



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT





SANTA CLARA COUNTY  
FIRE  
EST. 1947  
COURTESY & SERVICE

**SARATOGA**

# MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

The fire service is built on a history of being poised for the unexpected and working to mitigate those challenges while providing quality service to each community member. In 2023, Santa Clara County Fire Department (County Fire) continued to build upon that legacy. As we adapt to the growing needs of the district, we remain focused on advancing our strategic priorities and investing in technology and infrastructure projects to better serve our communities.

Over the past year, we made significant progress on multiple high-priority infrastructure projects and acquired several new fire apparatuses despite lingering supply chain issues. Through innovative recruiting, hiring, and the dedicated efforts from our training and operational staff, we also made significant progress towards eliminating the staffing shortage that impacted us following the pandemic.

Recognizing the ongoing wildfire risk in many areas of our district, we continue to invest in our Pre-Fire Management and Wildfire Resilience program. Following two successful years of grant funding for our Vasona Fire Fuels Crew, this program has transitioned to the district's general fund. This represents a significant investment toward ensuring wildfire mitigation efforts continue, strengthening community safety and resiliency.

Milestones were achieved on two significant countywide plans, the Santa Clara County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Both provide benefits to residents and businesses in the district by identifying areas of concern, outlining mitigation efforts, and strengthening the entire community's ability to recover following a disaster.

In 2023, we responded to more than 21,000 emergency incidents across our 132 square mile service area. We saw increased call volume across all our response areas, reinforcing the importance of self-evaluation and continual improvement.

I'm grateful for the tireless efforts each member of the Santa Clara County Fire Department has made to support the work to continuously improve our service delivery to you, our community members. I'm also excited for the positive changes 2024 has in store for us.

On behalf of each member of the Department, we hope this brief snapshot gives you a satisfying glimpse into our organization and into our culture of "Courtesy and Service."

As always, we welcome your feedback, which you may send to [publicinfo@sccfd.org](mailto:publicinfo@sccfd.org). You may also like to visit our website for more information on our organization and the services we provide at [www.sccfd.org](http://www.sccfd.org).

Sincerely,



Suwanna L. Kerdkaeuw  
Fire Chief



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*In 2023, County Fire welcomed 22 new employees, of which 18 were firefighters. Additionally, we saw 22 promotions across the Department through four promotional processes. The Department continues to work with the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accountability (IDEA) Committee to foster a diverse and cohesive workforce that provides the highest level of service to the communities of the district.*



# DEPARTMENT MISSION AND VALUES



## MISSION

The Santa Clara County Fire Department exists to protect lives, property, and the environment from fires, emergency incidents, and disasters through preparedness, prevention, education, and emergency response.

## VALUES

### TRUST

Advocate for collaborative relationships.

Maintain community through reliable professional behaviors and open communication.

Foster effective team environments.

### INTEGRITY

Maintain the highest level of ethical standards.

Exhibit prudent use of public resources.

### RESPECT

Honor diversity in the workforce and the communities we serve.

Appreciate individual and inherent differences.

### EXCELLENCE

Provide outstanding customer service.

Execute timely service delivery.

Promote professional development and innovation.

