

SIERRA MADRE FIRE DEPARTMENT

2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT



**“Firefighting is not a job; it is a calling—
one that requires a passion for service and
the courage to act when others hesitate.”**

-Chief Alan Brunacini

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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

As Chief of the Sierra Madre Fire Department, it is both an honor and a privilege to serve this remarkable community alongside the dedicated men and women who make up this department. Each year presents its own set of challenges, but 2024 - 2025 was a test unlike any other. From the relentless threat of wildfires to the demands of emergency medical services, operating a fire department requires constant readiness, unwavering commitment, and the ability to adapt in the face of adversity.

This year, our "Village of the Foothills" faced one of its greatest challenges with the Eaton Fire and the devastating mudflows that followed. These events placed our city, its residents, and first responders under immense strain. However, in true Sierra Madre form, our community's resilience and unity shone through. Neighbors helped neighbors, and our firefighters stood shoulder to shoulder with residents, protecting homes, clearing debris, and ensuring the safety of all. The strength of our city was on full display, a testament to the spirit that makes Sierra Madre such a special place.

Through it all, I found these words by Amit Ray, who said, "In every crisis, doubt or confusion, take the higher path—the path of compassion, courage, understanding, and love." This year tested us in ways we never expected, but it also revealed the true heart of this community. In the face of hardship, we chose compassion over despair, courage over fear, and unity over division. That is the Sierra Madre way! Despite these hardships, we continue to move forward, strengthening our department, refining our emergency response strategies, and deepening our commitment to protecting those we serve. Our firefighters train tirelessly, preparing for every possible scenario, so that when disaster strikes, we are ready.

Leading this department and serving this incredible city is a privilege I do not take for granted. I am deeply grateful for the support of our community, city leadership, and, most importantly, the brave men and women of the Sierra Madre Fire Department who put their lives on the line every day. Their dedication, courage, and sacrifice inspire me daily.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence, knowing that no challenge is too great when we stand together. Thank you for your unwavering support. It is our honor to serve you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Bartlett". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brent Bartlett, Fire Chief





ABOUT THE COMMUNITY



Mayor
Robert Parkhurst



Mayor Pro Tem
Kristine Lowe



Council Member
Gene Goss



Council Member
Edward Garcia



Council Member
Kelly Kriebs

Sierra Madre, known as the Village of the Foothills, was incorporated in 1907. Nestled between Pasadena and Arcadia, this three-square-mile city is home to serene neighborhoods, lush green spaces, and a vibrant community. At its core lies the charming downtown shopping district, a beloved landmark for both visitors and the 11,000 residents who proudly call Sierra Madre home.

In 1928, the original City Hall was established at 55 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., serving as both a government center and the city's first official Fire Station. As the city grew, the Fire Department relocated to its current headquarters at 242 W. Sierra Madre Blvd. in 1976, a year before the new City Hall opened.

The Sierra Madre Fire Department extends its heartfelt gratitude to the City Council for their guidance and support. We also thank the City Manager, City Manager's Office, and all Sierra Madre residents. It is through your unwavering support that we continue to provide excellent service, fostering the quality of life that makes Sierra Madre a truly unique and charming community.

Vision

The Sierra Madre Fire Department is dedicated to remaining a progressive, cost-effective, and innovative fire department that ensures a safe and inclusive environment for our community through exceptional customer service.

Mission

The Sierra Madre Fire Department is committed to protecting life, property, and our environment through compassionate service.

Core Values

Honor – adhering to the highest standard, both morally and ethically.

Integrity – based on trust and accountability through service.

Compassion – treating everyone with kindness and empathy.

Respect – to self and community, maintaining a department of teamwork and growth.



DEPARTMENT HISTORY



1921

Sierra Madre Volunteer Fire Department was established.



1928

First official Fire Station was built.



1929

First EMS Program started with a First Aid Wagon.



1976

Fire Station moved to current location and the first Basic Life Support (BLS) Vehicle was donated by the Kiwanis Club.



1987

Hosted the First Annual Fire Prevention Festival.



2006

First full-time Fire Chief was hired.



2007

The Paramedic Program (now EMS) was debuted.



2019

Sierra Madre Fire Department transitioned to a Full-Time/Career Department.

