

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



RONNIE R. VILLANUEVA
INTERIM FIRE CHIEF

October 20, 2025

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 25-061

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: *PTF* Ronnie R. Villanueva, Interim Fire Chief

SUBJECT: LAFD SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE DIVISION OVERVIEW

FINAL ACTION:	☐ Approved ☐ Denied	☐ Approved w/Corrections ☐ Received & Filed	☐ Withdrawn ☐ Other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

SUMMARY

The Supply & Maintenance (S&M) Division, commonly referred to as “the Shops”, is the logistical support section of the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD). While public perception often equates the Shops exclusively with fire apparatus repair, the Division encompasses far more: fleet engineering, logistics, procurement, supply distribution, personal protective equipment (PPE) outfitting, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) certification, tool repair, fabrication, and field repair operations.

The Division is responsible for managing over 2,200 vehicles and thousands of pieces of equipment. This operation is supported by four main repair facilities, two satellite shops, mobile field mechanics, and Emergency Air (EA1). The Division faces ongoing challenges due to persistent staffing shortages, increasing demand, and an aging fleet and facilities.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Supply and Maintenance Division responsibilities, contributions, and challenges to ensure the Commission and stakeholders have a transparent understanding of its scope and value.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

1. Receive the file this report.
2. Support future requests for staffing, facility upgrades, and resource allocation to sustain the Division’s critical role in firefighter safety and public protection.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

DISCUSSION

The S&M Division operates under an Assistant Chief with approximately 140 civilian staff and sworn members. Its mission is to provide safe, reliable apparatus, equipment, and supplies in a timely manner that directly enable the Department to meet its public safety mission.

The Division maintains and supports the Department's fleet of fire engines, ladder trucks, command vehicles, ambulances, brush patrols, Fast Response Vehicles (FRVs), fireboats, airport crash tenders, rescue tools, heavy equipment, gurneys, compressors, and much more. Beyond apparatus, the Division oversees supply procurement and distribution, apparatus and equipment design, personal protective equipment (PPE) outfitting, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) testing, and tool repair. All the logistical functions essential to the daily readiness of all firefighters, apparatus and equipment to ensure public safety.

Units and Key Functions

1. Maintenance Section - Equipment Superintendent

- Triple Shop
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Equipment Repair Supervisor
 - Sr. Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic
 - 7 Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics
 - Garage Attendant
 - Core Functions
 - Major repairs and annual preventive maintenance for 300+ fire engines and heavy apparatus.
- Aerial Shop
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Equipment Repair Supervisor
 - Sr. Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic
 - 5 Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics*
 - 2 Tire Repairers*
 - Mechanical Helper*
 - Core Functions
 - Maintains 57 aerial trucks, including NFPA ladder inspections and drivetrain work.
 - Single dedicated tire repairer for the entire fleet of 2200 vehicles, managing tire inventory, disposal, and emergency repairs.
- Valley Shop
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Equipment Repair Supervisor
 - Sr. Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic
 - 4 Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics
 - 6 Equipment Mechanics

- Mechanical Helper
 - Storekeeper II
 - Core Functions
 - Maintain heavy equipment, bulldozers, graders, FEMA/USAR fleet, and special command units.
- Light Vehicle Shop
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Automotive Supervisor
 - Sr. Equipment Mechanic
 - 15 Equipment Mechanics
 - 3 Mechanical Helpers
 - 2 Garage Attendants
 - Core Functions
 - Maintain ambulances, light-duty apparatus, Code 3 systems, hybrids; includes City Hall East P2 and FHMTTC satellite locations.
- Body Shop
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Auto Body Repair Supervisor II
 - 5 Auto Body Builder Repairers
 - 2 Auto Painters*
 - Sheet Metal Worker
 - Welder
 - Core Functions
 - Restores collision-damaged apparatus, provides decals, paints apparatus, fabricates obsolete/custom parts.
- Allied Shops
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Equipment Repair Supervisor*
 - Sr. Carpenter
 - Carpenter
 - Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic
 - 2 Mechanical Repairers
 - Machinist
 - 3 Mechanical Helpers
 - Core Functions
 - Repairs over 1,000 tools and equipment, 250 gurneys, 900 ladders, rescue tools, compressors, nozzles, and hose.
- Field Repair Shop
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Equipment Repair Supervisor
 - 6 Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics
 - Warehouse and Tool Room Worker I
 - Core Functions

- On-call and after hours repairs for all apparatus including fireboats and ARFF rigs. They also perform thousands of same-day repairs annually (3,163 triples; 1,412 ambulances; 951 aerials).