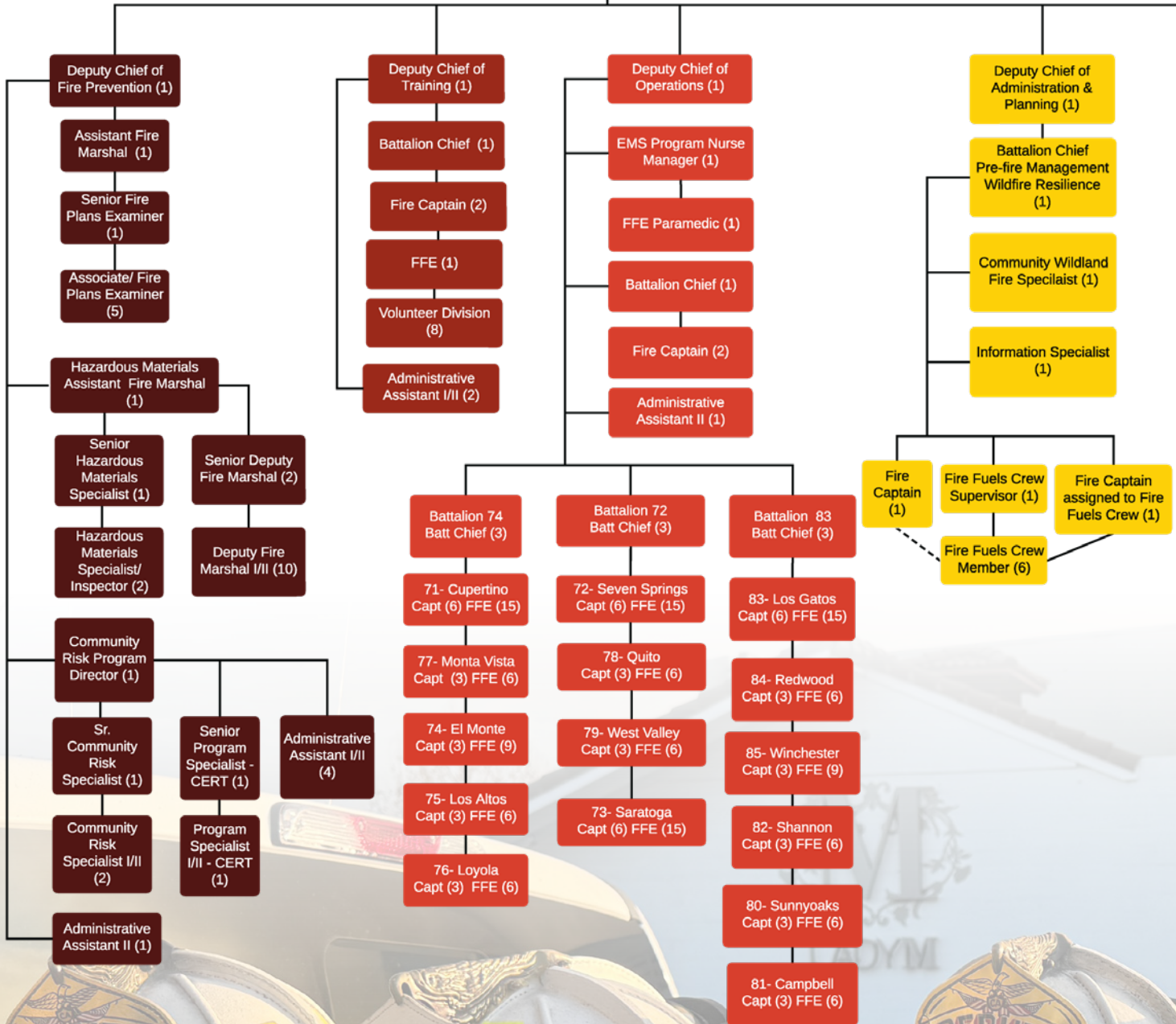


# DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

Santa Clara County  
Board of Supervisors  
(Board of Directors)

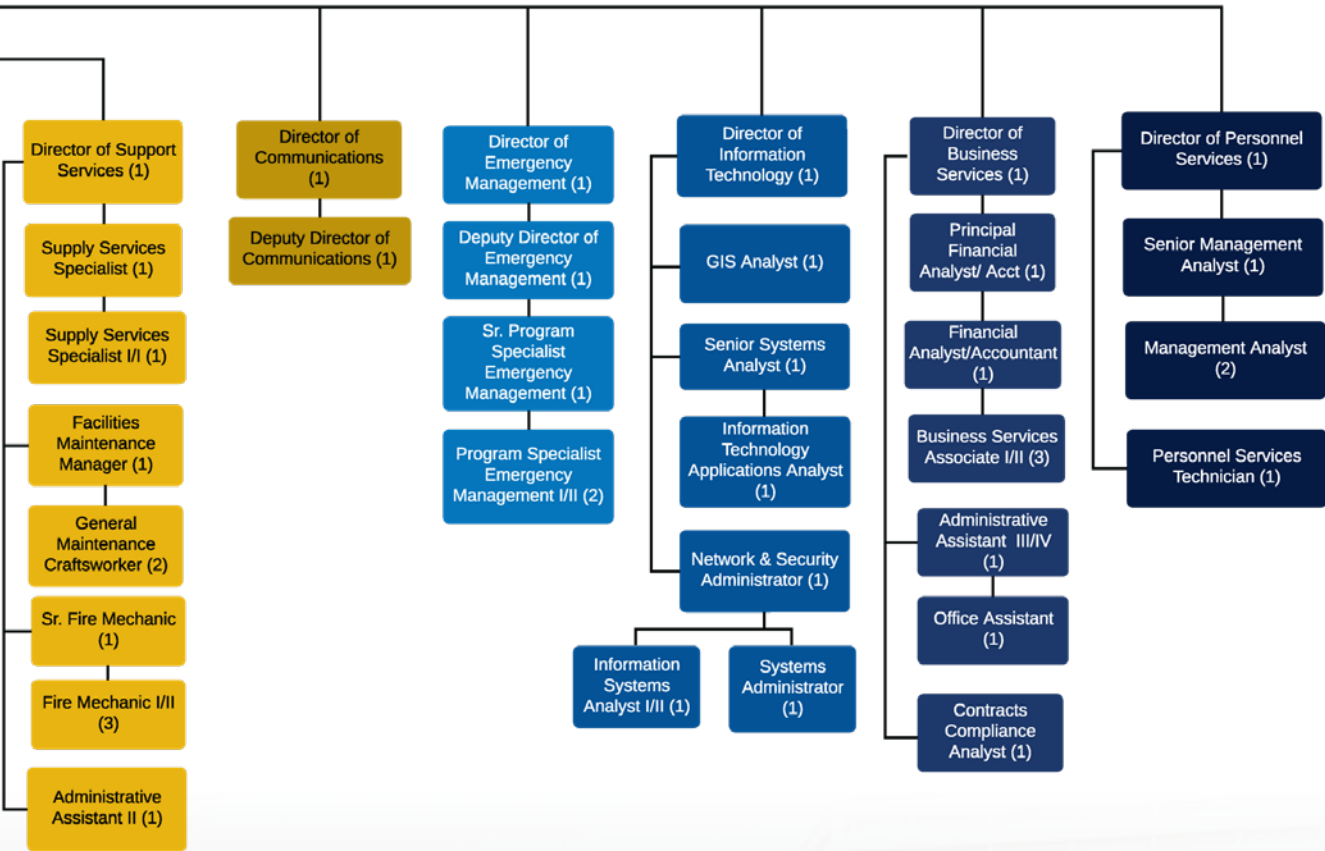
Fire Chief (1)

