

# Introduction

## Chapter 1

### 1.1 Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Butte County Cooperative Fire Agencies to provide professional services to protect lives, property, and environment to those residing, working or traveling within the unincorporated areas of Butte County, the Cities of Biggs, Gridley and the Town of Paradise.

### 1.2 Vision Statement

We are CAL FIRE serving the Butte County Fire Department, Cities of Biggs and Gridley Fire Departments and the Town of Paradise Fire Department providing public safety and all risk emergency services to the citizens and visitors of Butte County as part of a cooperative regional response system.

Our members, career and volunteer, work side by side as a team, proud to serve the communities with which we live. We are focused on comprehensive training, supported with quality fire apparatus and equipment, and guided by policies and procedures that enable our Department to deliver quality emergency services to the citizens of Butte County.

### 1.3 Core Values

It is the responsibility of each member to support the mission and vision by subscribing to the following values:

**Effective Communications** – We are respectful to our community and each other with effective open communications to our leader, our department and the customers we serve.

**Cooperation to All** - We work together as a “Team” to problem solve, enhance improvements to our job through research and development and build strong relationships with cooperators.

**Professional Coordination** – We lead by example in our professional and personal lives. Our pride in appearance, equipment and facilities will provide the highest degree of quality service with confidence and trust to the public and cooperators.

**Commitment to Serve** – We are committed to serve ourselves and the public with integrity. We encourage and promote stronger work force to enhance the department ability to serve.

#### **1.4 Volunteer Fire Company (VFC) Background**

Volunteerism is in our roots as a nation. In 1717, one of the first organized volunteer fire companies in America was formed in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1736, statesman Benjamin Franklin founded and served in the Union (volunteer) Fire Company in Philadelphia. Today a vast majority, over one million, of the firefighters in the United States serve as volunteers. It is estimated that over 25,000 fire departments are staffed with volunteers or a combination of volunteer and career firefighters.

#### **1.5 VFC Organization**

In 1931, the Butte County Board of Supervisors contracted with CAL FIRE. This contract was a major step toward integrating independent VFC's and career fire companies to work within a single fire department framework in Butte County.

In 1939 the State of California enacted section 14825 of the Health and Safety Code (attachment 10.45). This is the law that allows citizens of a community to form a Volunteer Fire Company.

With the enactment of Health and Safety Code section 14825, the umbrella of affiliation between CAL FIRE and Butte County Fire Department provides significant liability protection as well as other benefits that would not normally be afforded to completely independent VFC's. Section 14831 of the Health and Safety Code (attachment 10.44) authorizes the Board of Supervisors to regulate the formation and continued existence of VFC's.

The umbrella of affiliation also provides for each community to take great pride and to provide support for its community based VFC's.

#### **1.6 VFC Responsibility**

Each VFF must be familiar with the bylaws, procedures and policies of their VFC, as well as this Standard Operating Procedures manual. It is important that all VFF's take an active part in the internal operations of his/her VFC. A professional business-like organization must be maintained.

Every VFC that accepts or has accepted donations from the community must accept the responsibility that accompanies each donation. Citizens entrust the VFC to utilize contributions with sound business-like practices.

The VFC must treat all its members fairly, firmly and consistently and all VFF's are expected to maintain professional standards.

The VFC shall generally be responsible for the administrative and non-emergency operational affairs of the VFC, including the administrative supervision of all its members.

## **1.7 CAL FIRE/BCFD Background**

In California, as in most of the rest of the states, the state legislature recognizes those lands, outside of federal ownership and incorporated cities that are covered by brush, watershed, timber and grazing resources, as the state's (CAL FIRE) responsibility to protect them from wildfire. In counties such as Butte, valley agricultural crop lands and the structures and improvements outside of city or fire district boundaries are considered the local government's (BCFD) responsibility to protect. State law also provides for the formation of community (volunteer) fire companies under the supervision of the local county government. Fire protection within city or fire district boundaries is the responsibility of the city government or the fire district (unless they contract with CAL FIRE).

Fire protection in Butte County is a cooperative effort. Rather than establish separate fire protection agencies, one state and one county (with duplication of effort and expense), the County of Butte has contracted with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to operate the Butte County Fire Department. This cooperative fire protection system includes the important augmentation by community based volunteer fire companies, as well as the inclusion of the Cities of Biggs, Gridley, and Town of Paradise Fire Departments within Butte County under additional CAL FIRE contracts.