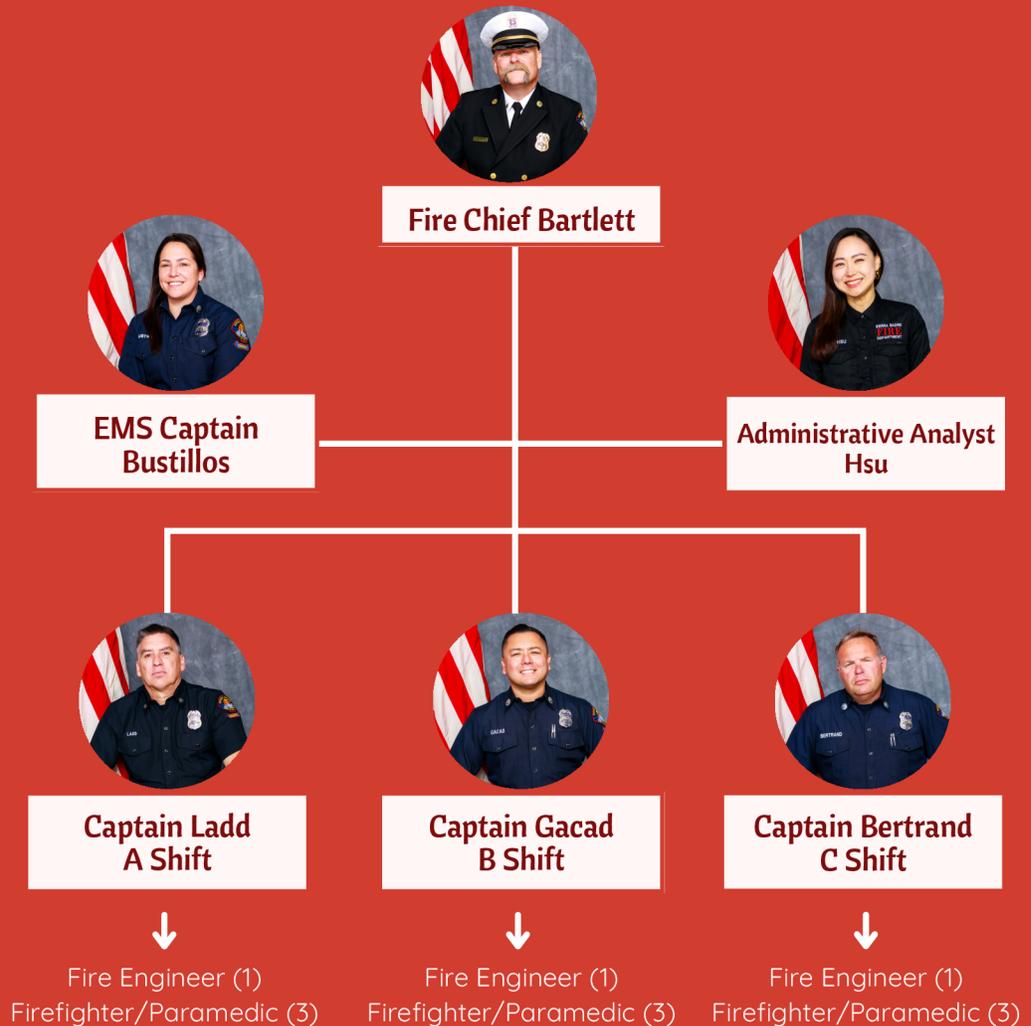


OVERVIEW

The Sierra Madre Fire Department Station 41, located at 242 W. Sierra Madre Blvd, proudly protects those residing, working and visiting the City of Sierra Madre from its central location in downtown. The Department services a primarily residential area of 3.2 square miles with a wildland/urban interface to more than 10,000 residents. The Fire Department operates on a 48/96 schedule, consisting of 3 shifts, each with 1 Captain, 1 Engineer, and 3 Firefighter/Paramedics. Battalion Chief coverage, for larger incidents, is provided by a contract agreement for incident management by the City of Arcadia.

The Department is divided into 5 divisions: Administration, Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Training, and Prevention.

DEPARTMENT



STAFF



**EMS Captain
Bustillos**

Karen Bustillos has been a first responder since 2007, serving 13 years with the Sierra Madre Fire Department in roles ranging from part-time Paramedic to Firefighter/Paramedic, and later, Fire Captain. In 2023, she transitioned into an administrative role, continuing to support and develop the department's medical services. Since 2017, Karen has led the EMS division, overseeing personnel, training, audits, budgets, and certifications. She also serves as a liaison between public health agencies and the Fire Department, helping advance EMS services and community healthcare initiatives. Her leadership has been instrumental in strengthening emergency medical operations and expanding opportunities for the department.



**FF/PM
Rosevear**

Scott Rosevear has been a Firefighter/Paramedic with the City of Sierra Madre for over five and a half years, joining as one of the first external hires after the department transitioned from a volunteer-based to a full-time career fire service. In 2023, he expanded his role by becoming a Community Risk Specialist, further demonstrating his dedication to fire prevention and public safety. Since taking on this position, he has completed California State Fire Training and certified as Fire Inspector 1, Fire Inspector 2, continually enhancing his expertise in risk reduction and fire safety education. Scott plays a key role in the department's fire prevention initiatives, proactively addressing community risks and fostering a safer environment for residents. His leadership and commitment make him a valuable asset to both the department and the community he serves.