Assistant Fire Chief  
(1)



Santa Clara County Executive

Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief (1)



County Fire’s 339 uniformed and civilian staff are organized into eight divisions and serve seven cities and unincorporated areas from fifteen fire stations that are divided into three battalions. Administration and support are provided from Department Headquarters and various support facilities. County Fire also provides executive leadership for the County of Santa Clara’s Office of Emergency Management and 9-1-1 Communications Center

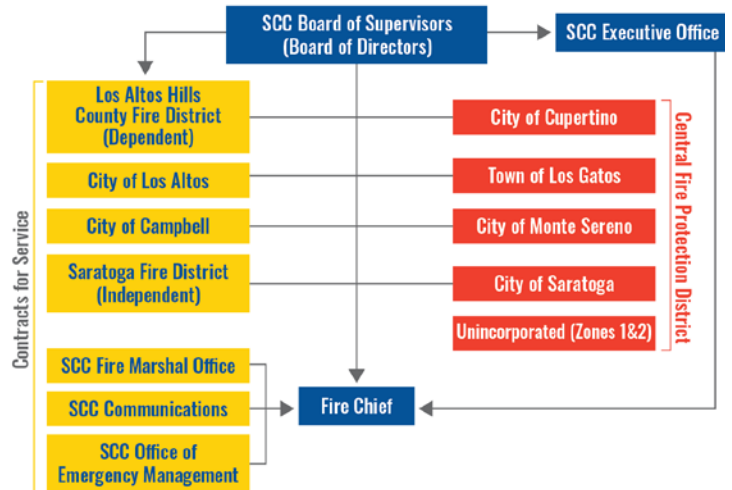


# COUNTY FIRE OVERVIEW

County Fire is a California special district serving the cities and towns of Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Redwood Estates, Saratoga, and surrounding unincorporated communities. We respond to fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescues, and fire investigations in addition to providing fire and life safety education.

Our fleet consists of 13 engine companies, nine wildland firefighting apparatus, three aerial truck companies, three rescue companies, three command vehicles, one 2,500-gallon water tender, one Hazardous Materials Response Team, and one Urban Search and Rescue company. Our seasonally staffed Vasona Fire Fuels Crew completes wildfire mitigation projects and responds to vegetation fires, weather-related incidents, and other emergency incidents within the district.

County Fire also provides fire prevention services for cities and towns in the district and contracted



services for the County Fire Marshal’s Office, with the Fire Chief serving as the County’s Fire Marshal. Additionally, County Fire provides administrative oversight of the County of Santa Clara’s Office of Emergency Management and Santa Clara County 9-1-1 Communications Center.

County Fire is governed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, which serve as the fire district’s Board of Directors.

