



SONOMA VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT

Community Firewire Newsletter

First Quarter 2026

Chief's Corner



As we begin 2026, we are proud to share the latest edition of our district newsletter and reflect on the dedication, resilience, and service that define our department. The strong connection we share with our community continues to be the foundation of everything we do.

Your trust, support, and engagement motivate our personnel to consistently uphold the highest standards of service, safety, and care. Over the past year, our crews have responded to a diverse range of emergencies locally while also supporting communities across California through the state's mutual aid system. From wildfire response to all-hazards incidents, our firefighters have worked alongside partner agencies, gaining valuable experience that strengthens our operational readiness here at home. At the same time, our members remain committed to ongoing training, fire prevention, and community outreach. As we move into the new year, we remain grateful for your continued support and proud to serve this community. Sincerely,
Steve Akre- Fire Chief

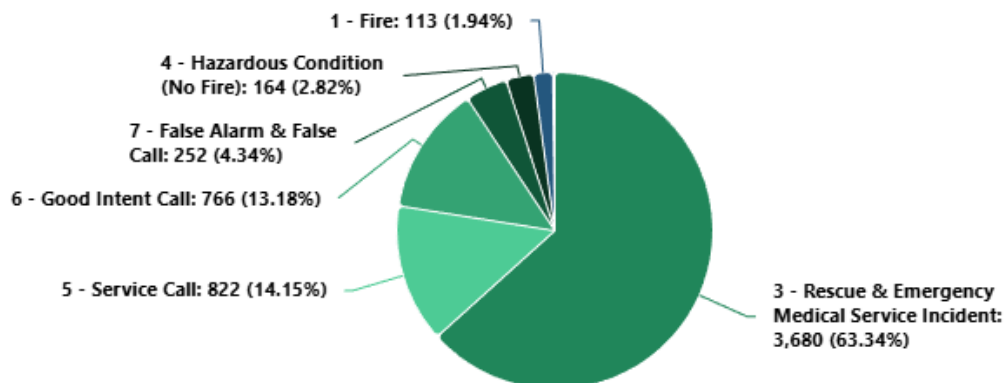
Sonoma Valley Fire News

Fire District's 2025 Year End Totals

The District ran a total of **5,843 calls** for the 2025 year.

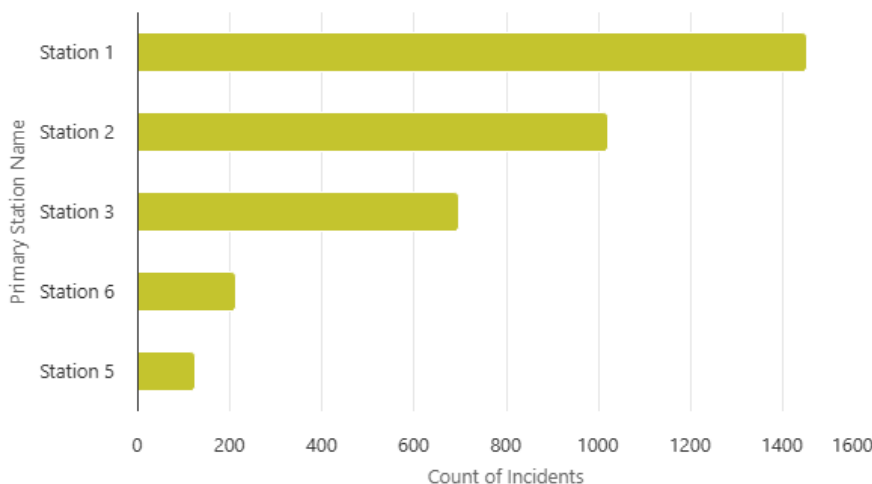
Incident Type Categories

Jan 01, 2025 to Dec 31, 2025



Incidents by Primary Station Name

Jan 01, 2025 to Dec 31, 2025



2025 October - December Call Volume

Our top priority is the safety and well-being of our community.

Medical- 962

Fire- 11

Public Assist- 456

False Alarms- 82

Total Calls- 1,511

(+ 1% over 3Q)

Training

Total Training Hours

- October 2025- December 2025- 2,420

Training Highlights

- Ladder Truck –Volunteer Academy
- Fire behavior doll house
- Air bag/heavy objects
- Volunteer academy
- Structural Fire training



In The News

New Region 3 Volunteer Firefighter Academy

In November, the Sonoma Valley Fire District and Schell Vista Fire District launched a joint local volunteer firefighter academy. Through this collaborative effort, Sonoma Valley Fire District welcomed nine new volunteers, while Schell Vista Fire added two. Hosting the academy locally allows participants to complete their basic firefighter training closer to home, rather than traveling to Santa Rosa Junior College.

Over the course of three months, recruits train twice weekly, developing the foundational skills and knowledge required of a firefighter. Final testing will take place in February, and upon successful completion, these recruits will be sworn in as volunteer firefighters, strengthening our ability to protect and serve the community. Keep up the great work as you continue this important journey.



New Hires

We would like to welcome aboard two new full-time members to our agency. Both were part time firefighters with us before. Mike Harris and Phillip Morrison were both hired full time after successful completion of the testing process. Welcome aboard.



In The News

Employee Spotlight!

We would like to congratulate Human Resources Officer Maci Bettencourt on being recently elected 2nd Vice President to the Executive Board of the Administrative Fire Services Section of CalChiefs Northern Division. This section is dedicated to supporting and empowering administrative professionals while strengthening fire service operations throughout California.

