

FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mission

Protect life, property, and the environment from fire, medical, disaster, and hazardous materials-related incidents through emergency mitigation, public education, and code enforcement.

Organization

San Carlos Fire Services ("Fire Services") is provided by the City of Redwood City Fire Department, which delivers service out of two San Carlos fire stations.

Org Code

01491000, 01491031

Dept #

4910

Description

Under the direction of the City of Redwood City Fire Chief, Fire Services consists of the complete firefighting personnel resources of the City of Redwood City Fire Department delivering emergency and non-emergency services to San Carlos. The Redwood City Fire Department supervises and manages one full-time regular Fire Prevention Officer for the City of San Carlos

FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

| Program Name | Fire Services |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Major Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire suppression • Emergency medical services • Fire prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fire and life safety inspections – Fire origin and cause investigations – Plan reviews • Public assist calls for service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lock outs – Smoke investigation – Occupants stuck in elevators – Water leaks/flooding – Assist people with access and functional needs – Trees/wires down – Other non-emergency requests for service • Rescue response • Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) • Public Education/Community Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Station tours – School visits – Community events (i.e., meetings, Public Safety Fair, Hometown Days, etc.) – Junior Fire Academy – Explorer Program |
| FY 2024-25 Accomplishments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Life Safety Inspections: Completed 100% of all annual state-mandated fire and life safety inspections on time. • Recruitment Process: Standardized recruitment by offering at least twice yearly recruitments to ensure active hiring eligibility lists are readily available to fill vacant positions. In this past fiscal year, Fire Services conducted five recruitments, including positions for Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Captain, Emergency Preparedness and Outreach Coordinator, and all Firefighter positions • Fire and Emergency Services Contract: Signed third amended and reinstated agreement between Redwood City and San Carlos for Fire and Emergency Services through June 30, 2027, including an option to extend the agreement for up to two additional years • Wellness Program: Submitted a detailed request for proposal and evaluated potential vendors based on specific criteria and measurable metrics in line with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Selected a vendor to conduct on-site annual physicals for all Fire Services personnel to ensure their health and well-being • Fuel Mitigation: Completed annual fuel mitigation work to establish fire breaks in collaboration with the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments. This past year, the Fire Department focused primarily on Eaton Park, Big Canyon Park, Arguello Park, and a city-owned parcel off La Mesa Drive |
| FY 2025-27 Goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a community presentation on emergency preparedness in June/July 2025 to inform and educate the community on how they and the City can prepare and respond to disasters |

- Prepare and mail an “*Emergency Preparedness Spotlight*” in September 2025 to inform and educate the community on how they and the City can prepare and respond to disasters
- Partner with the City of Belmont to enable emergency vehicle access and community evacuation access at Hallmark Drive (Belmont) and Crestview Drive (San Carlos) by December 2025
- Continue maintaining up-to-date information on the City’s “Wildfire Preparedness” and “Emergency Preparedness” webpages. Educate community volunteers about disaster preparedness and train them in basic disaster response skills through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program
- Rebrand the Fire Prevention Bureau to Community Risk Reduction Division (CRRD)
- Establish baseline data and a reporting format for new Fire Services performance measures identified in February 2025, collaborating with relevant departments to ensure feasibility and integration into the reporting framework, with an initial report to the City Manager in February 2026
- Initiate a comprehensive update of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) by June 2026 to align with the latest state and federal requirements, ensuring continued eligibility for disaster funding and risk reduction initiatives
- Provide annual fire and emergency services update to the City Council by March of 2026 and 2027
- Evaluate the Squad 409 Pilot program by July 2025, assessing its impact on serving the vulnerable downtown population, and present results and analysis to the Redwood City Council by November 2025. The primary benefit to the City of San Carlos would be improved reliability for Truck 9 and Engine 9, ensuring they are more available for more critical incidents

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| Program Goals | Fire Services aims to protect life, property, and the environment from fire, hazards, and other types of emergencies. |
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| Fire Services Objective 1 | <p>Provide professional emergency response services to San Carlos.</p> <p>The goal of measuring the response metrics is to track changes over time. As the city grows, demand grows with it. These statistics allow us to forecast the community's future needs and plan accordingly.</p> |
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| Key Performance Measures | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Average reaction time for EMS Calls | 1:31 | 1:30 | 1:28 | 1:27 |
| Average reaction time for all calls | 1:34 | 1:31 | 1:27 | 1:23 |
| Average travel time for EMS calls | 3:57 | 4:03 | 4:09 | 4:15 |
| Average travel time for all calls | 4:36 | 4:56 | 5:01 | 5:05 |
| Average Response Time for EMS Calls | 6:09 | 6:15 | 6:21 | 6:26 |
| Average response time for all calls | 6:21 | 6:23 | 6:27 | 6:31 |