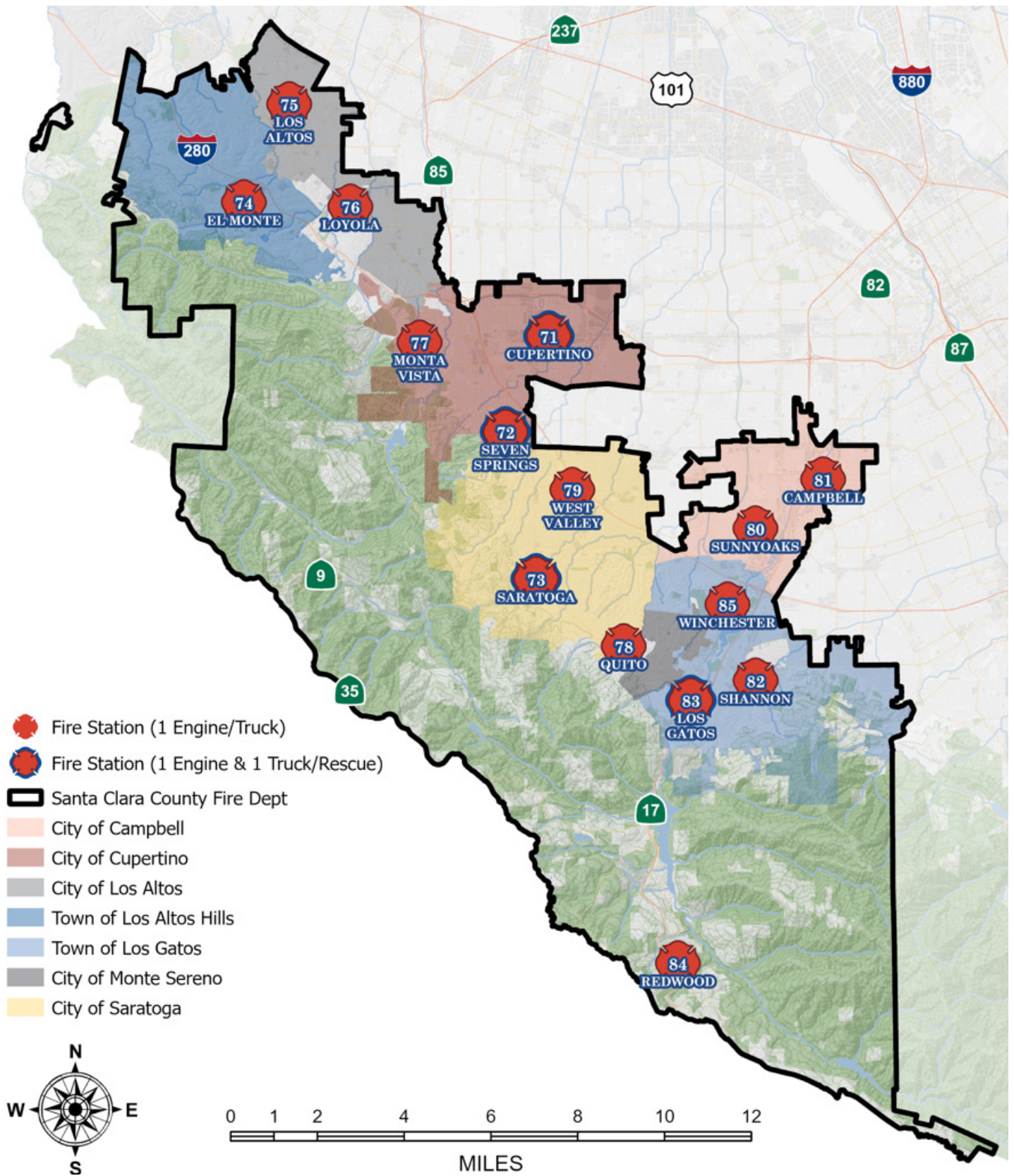


The Department has been a Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accredited organization for over 20 years and is one of 311 agencies worldwide that share this designation. This designation shows County Fire’s commitment to continually self-assess, seek opportunities for improvement, and remain transparent and accountable through the accreditation process’s third-party verification and validation.

The Department was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. This was the ninth consecutive year we achieved this prestigious award. Recent and historical financial reports are available at [sccfd.org](http://sccfd.org).



# LOCAL FIRE STATIONS



| CUPERTINO     | CAMPBELL  | LOS ALTOS | LOS ALTOS HILLS | LOS GATOS  | MONTE SERENO | SARATOGA    | UNINCORPORATED |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Cupertino     | Sunnyoaks | Los Altos | El Monte        | Los Gatos  | Quito        | Saratoga    | Redwood        |
| Seven Springs | Campbell  | Loyola    |                 | Shannon    |              | West Valley |                |
| Monta Vista   |           |           |                 | Winchester |              |             |                |

# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

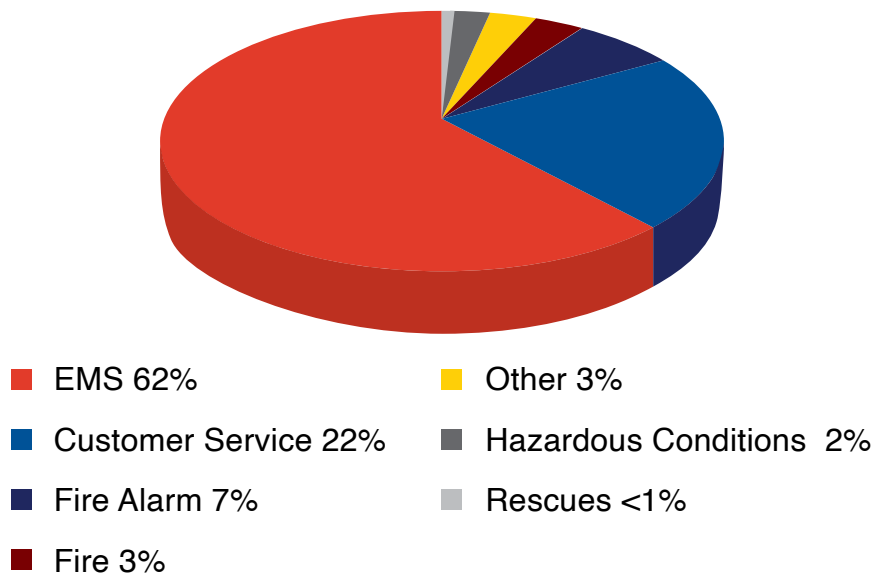
Each year, County Fire evaluates service delivery and community needs. We measure our efforts by establishing and reviewing organizational performance indicators. County Fire is committed to providing the highest quality of service and has an organizational culture that strives for improvement. Below are some of the statistics we captured for 2023.