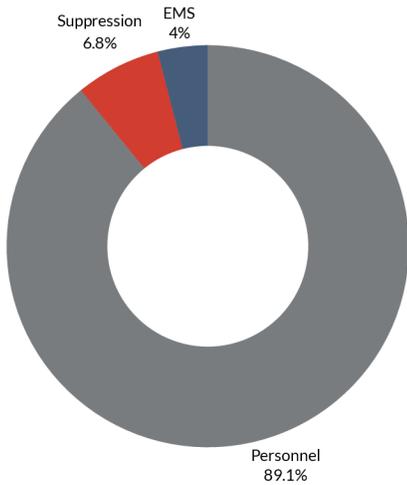
**FF/PM
Arson Investigator
Chu**

Lawrence Chu has served the City of Sierra Madre for four years as a Firefighter/Paramedic and, since 2023, has also worked as a Fire Investigator. In this role, he investigates fires within the city and assists neighbor agencies with their investigations. In 2024, Larry responded to two fires in Sierra Madre and provided mutual aid to neighboring agencies 11 times, dedicating 61 hours outside his regular shift to investigating car fires, vegetation fires, and structure fires. He is an active member of the Verdugo Fire Investigation Task Force, which collaborates with agencies such as LAFD, LACoFD, ATF, and the FBI. Recently, he was appointed Finance Lead for the task force, further demonstrating his dedication to fire investigations and interagency collaboration.

ADMINISTRATION



FY 2024-2025 Budget Summary



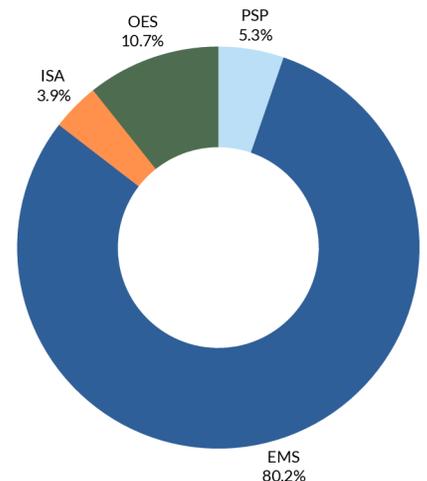
The Administration Division plays a critical role in overseeing the strategic planning, policies, and procedures that guide all aspects of the Sierra Madre Fire Department. This division ensures compliance with rules and regulations across fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), fire prevention activities, and public information efforts. In addition to supervising department staff and coordinating operations with other city departments, administration is responsible for managing complex assignments and providing direct staff support to the City Manager and City Council.

Key responsibilities include budget management, personnel and payroll administration, accounts payable, records management, community outreach, education programs, and organizational development. By working closely with each division, administration ensures the department delivers the highest level of service while maximizing available resources.

The Sierra Madre Fire Department (SMFD) receives the majority of its funding from Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provided both within the city and to neighboring communities. EMS fees are determined by Los Angeles County EMS Agency rates. In addition to EMS operations, SMFD generates cost recovery through Strike Team Deployments, Fire Safety Officer services, and Fire Permit fees.

Additionally, \$30,527 was reimbursed through the Instructional Services Agreement (ISA) program. This program is a collaboration between SMFD and Rio Hondo Community College, offering firefighter training, EMS courses, and specialized certifications that meet state-mandated requirements. By leveraging the ISA, SMFD can train more personnel without increasing local budget expenditures. This partnership ensures cost-effective, high-quality, and compliant training, keeping firefighters well-prepared for emergencies while minimizing financial strain on both the department and the city.

Cost Recovery Summary



NEW

City of Sierra Madre

PARAMEDIC SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM



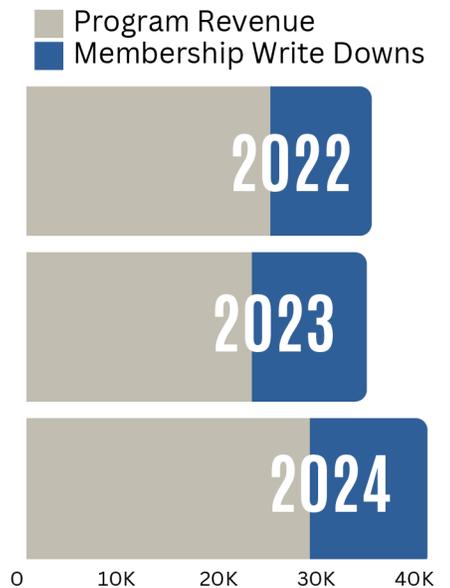
for Individuals, Households, Business and Modest-Income Families

The Paramedic Subscription Program plays a dual role—providing financial security for residents while also generating additional funds to help ensure public safety and emergency response.

Since its introduction in 2010, the Paramedic Subscription Program has seen steady growth, with increasing participation each year. Currently, 576 subscribers are enrolled in the program, and new sign-ups in 2024 increased by 125% compared to 2023. In response to this growth, the department has received approval to restructure the program to offer more cost-effective options for residents.

