



# Fire Engine Rotating Brown-Out Plan

The brown-out plan is designed to achieve \$11.5 million in budgetary savings within the Fire-Rescue Department as part of a City-wide budget reduction goal of \$179 million for Fiscal Year 2011. Savings achieved in the current Fiscal Year (FY2010) will reduce the amount of savings required in FY2011.

## Definitions

**Fire Engine** - An apparatus that carries hose, 500 gallons of water and a pump

**Fire Truck** – An apparatus that carries ladders and equipment, but has no fire extinguishing capability

Both carry a paramedic and three emergency medical technicians and are equally capable of providing patient care at medical emergencies.

## Background

San Diego has 47 fire stations. 34 of them have only a fire engine. Eleven have an engine and a truck, one has two engines and a truck, and one has an engine and a heavy rescue unit which has specialized rescue tools, but has no extinguishing capability.

## Brown-Out Plan

Under the rolling brown-out plan, the 13 stations with more than one apparatus will no longer always have multiple crews. Three will have one crew, as do the other 34 single-unit stations, and ten will house either two crews or one crew, alternating each month. When a station goes from two crews to one, this is known as a *brown-out*.

From one to eight *fire engines* will be subject to brown-out each day. The firefighters displaced from these browned-out fire engines will work in place of other firefighters who are on vacation, sick leave, are injured, or in training or filling other department needs. This pool of available replacements will eliminate the need to bring firefighters in on overtime and will save approximately \$11.5 million.

*Under this plan no fire station will be closed*

These fire stations are included in the brown-out plan

**Station 1** – Downtown

**Station 4** – Downtown

**Station 10** - College Area

**Station 11**- Golden Hill

**Station 12** – Lincoln Park

**Station 14** – North Park

**Station 20** – Midway

**Station 21** – Pacific Beach

**Station 28** – Kearny Mesa

**Station 29** – San Ysidro

**Station 35** – University City

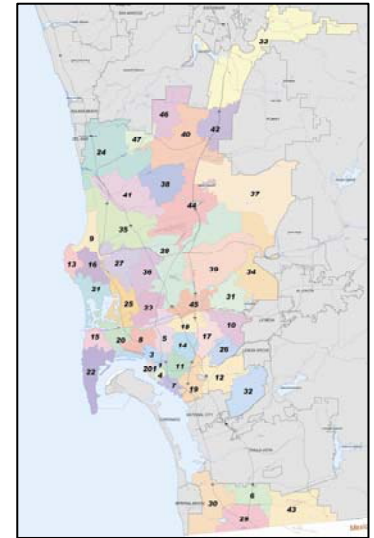
**Station 40** - Rancho

Penasquitos

**Station 44** – Mira Mesa

To prioritize which of the 13 engines would be browned-out each day the Department looked at five factors:

1) the average number of emergency calls at each station over a three year period; 2) the response time differential for a 2<sup>nd</sup> unit; 3) availability of surrounding stations; 4) how to avoid browning-out concurrent adjacent districts, and 5) special activities conducted at the fire stations.



## Impact

The brown-out of eight engines represents a *13% reduction* in the City's daily firefighting force. This is likely to result in increased response times in areas impacted by the brown-outs. Increased response times can result in poorer patient outcomes and increased fire spread and damage. Since some communities will not have a unit capable of extinguishing a fire, increased fire spread will occur while awaiting arrival of a fire engine from a more distant fire station.

The units at browned-out stations will be busier with emergency responses as will those fire stations in surrounding districts. This has a ripple effect across all fire stations as adjustments are made to ensure coverage. Increased emergency response activity means less time for training, fire inspections, maintenance and pre-fire planning of target hazards.

Fire trucks are larger and heavier than engines, and absorbing the workload of the browned-out engines will increase wear and tear on the trucks, leading to increased out-of-service maintenance and repair time.

## Evaluation

The plan is reviewed daily and adjusted to ensure efficiency. The Fire Chief can suspend the plan or re-staff any engines if emergency conditions warrant. The Department will provide quarterly reports on response time and impacts to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee of City Council.

For more information, contact the Fire-Rescue Department Public Information Office at 619-533-3780