| BASELINE PERFORMANCE   |           |
|--|-----------|
| Average time for a unit to arrive at a moderate risk emergency medical services (EMS) incident (urban/rural) | 4:35/7:34 |
| Average time for the first unit to arrive at a moderate risk fire incident (urban/rural)                     | 4:41/8:33 |
| Average turnout time for an urgent emergency medical services (EMS) incident                                 | 1:11      |
| Average turnout time for an urgent fire incident   | 1:36      |
| Contain fire to room of origin: 50% of the time  | 74%       |
| Maintain a fund reserve balance: 10-15%  | 27%       |
| STRATEGIC INITIATIVE GOALS AND RESULTS   |           |
| Keep vegetation fires to 3 acres or less 90% of the time   | 100%      |
| Maintain a Citizen satisfaction rating at or above 95%   | 95%       |
| Community education: Make contact with 29% or more of the population served                                  | 24%       |
| Maintain annual employee injury rate below 20% of all employees  | 21%       |

## 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

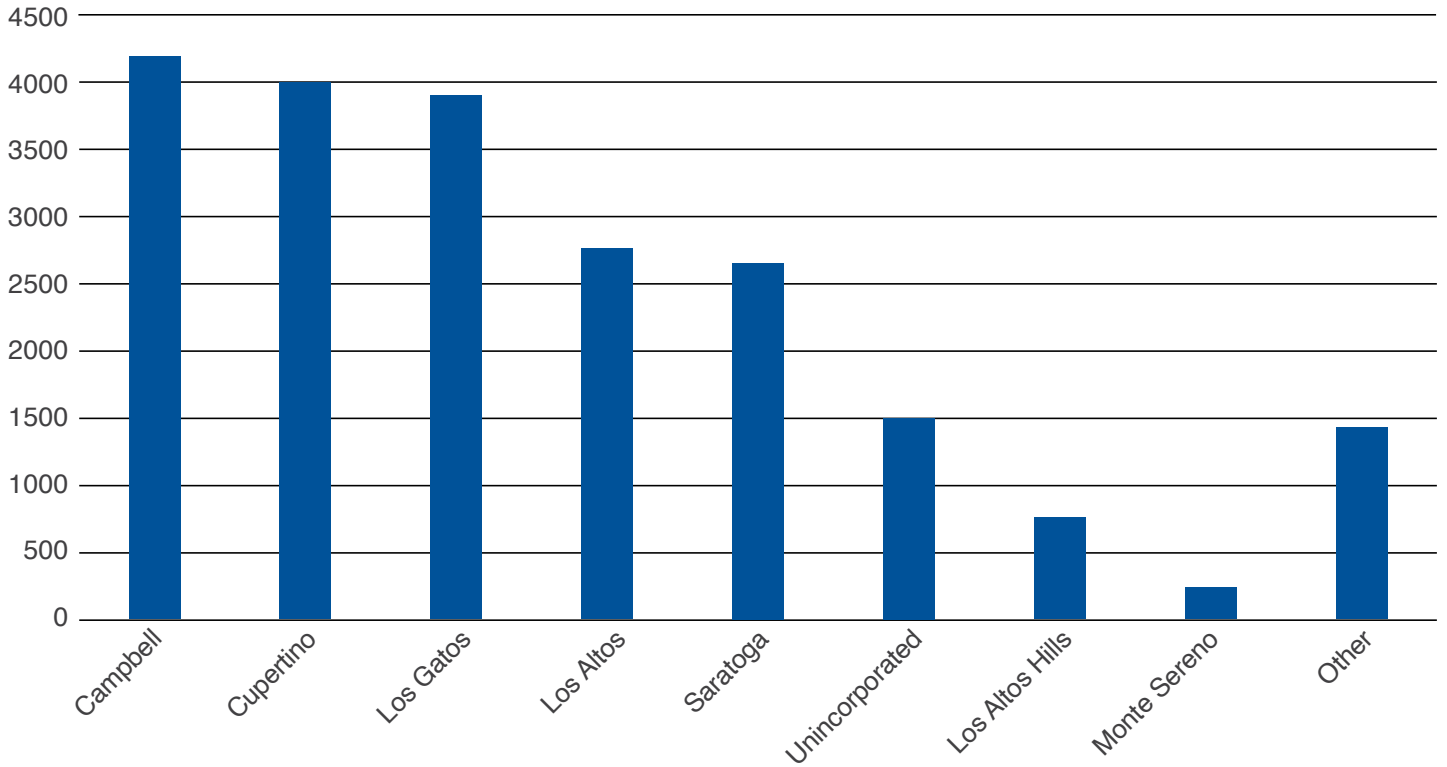
- 21,740** Total Calls
- 13,532** Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- 4,855** Customer Service Calls
- 1,598** Fire Alarm Calls
- 667** Other
- 585** Fires
- 428** Hazardous Conditions
- 75** Rescues<sup>1</sup>

