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# THE OVERLOOK

July, 2016

*Edited by Joanie Wynn*

## What is the Value of Your Volunteer Fire Department?

By Steve Wynn

Recently, in my conversations with community members, several important questions have surfaced:

- Why do we need the fire tax? Doesn't the BBQ bring in enough money for the Fire Department?
- Why do we need a new firehouse?
- What is the cost versus value of the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department?

Most of us understand the value of having a fire department, but do you know what it means to your homeowners' insurance costs? Or to the response time to save you or your house if there is a fire or someone in distress? On the financial side, what are the plain facts about the BBQ proceeds vs. the Muir Beach fire tax? And why does the department need a new fire house? To bring my insights to these questions, I've put together some information here:

### **Your Volunteer Fire Department = Lower Insurance Premiums**

A few years ago, our [ISO](#) (Insurance Services Office) fire suppression rating jumped to a 10 resulting in dramatically increased premiums for Muir Beach homeowners. Homeowners reported increases of up to \$4000 in their annual premiums. We immediately contacted the ISO office who let us know that if we could document the type and quality of equipment owned, level and number of trained firefighters in service, and amount of stored water/fire hydrants in the community, they would reconsider our rating. **After providing the requested documentation, our rating was reduced from a 10 to a 3.**

In order to preserve this rating, we must keep our equipment well-maintained and protected. We must stay current with our training and certifications and provide documentation as proof. Without quality fire protection from your fire department, Muir Beach will not continue to qualify for this low ISO rating and homeowners will once again face higher insurance premiums. Monetarily speaking, this alone can represent thousands of dollars in annual savings for Muir Beach homeowners and more than offsets the cost of a \$213 annual fire tax.

## **SAVING LIVES, SAVING PROPERTY**

Your Volunteer Fire Department provides the benefit and security of delivering a faster response time than Marin County emergency services. That 10 or 15 minutes can make a huge difference in a house fire or medical emergency. Think about this -- a structure fire can become completely involved within 10 minutes of ignition. And in the case of a heart attack or stroke, minutes can mean the difference between life and death.

## **DISASTER RESPONSE**

We must be prepared for the inevitable earthquake or fire. What if our roads are impassable or, more likely, Marin County Fire departments are committed "over the hill", assisting more populated areas in Mill Valley? It is essential that we maintain the level of training and equipment necessary to stand, as a department, on our own. This is why we've made disaster preparedness training a priority, organizing the Incident Command Center and community disaster drills with Muir Beach Disaster Council volunteers and neighborhood liaisons.

## **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE/PROGRAMS**

In addition to responding in emergency situations, we regularly deliver non-urgent public assistance to residents when their situation doesn't warrant a 911 call (i.e. stuck cars, elderly residents who have fallen and need help.) We also provide first aid classes, fire extinguisher services, beach/water safety days for the kids, blood drives & CPR training.

## **WHY DO WE NEED THE FIRE TAX? ISN'T THE BBQ ENOUGH?**

We are so appreciative of the groundswell of support we receive every year from community members who support our annual BBQ fundraiser. In addition, we receive money from merchandise sales, grant monies and donations. The proceeds from this event represent roughly half of our operating budget. The fire tax, however, is *absolutely essential* in providing the other half of our funding for equipment repair/maintenance, supplies and training. Without it, we cannot deliver the quality services we currently provide nor qualify for the lowered insurance rating/premiums as discussed above.

## **WHY DO WE NEED A NEW FIREHOUSE?**

Currently, our costly equipment is housed in a dilapidated, inadequate space at the dairy. Only one truck fits in the building. Beyond the rats, flooding and mold, our firefighters are exposed to diesel exhaust within the confined space every time we head out the door. The cost to upgrade the current location has been extensively researched; it is not feasible. In addition, the dairy is in a tsunami flood zone.

We desperately need a new firehouse that is larger, clean and dry to safely house our vehicles, equipment and vital supplies. We need a place to wash up after dealing with bodily fluids or hazardous waste during a call. We need a firehouse on high ground, out of the tsunami/flood zone and on a property owned by our own community.

We also need a water tender added to our existing fleet to provide emergency water for fighting wildland and structure fires. Consider the case of a massive earthquake: If waterlines rupture, we would be forced to shut down both of our water tanks. A water tender would give us the ability to fight a fire in this scenario.