Beginning July 1, 2025, new plans will be available, including reduced-cost options for family members, plans for low-income households, and coverage for business owners to protect employees during business hours. This program provides financial peace of mind by ensuring that all 911 response costs not covered by insurance will be waived for the patient by the City, eliminating out-of-pocket expenses. Additionally, it contributes funding to support emergency medical services, helping maintain high-quality care for the community.

Through careful financial management and strategic planning, the department continues to maximize resources while delivering high-quality emergency services to the community.



CALOES MUTUAL AID RESPONSE



Park Fire



Airport Fire

The Mutual Aid System operates on the principle of “neighbor helping neighbor,” ensuring that adjacent law enforcement and fire agencies support each other during emergencies. Within an operational area, neighboring agencies provide assistance as needed. If the incident exceeds local capabilities, regional resources are deployed to the affected county.

In August 2024, Sierra Madre Fire Department deployed three personnel to assist with the Park Fire in Chino, dedicating 864 hours to the response. In September, SMFD deployed three personnel to support efforts at the Coffee Pot Fire in Sequoia National Park, contributing 506 hours to the operation. As a result of these deployments, the City of Sierra Madre received 84,573,340 in mutual aid reimbursement.



OPERATION

The Sierra Madre Fire Department (SMFD) is a full-service career fire department dedicated to providing fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), rescue operations, hazardous materials response, and community education. Operating from a single fire station, the department is staffed by one Fire Chief, three Fire Captains, three Fire Engineers and nine Firefighters/Paramedics.

SMFD operates on a three-platoon system following a 48/96 schedule, where each platoon works a 48-hour shift every six days. For larger incidents requiring additional command oversight, Battalion Chief coverage is provided through a contract agreement with the City of Arcadia.

At present, Fire Prevention responsibilities are partially managed through an outsourced contract Fire Marshal, ensuring compliance with safety regulations and fire code enforcement.

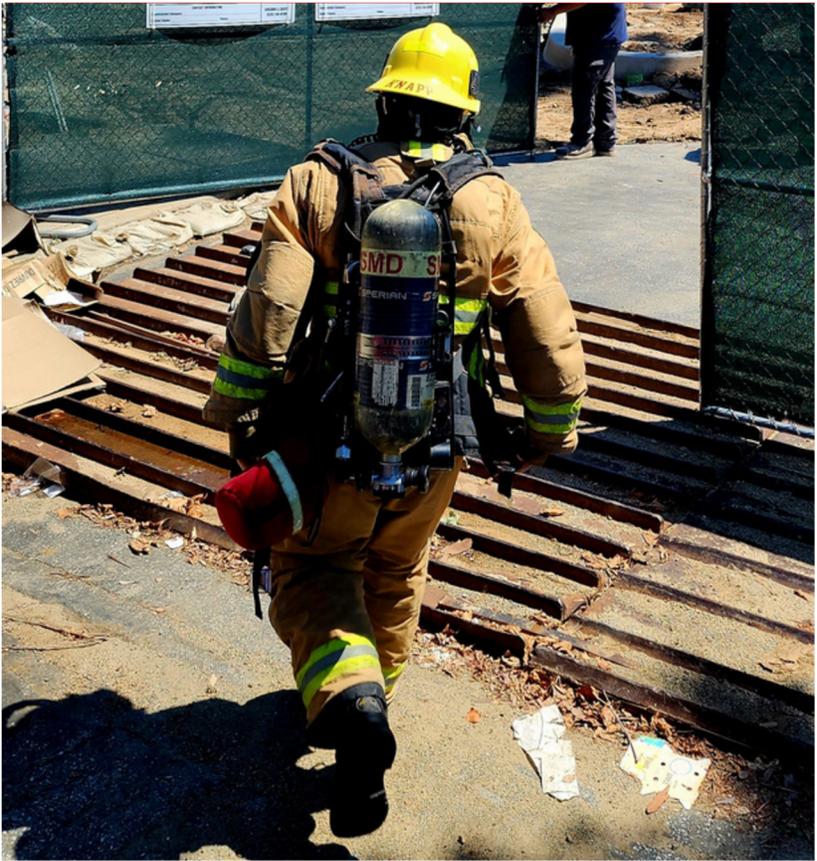
DEPARTMENT APPARATUS

- 1 Fire Engine – 2021 Pierce Enforcer
- 1 Reserve Fire Engine – 2013 KME
- 1 Command Vehicle – 2022 Chevrolet Silverado

- 1 Rescue Ambulance – 2021 Ram 4500
- 1 Reserve Rescue Ambulance – 2015 Ram 4500
- 1 Arson Task Force Vehicle – 2007 Chevrolet Tahoe

FIRE 33	RESCUE & EMERGENCY SERVICES 122	HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS /GAS LEAK 33	SERVICE CALL/ PUBLIC ASSISTANCE 26
POWER LINE DOWN 48	FALSE ALARM/ FALSE CALL 241	MOUNTAIN RESCUE 9	CAL OES MUTUAL AID 2

AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME: 5:39



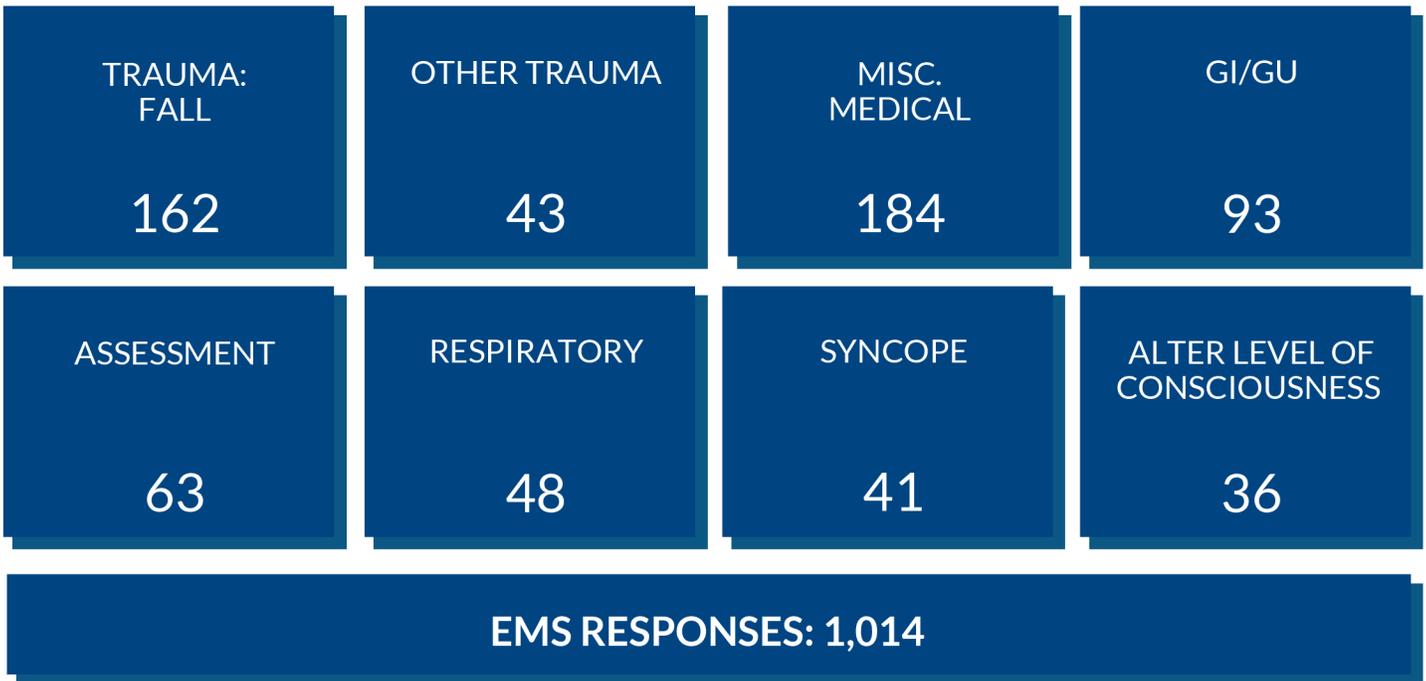
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



SMFD plays a critical role in emergency medical response, with EMS calls making up 65% of total call volume. The division undergoes monthly training and continuing education to maintain licensure and enhance their skills.

SMFD personnel respond rapidly to medical emergencies, delivering compassionate, high-quality care to residents. In the past year, firefighters/paramedics treated 982 patients, with 743 transported to local hospitals and 239 declining transport. The leading cause of EMS activation in Sierra Madre is trauma-related incidents, with falls accounting for 16% of all calls.

In November 2024, SMFD upgraded Fire Engine 41 from a Paramedic Assessment Unit (PAU) to a Paramedic Engine, following detailed audits by the Los Angeles Department of Health Services. This enhancement allows Medic Engine 41 to carry the same advanced medical equipment and medications as Rescue Ambulance 41, ensuring the community has two fully equipped advanced life support (ALS) units operating 24/7.







TRAINING

SMFD remains committed to ensuring the highest level of preparedness for its personnel through extensive training. In 2024, the department completed 6,720 hours of training, strengthening skills in fire, medical, and emergency response.

Of this total, 4,953.75 hours were dedicated to company-level training, where firefighters refined expertise in fire suppression, search and rescue, hose management, ventilation, and teamwork. These skills ensure efficient and effective emergency response to protect lives and property. SMFD conducted 169 hours of facilities training, emphasizing hands-on drills and live fire simulations to prepare firefighters for real-world emergencies. New drivers/operators completed 70 hours of training in pump operations, apparatus placement, and water supply management, while existing drivers/operators received 289.75 hours of continued education in apparatus operation, emergency response driving, and troubleshooting. Leadership training remained a priority, with 44 hours focused on incident command, fireground strategies, and personnel management. Additionally, 100 hours of Hazardous Materials (HazMat) training enhanced firefighters' ability to identify, contain, and mitigate hazardous incidents, covering decontamination, chemical identification, and regulatory compliance. Through rigorous training and leadership development, SMFD ensures operational excellence, safety, and efficiency, keeping firefighters prepared to serve the Sierra Madre community with professionalism and confidence in every emergency.





