



Station 61: 17061 Rolling Creek Dr., Houston, TX., 77090

Station 62: 4362 Louetta Rd., Spring, TX., 77388

Station 63: 21455 Imperial Valley, Houston, TX., 77388

This is 9-1-1 what is your emergency?.....

“Help! Help! My house is on fire! I need help! My address is.... I can’t get out!”

**Fire is Fast!** There is little time to decide. In less than 30 seconds, a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire.

**Fire is Hot!** Heat is more threatening than flames. A fire’s heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be one hundred degrees at floor level and rise to six hundred degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs. This heat can melt clothes to your skin. In five minutes, a room can get so hot that everything in it ignites at once. This is called flashover.

**Fire is Dark!** Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and then complete darkness. If you wake up to a fire you may be blinded, disoriented and unable to find your way around the home you’ve lived in for years.

**Fire is Deadly!** Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces smoke and poisonous gases that kill. These gases can make you drowsy, disoriented, and short of breath. The odorless, colorless gas fumes can lull you into a deep sleep before the flames reach your door. You may not wake up in time to escape.

**How to Survive!** Remember, time is the biggest enemy and every second counts. Escape first, then call for help! Make sure everyone in the family knows two ways to escape from every room. Never stand up in a fire, always crawl low under the smoke and keep your mouth covered. NEVER return to the burning building for ANY reason. Practice the plan, it could happen to YOU!

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*Looking back .... It took 10 years of planning....*

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### **Ponderosa Fire Department is a Neighborhood Landmark**

After 10 years of careful planning, starting in 1988, Ponderosa Fire Department headquarters became a reality in 1998, and is now a showcase for state-of-the-art firefighting skill and equipment thanks to an outstanding, forward-thinking Board of Directors, the organization was poised and ready to acquire land when it became available at a surprisingly affordable price in 1992, well under market value. The dream was finally on the drawing board.

With the assistance of experienced firefighters and an architect who served as a volunteer Board member for Harris County ESD #28, the facility began to take shape. The process of designing a highly functional building that would accommodate live-in fire fighters include electrical generation capabilities, and be home to the organization's administrative team, finally moved through the construction phase.

The completed Fire Department structure incorporates more than 19,000 square feet and was built at a cost of \$1.6 million, financed over 15 years at a rate of 5.676 percent. Thanks to the very generous efforts of the Board member/architect, much of the construction materials and fixtures were acquired at very favorable prices. The construction manager and administrative assistant also donated hundreds of volunteer hours to help complete the project within the projected timetable, under budget and without any increase in taxes.

Today, the Ponderosa Fire Department headquarters proudly stands as a monument to cooperation and ingenuity!

The Historic Board of 1998: Curtis Cook- President; Robert Batts- Vice President; Edson Dronberger-Treasurer; James Chatterton-Secretary; Craig Smith-Asst. Treasurer

# Emergency Services District #28

Effective September 1, 2019

the Ponderosa Fire Department (Emergency Services District #28), achieved the Public Protection Class (PPC) rating of 2. This is the Insurance Services Office (ISO) nationwide community fire protection rating system that utilizes water supplies, communications and fire department capabilities that affects most insurance policy costs, and in our case will reduce most insurance rates. You should contact your insurance agent soon to obtain the savings.

**The PPC rating places us in the top 4% of our nation's fire and rescue agencies.**

Chief Fred Windisch state, "We have consistently built our response system with the citizen in mind as our priority: this rating demonstrates reliability, professionalism and capabilities that are truly the best of the best. Our volunteers, part time and full-time paid firefighters always work with the end in mine, service first."

The PPC system uses many components evaluating various aspects of the response system. A "10" rating is no fire department, and a "1" rating is the highest.

The community rating is just that, and our wonderful water districts are very dependable and capable, our system is second to none, and our fire department meets or exceeds national standards in most categories.

The result is dependable emergency services because when our citizens call 9-1-1, they are having the worst day of their lives.



The boards of directors of the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire Association and Emergency Services District #28 are totally focused on service provisions.

These citizens of our community are dedicated to making the right decisions within the resources available.

The lists of accomplishments are many; fire stations and equipment are top notch, and we have volunteers and paid personnel who are the best people that understand our mission.

Emergency responses continue to increase. This year we will respond to over 2,600 emergencies along with our neighboring agencies in a seamless response system-you will see red trucks and green trucks at emergencies because we know you do not care what color the truck is-you want high quality quick response.

Visit our websites at:

[www.ponderosavfd.org](http://www.ponderosavfd.org),

[www.eds20.com](http://www.eds20.com)

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/PonderosaFD/>.