### **CAN THE FIRE TAX BE USED FOR OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS?**

No. Proceeds from the fire tax are used to pay for necessary equipment, maintenance and training for your fire department.

### **WHY UNIFORMS?**

I want to address another point. Some of our neighbors have asked me, "Steve, why do you wear uniforms?" You might be surprised to learn, but the uniforms are important.

Uniforms make a big difference when we are on scene. Projecting a professional image puts patients at ease which can directly affect their outcome. Put yourself in that situation. Would you feel more confident receiving assistance from a uniformed professional or someone in street clothes wearing some kind of oversize yellow jacket?

In addition, the scene of an incident can be chaotic with firefighters, law enforcement and bystanders. Uniforms help responders quickly identify one another on scene, making for a more efficient response.

In my meetings with Marin County officials, CHP, Cal Trans, NPS and State Park officials, our uniform signals our legitimacy and, I believe this results in improved outcomes for Muir Beach. Our uniform also indicates the professionalism of our department when we are interacting with community members in an official capacity.

Lastly, though we are a volunteer force, we are part of the larger firefighting community, so when we have occasion to attend 9/11 ceremonies or firefighter events, it is a sign of respect and comradeship.

We take our job very seriously and strive to a level of professionalism and competence that the uniform represents. Firefighters around the world wear uniforms. It is more than just a show of pride.

### **WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT**

We are very proud to be a part of the MBVFD. We are proud of our professionalism and ability to respond to emergency situations within our community. We make sure that our equipment is well maintained and up to date. We stay current with our training & re-certifications.

Each firefighter knows their job and how to integrate with other responding agencies. As individuals, each of us bring a special talent to the department that we all rely on out in the field. This, in turn, makes us strong and effective. In short, we're a great team.

We put a tremendous amount of time and effort into this volunteer position -- time not just during calls, but time in extensive training on evenings and weekends that take us away from our own families and personal pursuits. It is a sacrifice we gladly offer to make our community safer.

Whether you have called upon your Volunteer Fire Department in the past or not, every Muir Beach resident benefits from the existence and quality of the fire department. And if you ask residents who have called upon us for medical or fire emergencies, they have no question as to the value of having a well-trained and equipped fire department in our backyard.

## Muir Beach Disaster Drill A Big Success

*Photos by Joanie Wynn*



The Muir Beach Disaster Drill on April 24 was a huge success. Participants included members of Muir Beach Disaster Council (MBDC), Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department (MBVFD), Marin County Fire Department (MCFD), Marin County Office of Emergency Services (OES), Muir Beach residents and Green Gulch and a few friends from over the hill.

The goal was to improve radio communication with disaster liaisons, introduce a first aid scenario, have MBVFD package & transport patients to triage at the community center and to initiate radio communication with Green Gulch using the West Marin communication network i-COM radios.

The simulated disaster was a large earthquake that started at 10am. MBDC liaisons immediately jumped into action, sweeping their designated zones and communicating their findings and needs to the Muir Beach IC (Incident Command).

Leading up to the event, MBDC Coordinator Barbara Plotter worked with the liaisons monthly to help improve radio skills and their hard work paid off.



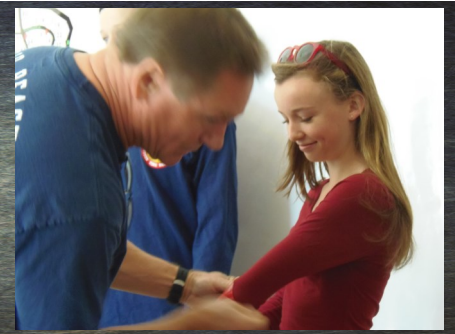


The liaisons operated their radios flawlessly relaying information to MBVFD Assistant Chief Chris Gove and Chief Steve Wynn in the Muir Beach IC. Communication was concise, information was complete and liaisons were able to improvise when faced with radio dead zones.

Other than clearing zones and radio communication, the liaisons were also faced with first aid scenarios. Staged throughout the community and acting as injured people were: Adrianna Bender, Chris Bender, Tennessee Hildebrand, Ryan Wynn and his friends Kernus Travis and Marco Vasquez from Sausalito.



Incident Command at MBCC



Robert Allen prepares the victim volunteers.

