

Summer/Fall 2013

FIRE LINE

News from your



Emergency Service Provider

Proudly serving the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk,
Danville, Diablo, San Ramon, Southern Morgan
Territory and the Tassajara Valley





Paige Meyer Appointed Fire Chief

Paige Meyer has been appointed to the position of Fire Chief for the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District. Chief Meyer previously served as the Fire Chief for the City of Vallejo and will join San Ramon Valley Fire on March 18. Chief Meyer fills the Fire Chief position which became vacant when Chief Richard Price retired in December 2012.

“The Fire Board reviewed and interviewed numerous outstanding candidates to fill the role of Fire Chief,” said Board President Stamey. “Our goal was to select a Fire Chief with an unyielding understanding of Fire and Emergency Services along with the communication and leadership skills necessary to lead this organization.”

Prior to joining the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, Chief Meyer spent 15 years with the Vallejo Fire Department. He has over 20 years of fire service experience, beginning as a volunteer Firefighter and later as a Public Safety Officer in Sunnyvale. In 1998 he was hired in Vallejo and has held the positions of Firefighter, Captain, Battalion Chief and Fire Chief. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Administration from California State University at Chico and an Associate of Science Degree in Fire Science from Butte College.

“Chief Meyer possesses a unique combination of skills,” said Director Stamey. “He has proven he can lead during economically challenging times and has demonstrated his ability to focus an organization around a core mission in order to best serve the community. We selected an exceptional leader for an exceptional organization.”



Save Rates Among the Best in the Nation

The San Ramon Valley may be one of the safest places to experience a cardiac emergency in the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sudden cardiac arrest, heart attack, stroke and other heart diseases are the leading cause of death in the United States. Recent data has shown that patients who experience sudden cardiac arrest are far more likely to survive if that episode occurs in the San Ramon Valley.

Nationally, if you experience a sudden cardiac arrest outside a hospital setting, your chances of surviving hovers around 8.5 percent. Here in the San Ramon Valley your chance of survival is two times higher at 17.9 percent. Valley residents have an even greater occurrence of survival if someone witnesses their cardiac emergency and their heart is able to be shocked by an AED (Automated External Defibrillator), in this scenario the likelihood of survival increases to 46.9 percent versus 26.3 percent nationwide.

“We are very proud of our cardiac arrest survival statistics,” said Fire Chief Paige Meyer. “We attribute our success to many factors including our 911 Communication Center who utilizes Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD), our rigorous paramedic training program, state of the art equipment on all our fire engines and ambulances, and our community outreach program that teaches hands-only CPR to over 2000 residents each year.”

