



City of Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department
401 E. Chapman Avenue – Placentia, California 92870

August 18, 2022

Honorable Erick Larsh, Presiding Judge
Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**SUBJECT: Response to Grand Jury Report Entitled, “Where’s the Fire?”
Stop Sending Fire Trucks to Medical Calls**

Dear Honorable Judge Larsh:

Please accept this letter as the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department’s response to the Grand Jury’s report entitled, “Where’s the Fire” *Stop Sending Fire Trucks to Medical Calls*. Here are Fire Chief Dobine’s responses:

FINDINGS:

F1: Despite fire departments throughout Orange County having evolved into emergency medical departments, most have not updated their emergency response protocols accordingly, but have simply absorbed emergency medical responses into their existing fire response models.

CHIEF’S RESPONSE:

- a) Agreed
- b) In preparation for the launch of the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department, we have deployed its current service model due to conducting extensive research of other fire agencies.

F3: ALS staff ambulances or smaller squad vehicles are often the most appropriate response to medical calls and do not compromise the quality of medical care.

CHIEF’S RESPONSE:

- a) Agreed
- b) This is how we currently deploy our personnel to medical calls which has proven to be effective.

F4: There has been a breakdown of communication and trust between OCEMS and Orange County Fire Chiefs.

CHIEF'S RESPONSE:

- a) I do not agree or disagree
- b) Many of these issues stem from occurrences that predate my employment, given that I have only been the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Fire Chief for ten months.

F5: Over-deployment of firefighters for medical calls contributes to the current climate of forced hiring and firefighter fatigue.

CHIEF'S RESPONSE:

- a) Disagree
- b) I do not agree as we do not have an over-deployment of our firefighters which may contribute to firefighter fatigue.

F9: OCEMS has the authority to and responsibility to inspect all for-profit ambulances operating in Orange County; however, publicly owned ambulances are not automatically subject to OCEMS oversight.

CHIEF'S RESPONSE:

- a) Agreed
- b) I agree that OCEMS has authority based on LEMSA to inspect our contract services ambulances and our City's ambulances are inspected annually.

F10: Placentia's changes to the emergency medical response protocols after leaving OCFA have resulted in improved medical response times.

CHIEF'S RESPONSE:

- a) Agreed

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1: As recommended in the 2012 and 2014 OCFA Standards of Coverage and Deployment Plans, as well as other studies, the Grand Jury recommends that, by 2024, all Orange County fire agencies utilize criteria-based dispatch protocols and send a single unit response to those incidents triaged as non-life-threatening (BLS).

CHIEF'S RESPONSE:

Upon inception, the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department's deployment model has already been in alignment with this recommendation.

R4: While OCEMS should recognize how certain policy changes may pose operational challenges to emergency responders in the field, fire leadership should recognize and respect the independent oversight authority and expertise of OCEMS.

CHIEF'S RESPONSE:

Agreed.

R5: Departments with publicly owned ambulances should allow OCEMS to inspect their ambulances for compliance with State EMS guidelines and adopt OCEMS recommendations.

CHIEF'S RESPONSE:

I do not agree or disagree as the City's service model utilizes privately-owned ambulances which are inspected regularly with OCEMS.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (714) 993-8105.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Dobine". The signature is written over a circular stamp or seal that is partially obscured by the ink.

Jason Dobine
Fire Chief

cc: Placentia City Council
City Administrator