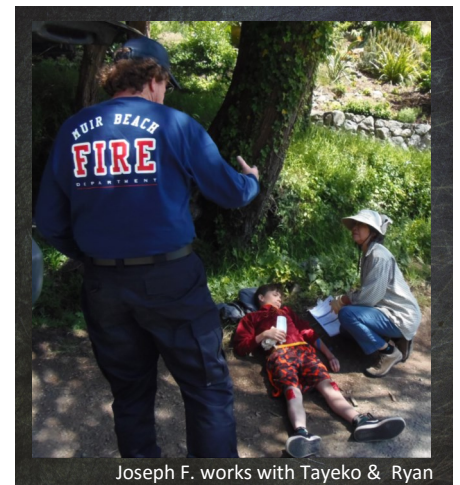
Assistant Chief Robert Allen gave instruction to each “injured” volunteer as to how they should respond based on their particular injuries. Red tape placed on the body was used to indicate open wounds while blue tape depicted broken bones.



Tayeko K. calls IC With Ryan W.



Maurice C. with CERT team



Joseph F. works with Tayeko & Ryan

Upon finding the victims, MBDC liaisons immediately reported their location, patient conditions, actions and needs to the IC. MB firefighters were also at each location to help prompt patient assessments and treatments.

At the same time, Green Gulch was conducting their own drill to test radio communication between their locations and the Muir Beach IC. Using the West Marin communication network i-COM radios they were heard loud and clear.

The drill's success made everyone ready to take it up a notch next year. First aid classes along with CPR/AED certifications will be held in the future along with CERT training and continued education for CERT personnel. Thank you and great job everyone!!



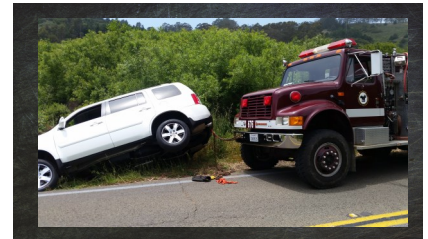
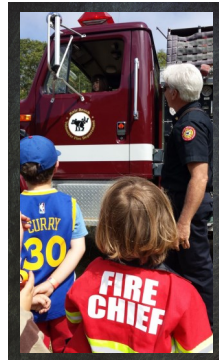
## 44th Annual Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Association BBQ Fundraiser

The 44th annual BBQ fundraiser was another huge success. Attendance was high and profits exceeded last year's.

Thank you to all volunteers for your hard work in preparing and running such a great and important event for our community and for our fire department.



*One of my favorite moments during the BBQ was seeing the faces of the kids as they checked out our engine and received a red fire hat.*



*Incidents during the BBQ were minor but had a reoccurring theme...cars in the ditch. MBVFD was quick to respond getting visitors back on the road.*

## Sidewalk CPR



Saturday June 11 was the 7th annual Marin County EMS Agency Sidewalk CPR event which was a HUGE success. Fire departments and volunteers set up all over Marin County to teach passersby the basics in CPR. The event lasted from 10am to 2pm and due to this effort there are now an additional **1,884** people trained (or re-trained in some instances) in Hands-Only CPR in Marin County. This was the first time MBVFD volunteered for this event and I am pleased to announce that we trained 164 people at the Muir Beach parking lot as we worked alongside Marin County firefighters.



(Left to right) Marin County firefighter, MBVFD Antonio Pares and Robert Allen teach sidewalk CPR

### Some CPR facts:

- 80% cardiac arrests occur at home
- Hands-Only CPR can double or triple ones chance of surviving a Sudden Cardiac Arrest
- You only need to remember two things: call 9-1-1 and PUSH HARD AND FAST IN THE CENTER OF THE CHEST UNTIL HELP ARRIVES
- DISCO CAN SAVE LIVES! Sing 'Stayin' Alive' to know how fast to compress!

## Create Defensible Space Around Your Home

*Jason Weber, Chief, Marin County Fire Department*

In January 2005, California revised the state law that requires homeowners to create a firebreak, known as "Defensible Space" around their homes. [Sections 4290 and 4291 of the California Public Resources Code](#) are the laws that require property owners in California to establish "Defensible Space." The law now requires property owners to extend **Defensible Space clearance around homes and structures from 30 feet to 100 feet.**

Wildfires move extremely fast and proper clearance to 100 feet will dramatically increase the chance of your house surviving a wildfire. This defensible space also provides an important area for firefighter safety when protecting homes during a wildland fire.