**It is important to remember each VFC is a member of the Butte County Fire Department and not its own fire department and should be represented as such (Example: Butte County Fire Department, Clipper Mills Volunteer Fire Company and not the Clipper Mills Fire Department).**

The partner agencies (State/City/Town/County) provide funding and primary equipment (generally). The individual communities, throughout the delivery area, provide community based funding.

Together, they have developed an effective all-risk, full-service fire protection organization with a mission to protect the lives and property of residents/property owners and to protect local natural resources (environment) from fire and other disasters.

The legal authority to engage in firefighting and emergency activities in most areas of Butte County is vested in the officers and staff of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection by legislative statute, Board of Supervisors resolution, and by contractual state, county, town, and city agreements.

Within the intent of the regulations, the CAL FIRE Unit Chief appointed as the Fire Chief shall be responsible for all county, city, town (under contract), and state fire department activities within Butte County.

## **1.8 CAL FIRE/BCFD Organization**

The CAL FIRE Unit Chief of the Butte Unit serves as the Chief of the Fire Department. The Unit Duty Chief (assigned Division Chief) supervises the day-to-day administration of the department. The Operational Division Chiefs administer the day-to-day operations within the division boundaries. A field Battalion Chief is responsible for the administration of incident operations, firefighting personnel, fire stations, apparatus, and equipment, assigned within a geographic area designated a battalion. The field Battalion Chief reports to the Division Chief and the Division Chiefs report to the Unit Chief. Each fire station, whether staffed by career and/or VFF personnel, has career captains that are responsible to the Battalion Chief for the care and maintenance of any assigned station, fire apparatus or equipment. Career Captains are also responsible for the supervision, training, and performance of their subordinates, i.e. Engineer, Firefighter, or VFF's. See attachment 10.1, Organization Chart.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is a State agency with jurisdictional responsibility for **wildland fires only** in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) within California; typically, the SRA is the foothill and mountainous areas of California where CAL FIRE is there to protect the watershed from the impacts of wildland fire. In Butte County, the SRA is typically located east of Highway 99, north of Highway 149 and east of highway 70.

CAL FIRE stations are located in many of Butte County's foothill communities including Cohasset, Forest Ranch, Butte Meadows, Stirling City, Paradise, Concow (Jarbo Gap), Berry Creek (Harts Mill), Forbestown (Robinson Mill), Feather Falls, and Oroville.

Since 1931 the Butte County Fire Department has been in a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE to provide integrated, cooperative, regional fire protection that provides fire, EMS, technical rescue and hazardous materials response to approximately 80,262 residents in the unincorporated areas of Butte County responding to over 21,000 emergencies every year.

All hazards emergency response services are provided from 23 career fire stations utilizing approximately 253 career firefighters (CAL FIRE), 25 support and 10 administrative personnel and approximately 145 community-based volunteer firefighters.

CAL FIRE is an all-risk fire department and responds to other emergencies in addition to SRA wildland fires on behalf of Butte County; however, CAL FIRE stations are only staffed part of the year during the summer preparedness period (typically 6 months) by the State.

The Butte County Fire Department (BCFD) is responsible for all emergency response in the unincorporated areas within Butte County including structure fires, vehicles fires, medical emergencies, hazardous material incidents, technical rescues, etc. and all wildland fires in the Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and the management, training and supervision of the volunteer firefighter program.

BCFD has eleven county funded engines stationed at ten BCFD stations and one CAL FIRE station in Oroville. The stations are generally in communities throughout the valley except for the foothill stations in Magalia, Kelly Ridge and Bangor. Butte County contracts with CAL FIRE, known as a "Schedule A Agreement" to staff and manage the BCFD.

In addition, the BCFD funds the winter staffing of six CAL FIRE stations in some foothill communities through a cooperative agreement with CAL FIRE known as an "Amador Agreement." During the winter, CAL FIRE funds the engine operators and permits the county to use the state facility and fire engine. Under the Amador agreement the county picks up the supplemental cost of staffing, funding the Firefighters and minimal operating cost to keep the station open during the winter months providing year around fire protection in six Butte County foothill communities.

The BCFD is comprised of the county funded stations in the valley communities of Nord, South Chico, Durham, Oroville (county fire engine at a state station), Richvale, Palermo, Biggs and Gridley, the foothill communities of Bangor, Kelly Ridge and Magalia, and combined with the six CAL FIRE Amador staffed stations in the foothills of Forest Ranch, Stirling City, Paradise, Concow (Jarbo Gap), Berry Creek (Harts Mill) and Forbestown (Robinson Mill). These stations provide year around fire protection through a regional network of fire stations in Butte County.