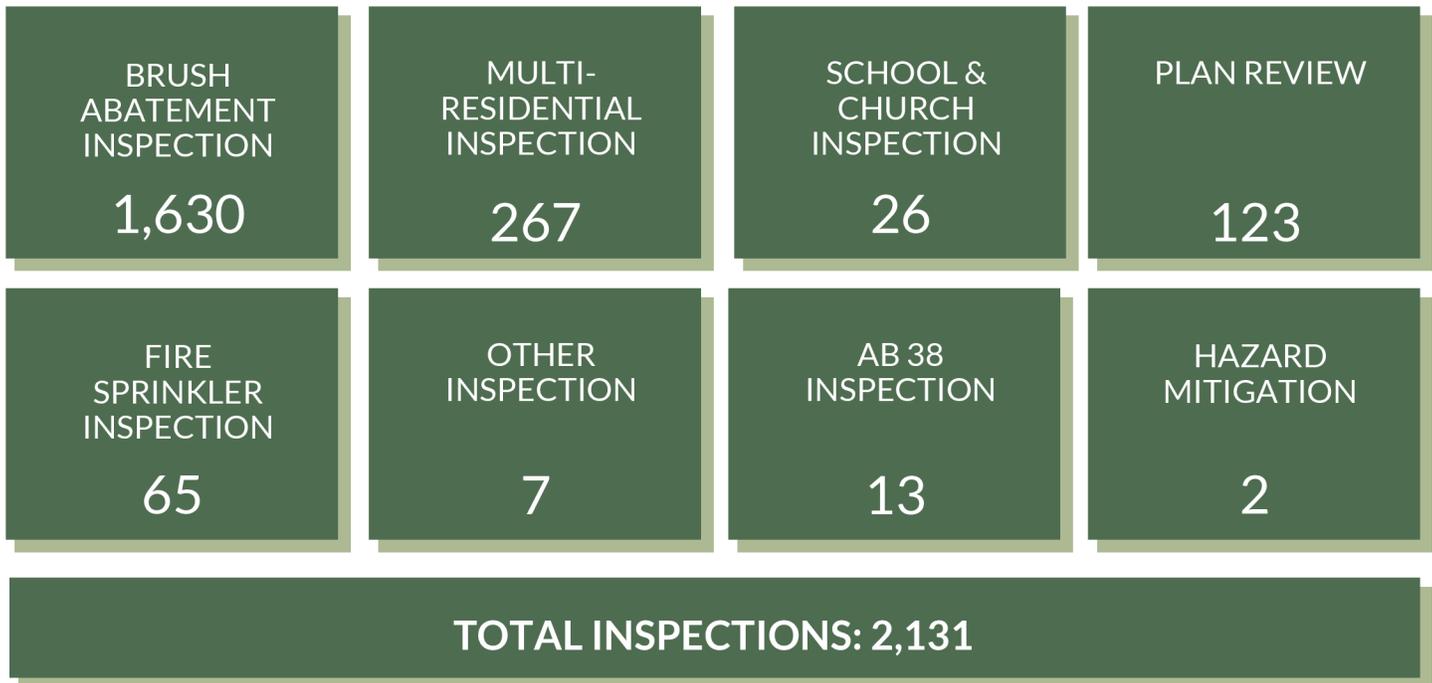
FIRE PREVENTION



SMFD prioritizes life safety, environmental protection, and property conservation through proactive Fire Prevention programs. The division works to reduce fire hazards, enhance community safety, and ensure fire code compliance. Staff address fire protection concerns for businesses and maintain fire safety systems. Fire inspections occur year-round, with increased efforts during Fire Inspection Season from May through November to identify hazards and enforce compliance.

In 2024, SMFD conducted 267 apartment inspections, issuing 83 correction notices, with 20 properties referred to Code Enforcement for violations such as missing No Smoking signage, expired fire extinguishers, and combustible storage. The department completed 1,630 defensible space inspections, with 181 requiring corrections and 10 referred to Code Enforcement for vegetation near roofs, inadequate street clearance, and dead vegetation. Additionally, 19 AB-38 inspections achieved full compliance, and 15 churches and schools were inspected, with 10 correction notices issued. Through inspections, enforcement, and education, SMFD continues to enhance fire safety and community protection.

From February to April 2024, the California Conservation Corps conducted a fuel reduction project in foothill areas, removing dead and nonnative plants and trimming overgrown vegetation to reduce fire hazards. In March 2024, the City held its final Chipper Event under the S.M.A.R.T. (Sierra Madre Achieving Resiliency Together) Program, part of the SMFD Fire Hazard and Fuel Reduction Program. Since May 2022, the program has hosted multiple chipper events and workshops. With continued community interest, SMFD is actively pursuing grants to fund future wildfire prevention initiatives.