If you would like more information or have any questions about defensible space and our defensible space program, please contact the Defensible Space Coordinator to schedule a free site visit.



### EMBERS

Embers are the most important cause of home ignition. Recent research indicates that two out of every three homes destroyed during the 2007 Witch Creek fire in San Diego County were ignited either directly or indirectly by wind-dispersed, wildfire-generated, burning or glowing embers (Maranghides and Mell 2009) and not from the actual flames of the fire. During a wildfire, tiny burning embers can fly far ahead of the fire, sometimes igniting homes a mile or more away from the fire itself. These embers are capable of igniting and burning your home in several ways. In order to have a wildfire-safe home, two equally important factors must be implemented: 1) the wise selection of building materials and designs that will help the home resist the wildfire; and 2) the home must have adequate defensible space, based on the wise selection, placement, and maintenance of near-home vegetation.

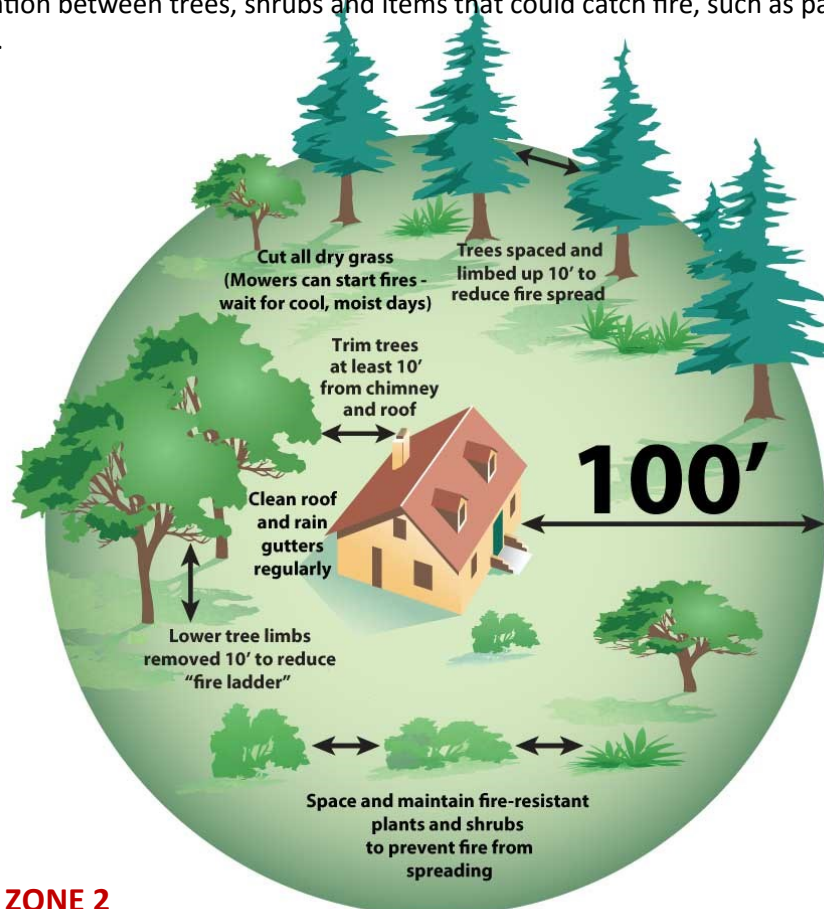
### DEFENSIBLE SPACE ZONES

Two zones make up the required 100 feet of defensible space. The two zones are: the home defense zone; and the reduced fuel zone (see "Defensible Space Zones, below). The home defense zone is within 30 feet of the house. The reduced fuel zone lies beyond the home defense zone and extends out at least 100 feet from the house or to your property line. Greater defense zone widths are necessary when your home is on a steep slope or in a windswept exposure. Specific recommendations for each zone are described below and pertain to the State Responsibility Area (SRA) protected by CAL FIRE. Local Responsibility Areas that are protected by city or county fire departments may have slightly different requirements.

## DEFENSIBLE SPACE: ZONE 1

Zone 1 extends 30 feet\* out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Relocate wood piles into Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.



