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## **PRESS RELEASE**

CONTACT: Scott Barnett 619-857-1857. [scottbarnetttaxpayersadvocate@gmail.com](mailto:scottbarnetttaxpayersadvocate@gmail.com)

### **TAXPAYERS ADVOCATE CLIFF & INLAND WATER RESCUE STUDY SHOWS WASTE IN USE OF FIRE RESOURCES V. LIFEGUARDS**

*SD Fire Department Responding to Lifeguard Rescues Create s Gaps in Service*

**La Jolla:** Scott Barnett, President of San Diego Taxpayers Advocate released the results of a two year study which compared resources used when SD Fire Department personnel responded to daylight cliff and inland water rescues. The study was based on over 8000 electronic fire dispatch records from 2008 through 2018, and hundreds of paper lifeguard dispatch reports.

“Our study clearly demonstrates that when San Diego Firefighters usurp cliff and show up in force at inland water rescues that should be done by lifeguards, it wastes of public safety resources and creates gaps in San Diego Fire services,” said Barnett.

#### **Fire Sends an Avg. of 19+ personnel to Beach Cliff Rescues Handled by 7 Lifeguards.**

“Fire sends as much as Three times the number of personnel and Two to Three times the number of vehicles then Lifeguards do,” said Barnett. “In normal budgetary times this is wasteful. Given the budget crisis this is an inexcusable mis-direction of resources by SD Fire management.”

#### **Fire Sends an Avg. of 6+ Vehicles for Cliff Rescues; Lifeguards 4 vehicles**

Chris Vanos, Chief Stewart of the San Diego Lifesaving Association said, “this study shows that Lifeguards conduct daytime beach cliff and inland water rescues better, cheaper faster than fire department personnel. Firefighters should continue to assist us when needed and not replace a system that saves lives.”

#### **Fire Sends an Avg. of 14 personnel to Inland Water Rescues Handled by 6 Lifeguards &**

#### **Fire Sends an Avg. of 5 Vehicles for Inland Water Rescues; Lifeguards 2 Vehicles**

“The Mayor’s office is already proposing cuts in training for Lifeguard cliff and inland water rescues,” said Vanos. “Public safety should be placed before politics.”

### **Key Charts and Graphs**

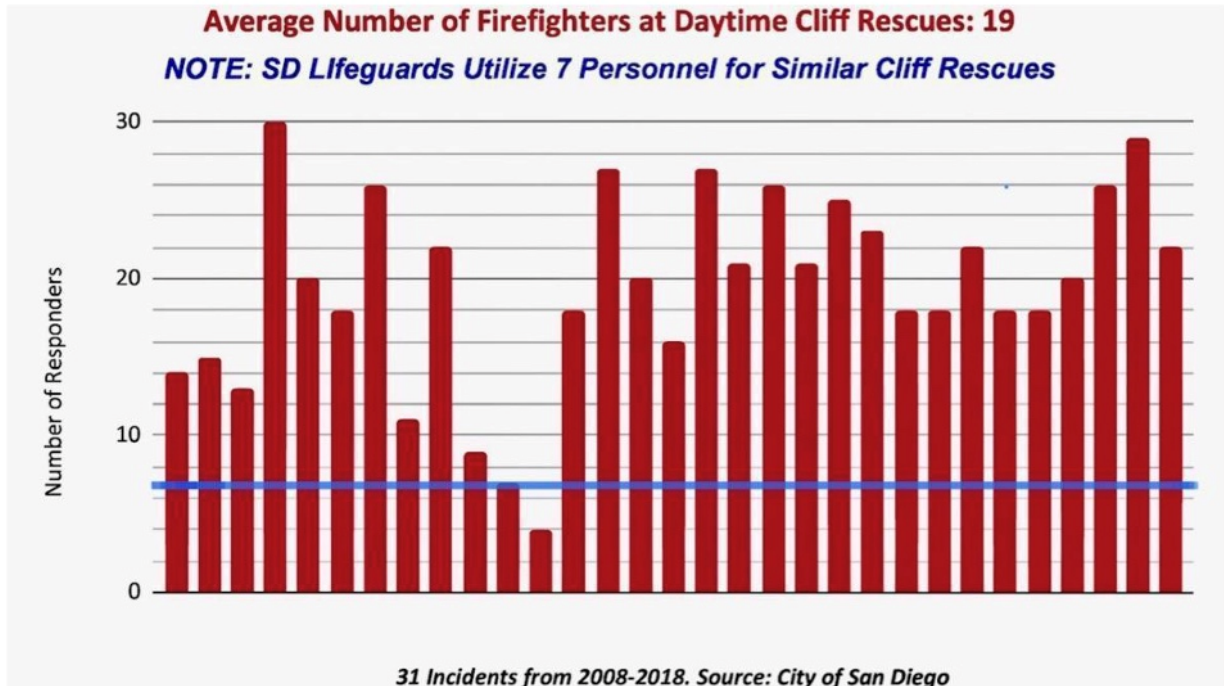
**Chart 1**  
**2008 - 2018 Daylight Cliff & Inland Water Rescues**