### 2023 INCIDENTS

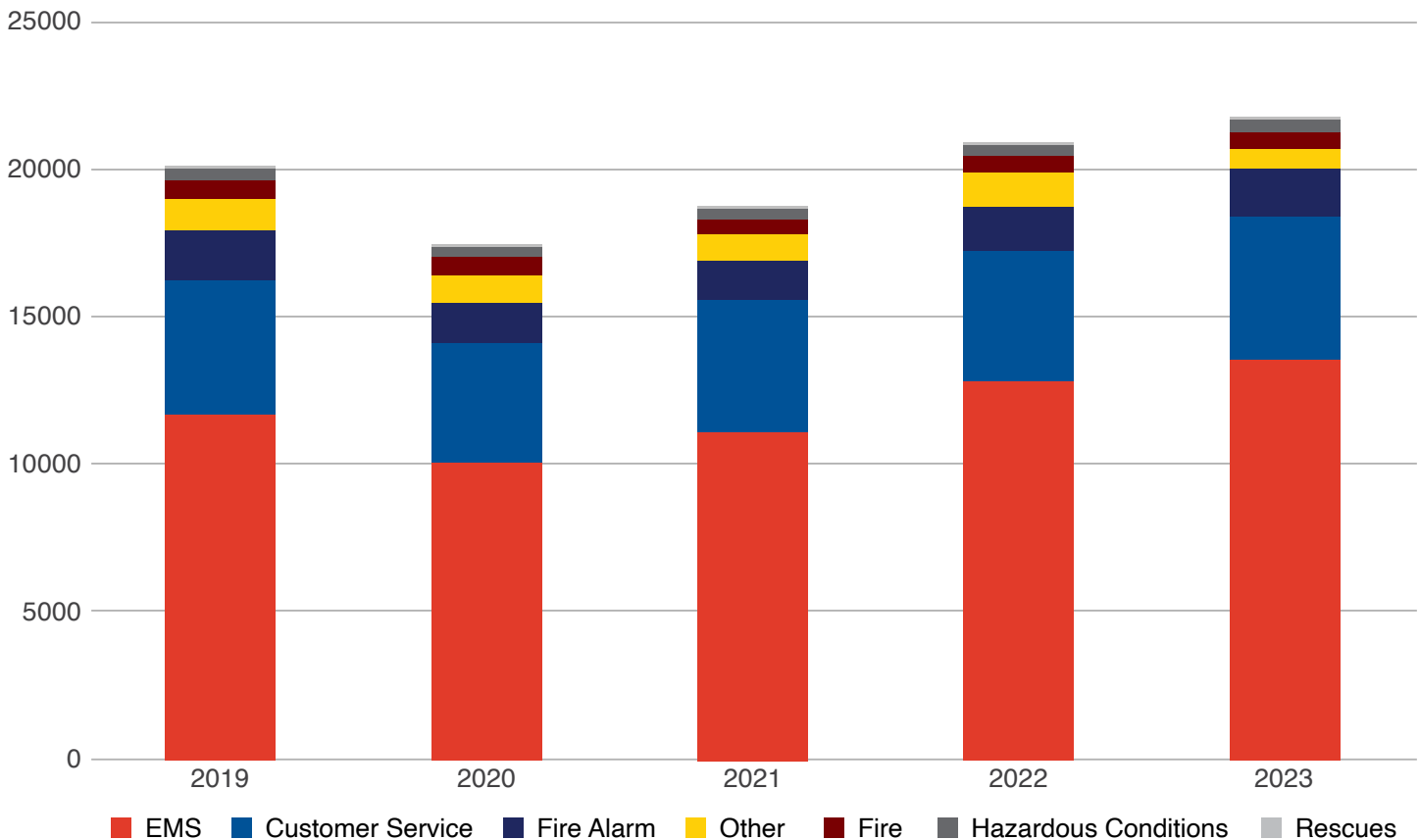


<sup>1</sup>An incident classified as a rescue indicates a victim was extricated or otherwise removed from an entrapped position or location.

## 2023 INCIDENTS BY CITY/TOWN JURISDICTION



## TOTAL INCIDENTS BY CATEGORY - 5 YEAR COMPARISON



# REDWOOD FIRE STATION

As we adapt to the growing needs of our district, we have made significant investment on two high-priority capital projects. Firefighters began operating out of the newly constructed Redwood Fire Station in the fall of 2023. This 8,200 square foot facility replaces a mobile home that served as the fire station for over 40 years. The new community fire station has an attached double apparatus bay to shelter the two fire engines assigned to this location and has been designed to meet modern fire station needs and enhance firefighter health and wellness. This includes separate living quarters for four firefighters, modern decontamination areas in the apparatus bay, and the relocation of fitness equipment to a dedicated fitness room free of contaminants. An official grand opening is in the works. For details, visit [sccfd.org](http://sccfd.org).



# HEADQUARTERS

Our new modern headquarters located at 1315 Dell Avenue in Campbell is nearly complete. Purchased under the leadership of (ret.) Fire Chief Tony Bowden in 2020, this 47,188 square foot building eliminates the need for leasing extra office space and brings all administrative staff and functions together under one roof. In addition to serving as a more convenient one-stop shop for customers, the new building offers more cohesiveness and efficiencies as we deliver a high-quality service as part of our business model.

The new headquarters has an open space concept, upgraded functional capacities, and provides space for future organizational growth. Included in the design is classroom and gathering space where we can host community education workshops and other events. We look forward to welcoming the community to a grand opening soon.



# FIRE PREVENTION










From conducting development plan checks and building inspections to providing community education, the Fire Prevention Division consistently works to deliver the best fire and life safety services to our community. The division continues to increase efficiencies with the help of technology solutions.

In late 2022, County Fire invested in ImageTrend®. Additional uses for this updated fire record management system have been implemented, with both Fire Prevention and Operations divisions now using it to electronically capture and record business inspections. This has increased staff efficiencies and sped up inspection turnaround time for customers.