## DEFENSIBLE SPACE: ZONE 2

- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees.
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches.

## FIRE-SAFE LANDSCAPING

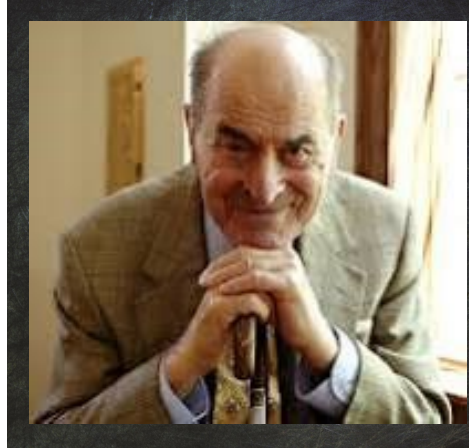
Defensible Space requires the installation and maintenance of Fire Safe Landscaping. It is important to remember that a fire safe landscape isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. A fire safe landscape uses fire resistant plants that are strategically planted to resist the spread of fire to your home. The good news is, you don't need a lot of money to make your landscape fire safe. And you will find that a fire safe landscape can increase your property value and conserve water while beautifying your home.





## Dr. Heimlich Saves Choking Woman

BBC News, May 2016



**The 96-year-old American inventor of the Heimlich maneuver used the technique himself to save a choking woman at his retirement home.**

Dr. Henry Heimlich said he had demonstrated the technique many times but never used it in an emergency. His action dislodged a piece of meat with a bone in it from an 87-year-old woman's airway.

*"I didn't know I really could do it until the other day,"* he told the BBC. Dr Heimlich was having dinner with eight or nine others at the Deupree House retirement home in Cincinnati when he turned to talk to a woman at his table and noticed she was choking. *"She had a skin color that was no longer pink. Her mouth was puffed up and her lips were out,"* he told the BBC. *"Though I invented the Heimlich maneuver I had never been called on to do it before."*

### **How easy is it to do the Heimlich maneuver?**

Dr. Heimlich described how he turned the woman, Patty Ris, around in her chair so her back was exposed. The maneuver requires a rescuer to carry out abdominal thrusts on a choke victim to dislodge the blockage. *"I did it three times and a piece of meat with a bone in it came flying out of her mouth and she was all right,"* he said.

Staff had rushed to the table when the woman started choking but stood back to allow Dr. Heimlich to carry out his maneuver.

*"Just the fact that a 96-year-old man could perform that, is impressive,"* his son Phil Heimlich told the Cincinnati Inquirer. Dr. Heimlich, who invented the technique in 1974, swims and exercises regularly. He often meets people who were saved by the technique or who saved someone else, his son said.

Since the technique was introduced in 1974 it is believed to have saved the lives of more than 100,000 people in the US alone. They include former President Ronald Reagan, pop star Cher, former New York mayor Edward Koch and Hollywood actors Elizabeth Taylor, Goldie Hawn, Walter Matthau, Carrie Fisher, Jack Lemmon and Marlene Dietrich. In 2014, actor Clint Eastwood was credited with saving the life of a golf tournament director in California who was choking on a piece of cheese. In the UK, celebrity promoter Simon Cowell was reportedly saved by comedian David Williams, who carried out the Heimlich maneuver on him after a mint became stuck in his throat.



## Hwy 1 Safety Project

In May, I was invited to participate in a Caltrans-hosted think tank designed to collect early input to inform the TCR (Transportation Concept Report) development process. This interactive, hands-on workshop was designed to generate ideas from partners on key needs and priorities for State Route 1 North in Marin and Sonoma counties. Some of the questions we addressed were:

- What are the key physical, environmental and social assets that define SR-1 North? How can we build on these assets?
- What is the perception of economic, environmental and physical issues within the corridor from your organization's perspective?
- What key opportunities or big ideas do you see for SR-1 North over the next 20 years as it relates to sustainability, mobility, economy and livability?



In my feedback, I included concerns from Muir Beach residents in regards to safety and congestion. All agreed these were important considerations to address. Overall, I was pleased that CalTrans is taking proactive steps to address current and future traffic and safety issues while keeping in mind the natural beauty of Hwy 1.