|   |             |                                |                               |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>31<br/>Daylight<br/>Cliff Rescues</b>    |             | <b>Avg. # of<br/>Personnel</b> | <b>Avg. # of<br/>Vehicles</b> |
| <b># SD Fire<br/>Personnel</b>              | <b>604</b>  | <b>19.5</b>                    |                               |
| <b># SD Fire<br/>Vehicles</b>               | <b>203</b>  |                                | <b>6.5</b>                    |
|   |             |                                |                               |
| <b># Lifeguard<br/>Personnel*</b>           | <b>217</b>  | <b>7</b>                       |                               |
| <b># Lifeguard<br/>Vehicles*</b>            | <b>124</b>  |                                | <b>4</b>                      |
|   |             |                                |                               |
| <b>123<br/>Inland<br/>Water<br/>Rescues</b> |             | <b>Avg. # of<br/>Personnel</b> | <b>Avg. # of<br/>Vehicles</b> |
| <b># SD Fire<br/>Personnel</b>              | <b>1775</b> | <b>14</b>                      |                               |
| <b># SD Fire<br/>Engines</b>                | <b>596</b>  |                                | <b>4.8</b>                    |
|   |             |                                |                               |
| <b># Lifeguard<br/>Personnel*</b>           | <b>738</b>  | <b>6</b>                       |                               |
| <b># Lifeguard<br/>Vehicles*</b>            | <b>246</b>  |                                | <b>2</b>                      |
|   |             |                                |                               |

Note: Chart shows ONLY SDFD daylight cliff rescues, removing: night-time cliff rescues the responsibility of SDFD; "non beach" area cliff rescues; "joint" SDFD, Lifeguard rescues. 31 SDFD daylight cliff rescues remained. SDLG numbers are based on Standard Operating Procedures.

