

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



KRISTIN M. CROWLEY
FIRE CHIEF

September 15, 2023

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 23-099

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Kristin M. Crowley, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: ADVANCED PROVIDER AND FAST RESPONSE VEHICLE PROGRAM
DEPLOYMENT UPDATE

FINAL ACTION: Approved Approved w/Corrections Withdrawn
 Denied Received & Filed Other

SUMMARY

Since 2015, the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) has deployed both Fast Response Vehicles (FRVs) and Advanced Provider Response Units (APRUs). Both the APRU and FRV programs have proven highly successful and versatile. In support of the LAFD Strategic Plan, these programs support goal number one, strategy one, “Ensure optimal emergency resource deployment to meet the evolving needs of the City,” and goal number one, strategy two, “Elevate the delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to ensure all patients receive the highest quality of care possible.” The LAFD has recently modified the deployment and staffing of the APRU and FRV programs to better support these goals.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and file this report.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

DISCUSSION

Advanced Provider Response Unit (APRU)

The LAFD APRU provides a multifunctional emergency medical response unit with a broader scope of practice that is well suited to supplement the LAFD’s traditional EMS units in response to the City’s demand for additional EMS response capabilities. APRUs are staffed by a Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant with a Firefighter/ Paramedic (FF/PM). The APRUs can provide advanced medical assessments and treatments, clear patients for transport to a Sober Center or Psychiatric Urgent Care Center (PUCC), provide treatment-in-place resolutions for low-acuity medical problems, and make referrals to allied agencies for patients with elevated social risk factors such

as homelessness. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has approved LAFD Advanced Providers (APs) to receive authorization to write psychiatric holds, allowing transport to a broader number of PUCs. LAFD APs will receive their initial training to write psychiatric holds in the near future.

The APRU provides workload relief to rescue ambulances and fire companies, improves resource availability, improves response times, provides advanced medical care, and more appropriately responds to calls for psychiatric emergencies, serial inebriate patients, low acuity medical complaints, and can navigate referrals to allied homelessness relief agencies. Additionally, the APRU's ability to treat many non-life-threatening medical complaints in place can offload patients from impacted hospital emergency rooms.

APRU Deployment

UNIT	STAFFING	LOCATION	HOURS
AP 7	1 AP/1 FF/PM	Fire Station 7	Mon.-Thurs. 0600-1600
AP 58	1 AP/1 FF/PM	Fire Station 58	Mon.-Thurs. 0600-1600
AP 65	1 AP/1 FF/PM	Fire Station 65	Mon.-Sun. 0800-2000
AP 82	1 AP/1 FF/PM	Fire Station 82	Mon.-Thurs. 0600-1600
AP 4	1 AP/1 FF/PM	Fire Station 4	*Proposed, pending staffing

APRU Statistics Year-to-Date

ADVANCED PROVIDER RESPONSE UNITS	AP 7	AP 58	AP 65
Shifts Staffed	115	118	130
Incidents Dispatched	691	737	1018
AP Treated & Not Transported - Total PTs	189	209	346
AP Treated & sent via Taxi - Total PTs	22	23	34
Lucas device applied	4	6	18

Delays at the Personnel Department and the pay scale for APs being on the lower end of a competitive market rate have hampered efforts to fill AP vacancies. Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants are highly coveted in the healthcare field, creating a competitive market to recruit and retain these versatile practitioners. The continuing vacancies leave several highly productive APRUs unavailable on a regular basis. The Department is actively pursuing the Emergency Appointment of three APs.

Fast Response Vehicle Program (FRV)

An FRV is a lightweight vehicle, typically outfitted with a small capacity water pump and tank, staffed by two FFs, at least one of which is a PM. The FRV provides a patrol apparatus that can manage small outside fires (e.g., grass, rubbish, and tent) and respond to nearby EMS calls. Through multiple pilots, the LAFD has found FRVs effective in decreasing response times and offloading call volume from heavy fire suppression apparatus, improving resource availability. The primary mission of all FRVs is to decrease response times, increase resource availability, and perform rapid on-scene triage to cancel or upgrade/downgrade responding resources. Additionally, the FRVs actively patrol districts and can be staffed with personnel who have additional training for specialized missions (e.g., respond to tactical law enforcement incidents).