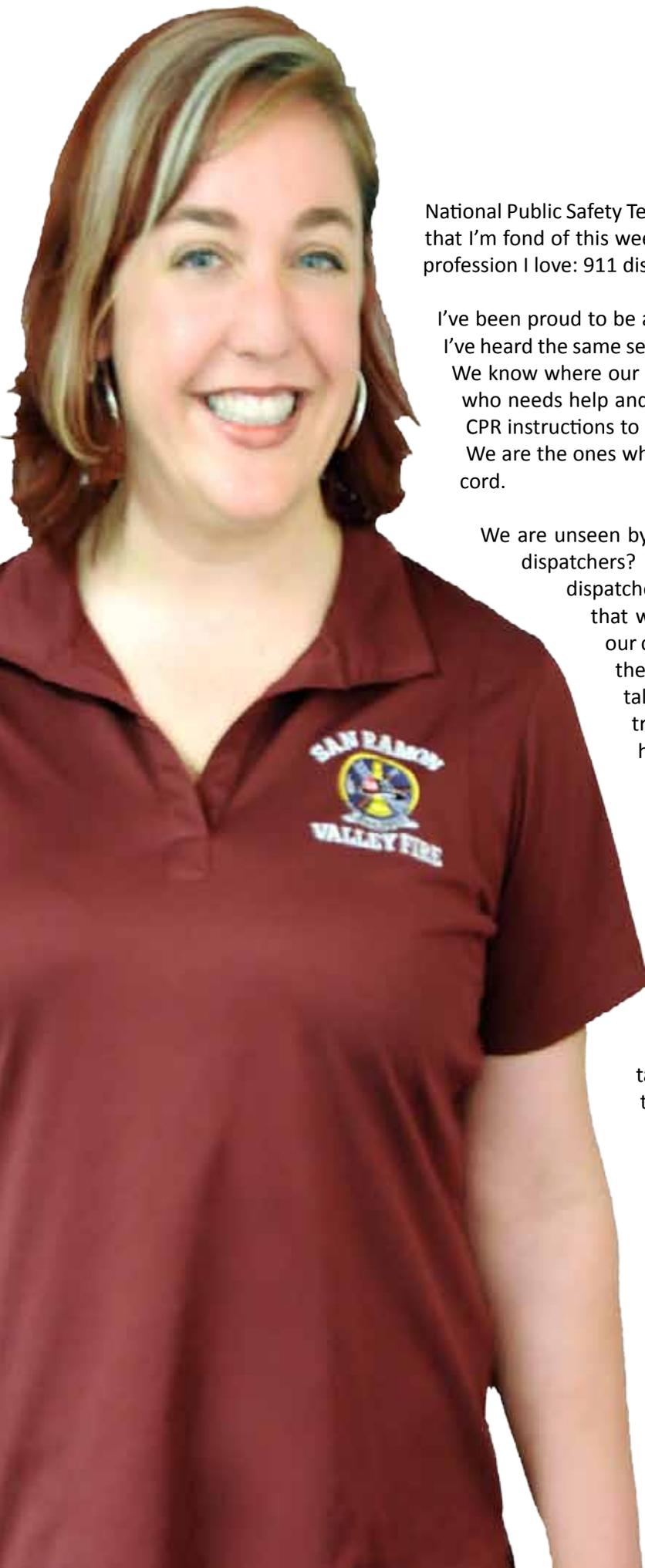
San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District who provides advanced emergency medical services to the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, Diablo, San Ramon and the Tassajara Valley is passionate about cardiac care.

“As a sudden cardiac arrest survivor and advocate for bystander CPR and AED use, I know the importance of rapid quality care,” said Joe Farrell, Danville resident. “I am proud to live in a community that takes such pride in their level of patient care and I rest easy at night knowing I’m safer simply because I live here.”

San Ramon Valley Firefighter/Paramedics are also equipped with the newest state of the art tool that could make cardiac care even stronger throughout the District.

Over the past couple months, Firefighter/Paramedics have been training and using the new LIFEPACK 15 cardiac monitors. These cardiac monitors are an essential tool when responding to advanced life support (ALS) calls. Similar to what you would see in an emergency room, cardiac monitors perform 12-lead EKG readings that help Firefighter/Paramedics determine the most appropriate treatment. The cardiac monitors function as defibrillators, blood pressure monitors, and oxygen saturation monitors. While the Fire District has been using similar monitors for the past eight years, the new LIFEPACK 15 now has the capability to wirelessly transmit the patient’s current medical condition directly to the emergency room. This information will allow hospitals time to prepare the most appropriate medical team and treatment for the patient upon arrival.

The purchase of the LIFEPACK 15 monitors were part of a grant awarded to Contra Costa County EMS as part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program (AFG).



Help is on the Way!

National Public Safety Telecommunications Week is in April every year. I have to admit that I'm fond of this week—all those fancy words aside, it's a week for honoring the profession I love: 911 dispatcher.

I've been proud to be a 911 dispatcher for the last fourteen years, and many times I've heard the same sentiment: Dispatchers are the unsung heroes of first response. We know where our firefighters are positioned at a burning house, and we know who needs help and how to get it to them. We are the ones who give lifesaving CPR instructions to a frantic daughter who just found her mother not breathing. We are the ones who coach a new father how to tie off his new baby's umbilical cord.

