



SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN FIRE DISTRICT

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District?

The Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District — commonly known as Metro Fire — serves a population of over 720,000 in a 359 square mile service area. Metro Fire is one of the largest fire agencies in the State of California, operating 41 stations in 23 distinct communities throughout unincorporated Sacramento County, Citrus Heights, Rancho Cordova, and a portion of Placer County.

What challenges face Metro Fire?

In the last 10 years, emergency calls have increased by 30% for medical emergencies and 40% for fire emergencies. Anytime a fire engine is used for a medical emergency, it isn't available to respond to a fire. Our stations were not built to fit the number of personnel and vehicles needed to meet today's call volume. These capacity issues affect our ability to respond to emergencies quickly.

How do aging facilities, vehicles, and equipment impact emergency response times?

More than half of our fire stations are over 50 years old, and many have never been updated to meet today's standards. They are now too small to house the amount of emergency vehicles and personnel needed to respond to an increasing number of emergency calls. These fire stations also have heightened risk of firefighter exposure to cancer-causing indoor air pollution. Additionally, 73% of our fire engines will reach the end of their useful lifespans in the next few years. Deteriorating facilities run the risk of violating work safety regulations without improvements and hinder our ability to attract and retain qualified firefighters.

Why does emergency response time make a difference?

According to the American Heart Association, brain deterioration starts four to six minutes after a person stops breathing. Similarly, every minute a fire doubles in size, exponentially increasing the risk of damage and destruction.

How is Metro Fire responding to these facilities, vehicle, and equipment needs?

The needs identified in a recent comprehensive capital needs assessment far exceed the current budget. To address these needs and meet the growing public safety demands of the communities we serve, the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District has placed a Fire & Emergency Response Bond Measure, Measure O, on the November 2024 ballot.





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How much would Measure O cost?

Measure O would cost \$19 per \$100,000 of assessed value — not current market value — or about \$78 per year for the typical property taxpayer, or about \$6.50 per month. For seniors who have owned their homes for a long time, and have lower assessed values, the cost could be lower.

What is the difference between market value and assessed value?

The cost of Measure O is based on the assessed value of properties within the Metro Fire's boundaries. The assessed value of a property is based on the original purchase price and may not increase by more than 2% a year, while the market value tends to grow at a much faster rate based on market conditions. Thus, the assessed value is usually much lower than the market value, especially if a property was purchased long ago at a much lower price than it could be purchased for today. It is this lower assessed value upon which the cost of Measure O is based.

How would Measure O funds be allocated to address facilities, vehicle, and equipment needs?

If approved, Measure O could be used to address identified needs, including:



Providing additional emergency response equipment, fire engines, ambulances, and other vehicles so first responders can arrive on the scene quickly



Replacing outdated and deteriorating lifesaving equipment



Improving aging fire stations to meet current work safety conditions



Ensuring continued reduction for our firefighters' exposure to cancer-causing air pollution



Equipping stations to more rapidly respond to medical and fire emergencies simultaneously to keep up with growing call volume



Constructing new stations in high-population areas to reduce response times

How would addressing facilities, vehicle, and equipment needs affect emergency response times?

By addressing identified facilities, vehicle, and equipment needs, Metro Fire would be able to continue providing fire protection and lifesaving services to the community, including:



Maintaining 911 fire response and emergency medical response times



Sustaining local fire protection



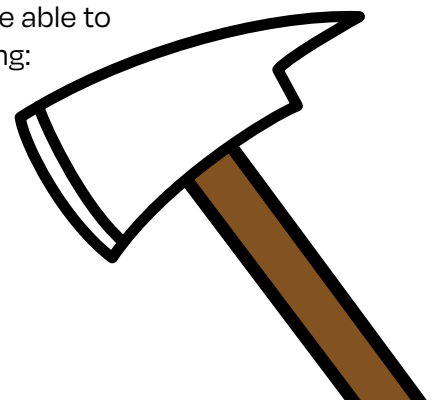
Protecting natural disaster response and wildfire prevention



Supporting rural fire protection and emergency medical response services



Attracting and retaining qualified professional firefighters and paramedics





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What projects will be funded by Measure O?

Measure O will be used to fund capital improvements identified in the Metro Fire's [Capital Improvement Plan](#) in response to the [Standards of Cover Study](#). Improvements will occur throughout the entire District boundaries. Such projects include:

- ✓ Replacement of outdated and deteriorating lifesaving equipment such as self-contained breathing apparatus, cardiac monitors, and defibrillators
- ✓ New fire engines, ladder trucks, and ambulances
- ✓ New fire stations in Vineyard, North Highlands, and Rancho Cordova areas of the District
- ✓ Expansion and/or relocation of existing fire stations in North Highlands, Rancho Cordova, Mather, Citrus Heights, Florin, and Carmichael, or other District stations that are found to be inadequate to serve the District's service population
- ✓ First responder training facility

What other funding sources does Metro Fire plan to use besides Measure O to fund its capital needs?

Metro Fire intends to continue to make ongoing annual general fund contributions to fund capital improvements. Additionally, Metro Fire charges development impact fees used to mitigate the impacts caused by new homes and businesses. It also charges EMS fees to recover the cost of providing emergency medical services. Further, Metro Fire has and will continue to pursue State and Federal grants whenever they are eligible to fund capital improvements. General fund contributions, development impact fees, and EMS fees have been incorporated into the capital funding plan to reduce the Measure O funding need.

Why does Metro Fire need Measure O now?

Measure O is needed to address aging infrastructure, outdated equipment, and to ensure we can continue to provide effective and reliable emergency services to our community.

What will happen if Measure O does not pass?

If Measure O does not pass, Metro Fire will face challenges in maintaining and improving its facilities, vehicles, and equipment, potentially impacting the quality and reliability of emergency services.



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How long will it take to complete the projects funded by Measure O?

The timeline for completing the projects will depend on the scope and complexity of each project. Detailed project plans will be developed to ensure timely completion.

What is the size of Metro Fire's operating budget?

The General Fund share that pays for the operations of the District is approximately \$304 million.

Why can't new facilities, vehicle, and equipment needs be funded with the current General Fund budget?

Metro Fire has made, and will continue to make, ongoing budget contributions to fund capital equipment and building improvements. But it is not enough. After accounting for future General Fund contributions, development impact fees, and EMS fees, the unfunded capital needs over the next 10 years have reached an estimated cost of \$415 million with inflation.

Metro Fire's General Fund budget for 2024-25 is approximately \$304 million. In order to fund the capital needs, Metro Fire would have to find an additional \$41.5 million of funding per year, equal to 14% of the General Fund. After funding firefighter salaries and benefits as well as fueling and maintaining fire engines, and keeping the lights on at fire stations, this is simply not possible.

How can you be sure the money will be spent responsibly?

Bond measures require mandatory fiscal accountability and local control. All funding from Measure O would be subject to mandatory local control and accountability measures, including:

- ✓ A detailed project list outlining the exact use of funds
- ✓ Public disclosure of all spending
- ✓ Independent annual financial and performance audits
- ✓ An independent Citizens' Oversight Committee to review the use of funds
- ✓ By law, all funds would stay local to Metro Fire's community and could not be taken away by the State



How can I make my voice heard?

Community input will be a critical component of our planning process, so we welcome your feedback and questions. For more information or to provide feedback, please visit our website at www.metrofire.ca.gov or contact us at MeasureO@metrofire.ca.gov.