



CALIFORNIA PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS

DO NOT APPLY - PLACENTIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

City Seeks Discriminatory Treatment of Firefighters in Retirement and Risky Staffing Pattern

Brothers and Sisters:

The City of Placentia is recruiting to staff a new non-union fire department, seeking management (fire chief, battalion chiefs) and some paid firefighting positions (captain, engineer, firefighter). The new department is being created after the city terminated its contract with Orange County Fire Authority, and is being undertaken with the stated intent to reduce professional firefighter staffing and outsource EMS response to a small, local private ambulance company.

In solidarity with Orange County Professional Firefighters Association, Local 3631, CPF asks that you DO NOT APPLY to Placentia Fire Department for any position.

We ask that you discourage any and all potential firefighter candidates from seeking employment in Placentia.

The foundation for this request is simple justice. Placentia's department would impose an unjust system by denying firefighters ... and **only** firefighters ... the ability to retire with a secure pension.

This past month, the city sought, and was granted, the authority to keep its firefighters out of the pension system that protects every other city worker – CalPERS. Everyone else, from law enforcement to city management to classified employees would continue to have the protection of a secure pension.

Firefighters would be the only class of employees who would be denied a secure pension. We don't think that's right.

In addition to its explicit attempt to create a second-class retirement for firefighters, the city's proposal also offers a second-class job opportunity.

- Under the terms of the city's proposal to create its fire agency, full-time professional staffing would be substantially reduced from an average of 37 within the city under OCPFA.
- Additional engine personnel and backfill would be handled by non-union reserve personnel, who would be paid on an hourly basis.
- ALS service would be provided under a contract with a local ambulance provider that has [paid out millions in settlements for fraudulent billing of taxpayers and is in the middle of efforts to privatize all ambulance service in Orange County.](#)

CPF and Local 3631 believe **ending secure pensions for firefighters and privatizing EMS, are the unstated, but unmistakable agenda** of the city's action.

We strongly believe their action is the **first step down the road to ending secure pensions** for all firefighters, and all public workers.

And we believe the staffing proposal as outlined poses a **clear and present health and safety risk to any individual who might be hired** to work for the proposed Placentia fire department.

Local 3631 and California Professional Firefighters ask that you stand up against this injustice, and stand up for our profession. Please spread the word and DO NOT APPLY to Placentia Fire.

If you have any questions, please contact Tim Steging, president of Orange County Professional Firefighters Association, Local 3631.



CALIFORNIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

1851 Heritage Lane, Ste. 138 • Sacramento, CA 95815

Off: 916-923-9455 www.CalChiefs.org

December 5, 2019

Dear California Fire Chiefs' Members,

Due to grave concerns that I and others have on the E-Board, we are asking our members to not apply for or accept employment with the proposed "new" fire department in the City of Placentia.

In solidarity with our partners and key stakeholders in Orange County, I bring these egregious operational, safety and staffing concerns over the implementation processes being put into place by Placentia which are contradictory to safe, effective and efficient delivery of critical fire and EMS services in an urban environment expected in California.

The proposed model in Placentia does not attempt follow established national standards for staffing and fire ground responses to emergency incidents and further threatens the health and safety of this community in the following respects:

- Mandates for the first response reduction in service from ALS to BLS
- Turns the complete provision and oversight of day-to-day EMS care and delivery to a private provider with no fire department oversight or management
- Provides for dangerous sub-par staffing in an urban community with no regard for firefighter safety and no commitment to established state and national standards for deployment, fire ground operations and minimally acceptable staffing ratios
- Relies on constant mutual aid from surrounding communities, impacting their delivery of services in their respective communities, and endangers the established statewide system

We are conveying that no one should seek employment with a community that disregards long-standing firefighter safety, emergency response staffing, mutual aid system and first-response EMS delivery capabilities. Not standing together in solidarity on this critical matter sets a dangerous precedent and endangers our safety net to the communities for which we strive daily to provide excellent fire and EMS response services.

