



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

March 10, 2020

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis T. Broschard III, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

- Evolving "Off" Fire Season. The extended dry spell running from February into March could signal an early start to the fire season. We took the unusual step of dispatching one of our fire dozers to a seven-acre grass fire in East County on February 22. In this case, the fire was accidental which points to the need for residents to be cautious, especially as the dry spell continues.
- Coronavirus Planning. We continue to monitor the situation relative to the spread of this virus with an eye toward protecting our first responders and keeping our employees informed. As this is an evolving issue, discussions regarding continuity of operations, as well as surge capacity for ambulances and fire resources, are taking place in advance of a potential increase in the severity of the spread or impact on the emergency response system within Contra Costa County.

Our ambulance transport system has premade kits on hand for outfitting ambulances to accommodate transports of known infected patients. Personal protective equipment (PPE) for responders is provided following CDC recommendations.

- Academy 54 Update. Academy 54 graduated on February 13 adding 22 new probationary firefighters to our ranks. Since then, they have all begun their respective first company assignments within the District, continuing their fire service professional development under the tutelage of veteran fire captains. After five months in these initial assignments, each probationary firefighter will rotate to a second assignment and have the opportunity to learn from another veteran fire captain.
- Academy 55 Update. Six candidates are in the final pre-employment screening process for the lateral Firefighter-Paramedic Academy. We expect to begin the academy for these experienced firefighter-paramedics on April 13.
- Fire Control Worker Recruitment. Twelve candidates are in the pre-employment screening process for this program. New hires will begin their one-month training on May 1.

- REACH Partnership. We continue to see improvements in total response time and reductions in time for patient transfer into the air ambulance at scenes. This is resulting in a shorter overall time window to get critical patients from a scene and delivered to an appropriate medical care facility. Con Air 1, the larger of our two partnership helicopters, capable of hoist rescue and aerial firefighting, is due to arrive at the Buchanan Field base in mid-March. The aircraft is expected to go into service later this month in an air ambulance-only role. This will provide a second air ambulance operating out of Buchanan Field. Work continues to prepare it for its hoist rescue and aerial firefighting roles with an expected in service date sometime later this summer. At that time, we will conduct a media event to communicate the many benefits of this partnership to the county and larger region these two aircraft serve.
- ET3. We were notified in late February by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that we were selected to participate in the Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport (ET3) Model. The five-year payment model is designed to provide greater flexibility to ambulance crews to address the emergency health care needs of Medicare Fee-for-Service beneficiaries following a 911 call. The model is set to begin during the spring of 2020. Although there are current regulatory impediments to full implementation of the model in California, we are working closely with both the County EMS Authority and State EMS Agency to determine if there can be a path forward as a pilot program within the current regulatory framework.