2. Supply Section - Battalion Chief

- Rescue Maintenance
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Captain I
 - 3 Platoon Duty Apparatus Operators (1 per shift)
 - 3 Platoon Duty Firefighters (1 per shift)
 - 2 Special Duty Firefighters (1 currently on long-term leave)
 - Core Functions
 - SCBA Program: Maintenance, certification, and fit testing for every sworn member.
 - Quality Assurance: Ensures respiratory protection standards are met to safeguard members at structure fires, hazardous materials responses, and other IDLH environments.
 - Emergency Air (EA1): Staffed by 24-hour personnel, EA1 responds to emergency incidents providing logistical support with rehabilitation supplies and critical air bottle replenishment.
 - Department-wide Support: Facilitates the safe, reliable functioning of life-sustaining equipment used daily by members.
- Receiving & Distribution
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Fire Captain I
 - Senior Storekeeper
 - 2 Storekeepers*
 - Warehouse & Toolroom Worker II
 - Warehouse & Toolroom Worker I*
 - Administrative Clerk
 - Delivery Driver II
 - Truck Operator*
 - Maintenance Laborer*
 - Core Functions
 - Supply Chain Operations: Receives all goods for every Department facility and coordinates distribution across 106 fire stations and administrative sites.
 - Medical Supplies: Forecasts, orders, and coordinates delivery of medical consumables for field use, including life-saving medications and disposable supplies.
 - Turnout World: Outfits all members with NFPA-compliant PPE, ensuring safety and uniformity.
 - Vendor Coordination: Works directly with suppliers to place orders, manage contracts, and handle returns or issues.

- Logistical Distribution: Acts as the LAFD's warehouse nerve center, ensuring a continuous flow of equipment, uniforms, and medical resources across the city.
- Purchasing & Supplies
 - Leadership & Staffing
 - Senior Administrative Clerk
 - 3 Administrative Clerks*
 - Core Functions
 - Procurement: Processes purchase orders (POs) and ensures compliance with City of Los Angeles procurement policies.
 - Financial Management System (FMS) Coordination: Aligns all Department orders with the City's financial tracking systems.
 - Support for Stations & Bureaus: Converts Station Resource System (SRS) orders into actionable purchases, ensuring field units receive required equipment and supplies.
 - Administrative Backbone: Provides transparent documentation of purchases, serving as the audit-ready bridge between field operations and City finance.
- Equipment Engineering
 - Leadership & Staffing:
 - Fire Captain II
 - Fire Engineer
 - Equipment Specialist II
 - Equipment Specialist I
 - Administrative Clerk
 - Core Functions:
 - Apparatus Specifications: Develops detailed build specs for all new apparatus, tools, and specialized equipment.
 - Fleet Projection: Plans and oversees long-term apparatus replacement strategy (MICLA-funded), aligning with NFPA fleet life cycle standards.
 - Vendor Oversight: Participates in build trips and inspections to ensure apparatus are constructed to Department specifications.
 - Certification & Testing: Conducts annual pump tests and aerial ladder certifications for the entire fleet, ensuring compliance and readiness.
 - Innovation: Designs and prototypes specialized equipment tailored to the complexities within the City of Los Angeles.

The Supply and Maintenance Division suffered significant staff reductions due to the Early Retirement Incentive Program in 2009 and the Separation Incentive Program in 2020. These programs aimed to reduce the City's financial obligations by offering early retirement and eliminating the associated positions. The eliminated roles included heavy duty mechanics, mechanical helpers, welders, and auto body repairers.

The cumulative loss of these positions severely widened the gap between available and required mechanical repair hours. Concurrently, the fleet size expanded to meet increasing call volumes, placing a greater strain on a diminished labor force. As a result, the division became more reliant on reserve apparatus, which limited surge capacity. For Fiscal Year 2025-2026, Supply and Maintenance has secured the restoration of 16 positions and the addition of a General Automotive Supervisor. These positions are funded for nine months starting October 2025. The restored and newly added roles include a diverse range of skilled trades and support staff, including:

- **General Automotive Supervisor (1 position):** Handles the general administration of the Maintenance Division and the Equipment Repair Supervisors.
- **Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics (4 positions):** These skilled professionals are vital for the maintenance and repair of the department's extensive fleet of heavy machinery, ensuring operational readiness and minimizing downtime.
- **Mechanical Helpers (5 positions):** These individuals will provide essential support to the mechanics, assisting with various tasks, learning on the job, and contributing to overall workshop efficiency.
- **Tire Repairer (1 position):** A dedicated tire repairer is crucial for maintaining the safety and functionality of all departmental vehicles, from light-duty trucks to specialized heavy equipment.
- **Storekeepers (2 positions):** Storekeepers play a critical role in managing inventory, ensuring that necessary parts and supplies are readily available for maintenance and repair operations, thereby preventing delays.
- **Maintenance Laborer (1 position):** This role will provide general support for various maintenance tasks, contributing to the upkeep and cleanliness of facilities and equipment.
- **Truck Operator (1 position):** A dedicated truck operator is essential for the efficient transportation of equipment, parts, and materials, supporting the logistical needs of the department.