**THANK YOU** for your continued confidence and support since 1972.

## Day to Day...



Ponderosa Fire Department continues to hire full-time firefighters/emergency medical technicians (EMT)s to meet the continuing demands of service. Currently, we have 33 full-time, 18 Part-time, and 9 volunteers and our world continues to change...

We were fortunate to apply for and received a federal CARES Act Employee Retention Credit. The total amount received was \$1 million dollars less the 25% fee. The funds allowed us to purchase these items:

- 2 sets of firefighter turnout gear per person (cancer prevention and always ready conditions); \$140,000.00.
- 2 sets of battery-operated hydraulic spreaders and cutters for entrapments; all three stations now have these essential tools; \$50,000.00.
- A generator for the Rolling Creek fire station to have emergency power for the large meeting room area; the rest of the station is on the original (1998) stand-by generator; \$48,000.00.
- Replaced the original AC system in the Rolling Creek location training room that was in failure mode due to being original 1998 equipment: \$48,000.00.
- Replaced aged self-contained breathing apparatus and cylinders: \$300,000.00.

The continuation of price increases is a challenge for us and you. We hope the economy will adjust so we can see some relief. We have three replacement fire engines on order since October 2022; they should be here in mid-2025.

The entire industry still deals with supply-line shortages and the lack of qualified personnel.

Here are our statistics:

- Total Responses-2,509
- Emergency Medical System (EMS) Assists-1,091
- Entrapments, Motor Vehicle Incidents-15
- Building Fires Including Auto Aid Response-159
- Other Responses-941
- Other Fires-163
- Vehicle Fires-48

The above responses to building fires includes our responses for mutual aid with our partners.

The false emergency automatic fire alarms, especially from commercial buildings, continue to be a burden. Last year, we were notified of 684 alarms, 22% of our emergency response notifications. We respond to about 10% of those and invoice the repeat offenders. This resulted in over \$33,000,00 in charges to these businesses and apartments. A response is \$400.00 and a non-response due to dispatch costs is \$80.00.

Here are a few examples of calls we received in 2023.

- July was greeted with a large apartment fire started by arson.
- October continued with another large apartment fire, with one civilian dead and another transported for smoke inhalation.
- November brought a strip center fire due to electrical, and the firefighters discovered a female and 3 children living in one of the businesses within the complex. Also, in November a house fire happened due to faulty fireplace construction during a previous remodel, the damage was extensive.
- A Christmas Day house fire was caused by incense burning underneath a live Christmas tree. A disabled individual rescued from the second floor to escape with extensive interior damage. Also in December, Ponderosa and Klein Fire Departments partnered in response to a house fire and rescued a mother and infant son. Both were hospitalized and have recovered.



## The Other Side of Fire Fighting, Firefighter Tragedies An Editorial by Fire Chief Fred Windisch, Ponderosa Fire Department

The building is on fire, it's what we do, so we say. We go into burning buildings while others are running out. "2013 was not a good year for Texas' firefighters," stated Chief Fred Windisch, "we lost 18 souls."

It has been my passion, commitment, and job as the Fire Chief to prevent harm to you and our members, and it is difficult for me to convey my thoughts during this trying time. To help me pass my thoughts I have excerpted the following from an article in the June 5, 2013, Houston Chronicle written by Chris Hammons, dean of the school humanities at Houston Baptist University. His words will tell you the story of what we do.

*The story begins....*

*"I'm not sure why it hurts so much when firefighters die. The combative nature of soldiering or police work comes with the expectation that somebody will get killed. You pray it's the bad guys. And while the loss of a police officer or soldier is never expected and always painful, the unending battle between good and evil allows some frame of reference. Firefighters, however, touch a part of us that still lives in innocence. As children, we venerate them as superheroes. When we grow older; we appreciate the selflessness of firefighters. There really is no urgent need to save someone's burning house. But the benevolence of firefighters pushes them to protect not only people, but property as well. They know a burning building is someone's home or business and they care.*

*Firefighters remind us about all that is right with America, particularly in an era when we focus way too much on all that is wrong. That is why it hurts when we see them fall. Our superheroes aren't supposed to die."  
...end of story.*

Our volunteers, part-time and full-time firefighters are here for you providing the best service we can in both fire and emergency medical services, but there is a point when we cannot send good after bad.

While we can do a lot to save you and your property; we cannot be everything to everyone. Deaths and injuries to firefighters (our parents, sons, daughters, relatives, and friends) is a problem and we cannot continue to risk our lives because "it is our job."

Superheroes have limitations and we must be realistic in understanding those limitations. Even Superman with all his superpowers was subject to kryptonite.