BRUSH ABATEMENT PROGRAM

BEGINS ON

JUNE 1ST

FOR RESIDENTS LIVING ABOVE GRANDVIEW AVE.



REMOVE ALL DEAD
VEGETATION





COMMUNITY OUTREACH

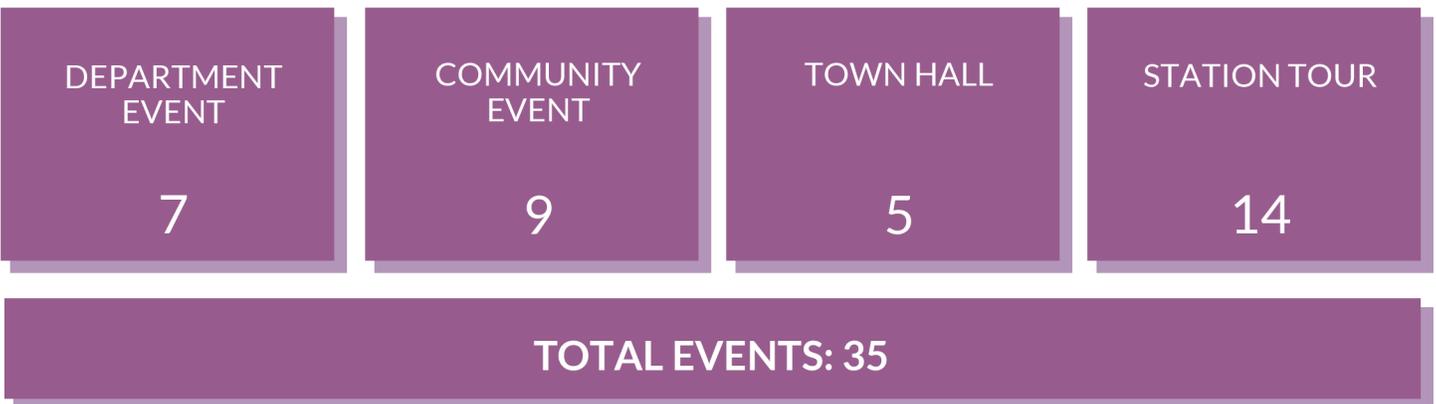
SMFD is dedicated to educating the public on fire safety and wildfire preparedness, ensuring residents have the knowledge needed to protect their homes and community. A key focus is home hardening, teaching homeowners how to create defensible space, utilize fire-resistant construction, and reduce wildfire hazards. Many public education activities are directed toward children in the community. SMFD provides fire safety programs to all seven public and private schools in Sierra Madre, offering station tours and interactive presentations led by firefighters. Additionally, the department provides public education on CPR and first-aid techniques, empowering residents with life-saving skills to respond to medical emergencies.

Throughout the year, SMFD actively participates in citywide events alongside other departments, engaging with the community to promote fire safety awareness and wildfire preparedness. The department also takes part in various community events, including the Parade at the SMLL & SMGSA Opening Days and Winter Fest.

SMFD hosts two major public events to engage and educate the community. In May, the Public Safety Open House provides residents with an opportunity to learn about fire and police services, emergency preparedness, and wildfire protection. Attendees can meet first responders, explore emergency vehicles, and participate in hands-on demonstrations.

During National Fire Prevention Week in October, SMFD collaborates with the Sierra Madre Public Library to host fire safety events, including the popular Big Pumpkin Smash. The week concludes with the Annual Fire Prevention Festival, where residents learn about home hardening, fire safety, wildfire risk reduction, and emergency planning. The event features interactive booths, hands-on demonstrations, and opportunities for both children and adults to dress up as firefighters. It also brings together local agencies, fire prevention vendors, and wildfire safety experts, offering practical solutions for building fire-resistant communities.

For ongoing updates and safety tips, follow the Sierra Madre Fire Department on Instagram and Facebook to stay informed about community events and fire preparedness initiatives.







MAJOR EVENTS

The City of Sierra Madre experienced significant impacts from the Eaton Fire, which ignited on January 7, 2025, and rapidly spread due to extreme Santa Ana winds. At 8:46 AM that day, the City issued a NIXLE alert for a Red Flag Warning, accompanied by parking restrictions due to severe wind conditions. As fire conditions worsened, a voluntary evacuation order was issued at 8:06 PM for Zone 1 and Zone 16, covering areas north of Grandview Ave and west of Grove Street. By 9:32 PM, evacuation orders expanded to include seven zones as the fire spread aggressively.