We are unseen by the public. Sure, we're often unsung. But the thing about dispatchers? We don't mind being unsung. The reason we chose to be dispatchers instead of firefighters, police officers, or paramedics, is that we have a very particular, very rare skill. We're able to keep our calm when the world is losing theirs. When things go wrong in the worst way and every caller is screaming, we put our biggest talent to work: We calm people. A good dispatcher uses every trick she's ever learned to get a hysterical person to listen to her. My proudest moments in this job are when I turn someone who wants help into someone who is actively providing help. When I hear someone panicking on the other end of the phone, I can feel my heart rate actually decreasing. I take a deep breath and really think about each second: What will help this person? Sometimes I need to speak quickly, to reassure them that we know exactly where they are and what they need. For the very next caller, I can tell that that approach won't work, and I need to speak slowly and softly to get them to believe help is coming.

When the firefighters and paramedics get on scene, they take over, providing such excellent care that for the most part, the initial dispatcher is forgotten.

And here's the truth: we like that. It's enough that we are effective, that we help, that in times of crisis, we are the very first point of contact. Everything is built upon the foundation of calmness we work so hard to create.

We, as dispatchers, are proud of our job. We don't need medals or recognition (though we sure like the candy we get during our special week!). We just need to know that not only do we have a great job, but that our job can really make all the difference in the world.

San Ramon Valley Fire, A Hikers Bestfriend

Most visitors to Mount Diablo enjoy the stunning views and picturesque trails throughout this 19,000 acre State Park, but some will find themselves in need.

Recently, a young man fell over 50 feet into a void located in the Sentinel Rock area of the park; he was conscious and alert, but badly injured, and unable to walk or climb. His friends were able to call for help and crews from Station 33, Station 35 and the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team responded.

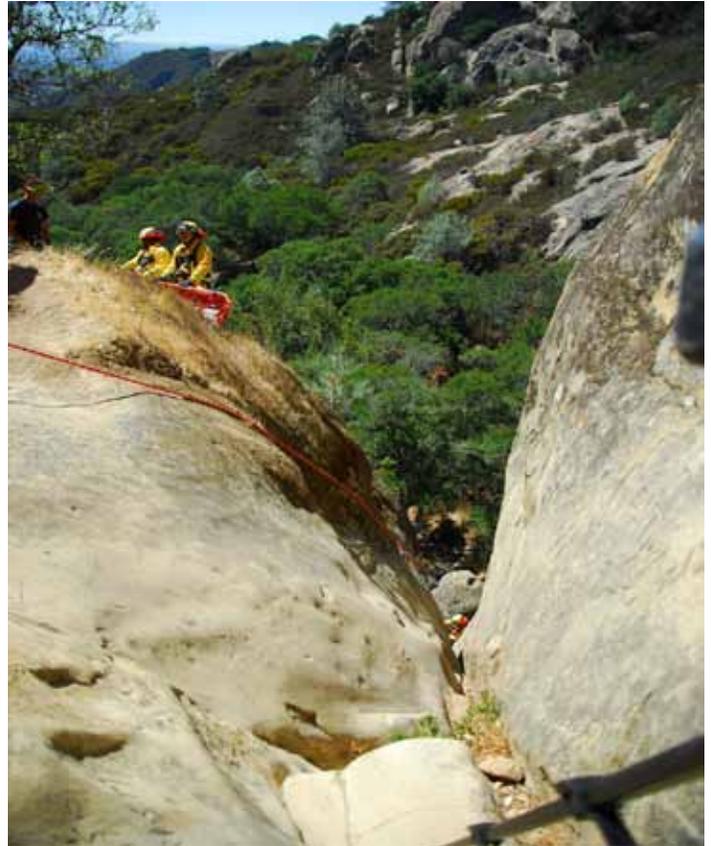
"San Ramon Valley Firefighters have many advanced skills," said Battalion Chief Derek Krause. "Members of the USAR team and all Firefighters from Stations 33 and 35 train each year for this exact scenario, in this exact location – and this rescue was seamless."

Each year firefighters travel to Mount Diablo State Park to practice and hone their skills. This regular training element is just one example of the many evolutions San Ramon Valley Firefighters drill to prepare for emergencies on the mountain.

Once firefighters reached a landing above the hiker, they quickly built a technical rescue system and rappelled down to where he had fallen and began immediate medical care. Next he was "packaged" and loaded into a rescue basket, brought down by two additional rescuers, and lowered to waiting firefighters who walked him out to safety. The patient was then transported via San Ramon Valley Fire Ambulance to the landing site where the air ambulance, CALSTAR, flew him to the local trauma center.