The BCFD is a combination fire department consisting of career and volunteer firefighters. The BCFD has community based volunteer firefighters that respond and support emergency operations; however, the number of volunteer firefighters has declined in Butte County, as well as nationally. The BCFD has seen a reduction in volunteers over the past 20 years to about fifty percent of what it used to be due to the high demands of work, family and legally mandated State and Federal training requirements to become and maintain volunteer firefighter status. Some volunteer firefighters still support their communities by responding to emergencies when available and by responding key pieces of support fire apparatus such as water tenders, breathing support (air units), squads, and fire engines needed during emergency operations.

This fire protection model provides quality fire protection in most Butte County communities with an engine staffed with a career fire apparatus operator and firefighter (two personnel) supported by neighboring career staffed engines and community based volunteer firefighters.

Emergency Response outcomes are based on the timing and weight of response relative to the type (complexity) and location of the incident.

#### Timing of an Emergency Response

The timing of response refers to the time it takes to dispatch strategically placed community fire department resources to the incident, the time for firefighters to get to the fire engine, put on personal protective equipment, respond to and arrive at the incident from their location.

#### Weight of an Emergency Response

The weight of response refers to a multiple-unit response from various surrounding communities for serious emergencies, such as a room and contents structure fire, a traffic collision with extrication, hazardous materials incident, or a technical rescue incident, etc. In these situations, a sufficient quantity of firefighters and resources must be assembled within a reasonable time frame to safely abate the emergency.

#### Fire Department Operational Command

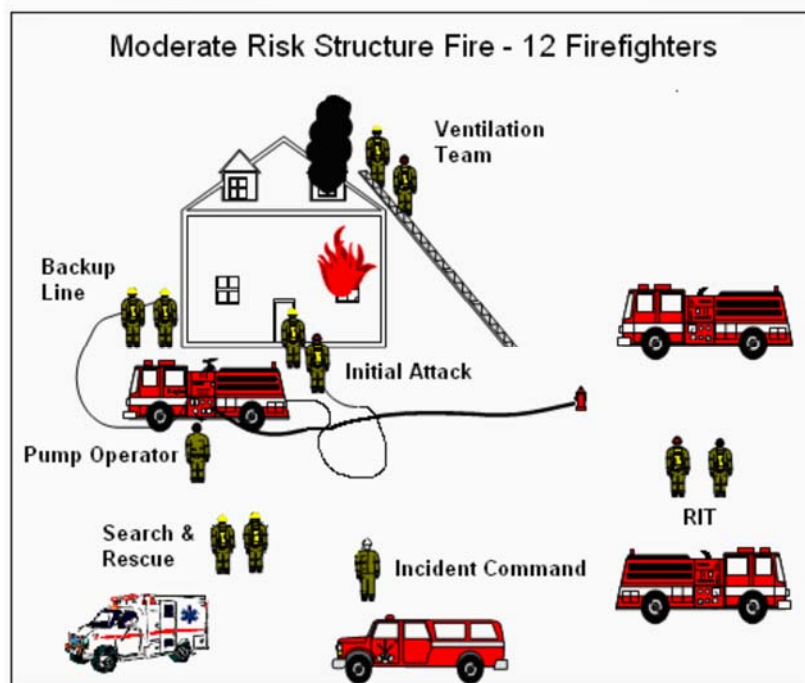
The day to day fire department operations are led by highly trained and experienced CAL FIRE chief officers. Daily operations and administration coverage for the Butte County Fire Department is led by one of four CAL FIRE Division Chiefs (Duty Chief) on a rotating basis. In addition, operational coverage with initial response to complex incidents is provided by Battalion Chiefs, of which ten are CAL FIRE, two are Butte County and one is Town of Paradise.

## NFPA 1720

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) establishes standards for fire service operations. Under NFPA-1720 combination departments like the Butte County Fire Department, comprised of a mix of career and volunteer firefighters, should assemble to following.

Staffing	Response Time	Minimum Staff	Response Time	Objectives
Zone	Demographics	Responding	Minutes	Met % of Time
	(people)			
Urban	> 1000/Mi2	15	9	90%
Suburban	500-1000/Mi2	10	10	80%
Rural	<500/Mi2	6	14	80%
Remote	Travel > or = to	4	Dependent on	90%
	8 miles		travel distance	
Special Risk	Determined by	Determined by	Determined by	90%
	AHJ	AHJ	AHJ	

Below is some typical structure fire, fire ground tasks



## **1.9 VFC Responsibility**

The day to day operations of the fire department will be delegated to the Division Chiefs and then to the Battalion Chiefs. The Battalion Chiefs are responsible for administering the VFF program within their respective battalion.