Fire Prevention also expanded use of the ArcGIS® Field Maps application that was implemented in 2022 to include Wildland Urban Interface and fire hydrant inspections. This map-based tool allows fire companies to document completed inspections much faster than previous methods, and reliably feeds information into the database in almost real-time.





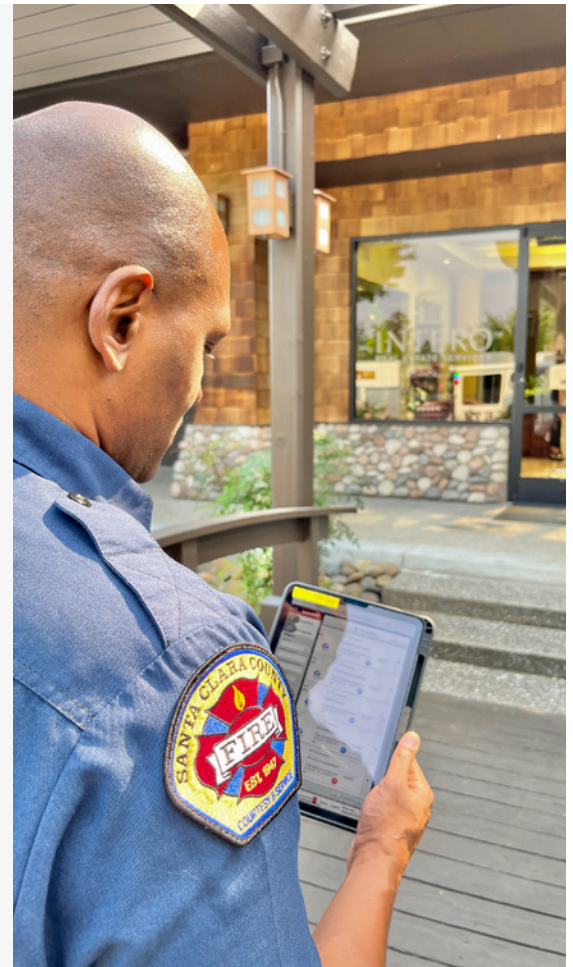
## BY THE NUMBERS

-  **4,132** Construction plan reviews
-  **2,105** Construction field inspections
-  **6,601** Field inspections
-  **3,299** Wildfire preparedness inspections
-  **250** HazMat inspections
-  **95** Urban Runoff Program inspections
-  **39** Underground storage tank inspections
-  **292** Fire investigations
-  **6** Arson Arrests\*

*\*County Fire contracts with the City of Campbell Police Department to conduct fire-related criminal investigations and prosecute individuals as necessary.*

## CONTRACT SERVICES FOR COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

-  **2865** Unincorporated Construction Plan Reviews
-  **848** Unincorporated Construction Field Inspections



# COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Community Education and Risk Reduction Services (CERRS) unit offers a variety of free and low-cost educational programs ranging from CPR training and emergency preparedness to smoke alarm installations and resource assistance for vulnerable residents.



## COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED

- 911 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training
- 18,784 Community Events
- 661 CPR Training
- 5,682 Fire & Life Safety
- 1,414 Fire Station Tours
- 28 Home Safety Services (CO/Smoke Alarm)
- 276 Safety Information & Resident Resource Assistance
- 25,428 School Fire Drills
- 505 Wildfire/Disaster Preparedness
- 53,689 Participants**

## 2024 PROGRAMS

In May 2024, County Fire will host revamped community wildfire preparedness workshops in partnership with the California Department of Insurance. The workshops will provide a comprehensive overview of wildfire education, covering how to make your home and property fire resilient, evacuation planning, and home insurance.

A new emergency preparedness in the workplace webinar is also being offered in partnership with local law enforcement. For more information, visit [sccfd.org](https://sccfd.org) or email [communityoutreach@sccfd.org](mailto:communityoutreach@sccfd.org).



## 2024 COMMUNITY WILDFIRE WORKSHOPS

- 🔥 April 30, 6 p.m. – Los Gatos
- 🔥 May 4, 10 a.m. – Los Gatos
- 🔥 May 8, 6 p.m. – Los Altos Hills
- 🔥 May 14, 6 p.m. – Saratoga

Visit [sccfd.org](https://sccfd.org) for details.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

As we work to ensure our firefighters and equipment are ready to respond to any emergency, we urge you to also think about how you can help prevent emergencies and be better ready to react if one were to occur.

## ATTEND A TRAINING

County Fire offers many complimentary and low-cost trainings ranging from CPR and fall prevention to wildfire workshops and community emergency preparedness academies. We encourage you to browse our 2024 offerings, register for a training of interest, and bring a friend or family member: [sccfd.org](https://www.sccfd.org).



*County Fire supported County Communications, OEM, CAL-OES, and FEMA personnel during the 2023 winter storms, assisting with access to radio towers, and providing transportation for initial damage assessments.*

## REGISTER TO RECEIVE EMERGENCY ALERTS

AlertSCC is the official emergency alert and warning system used in the County of Santa Clara. Notifications are delivered based on your preference (phone, text, email) and will contain important safety messages to help you make an informed decision on what actions to take during an emergency. Register now at [AlertSCC.org](https://www.AlertSCC.org).