"The high level of services provided by San Ramon Valley Fire was one of the many reasons I was so drawn to this impressive organization," said Fire Chief Paige Meyer, who was appointed Fire Chief in March. "Firefighters in this valley are ready for anything, from a medical emergency to a hazardous materials spill to a house fire."

The landscape of the San Ramon Valley boasts vast open spaces, lush hillsides, State and Regional Parks, rural communities, urban city centers and commercial buildings. What makes the communities of Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, Diablo, San Ramon and the Tassajara Valley so unique also provides a myriad of hazards.



"San Ramon Valley Firefighters have to be true renaissance men and women," said Training Chief John Duggan. "The training regimen that all Firefighters undergo each year readies our crews for advanced life support medical emergencies, structure fires, wildland fires, various rope rescues, hazardous material events and multi-casualty incidents such as earthquakes."

San Ramon Valley Firefighters hope that everyone has a chance to enjoy our beautiful outdoor spaces, but want all residents and visitors to know that should you need us, we will be there, ready to help, anytime.



Successfully Preparing for a Wildfire is a Team Effort

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District is getting ready for wildfire season, and you should too! Our engines and trucks are carrying additional tools and gear to fight vegetation fires in the wildland hazard severity zone. Our firefighters are brushing up on their wildfire skills by attending specialized trainings and participating in situational drills, but we still need your help!

A community that is wildfire smart requires readiness on the part of the Fire District and property owners. Each year, wildfires consume hundreds of homes in California, however CAL FIRE estimates that as many as 80 percent of homes lost to wildfire could have been saved if their owners had followed a few simple fire-safe practices.

Start by creating a 100 feet of defensible space around your home. This area is the space firefighters need to get between your home and the oncoming fire. Make sure this space is well maintained or landscaped. Take action to cut native grasses to less than three inches and limb up trees at least five feet. Remove other combustibles around your home such as firewood or dry pine needles.

Make a date with your roof! Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home; ensure your roof and gutters are clear of pine needles, leaves and other debris. If you have a shake roof, consider replacing it with a non-combustible roof made to withstand heat and embers.

Confirm your house numbers are clearly visible and that your driveway or private road is maintained so emergency vehicles can access your home quickly.

Wildfires are a natural part of our beautiful landscape, so preparing our homes and families for wildfire is essential. Take a moment to walk around your home and assess it for fire safety. Also begin to create a Family Disaster Plan, which includes escape routes and emergency supply kits for your home and car.

Together we can make our community “wildfire smart”! For more information on what you can do, visit our website at www.firedepartment.org/abatement.

Wildfire Ready

Creating and maintaining defensible space around your home is critical. Please do not delay in preparing your family and home for wildfire. Fire Prevention staff will be educating residents and evaluating properties to make sure they are in compliance with Fire District Standards.

If wildfire occurs in your neighborhood:

- Don't wait to be told to evacuate. Authorities may not have enough time to order an evacuation. If you feel threatened, leave on your own initiative.
- Obey all evacuation orders.
- Drive calmly with your headlights on for visibility.
- Do not block the access roadway for fire engines and emergency personnel.

For more information and to view the District's Minimum Abatement Standards, visit our website at: www.firedepartment.org/abatement.

Alarms
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Get Prepared San Ramon Valley

Free Community Classes

Personal Emergency Preparedness (PEP)

We live in earthquake country! There is nothing we can do to stop an earthquake, but we can get prepared! Join with fellow community members at this free class geared to help you and your family prepare before an earthquake, survive during the quake and recover quickly after the disaster! Students will learn hazard mitigation, utility control, “duck, cover and hold” and tips for creating emergency kits. The May session will also include tips on how to prepare for a wildfire. Mark your calendar and plan to get prepared! To register for this class, visit www.firedepartment.org/community and click on the classes link or call (925) 838-6600.

Wednesday, May 16
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm



Community Fire Extinguisher Training

Portable Fire extinguishers can save lives and property by putting out and containing small fires. Residents of the San Ramon Valley are invited to participate in this free hands-on fire extinguisher training. Students will learn

the PASS system and have the opportunity to put out a real fire. Pre-registration is required and class size is limited. To register for this class, visit www.firedepartment.org/community and click on the classes link or call (925) 838-6600.