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## Save the Date: First Aid Class 2/11/17

This informative class is offered to all Muir Beach residents. The course is designed for citizen first responders without any medical background. Nurses and doctors appreciate this training as well because it provides hands-on practice for first responder emergency life-saving actions. It is also great, practical knowledge for everyone. Everyone age 14 and up is welcome to attend. Requested donation is \$5. Time TBD.

To reserve your spot, please contact Barbara Piotter at: [aufkirchen@gmail.com](mailto:aufkirchen@gmail.com)

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## Update on H.R. 343: Volunteer Emergency Responders Tax Deduction Act

June 16, 2016 - There is a new co-sponsor for the H.R. 343: Volunteer Emergency Responders Tax Deduction Act, Rep. Sean Maloney [D-NY 18] The bill now has 39 co-sponsors (23 Republicans, 16 Democrats). Over 71% of fire departments polled in the United States are volunteer departments (U.S. Fire Administration). On behalf of all volunteer firefighters, I encourage everyone to support this bill. As explained in a previous issue of The Overlook, the act incentivizes volunteer participation and supports recruitment efforts with a tax credit for volunteer firefighters and first responders.



## Jr. Firefighter Program Update

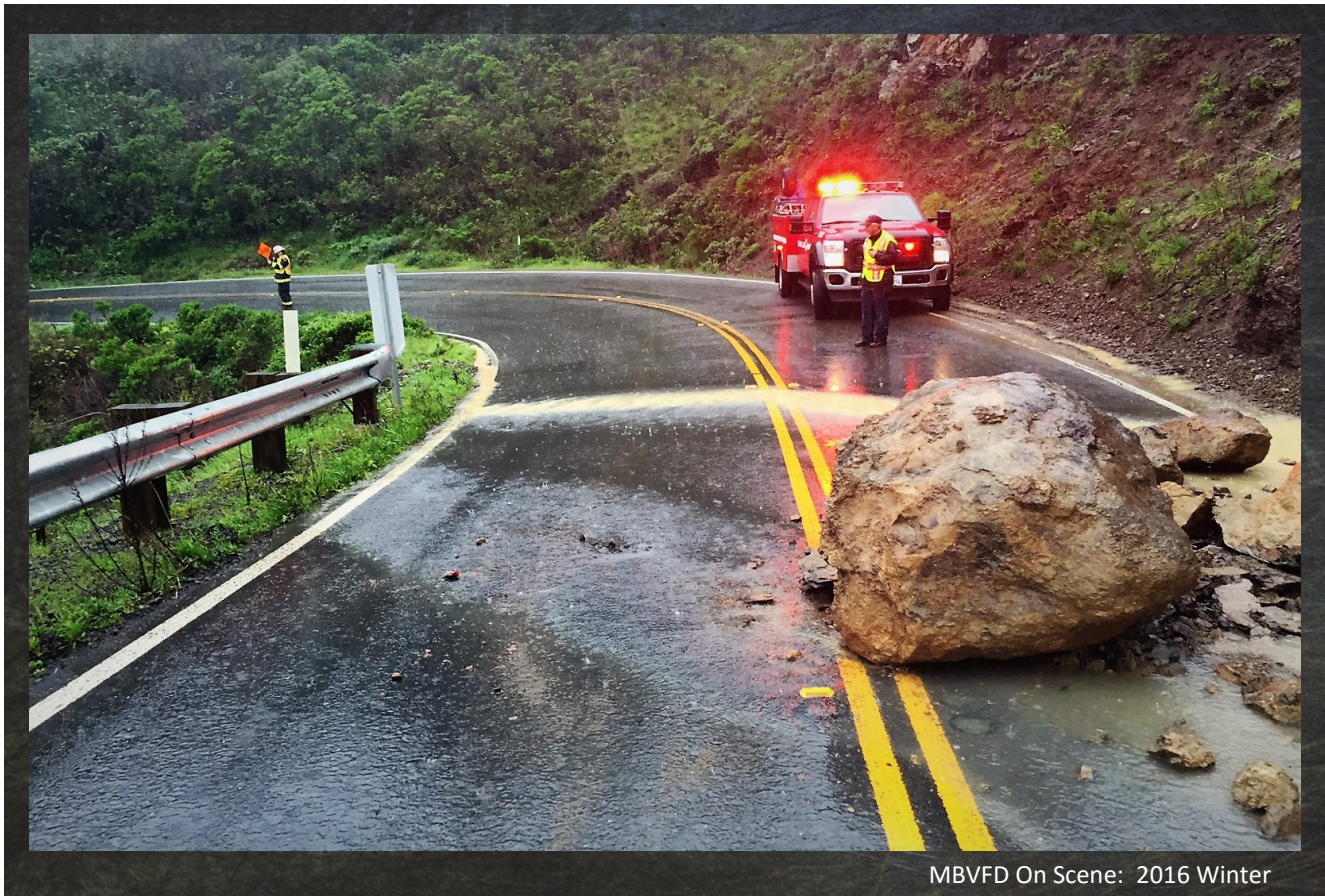
Jr. Firefighter Chris Bender got his first experience performing a quick attack on a simulated structure fire. MBVFD firefighters sent him through a crash course in how to suit up with structural turnouts and SCBA (Self-contained breathing apparatus) and pull hose from engine 676.