This substantial increase in staffing is in addition to the four resolution authority positions that were successfully funded in the preceding Fiscal Year 2024-2025, demonstrating a continued commitment to strengthening S&M's human resources. The hiring process for these critical roles is a comprehensive and multi-stage endeavor, typically requiring 4-6 months to complete, contingent upon the availability of pre-qualified candidate lists from the City of Los Angeles Personnel Department. However, several key categories currently lack an established list of eligible candidates, which presents a challenge to expeditious hiring. These categories include:

- **Equipment Repair Supervisor**
- **Storekeeper**
- **Mechanical Helpers**
- **Maintenance Laborer**

To address this, S&M has formally requested that the City Personnel Department promptly initiate the testing process for these specific job classifications. Once these essential tests are administered and successfully completed, and a robust list of eligible candidates is established, the department can then proceed with the subsequent phases of the hiring pipeline. These phases include in-depth interviewing of candidates, thorough background checks to ensure suitability, and ultimately, the selection of the most qualified individuals.

Following candidate selection, each new employee will embark on a probationary period of six months. This crucial period serves as an intensive training and evaluation phase, during which the individual's performance, skills, and adherence to departmental standards are meticulously assessed. Only upon successful completion of this probationary period will the employee be considered for permanent employment within the S&M department.

Considering all these intricate stages—from the initiation of testing for new candidate lists to the conclusion of the probationary period—the entire onboarding process for a new employee can extend beyond a year. This extended timeline underscores the department's commitment to securing highly qualified and thoroughly vetted personnel, ensuring the long-term effectiveness and efficiency of Supply and Maintenance operations.

Despite these recent additions, S&M's staffing levels have only returned to 1995 figures. This is problematic because the current vehicle fleet consists of over 2,200 vehicles, a significant increase from the approximately 1,500 vehicles in 1995. Furthermore, a 2012 Board of Fire Commission Report (12-178) previously highlighted that the Department's fleet had outgrown its labor capacity. Modern vehicles exacerbate this issue due to their increased complexity, demanding more specialized knowledge and repair hours from mechanics.

Although the Supply and Maintenance Division has gained additional capacity through the restoration of positions for FY 25/26, the overall labor capacity still remains insufficient for our existing fleet levels. Furthermore, FY 25/26 will introduce over 50 additional vehicles to the fleet exacerbating the disparity between labor capacity and need. These additional vehicles were added to keep up with the steady increase in call volume the Department experiences. However, each additional vehicle requires mechanical labor hours for maintenance and funding for parts. Consequently, directing resources towards these new vehicles reduces mechanical hours used for heavy apparatus maintenance.

Consequently, the Out of Service (OOS) rate for reserve apparatus consistently exceeds 95%. This high OOS rate indicates that greater than 95% of our reserve vehicles are out of service at any given time which prevents the Department from having readily available reserve apparatus to replace damaged or broken units. Efforts have been made to mitigate this by hiring mechanics and support staff overtime during

holidays and weekends to reduce the OOS rate and ensure reserve apparatus availability.

Furthermore, the restored positions fully utilize all available mechanical workstations within the current facility's footprint. Adding additional capacity would require an expansion of the facility footprint along with support functions such as warehousing, equipment engineering, bodyshop, welding, and fabrication. Adding a second shift under the existing footprint would expand our overall capacity however it comes with its own inefficiencies and issues. These include: contracted work restrictions, time lost moving apparatus around, inability to work on long term repairs, lack of support services and parts, and lack of tool storage for additional mechanics.

Currently, the most cost-effective means of increasing mechanical capacity without increasing the footprint is through the use of overtime during RDO's and weekends. This effectively increases the workforce by 15 to 20% without incurring the cost and time of facility expansion. Assigning overtime also allows S&M to direct efforts towards specific areas of deficiency based upon our OOS metrics. However, the use of overtime is only a stop gap measure to bridge the gap between capacity and fleet needs. Ultimately, S&M will need to right-size labor capacity to the Department's needs.

CONCLUSION

The Supply and Maintenance Division is foundational to the mission of the LAFD. Its scope extends well beyond apparatus repair. It encompasses procurement, logistics, engineering, PPE, and safety systems that keep every firefighter equipped and every station operational and mission ready.

By strengthening staffing pipelines, modernizing facilities, and reframing the narrative to fully showcase these contributions, the Department can ensure the Shops receive the resources and support required to sustain operational excellence.