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| Description | <p>The San Carlos Fire Department is dedicated to delivering timely, professional, and effective emergency response services to the community. This includes fire suppression, emergency medical services, public assistance calls, and other critical responses to hazardous incidents. The department ensures its personnel are highly trained and equipped to handle emergencies efficiently, mitigating risks and safeguarding residents, businesses, and property.</p> <p>This key performance measure tracks the overall response time in minutes for emergency calls, including reaction time (time from dispatch to unit en route), travel time (time from en route to arrival), and total response time (from dispatch to on-scene arrival). These metrics apply to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and all emergency call types, providing insight into the department's efficiency in responding to incidents. The county standard is to have a fire agency paramedic on scene within 6:59 minutes.</p> |
| Purpose | Monitoring response times evaluates the effectiveness of emergency service delivery and identifies areas for improvement. By analyzing these times, Fire Services can enhance operational efficiency, optimize resource deployment, and ensure rapid emergency response, ultimately improving public safety and patient outcomes. |
| Status | The dispatch and response data analysis for the current fiscal year shows that the department is maintaining or improving its response time targets. As of March 2025, average reaction and travel times for EMS and fire calls are within the expected range. Ongoing efforts to optimize deployment strategies, improve route efficiencies, and enhance firefighter training continue contributing to stable response performance. |

| Key Performance Measures | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|---|--|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| % of fires contained to the structure of origin | N/A | 90% | 90% | 90% |
| Description | This key performance measure tracks the percentage of fires successfully contained within the structure where they originated, preventing their spread to adjacent | | | |

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| | buildings or areas. It reflects the effectiveness of station locations, response times, and fire suppression efforts. |
| Purpose | Monitoring this measure aims to assess the efficiency of fire containment strategies and firefighting operations. A higher percentage indicates successful intervention, minimizing property damage and reducing the risk of casualties. It must be noted, however, delays in reporting an incident or the absence of detection systems can negatively impact this performance measure. Tracking this metric helps continuously evaluate training, resource allocation, and response effectiveness to improve fire suppression efforts. |
| Status | This is a new metric introduced for fiscal year 2025. Preliminary tracking indicates that the department is on pace to meet the 90% containment target, with early data suggesting successful suppression efforts. The department is updating fire incident reports to ensure accurate documentation and will refine data collection methodologies as the year progresses. |
| Key Performance Measures | FY 2024 Actuals FY 2025 Projected FY 2026 Proposed FY 2027 Proposed |
| % of residents indicate that they are satisfied with the City's effort to provide fire protection, prevention, and emergency medical services | N/A 93.6% N/A 95% |
| Description | This satisfaction survey data is collected as part of the Community Satisfaction Survey that is conducted biennially by True North Research, Inc. This year's survey polled 680 adults in January 2025. |
| Purpose | The survey provides a statistically reliable understanding of residents' satisfaction, priorities, and concerns as they relate to services and facilities provided by the City. |
| Status | The latest survey was conducted in 2025 and the next survey will be conducted in 2027. Community survey reports can be found at www.cityofsancarlos.org/communitysurveys . |

| Workload Measures | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Call Volume by Service Type: | | | | |
| - EMS/Rescue | 1,752 | 1,848 | 1,950 | 2,057 |
| - Fire | 37 | 39 | 41 | 43 |
| - Service Call ¹ | 467 | 493 | 520 | 548 |
| - False Alarm | 271 | 286 | 302 | 318 |
| - Good Intent ² | 526 | 555 | 585 | 618 |
| - Hazardous Condition | 96 | 101 | 107 | 113 |
| - Rupture/Explosion | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

¹ Service Call includes calls for person in distress, water problem, smoke problem, animal problem or rescue, public service assistance, unauthorized burning, and cover assignment/standby at fire station/move-up

² Good Intent calls include calls that are dispatched and canceled in route, wrong location/no emergency found, controlled burning, vicinity alarm, steam/other gas mistaken for smoke, EMS call where party has been transported, hazmat release investigation with no hazmat

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|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| - Severe Weather | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Total number of calls for service | 3,158 | 3,332 | 3,515 | 3,708 |

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| Fire Services Objective 2 | Public outreach and citizen training efforts. |
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| Key Performance Measures | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| # of CERT and public education events/class participants | 2,000 | 3,200 | 3,500 | 3,605 |
| % of class participants satisfied with the event/class | N/A | N/A | 90% | 95% |
| # of CERT volunteers | 32 | 42 | 45 | 48 |