Saturday, July 14
10:00 am – 11:00 am

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact our area. CERT trains community members in basic disaster response skills. During this 20-hour course students will learn: Disaster Preparedness, Fire Safety, Disaster Medical Operations and Triage, Light Search and Rescue, Team Organization, Disaster Psychology, Terrorism and the Incident Command System.

Upon completion of the program, CERT members will participate in a night drill that will put all of their new skills to work. CERT classes are held in the evenings, once a week, for 6 weeks. Some weekend classes are also available. To find out more about the San Ramon Valley CERT Program and to sign up for the next CERT cycle, please visit our web site at www.firedepartment.org/CERT and click on upcoming classes.

CERT Class 46 @ San Ramon Valley Fire - 2 Saturdays

May 5 8am-5pm - Intro, Fire Sup, Terrorism, Medical
May 12 8am-5pm - Medical, ICS, SAR, Drill

CERT Class 47 @ San Ramon Valley Fire - Thursdays

May 3 Introduction to CERT/Emergency Prep
May 10 Terrorism and Suppression
May 17 Medical Class
May 24 Light Search and Rescue
May 31 Psychology and Incident Command System
June 7 Drill





Sidewalk CPR

Have you ever thought about the sidewalks in our community as life savers? Here in the San Ramon Valley they are the foundation of a new program known as “Sidewalk CPR”. If you have attended any of the numerous outdoor events here in the Valley over the past year, you may have had the opportunity to walk up and in just minutes, learn “Hands-Only” CPR and the proper use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator).

Hands-Only CPR is CPR without the mouth-to-mouth component. It is recommended for use by people who see an adult suddenly collapse at home, at work or in a public place. When an adult suddenly collapses and suffers cardiac arrest, their lungs and blood contain enough oxygen to keep vital organs healthy for the first few minutes until professional help arrives, thus the need for rescue breaths is not crucial as long as the person is receiving quality chest compressions with minimal interruption to pump blood to the heart and brain. Saving a life is as simple as 1, 2, 3....

- Step 1 · Ensure the person is not breathing normally
- Step 2 · Call 9-1-1
- Step 3 · Press hard & fast in the middle of the chest until help arrives.

The HeartSafe Committee using the Sidewalk CPR program has trained nearly 3,000 people in Hands-Only CPR and AED use. This unique program has been so successful that the HeartSafe Committee was invited to the California State Capital by Assemblymember Joan Buchanan’s Office and the American Heart Association to teach Hands-Only CPR at their annual “Go Red at the Capital” event on Thursday, February 2, 2012.

Who knew saving a life could be so easy? Look for your HeartSafe Committee and the “Sidewalk CPR” program at this year’s San Ramon Art & Wind Festival, the San Ramon Valley Emergency Preparedness Fair and the Danville Fall Crafts Fair.

FIRE LINE

The Fire Line is published by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District as a public service to the residents of our District.

Board of Directors

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Glenn Umont	Gordon Dakin
Jennifer G. Price	

Fire Chief

Paige Meyer

Fire Marshal

Christina Kiefer

Acting Assistant Chief, Operations

John Viera

District Clerk

Susan F. Brooks

Administrative Services Director Robert Leete

www.firedepartment.org

Phone Numbers

Administration (925) 838-6600
Business Office, CPR Class information, Fire Prevention, New Construction Permits, Inspections, Exterior Hazard Abatement

Dispatch

(Emergency - Direct)	(925) 838-6691
(Non-emergency)	(925) 838-6640

Emergencies

Dial 9-1-1

Emergency Numbers for Local Cell Phone Users

Use these numbers, NOT 9-1-1, when calling from a cell phone

FIRE

San Ramon Valley Fire	(925) 838-6691
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AMBULANCE

San Ramon Valley Fire	(925) 838-6691
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SHERIFF

Contra Costa Sheriff	(925) 646-2411
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POLICE

Danville	(925) 820-2144
San Ramon	(925) 228-8282

STATE HIGHWAY PATROL

9-1-1