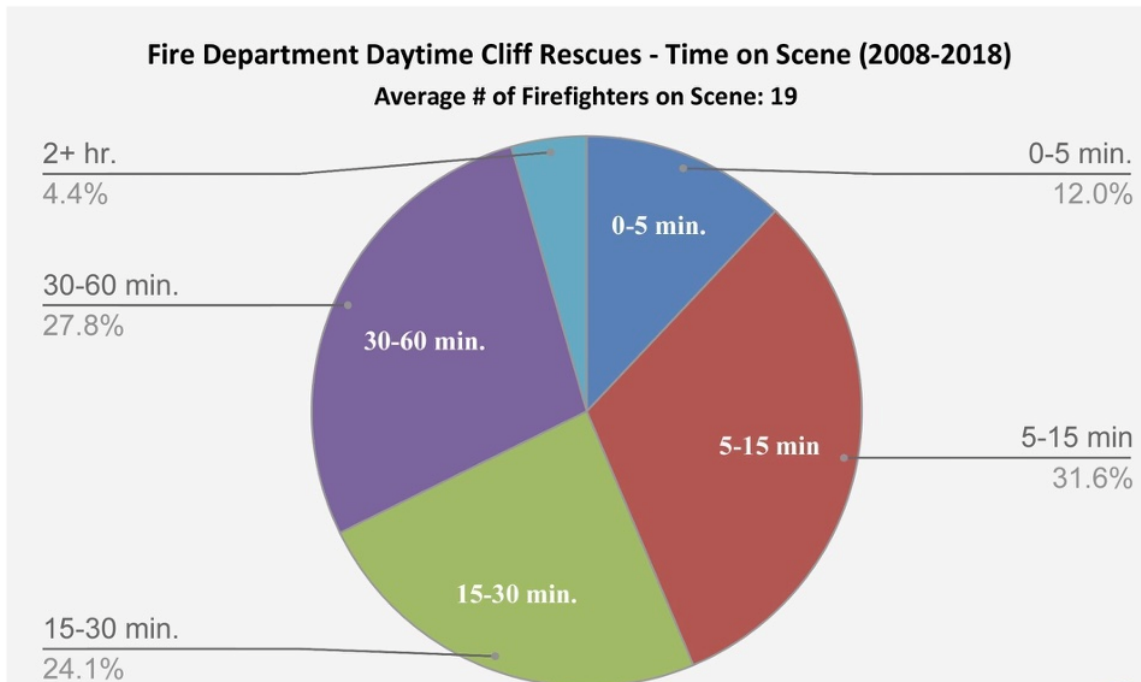
*Source: City of San Diego*

Graph 1



Using 19 firefighters to conduct daylight cliff rescues is unnecessary & costly

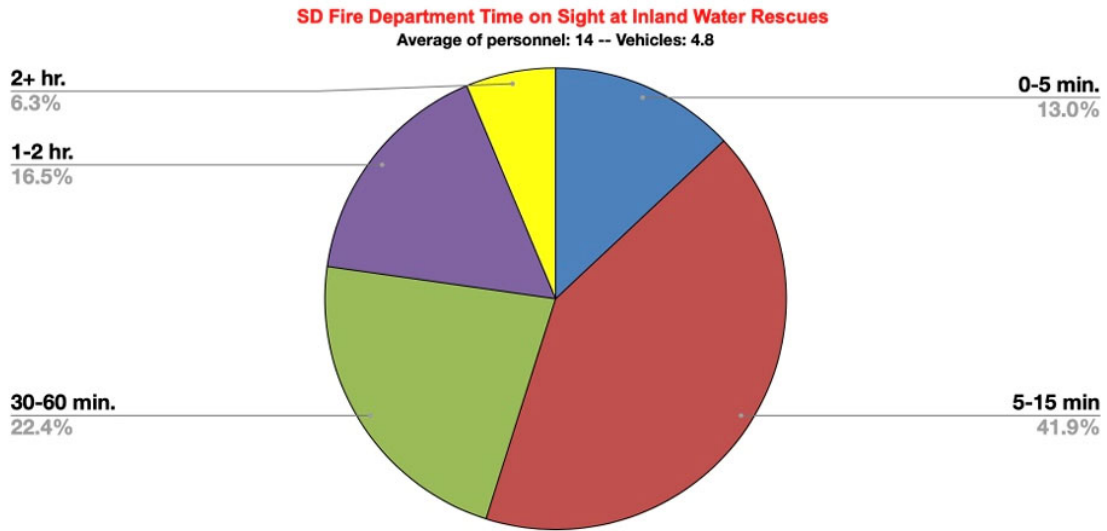
Graph 2



**Responding to Daylight Cliff Rescues Results in San Diego City Firefighters being out of service for other emergency needs**

**Note: Responding to daylight cliff rescues puts SDFD resources out of service from 15 minutes to over two hours 56.7% of the time.**

Graph 3



**San Diego Firefighters complete inland water rescues within 15 minutes 54.9% of the time.**

Only one engine is required at inland water rescues to use for tying down ropes and hosing down lifeguards after being in potentially toxic water conditions.

Site of Today's May 19, 2020 press conference was site of March 2019 SD Fire Department beach cliff rescue undertaken a short time prior to SD Lifeguards being on Duty.





**SDFD responding to March 4, 2019 Daylight Cliff Rescue in La Jolla.  
14 personnel shown plus SDPD.**



**SDFD responding to March 4, 2019 Daylight Cliff Rescue in La Jolla prior to Lifeguards being “on duty” for cliff rescues. Had this incident occurred only an hour or two later, Lifeguards would have been the primary responders using 4 vehicles and 7 personnel. Neither Firefighters nor Police Officers would have been needed.**

**###**

For technical questions contact:  
Chris Vanos, Chief Steward, SD Lifesavers Association.  
619-972-3525  
[cvanosteamsters911@gmail.com](mailto:cvanosteamsters911@gmail.com)

***Dr. Richard Parker, PhD, SDSU Professor Emeritus, participated in conducting this study.***

The full study and exhibits can be viewed at: [www.taxpayersadvocate.org](http://www.taxpayersadvocate.org)

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