Each station will have a CAL FIRE, Fire Captain assigned to the VFC as a Career Liaison Officer between the department and the VFC. The Career Captain will maintain a professional, productive and supportive relationship with the VFC officers and members.

The Career Captain will also confer with the VFC Captain on all applicable station level issues directly or indirectly related to the VFC or its members.

For the volunteer firefighter program to be successful, it is critical and mandatory that an open line of communication and a professional relationship between ALL career staff (especially the Career Captain) and the volunteer fire company officers and membership is maintained and the VFC members and the career staff be treated with the respect they deserve.

## **1.10 Definitions**

### Active Roster

A listing of all Volunteer Fire Fighters (VFF) who are members in good standing with the department.

### BOS

Board of Supervisors, Butte County.

### Career Captain

CAL FIRE employee with the rank of Fire Captain. Each Volunteer Fire Company (VFC) is assigned a Career Captain to assist with the management of the VFC. The career captain serves as the Liaison Officer between the VFC and the department.

### Career Station

A career staffed fire station. May also have volunteer firefighters assigned to it.

### Department

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) – Butte Unit, Butte County Fire Department, City of Biggs Fire Department, City of Gridley Fire Department, and Town of Paradise Fire Department.

### Hard Covered

VFC apparatus is staffed and can respond within one minute during the day and within two minutes at night



### Member

Any VFC member in good standing, regardless of rank.

### PVFF

Probationary Volunteer Firefighter. VFF with probationary status. A VFF, who has been formally accepted as a Volunteer Firefighter, and is receiving their required training during probationary status.

### SOP

Standard Operating Procedures.

### Soft Covered

VFC apparatus is considered staffed and can respond within 15 minutes

### VFC

Volunteer Fire Company. The group of members consisting of the active roster. The company is identified by the fire station number, i.e., VFC #74 is at Station #74.

### VFF

Volunteer Firefighter. Any member that is on the active roster and off probation.

### VFF Allocation

The total number of VFF's authorized for a volunteer company.

### Volunteer Liaison Officer

Volunteer in good standing selected by the Fire Chief to hold the position of Volunteer Liaison Officer (VLO). The Volunteer Liaison Officer is the liaison officer between the volunteer fire company captains and the Fire Chief.

The Volunteer Liaison Officer will assist the department regarding issues related to integrated operations and administration of the volunteer fire program.

The Volunteer Liaison Officer will report directly to the Fire Chief.

### VFC Station

An unstaffed fire station maintained by a VFC under the direction of a Career Liaison Officer.

### Volunteer Auxiliary

A group consisting of community members and/or volunteer firefighters who support a VFC. Support can be defined as any act(s) that enhances a VFC's operations (such as fundraisers, social events, etc.) that are in agreement with the department's mission.

## **Volunteer Fire Company Positions**

### VFF Captain

Volunteer Fire Company Captain. A Volunteer Firefighter from each VFC, elected by the VFC, approved by the Fire Chief, to coordinate the volunteer firefighters, volunteer operators, volunteer stations and apparatus. Appointments are effective January 1 of each year and serve a calendar year term.

### VFF Lieutenant

A VFF from each VFC, elected by the VFC, approved by the Fire Chief, to assist the VFF Captain. In the absence of the VFF Captain, he/she will act on appropriate issues for the VFF Captain.

### Company Secretary

A VFC in good standing, elected by the membership, to maintain company records, take notes, and compile agendas. This position may be combined with the Treasurer duties.

### Company Treasurer

A VFC in good standing, elected by the membership, to coordinate the financial operations of each VFC's Treasury. This position may be combined with the Secretary duties.

### Company Training Officer

A VFC in good standing, appointed by the VFF captain, to coordinate the training operations of each VFC.

## **Volunteer Company Levels of Response**

### VFF Support Responder

A VFF meeting the training requirements to respond to designated incidents and perform specific functions as a Support Responder.

### VFF EMS Responder

A VFF meeting the training requirements to respond to designated incidents and perform specific functions as an EMS and Support Responder.

### VFF Full Responder

A VFF meeting the training requirements to respond to all incidents as a fully trained firefighter.

### VFF Breathing Support Operator

An EMS or full responder certified to drive and operate a Breathing Support.

### VFF Water Tender Operator

An EMS or full responder certified to drive and operate a Water Tender.

VFF Operator

A responder certified to drive and operate specified fire apparatus (utility, squad, rescue, breathing support, water tender, etc.).

VFF Engineer

A full responder certified to drive and operate fire apparatus (engines).