Burning over 14,000 acres before containment on January 31, the fire devastated portions of the city, destroying 14 homes and 25 additional structures. The Sierra Madre Historical Wilderness Area and Mount Wilson Trail were severely affected, heightening the risk of post-fire erosion and environmental damage. In response, the City mobilized fire crews, law enforcement, and emergency personnel who worked tirelessly under challenging conditions to protect lives and property. SMFD entered into unified command with CAL-Fire, the US Forest Service, and the Pasadena Fire Department. Together, they worked for 36 hours straight, alongside SMFD's 11 firefighters, battling the blaze under extreme conditions. On the afternoon of January 9, some evacuation orders were downgraded to evacuation warnings as conditions improved. As the fire was contained, the City turned the attention to post-fire recovery, particularly in stabilizing slopes and preventing landslides. Experts warned that the recovery process would be extensive, requiring ongoing efforts to restore the resilience of the affected areas.

In February, severe rainfall led to dangerous mudflows throughout Sierra Madre, exacerbating the challenges faced in the fire's aftermath. As a precaution, the City issued a NIXLE alert announcing evacuation orders for portions of Sierra Madre affected by the Eaton Fire burn areas, effective 7:00 AM on February 13. As heavy flooding led to in road closures, evacuation orders, and damage to homes as several feet of mud, rocks, and debris cascaded into residential areas. The City responded swiftly, deploying emergency crews to clear debris, restore infrastructure, and provide support to impacted residents. Thanks to these efforts, no injuries were reported, though property damage resulted. While evacuation orders were eventually downgraded to warnings, the risk of future debris flows remains high.

It is important for all residents to stay alert. As the City continues to utilize NIXLE and Genasys Protect to assist with emergency incidents and provide timely updates. Additionally, the City is in the process of implementing the Smart911 app to enhance emergency alert notifications. Smart911 can issue alerts based on the user's geographical location, providing more timely updates in emergency situations. SMFD actively encourages residents to sign up for NIXLE and Smart911 while also demonstrating how Genasys Protect functions during emergencies through community outreach and public education initiatives.

SMFD urges all residents to remain vigilant, stay informed, and follow all evacuation orders to ensure community safety. By working together, we can build a more resilient city, better equipped to withstand future wildfires and post-fire environmental challenges.

SMFD MASTER PLAN



THE SIERRA MADRE FIRE DEPARTMENT is committed to safeguarding the community, but recent challenges, including the Eaton Fire and post-fire flooding, have reinforced the need for additional support and investment to enhance emergency preparedness and response. To continue providing high-quality service, SMFD is seeking collaboration and resources in key areas such as risk reduction, training, infrastructure improvements, financial sustainability, and operational efficiency.

A top priority is strengthening Community Risk Reduction (CRR) initiatives to address wildfire threats, post-fire erosion, and flooding hazards. SMFD aims to implement proactive fire prevention strategies, defensible space inspections, and expanded public education programs to ensure residents have the knowledge and resources to protect their homes. By enhancing home hardening efforts, evacuation planning, and brush clearance compliance, the department can work alongside the community to reduce fire risks and improve safety.

To further elevate emergency response capabilities, enhanced training and staffing are essential. While SMFD personnel are highly trained, more hands-on training exercises, wildfire simulation drills, and interagency coordination with neighboring fire departments would improve operational readiness. The department also recognizes the importance of expanding its workforce, including additional administrative staff, more operational personnel, and a structured reserve firefighter program to strengthen its ability to respond to large-scale emergencies.

Investing in fire station infrastructure and emergency equipment remains an important priority. While the current station serves the community, its aging design limits efficiency, storage, and decontamination areas. A remodel could streamline the layout to improve response times and operational flow. Updating the living quarter with gender-specific restrooms, showers, and sleeping areas would create a more inclusive environment and align with modern standards. Additionally, incorporating a multi-purpose meeting room for training, operational briefings, and public education would enhance preparedness and community engagement. These upgrades would not only strengthen SMFD's ability to respond effectively but also provide a safer and more functional workspace for its personnel.

Ensuring long-term financial sustainability is also a key focus. SMFD is actively seeking grant funding, regional partnerships, and federal assistance programs to support wildfire mitigation efforts and emergency response improvements. Exploring ways to enhance cost recovery for emergency medical services (EMS) and fire response operations will also contribute to financial stability. Looking ahead, developing a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) would provide valuable guidance for prioritizing investments in fire station upgrades, apparatus replacements, and emergency response technology.

Enhancing operational efficiency is also a focus area. Establishing clear response time objectives for wildfire and emergency incidents will enable the department to measure performance and implement strategic improvements. Strengthening automatic and mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire departments will ensure faster response times and seamless coordination during large-scale incidents.

SMFD remains dedicated to protecting the Sierra Madre community and is seeking stronger partnerships, investments, and resources to enhance emergency services. Through collaborative efforts and strategic improvements, we can ensure a more resilient, well-prepared, and safer Sierra Madre for years to come. We appreciate the ongoing support and engagement from the community and look forward to working together to achieve these goals.

FOLLOW US



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For emergencies, please dial 9-1-1

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