Three FRVs are variably staffed (v-staffed) by offering 24-hour overtime shifts and deployed as Advanced Life Support (ALS) Assessment resources. The staffing of these apparatus consists of one FF and one FF/PM. Four FRVs are staffed by FF/PMs assigned to the Tactical Emergency Medical Support (TEMS) Unit. These FRVs are staffed and equipped as ALS Mobile Intensive Care Units with additional specialized capabilities. The FF/PMs assigned to these FRVs have trained in TEMS, mental health crisis response, and alternate destination assessments (e.g., Sobering Center and PUCC). These units either patrol and respond to calls in routinely designated districts or are moved to high-volume areas based on real-time analysis of incident activity and resource availability.

Fast Response Vehicle Deployment

UNIT	TYPE	STAFFING	LOCATION	HOURS
FRV 9	Brush Patrol type with Fire Pump	1 FF/1 FF/PM (v-staffed)	Fire Station 9	24 hours x 7 days
FRV 64	Brush Patrol type with Fire Pump	1 FF/1 FF/PM (v-staffed)	Fire Station 64	24 hours x 7 days
FRV 82	Brush Patrol type with Fire Pump	2 FF/PM (TEMS) or 1 FF/1 FF/PM (v-staffed)	Fire Station 82	Mon-Thurs. 0600-1600 Fri./Sat. 24hrs
FRV 91	Brush Patrol type with Fire Pump	2 FF/PM (TEMS)	Fire Station 7	Mon.-Thurs. 0600-1600
FRV 200	SUV without Fire Pump	2 FF/PM (TEMS)	Downtown	Mon.-Thurs. 0600-1600
FRV 201	SUV without Fire Pump	2 FF/PM (EMS Bureau)	Ready Reserve	Intermittent as needed
FRV 401	SUV without Fire Pump	2 FF/PM (EMS Bureau)	Downtown	Mon-Thurs. 0600-1600

10-Hour FRV Statistics Year to Date *

UNIT	SHIFTS STAFFED	TOTAL INCIDENTS	AVG. INCIDENTS PER SHIFT
FRV 91	115	978	8.5
FRV 82	88	760	8.6
FRV 200	24	252	10.5
FRV 201	90	939	10.4
FRV 401	73	778	10.6
FRV 9	83	976	11.7
FRV 64	22	227	10.4

*FRV 64 converted to 24-hour v-staffing on March 20, 2023. FRV 9 converted to 24-hour v-staffing on May 22, 2023. FRV 200 went into service on June 6, 2023.

24-Hour V-Staffed FRV Statistics Year to Date*

UNIT	TOTAL SHIFTS	TOTAL INCIDENTS	AVERAGE INCIDENTS
FRV 9	63	920	14.7
FRV 64	71	1578	22.2

*FRV 9 is deployed from Fire Station 4 and services Fire Station 9 (skid row) between the hours of 0630-1700. After 1700, FRV 9 is housed and deployed in Fire Station 4 (Arts district). FRV 82 v-staffing on Fridays and Saturdays deployed to Fire Station 27 (Hollywood) will start on September 15, 2023 after the drafting of this report.

The apparatus fleet serving as FRVs is 15-20 years old and goes out of service frequently due to a mechanical issue. Efforts to expand the fleet have required using reserve Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV) without fire pumps due to manufacturing delays to deliver new apparatus.

CONCLUSION

FRVs and APRUs have continued to demonstrate value in augmenting traditional response units (i.e., ambulances and fire companies) to improve service. FRVs allow for specialized mission support, patrol for and attack outside fires, improve response times, and alleviate call volume for heavy apparatus, thus improving resource availability. APRUs represent an evolution in the delivery of EMS to augment traditional response units and better respond to the increased call volume for life-threatening medical emergencies and non-life-threatening medical complaints. APRUs advanced medical assessment and treatment skills offer numerous alternative resolutions for

patients experiencing non-life-threatening medical conditions. This ability to treat in place or provide alternate referrals rather than transporting to an emergency room improves the availability of both ambulances and fire companies, improves response times, offloads patient volume at impacted emergency rooms – thus improving patient offload times, and provides a better level of service to patients.

The Department looks forward to reporting back in further detail on requests to expand the deployment of FRVs and APRUs in support of our goal of ensuring optimal emergency resource deployment to meet the evolving needs of the City.

Board Report prepared by Tyler J. Dixon, Assistant Chief, Emergency Medical Services Bureau.