One of the requirements of the program is to have all Jr. firefighters lead a drill in one firefighting skill of their choosing. MBVFD firefighters will be available to support and provide instruction to ensure the drill is a total success.



Picture by David Taylor

## Shot of the Month: March



MBVFD On Scene: 2016 Winter





## Incident Report

### January to July 19

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1-2-16: Allergic reaction, Muir Woods                    | 5-6-16: Broken ankle, Muir Woods                          |
| 1-11-16: Difficulty breathing, Muir Beach                | 5-6-16: Horse fall off trail/injured rider, Heather trail |
| 1-16-16: Unconscious woman fell, broke wrist, Muir Woods | 5-15-16: Boat in distress                                 |
| 2-6-16: Car off road, Muir Beach                         | 5-16-16: Altered level of consciousness                   |
| 2-12-16: Sick woman, Muir Woods                          | 5-19-16: Sick person, Muir Beach                          |
| 2-13-16: Vehicle roll over, Hwy 1                        | 5-29-16: Car in ditch, Frank Valley Rd.                   |
| 3-5-16: Public assist, Muir Beach                        | 5-29-16: Car in ditch, Frank Valley Rd.                   |
| 3-7-16: Cardiac issue, Green Gulch                       | 5-30-16: Rolled ankle, Muir Woods                         |
| 3-10-16: Rock slide, Hwy 1                               | 5-30-16: Car fire, Hwy 1                                  |
| 3-12-16: Cardiac issue, Muir Woods                       | 6-2-16 Broken ankle, Muir Woods                           |
| 3-19-16: Vehicle off road, Hwy 1                         | 6-12-16: Dislocated elbow, Muir Woods                     |
| 3-25-16: Rolled ankle, Big beach                         | 6-19-16: Vehicle off road, Hwy 1                          |
| 3-28-16: Temp. loss of vision, Big Beach                 | 7-2-16: Substance abuse, Muir Woods                       |
| 4-3-16: 3 vehicle accident, Hwy 1                        | 7-9-16: Cardiac issue, Muir Woods                         |
| 4-21-16: Fall-spine injury, Muir Woods                   | 7-10-16: Vehicle off road, Muir Woods                     |
| 4-25-16: Fall-head and knee injury, Muir Woods           | 7-10-16: Altered level of consciousness, Muir Woods       |
| 4-26-16: Loss of consciousness, Muir Beach               | 7-11-16: Bike down, Hwy 1                                 |
| 4-30-16: Fall, Muir Woods                                | 7-19-16: Loss of consciousness, Muir Woods                |
|  | 7-19-16: Sick person, Muir Beach                          |

### Reminders

Amazon Smile will make a donation to an organization of your choice. To have the MBVFD be your selected charity, simply type <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0330764> into your browser and shop as you usually do or you can go to our site [www.muirbeachfire.com](http://www.muirbeachfire.com) and click on the Amazon Smile link on our home page.

Then, every time you make a purchase on Amazon, Amazon Smile will give 0.5% of your purchase to MBVFD!!



**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT**

**PLACE A MBVFD**

**STICKER ON YOUR CAR WINDOW**

To get your free MBVFD sticker contact  
Steve Wynn at : [steve@muirbeachfire.com](mailto:steve@muirbeachfire.com)



**STICKER GOES ON THE OUTSIDE OF WINDOW**