus triggering a Tier 0 Multi Casualty Incident through the County Sherriff's Office. The patients were transported to local hospitals for evaluation. Tri Delta Transit agency was dispatching a heavy wrecker to remove the bus from the embankment. Antioch PD, American Medical Response and Tri Delta Transit all assisted in the mitigation of this incident.

**DATE:** March 22, 2015, 1:49am  
**TYPE OF ALARM:** EMS Stabbing – 4 Male Adults  
**LOCATION:** 1140 Meadow Lane  
**RESPONSE:** 2 Engines, 4 AMR Units, 1 AMR Supervisor  
**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Concord PD  
**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 7

Engine 10 (Concord) arrived and reported multiple victims were stabbed and requested additional resources. Three adult male patients had been stabbed as a result of a bar fight. Two of the patients were transported to John Muir Trauma Center in Walnut Creek, and one was transported to Highland Hospital in Oakland via ground ambulance. The condition of the patients is unknown but, I can confirm that the two transported to John Muir went directly to the Operating Room post rapid assessment in the ER.

During the incident on Meadow Lane, there was another stabbing located a few blocks away on Robin Lane. The incident on Robin Lane was unrelated to the initial incident. That patient was transported by AMR to Kaiser Richmond. John Muir Walnut Creek was unable to take all patients because they went on trauma divert. (Trauma Divert is initiated when 2 operating room suites are in use due to trauma.)

Calls involving trauma utilize a lot of resources. Due to the critical conditions of the patients it requires one ambulance per patient. In addition, we usually send a Firefighter-Paramedic with the ambulance to assist with care during transport.

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**DATE:** March 23, 2015  
**TYPE OF ALARM:** Vehicle Accident  
**LOCATION:** 825 Shell Ave. Martinez  
**RESPONSE:** 2 Engines, 1 Quint and 1 Battalion Chief  
**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** Martinez PD, BayPoint Tow, CHP, AMR  
**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 10

We responded to the report of a big-rig that had flipped over onto a vehicle with a person trapped inside. First arriving crews found a person that was deceased inside of the vehicle with a trailer full of gravel lying on top of it. This became a body recovery event in which two large commercial wreckers were called to the scene to assist with the lifting and moving of an approximately 12-ton load.

Once the investigative work by PD was completed we began to remove the trailer and cut apart the car to remove the victim. This process, from start to end, took approximately 6 hours and was taxing for the rescuers. Any rescue that turns into a body recovery effort, rescuers are taught that speed is not of the essence and safety for the rescuers is paramount.

**DATE:** March 24, 2015

**TIME OF ALARM:** 4:38 am

**TYPE OF ALARM:** Multiple Vehicle Fire

**LOCATION:** 2780 Willow Pass Road

**RESPONSE:** 3 Engines, 2 Trucks, 2 Battalion Chiefs, 1 Breathing Support/ Rehab Unit, 1 Investigator

**ASSISTING AGENCIES:** None

**TOTAL FIRE PERSONNEL AT SCENE:** 21

Fire units from Bay Point, Pittsburg, Antioch, Concord, and Walnut Creek responded to 2780 Willow Pass Road for multiple vehicles on fire. Engine 86 was first to arrive at the Insurance Auto Auctions Inc. yard to find approximately 25 vehicles on fire. On-scene personnel managed to keep the large body of fire contained with little exposure to other vehicles and there were no reported injuries. The cause of the fire is under investigation.