As you know, California faces significant threats from natural disasters, wildfires and increased emergency services demands that cannot be met by providing sub-standard, reduced staffing and reduced EMS care as proposed by Placentia.

In advance, thank you for your prompt attention on this critical matter.

As always, please stay safe!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edmond A. Rodriguez".

Edmond A. Rodriguez
President

"To strengthen and advocate for the California Fire Service through leadership, unity and collaboration."

ATTACHMENT B



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January 21, 2020

Scott Ferguson, Consultant
City of Placentia

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

California Fire Chiefs Association (CalChiefs) is a large and diverse professional association whose vision is to be the voice of the California Fire Service. CalChiefs membership comes from the more than 800 fire agencies operating in the state of California. We engage and advocate in California Fire Service matters that have statewide impact.

On behalf of the CalChiefs members, I write to express our grave concerns for community and firefighter safety as a result of what we understand to be the City of Placentia's proposed deployment model in the new fire department. We are further alarmed that the city's decisions to reduce staffing and service levels will impose hardships on citizens and firefighters in neighboring communities in both the City of Placentia's service territory and fire departments in Orange County. Under this scenario, other fire departments would be asked to provide inequitable assistance to Placentia's new department.

As you know, Placentia intends to launch its new Fire and Life Safety Department on July 1, 2020. Despite this quickly approaching launch date, there is still much we don't know about Placentia's plans to deliver comprehensive fire and life safety to its citizens. Many questions remain unanswered, due to lack of information regarding firefighter training, dispatch and call transfers, performance objectives, resource management, tactical operations, alarm answering time, full alarm assignments, EMS oversight, and wild land suppression, among other issues.

In addition to being concerned by these unknowns, we are deeply concerned by what we do know about Placentia's planned deployment. Our specific concerns are as follows:

- The provision and oversight of day-to-day EMS care and delivery would be turned over to a private provider with no fire department oversight or management.
- The deployment plans provided by the City of Placentia on its website and in community outreach have been inconsistent, at best, which leaves us to believe that the proposed deployment and staffing model is in conflict with staffing recommendations in state and national standards for deployment, fire ground operations and minimally acceptable staffing ratios. ([NIST study on fireground staffing](#))

ATTACHMENT C

"To strengthen and advocate for the California Fire Service through leadership, unity and collaboration."

- Relying on constant mutual aid from surrounding communities to supplant Placentia's reduced staffing and resource model will impact delivery of services in their respective communities and endanger the established statewide mutual aid system.

The intent to transfer the responsibility of EMS response to a private for-profit EMS provider without fire department oversight or management leaves the citizens and visitors in the City of Placentia at risk. CalChiefs believes that the provision of emergency medical services is an essential service to be managed by the public agency governing the city, county or district. Leaving such a critical safety task to a private for-profit provider without careful oversight and management has proven time and time again to be detrimental to local public safety.

With the resource and staffing level reductions, Placentia will not be able to ensure firefighter safety and adequate response with its new department to serve its citizens. In accordance with [federal law](#), the first arriving unit will not be able to undertake immediate interior firefighting suppression efforts until additional units arrive if there is no known rescue in the structure. Nor will the city be able to supply 50% of an initial alarm response without support from other fire agencies.

These decisions and plans put firefighters and the citizens they serve in greater danger, a risk burden that will be borne by neighboring departments who are being asked to deliver mutual aid support to Placentia to meet industry-standard response levels. This model is contrary to the California Disaster Act and our statewide mutual aid compacts and is not financially sustainable.

CalChiefs urges that Placentia provide the information necessary to ensure that it does not recklessly endanger the lives of firefighters or citizens, nor jeopardize the fiscal sustainability of neighboring government agencies due to its decisions.

Sincerely,



Edmond A. Rodriguez
President

Cc: Placentia City Council
Damien Arrula, City Manager, City of Placentia
Orange County Fire Authority Board of Directors