## KNOW YOUR (EVACUATION) ZONE

Genasys Protect, formerly known as Zonehaven, provides specific, timely, and accurate information regarding evacuations. Visit [protect.genasys.com](https://www.protect.genasys.com) today, record your evacuation zone, and return anytime to view evacuation orders, warnings, or other advisories.



*County Fire personnel staffed the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), serving as the countywide Fire Branch Director for multiple days during EOC activations.*

## OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Ensuring community resiliency is a goal of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Many homes and businesses were impacted following the late 2022 series of winter storms which brought record-breaking snowfall, rainfall, and power outages to the area. OEM tirelessly advocated for Federal Individual and Household Assistance for impacted communities resulting in FEMA's amendment of its Major Disaster Declaration. This inclusion encompassed the Individual Assistance Program, providing critical support such as temporary

emergency housing, home repair assistance, and financial aid for disaster-related expenses. OEM also led countywide efforts to revise the Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) in 2023, which lays the strategic groundwork necessary for the County to pursue funding for future projects that will alleviate fallout after a disaster and help the entire community rebound more quickly.



# WILDFIRE RESILIENCE



County Fire remains committed to reducing wildfire risk throughout the district. Fire fuels mitigation and evacuation route hardening are vital for the safety of community members and emergency personnel when evacuating and responding to an emergency.

In its second season of operation, our now ten-member Vasona Crew improved clearance along several evacuation routes and maintained fuel break projects established in 2022. These projects create and/or improve evacuation routes and reduce dead, fallen, or overgrown vegetation to reduce both the spread of and damage caused by wildfire.

In 2023, two additional full-time positions were approved for the program. A Fire Fuels Crew Supervisor was added to support leadership on the Vasona Crew and in the Pre-Fire Management & Wildfire Resilience Program. The Community Wildfire Specialist classification, previously a temporary position, has transitioned to permanent status. This position works with community members and city leadership to identify fuel mitigation projects and conducts home ignition zone and defensible space assessments to provide guidance on how they can protect their homes/businesses and reduce wildfire risk.



*In 2023, County Fire collaborated with community and local government stakeholders to complete a revised Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The CWPP enhances wildfire resiliency and seeks to reduce wildfire impact on the community. Visit [sccfd.org/cwpp](https://sccfd.org/cwpp).*



# FIREFIGHTER READINESS

Following our 2022 designation as an Accredited Local Academy (ALA) by the California State Fire Marshal's Office, we hosted one ALA in 2023. To support increased training needs, an additional Fire Captain was assigned to the Training Division.

Reliable fire apparatus are critical for emergency response. Although supply chain issues are still impacting the industry, our Support Services Division successfully added two new apparatus to our fleet.



*Training is a top priority to ensure new firefighters have the skills necessary to safely respond to emergencies and support ongoing refresher training for existing firefighters to keep skills current with industry standards.*



*Our new Crew Carrier allows for our entire Vasona Fire Fuels Crew to travel to fires and worksites together with all the tools and equipment needed to perform their work.*

*A new Breathing Support Unit (BSU) replaced an end-of-life unit that joined the fleet in 2005. The BSU transports critical self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) bottles and has a mobile air compressor to refill multiple bottles simultaneously on scene of incidents.*

# 9-1-1 COMMUNICATIONS

County Fire has partnered with the County of Santa Clara 9-1-1 Communications Department (County Communications) for dispatch services since our inception in 1947. In addition, we've provided executive leadership for County Communications for the past six years. Over our combined histories we have seen many changes, but none more than what occurred in 2023.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 374,830** Total inbound calls
- 146,512** Total outbound calls
- 74,590** Total 9-1-1 calls inclusive of wireless, wireline, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), text, and text to telephone (TTY)



County Communication's new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system was launched on September 13, 2023, replacing a CAD system that was originally designed and implemented in the late 1970's. The new CAD offers many enhanced dispatching capabilities for the fire, emergency medical, law enforcement, and county parks-related calls dispatchers receive.

The new and improved CAD system will allow County Fire to better serve the community by speeding up dispatch time and the arrival of first responders on scene of emergencies. With the new system, dispatchers can assign emergency vehicles to an incident based on their current location rather than by a static site, such as a fire station. County Fire plans to implement closest unit dispatching, described above, in 2024.

County Fire's Information and Technology Division (IT) worked diligently to ensure the multiple critical interfaces that impact routing, mapping, station alerting, and internal command and control tools used by multiple divisions of the Department worked as designed with the new CAD system.

This new technology is yet another enhancement County Fire is pleased to share with you as we seek to deliver the highest quality service to our communities. The new CAD system comes with streamlined training, ramping up new dispatch personnel more quickly, and will be sustainable for many years to come.



## SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

14700 Winchester Boulevard, Los Gatos, California 95032 | (408) 378-4010 | [SCCFD.ORG](https://www.sccfd.org)

*We're moving soon! Stay up to date on our website for our upcoming move to 1315 Dell Avenue Campbell, CA 95008.*

f @ i X in @sccfiredept