



## **Templeton Community Service District**

*Templeton Fire and Emergency Services*

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who is the Templeton Fire and Emergency Services?**

For more than 120 years, Templeton Fire and Emergency Services, a service of Templeton Community Service District (TCSD), has been a proud and important part of our community. Serving Templeton's nearly 8,000 residents, Twin Cities Community Hospital, local doctors' offices and commercial and industrial businesses, the HWY 101 corridor, and surrounding areas.

Our primary response Fire and Emergency Services engines are designed to handle all-risk types of incidents. All-risk means that the department responds to any non-law enforcement 911 calls. This includes lifesaving medical, rescue, structure fires (all types), hazardous conditions, public assists and other types of calls for service. The department also responds to a variety of public safety issues including flooding and other major emergencies, such as earthquakes.

### **Why should I pay attention to our local fire service?**

Recent devastating fires across the state, especially those in southern California and northern California (Paradise) are a stark reminder that our Templeton community is AT RISK when a fire, emergency medical, natural disaster, or other emergency strikes. California's 2017 wildfire season killed 41 civilians and 2 firefighters. The 2018 wildfire season is the most destructive wildfire season on record, resulting in at least 85 deaths, including 7 firefighters.

### **What are Templeton Fire and Emergency Services challenges?**

Current staffing levels at Templeton Fire and Emergency Services are not adequate to properly protect you, your family and your property. Due to limited property tax funding from the County, that Templeton station is only staffed from 8 AM to 5 PM daily. Nights are currently covered voluntarily by firefighters when available. This leads to longer response times and occasionally our emergency service crew is unable to respond to after-hour 911 calls.

**Additionally, Templeton Fire and Emergency Services experienced a 75% increase in service calls since 2010.** Sixty percent (60%) of all calls for service are for emergency medical incidents. This includes responding to victims of heart attacks, stroke, traumatic injury, car accidents, youth sport injuries and other medical emergencies.

### **Why does it matter if there is a delay in 911 response times?**

The American Heart Association states that brain deterioration starts between four and six minutes after a person stops breathing. The average 911 response time for Templeton Fire and Emergency Services is 6 minutes. Even a one-minute delay in response time increases mortality rates. Due to the lack of adequate property tax funding, there are times when Templeton emergency responders (firefighters) are not available to respond to your 911 calls for help.

## **Why Keep Templeton Fire and Emergency Services?**

For more than 120 years, Templeton Fire and Emergency Services has been a proud and important part of our community. If TCSD is forced to close your Fire Department and Templeton's ONLY fire station, it is uncertain as to whether or not operations would be provided by Cal Fire. What is certain is that our community would lose local control of this vital life-saving service.

### **Loss of a North County Resource:**

If Templeton Fire and Emergency Services was forced to dissolve, the loss would be felt by Templeton Residents and the entire North County. No one agency can safely mitigate large incidents such as freeway accidents, structure or wildland fires alone. Templeton receives assistance from Atascadero, Paso Robles and Cal Fire for large emergency incidents. Templeton provides assistance to our neighboring communities as well. The loss of Templeton Fire and Emergency Services would eliminate a valuable resource to an already understaffed North County.

**Cal Fire is a valuable partner, but already stretched thin.** If our fire service is handed over to Cal Fire, Templeton would most likely be served by County Fire Engine 30, located in Paso Robles. Engine 30's primary response area is over 60 square miles and one of the busiest Engines in SLO County. It is possible that simultaneous incidents could occur which would create longer 911 response times for a fire or medical emergency in Templeton.

### **What is the Templeton Fire and Emergency Services doing to address these critical needs?**

In order to protect lives and property, improve response times and provide fire and emergency response coverage 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, Templeton Fire and Emergency Services has been aggressively working towards a solution that would provide a sustainable and reliable fire and emergency service delivery model.

### **Identified Solutions Include:**

**1:** In 2017, the TCSD Board of Directors voted to create a Community Facility District (CFD) for new residential and commercial development to ensure that new development pays their fair share of the increase in demand for emergency services. This anticipated future funding, unfortunately, will not address the Fire Department's current funding shortfalls.

**2:** The District asked the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors for a remedy in the form of an increased share of our property tax allocation. Templeton Fire Department's only source of funding comes from property taxes. Our current property tax allocation from the County was established in 1976 and is about 8.4%. So, of all the property taxes paid by TCSD property owners, only 8.4 cents of every dollar you pay to the county comes back to the District. After numerous meetings with the TCSD Officials over the past several years, the Board of Supervisors denied our specific request to increase our property tax share.

**3:** A remaining sustainable and reliable option available to the District is to seek community support for a local parcel tax. This allows your local Fire Department to provide lifesaving fire and medical emergency services on a 24 hour, 7 days per week basis.

**How will the funds from the proposed measure be used to?**

- **Provide** essential local fire protection and emergency medical services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- **Reduce** fire and 911 emergency response times
- **Recruit and retain** qualified firefighters

**Does that mean the District is going to go out for a Parcel Tax?**

NO decisions have been made. Additional funding is required to staff our fire station 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TCSD is conducting a thorough financial study to determine how much additional funding is needed to keep our only fire station open, but it is clear that our needs are great and a local parcel tax is a viable solution to meet our critical needs.

**How can we be assured that the funds will be spent properly?**

Strict Taxpayer Protections are required. By law, all funds will stay local. Every penny generated by the measure under consideration would go directly to Templeton Fire and Emergency Services. The State cannot take this funding away. Independent Citizens' Oversight and mandatory audits ensure funds are spent properly.

**If a measure is placed on the ballot, how much will it cost me?**

NO decisions have been made. TCSD is conducting a thorough financial study to determine how much additional funding is needed. Once we know the amount of funding required to staff our fire station open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, we will update our community.

**Will businesses share in the cost of such a measure?**

Yes, both commercial and residential property owners will be subject to assessment.

**Doesn't the State or County provide funding for this?**

No. With a growing demand for emergency services, a shoestring operating budget, and no funding available from the State or County, it's becoming problematic to meet Templeton's increasing demand of emergency incident calls. It is critical that your fire department achieves a condition of readiness, so we are prepared to respond when you need us the most.

**Who makes the final decision on a local parcel tax measure?**

The locally elected Templeton Community Service District Board of Directors is the legal entity that must take action to call for an election. Taking such an action would put the question to local voters to decide. Ultimately, Templeton Community Service District REGISTERED VOTERS have the final say when they vote for or against the measure.

**Where to go for additional information?**

For more information go to our website at: [www.templetoncsd.org](http://www.templetoncsd.org), email Chief Bill White at [chief@templetoncsd.org](mailto:chief@templetoncsd.org) or call us at (805) 434-4911.