



PALO ALTO PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS



Protecting Public Safety: Why Engine 64 Must Be Fully Staffed

[Palo Alto Firefighters Urge the City to Restore Engine 64 the Right Way](#)

What's Happening?

The City of Palo Alto plans to bring back Engine 64 but in a failed cross-staffing model—meaning the same firefighters would be assigned to both the fire engine and the ambulance.

This would leave either the fire engine or ambulance unavailable whenever a call comes in. This model has already failed in the past and puts residents at risk.

Why Should You Care?

Slower Emergency Response Times – The Palo Alto Fire Department (PAFD) already fails to meet its response time goal of 8 minutes for 90% of calls. The department currently averages 9 minutes and 41 seconds, far worse than the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard of 4 minutes for the first engine to arrive.

Fire Station 4 is Overloaded – Medic 64, the ambulance at Station 4, is twice as busy as it should be. If firefighters are on the ambulance, Engine 64 sits empty and can't respond to fires.

Increased Wildfire Risk – Palo Alto and Stanford are ranked as the top two wildfire risk areas in Santa Clara County. If Engine 64 is cross-staffed and unavailable, fires in this high-risk area will go unchecked longer.

Palo Alto Firefighters Respond to More Calls Than Any Other City in Santa Clara County

- Palo Alto: 107 calls per 1,000 residents
 - Mountain View: 64 calls per 1,000 residents
 - Santa Clara: 69 calls per 1,000 residents
- Yet Mountain View and Santa Clara have more fire suppression units than Palo Alto.



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Measure K Funds Were Supposed to Fix This – In 2022, voters approved Measure K, a business tax expected to generate \$7 million annually, with one-third dedicated to restoring public safety services. Yet, the city has not used this funding to properly staff Engine 64.

What Do Palo Alto Firefighters Recommend?

Fully Staff Engine 64 as a Stand-Alone Unit – This is the only way to improve response times, reduce strain on overworked firefighters, and protect public safety.

Use Measure K Funds for Public Safety – The city must follow through on its promise and fund proper staffing instead of implementing another failed cross-staffing model.

Temporary Staffing with Overtime Until New Hires Are Ready – Nine new firefighters and a training officer will be entering the workforce in a matter of weeks. We prefer full-time staffing, but until permanent positions are filled, it's safer to staff Engine 64 with overtime rather than cross-staffing.

How Can You Help?

Speak up at City Council Meetings – Demand that the city properly restore Engine 64 with dedicated staffing.

Email City Council Members – Tell them that public safety should be a top priority.
City.Council@CityOfPaloAlto.org CityMgr@cityofpaloalto.org

Follow & Share – Help spread the word by sharing this information with your neighbors and on social media. Email: pafd1319eboard@gmail.com to be added to a mailing list and informed on upcoming council and budget meetings.

The Bottom Line:

The city is ignoring the lessons of the past and risking lives by proposing an ineffective cross-staffing model. Palo Alto firefighters are ready to serve and protect our community—if the city gives us the resources to do it.

Please email your representatives to express your concerns over this situation. This is your city and you deserve to be served by a fully functional fire department.