Maci is a respected and effective leader in human resources here in Sonoma County, and in this new role she will extend her support to fire agencies across Northern California. She consistently demonstrates a strong work ethic and willingly takes on additional responsibilities within the Sonoma Valley Fire District, most recently stepping in to fill the role of Finance Officer during a maternity leave. Maci exemplifies the professionalism, dedication, and leadership that define excellence in fire service administration.



Maci Bettencourt
2nd Vice President

Sonoma Valley Firefighters Take First Place!

Your Sonoma Valley Firefighters competed against eight other local fire departments at the Itchy Franceschi Memorial Softball Tournament in Forestville this past fall and took home the first place trophy. Great job!



Meet Your Crew

Agua Caliente Station 3- 'B' Shift

Captain Dustin Garcia is a Sonoma Valley native who grew up across from the El Verano fire station and graduated from Sonoma Valley High School in 2002. He began volunteering in 2003, earned his paramedic license in 2009, and was hired full time with Sonoma Valley Fire in 2013. He promoted to Engineer in 2017 and Captain in 2020, bringing over 20 years of combined service. He lives in the valley with his wife and two daughters and enjoys outdoor activities, 49ers games, and restoring vintage muscle cars.

Carlos Ortiz began his fire service career as a volunteer in 2017, was hired full time in 2020 as a Firefighter, and earned his paramedic accreditation in 2022. Born and raised in Sonoma Valley, he now resides in Sacramento County.

Les is currently an Engineer Paramedic who began volunteering with the City of Sonoma Fire in 2002 and was hired full time in May 2007. He spent most of his life in the Bay Area and now resides in Sparks, Nevada with his wife and four children.

Ismael Gonzalez began his fire service career as a volunteer with Schell Vista in 2009 and continued volunteering with Sonoma Valley in 2014. He was hired full time in 2020 and became a paramedic in 2022. He now lives in Lodi with his wife and two children.

Sofia Iniguez is a firefighter/paramedic who began her career as a volunteer in 2022 and was hired full time in 2024. Born and raised in Sonoma, she enjoys rock climbing, working out, camping, motorcycles, and tattoos.



Left to Right: Carlos, Dustin, Ismael, Sofia



Les

Fire Prevention

Vegetation Management Division – Project Update

The Sonoma Valley Fire District Vegetation Management Division is launching two vegetation management projects this fall aimed at improving wildfire resilience and public safety. With increased Measure H funding, the District has expanded its ability to plan and implement strategic fuels reduction projects throughout Sonoma Valley, enhancing evacuation routes, firefighter access, and long-term wildfire preparedness.

The Grove Street Shaded Fuel Break project includes approximately five miles of roadside fuel reduction along public and private roadways, improving emergency access and evacuation while establishing a critical east-to-west fuel break across Sonoma Mountain. This work is being completed by the Northern Sonoma County Fire District Fuel Crew with support from Sonoma Valley Fire District fuels personnel and County of Sonoma wood chipper crews.

The Cavedale Fire Readiness and Forest Restoration Project, located along Cavedale Road, is the first phase of a larger effort to improve defensible space along the corridor. This phase involves hazardous vegetation removal across approximately nine acres, preparing the area for potential future prescribed fire and reducing risk along a narrow, heavily vegetated roadway.

Together, these projects demonstrate the District's commitment to proactive wildfire mitigation and strengthening community resilience through strategic planning and collaboration.



Firehouse Favorites: Recipes Straight from the Crew



Recipe



TITLE: Quesabirria Tacos

By: Firefighter Ismael Gonzalez

PREP TIME: 20 min.

COOK TIME: 5-8 hours

SERVINGS: 6-8

INGREDIENTS:

3-5 lbs. chuck roast
1 package corn tortillas
1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tbsp garlic powder
1 tbsp onion powder
1 tbsp Mexican oregano
½ tsp cumin
½ tsp chili powder
Pinch nutmeg
4 ounces chipotle sauce
1-1½ cups beef broth to cover

DIRECTIONS:

Season chuck roast with S & P both sides. Sear both sides with oil. Transfer it to crockpot. Add in seasonings. Add in chipotle sauce and beef broth. Cook on low for 8 hours or 5-6 hrs. on low.. Once done, shred the meat. Dip corn tortillas in the juice from crockpot. Place them in a hot skillet. Top with some cheese and some of the meat. Fry until nice and crispy. Top with anything you like.

History: Sonoma Valley Fire District Station 4

Located at 18798 Prospect Drive in Diamond A, this station houses a Type 1 engine and a wildland type 6 patrol engine. This station is currently located on the Diamond A rec centers land and is leased from them. We have a small force of volunteer firefighters that staff these apparatus during emergencies. The full-time staffed engine responds to this area out of our Station 2 property in El Verano.



Upcoming Events

April 4: Easter Egg Hunt– Dunbar School

May 10: Mother's Day Breakfast- Glen Ellen

June 21: Father's Day Breakfast- Kenwood

Thank you!

As we welcome the New Year, we extend our sincere gratitude to our community for your continued trust, support, and partnership. Your encouragement and engagement throughout the year strengthen our mission and inspire our commitment to serving with professionalism and care. It is an honor to serve such a dedicated and connected community, and we look forward to the year ahead as we continue working together to keep Sonoma Valley safe. Wishing you and your loved ones a healthy, safe, and prosperous New Year.



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