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| Description | Public education and community engagement are integral to fire prevention and emergency preparedness. The Fire Department conducts educational programs such as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, school visits, station tours, and public safety fairs. These initiatives aim to equip residents with the knowledge and skills to prevent fires, enhance disaster preparedness, and assist first responders during emergencies. |
| Purpose | This aims to increase public awareness and resilience through proactive engagement and training programs. Fire Services can assess community participation and improve its strategies for disseminating critical safety information by measuring the number of outreach events, CERT classes, and social media interactions. |
| Status | This is a new metric introduced in fiscal year 2025. As of March 2025, the department has completed the majority of scheduled CERT and public education events, with attendance levels meeting or exceeding expectations. Public outreach and increased coordination with community partners and schools have contributed to strong participation. Plans for the remainder of the fiscal year include additional outreach efforts focused on wildfire preparedness and home fire safety. |

| Key Performance Measures | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| # of department social media followers/members | N/A | 91,105 | 93,883 | 96,698 |

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| Description | This key performance measure tracks the number of social media followers and members across the department's official communication platforms (Instagram, Meta, X, TikTok, & Nextdoor). It reflects the reach and engagement of the Department's digital presence, including updates on emergency preparedness, fire prevention tips, public safety announcements, and community events. |
| Purpose | Tracking social media followers and members assesses the effectiveness of the department's online outreach and public engagement efforts. A growing social media presence indicates increased community awareness and accessibility of critical safety information. By monitoring these metrics, the Department can refine its digital communication strategies to ensure the timely and widespread dissemination of essential fire safety and emergency preparedness messages. |
| Status | This is a new metric introduced in fiscal year 2025. The department's online presence continues to expand, with a steady increase in social media followers. As of March 2025, engagement metrics show positive trends in public interaction with safety |

messages and emergency preparedness content. Continued focus on high-quality content and timely updates will support further growth. Once we have baseline data, we will measure predictions and success by using a follower growth rate.

| Workload Measures | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| # of CERT and public education events/classes conducted | 72 | 85 | 88 | 90 |

**Fire Services
Objective 3**

Fire code inspections, permitting, and enforcement.

The primary goal of code inspections and enforcement is fire prevention. During inspections, we confirm that businesses have proper fire protection in place, all cooking areas are free from grease buildup, and escape routes are clear for quick escape during a fire. Our plan review process ensures that new construction is compliant with state and City codes regarding fire suppression and alarm systems, proper occupant load, proper exits, etc.

| Key Performance Measures | | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|---|---|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| % of Fire & Life Safety mandated inspections that are completed | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Description | State and local codes require mandated inspections, including those for schools, apartment buildings, and other occupancies with specific fire life safety requirements. Construction inspections ensure that fire safety systems are installed and maintained according to approved plans and codes. | | | | |
| Purpose | These inspections aim to proactively identify and correct potential fire hazards, protect public safety, and ensure compliance with fire and building codes. Regular inspections reduce the risk of fire-related incidents and ensure that buildings meet minimum safety standards for occupancy. | | | | |
| Status | As of March 2025, the department has completed over 90% of its mandated annual inspections and regularly conducts construction inspections. The department is on track to finish 100% of the required inspections by the end of FY 2024–25. Collaboration with building officials and improved scheduling tools can enhance inspection efficiency and compliance tracking. | | | | |
| Key Performance Measures | | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
| % of fire investigations with a determined cause | | 63% | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| Description | This measure reflects the percentage of fire origin and cause investigations in which the department determined a definitive cause. For comparative purposes, in FY 2023, 25% of fire investigations resulted in a determined cause. | | | | |
| Purpose | Investigating the cause of fires supports fire prevention efforts, helps identify trends or common ignition sources, and contributes to legal or insurance proceedings when necessary. Determining cause also guides public education strategies and informs code enforcement priorities. | | | | |
| Status | As of March 2025, the department has conducted a consistent number of fire investigations, with a fair percentage resulting in a determined cause. This reflects the training and experience of fire prevention personnel and supports the department’s goal of learning from incidents to prevent future occurrences. Ongoing documentation improvements are helping enhance investigative accuracy and reporting. | | | | |

| Workload Measures | FY 2024 Actuals | FY 2025 Projected | FY 2026 Proposed | FY 2027 Proposed |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| # of Fire & Life Safety mandated inspections conducted | 228 | 228 | 228 | 228 |
| # of Fire & Life Safety construction | 346 | 356 | 367 | 378 |
| # of plans reviewed | 208 | 252 | 260 | 267 |
| # of plans reviewed on time | 208 | 252 | 260 | 267 |
| # of fire investigations conducted | 8 | 4 | 4 | 4 |