



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**MAYOR LEE ANNOUNCES NEW FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL SERVICES ACADEMY CLASS**

*Increased Fire Department Hiring, Adjusted Work Schedules & New Ambulances to Provide Better, Responsive  
Emergency Medical Services for Residents*

**San Francisco, CA**— Mayor Edwin M. Lee today announced that a new 40 person San Francisco Fire Department H-3 EMT/Paramedic training academy will begin in March with graduates expected to be working by May. Another 14 person training academy will be included in the Mayor's 2015-16 budget for a total of 54 new hires. It is anticipated that with the new staff and implementation of other solutions recommended by the Ambulance Working Group, ambulance transport times across the City will be further reduced.

"The City has made significant progress over the past several months to increase the safety of our residents and reduce ambulance transport times. This includes hiring additional Fire Department staff, creating an as-needed per diem workforce to handle surges, replacing more than 40 percent of the ambulance fleet, and working to reduce 9-1-1 system demand," said Mayor Lee. "Moving forward, the City has a detailed hiring plan, a timeline to invest in a new Ambulance Division facility and we will continue to use data-driven solutions to deploy staff and keep our residents safe."

The mayor identified this issue in his budget last year and included new EMTs for the City and developed the Ambulance Working Group to propose other solutions. Members have been working diligently to identify and implement solutions to reduce ambulance transport response times across the City since then. By the end of May 2015, ambulance division staff will have increased by more than 20 percent since June 2014.

"Since the ambulance crisis peaked last summer, I have been working collaboratively with Mayor Lee and the EMS working group," said Board of Supervisors President London Breed. "Together, we have launched a series of measures to address the crisis and prevent one from developing again. Response times are coming down and new ambulances and staff are on the street. I am proud of the progress we are making to keep San Franciscans safe."

"The collaborative efforts of the Ambulance Working Group are invaluable in identifying system-wide solutions to address current call volume increases and population growth that have been straining the 9-1-1 system as a whole," said Chief Joanne Hayes-White. "A number of solutions, in addition to the enhanced staffing within the Fire Department's Ambulance Division, are being vetted. Comprehensive data analysis will continue to be a necessary and helpful tool in planning for the future sustainability of San Francisco's Emergency Response System."

The San Francisco Fire Department will hire 40 H-3 personnel, who will begin their training academy in March 2015, based on a recommendation from an ambulance demand analysis and a staffing projection recently

completed by the Controller's Office. The first set of candidates for the 2015 academy was selected in December. The remainder of the class will be selected from a diverse pool of more than 1,000 diverse candidates who qualified for the Fire Department's new H-3 list, established last month.

The Fire Department has acquired 18 new ambulances since August with one additional unit scheduled to arrive within the next two weeks for a total of 19. These new ambulances will increase the number of units available to the Fire Department, spend less time out of service for maintenance and repairs, and are expected to last significantly longer than previous generations of ambulances.

To reduce 9-1-1 system usage, a nurse has been stationed at the 1001 Polk Street shelter, with a second nurse to be stationed at the 525 5<sup>th</sup> Street shelter by the end of February. The Fire Department continues to work closely with Department of Public Health to develop a detailed proposal and approach for implementing a HOME Team type model, with particular focus on maximizing the program's impact on unnecessary 9-1-1 system usage.

The Fire Department is working with the Department of Public Works and the Capital Planning Program to include a new \$40 million Ambulance Division facility, commonly referred to as Station 49, in the City's Capital Plan. The combination of a better-designed facility in conjunction with specialized warehouse staff and a computerized inventory tracking and management system will significantly reduce ambulance down time. It is anticipated the new facility will open by 2019.

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