**Remember our first responders. Protect, honor, and demand they have the best equipment and protective gear they need so they can do their best to save you. As always, thank you for your continued support and never forget that our job is to make your worst day a little bit better.**

**Fred Windisch**

# The Cost to Equip a Firefighter...\$20,549.00.



Helmet: \$375.00

Hood: \$120.00

Identifier: \$150.00

Bunker Coat: \$2,145.00

Suspenders: \$70.00

Flashlight: \$220.00

Halligan & Axe:  
\$640.00

Additional Gear  
Bullet Proof Vest: \$1,200.00  
2<sup>nd</sup> Set of Gear: \$3,590.00  
Tactical Helmet \$275.00

Radio: \$1,250.00

Self-  
Contained  
Breathing  
Apparatus:  
\$7,900.00

Gloves: \$170.00

Pass Device:  
\$650.00

Bunker Pant: \$1,394.00

Boots: \$350.00

# *Dressed and Equipped for Fire Fighting Success*

Among the extensive list of things most of us take for granted... is... the incredible amount of money it takes to outfit a fire department.

Sure, we don't need fire services every day, but just ask anyone who has experienced a fire at their home or office. Hopefully, it will never happen to you but if it does you want the best trained firefighters, the fastest response time, and the latest in technology to be there for you.

Fortunately, the Harris County Emergency Services District #28 has made a long-term commitment to excellence across the board.

This involves careful long-range planning and the scheduled replacement of the well-used fire trucks, and firefighting equipment. A thorough continuing and on-going relevant education for career and volunteer firefighters while staying current in the advances in technology for useful firefighting techniques and safety is paramount.

The Ponderosa Fire Department has evolved into a high-performance customer service-centered delivery system. We monitor, or "count the cost" of how we do things, and we do that with qualified and committed people, our most valuable resource.

We are continually evaluating our product/performance responding to your needs with all the resources available to us. Yes, we "count on dollars and cents." It is our reality; we simply cannot perform for you without it.

Our district continues to grow, and it has become necessary for us to look at employing more paid personnel.

The bottom line....

Tax rates will need to be increased within the next couple of years. But don't panic! When we "count our tax rate," we see that it is small, and the benefits are huge.

We are always there for you in every way no matter the circumstances. Please support us in ensuring that the services you receive are the best they can be. As always, consider us as your silent sentinel. 9-1-1 is our calling card.



# The Cost of The Ride..... \$ 4,940,000.00.



The Rescue Truck  
\$1,000,000.00

Rescue Equipment Cost:  
\$230,000.00



The Pumper: \$1,200,000.00

Pumper Equipment Cost:  
\$90,000.00



The Tower / Ladder Truck:  
\$1,500,000.00

Tower/Ladder Equipment Cost:  
\$90,000.00

Vehicle Maintenance: \$108,000.00  
Fuel: \$46,000  
Insurance: \$566,000.00  
Equipment Expense: \$110,000.00

**Yearly Administrative Cost of running a Fire Department:**

**\$5,000,000.00**

**ESD Dispatch costs: \$157,000.00**



# Texas Emergency Communication Center (TECC)

Speaking of dispatch centers...the Texas Emergency Communications Center (TECC) is the 9-1-1 dispatch center for five fire departments in north Harris County.

TECC was organized in September 2021 and serves as the dispatch center for Ponderosa, Spring, Cypress Creek, Klein, and Champions fire departments. TECC's current annual operation budget is \$2,000,000.00. TECC also serves as a Secondary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in the Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network for Harris and Fort Bend Counties.

TECC uses the Fire Priority Dispatch System (FPDS), protocols from the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED), to ensure that the trained and certified Emergency Fire Dispatchers (EFD) properly conduct structured and rapid caller interrogation for life safety evaluation and an accurate selection of the appropriate unit response. The EFD relays important scene information to the field responders and provides essential Dispatch Life Support (DLS) and pre-arrival Instructions.

The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) has bestowed an accreditation on TECC for international organizational standards for emergency services. The IAED accreditation is the highest distinction given to emergency communication centers.

TECC territory spans 165 square miles with a population of 500,000 people. TECC was built in under 4 months following the breakup of Cypress Creek EMS and ESD 11. The budget for the build was \$1.5 million or \$300,000 per department. \$445,500 was budgeted for the reconstruction of the building, including the electrical work and redundancies needed in a 9-1-1 center. The other costs included console furniture, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and licenses, protocol licenses, radio systems, related equipment, computer workstations, radio towers, and Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS). The UPS is a large battery that keeps all necessary equipment running while power is interrupted. This battery can run the dispatch center for 10 hours.

When the power goes out, the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) immediately takes over, keeping all systems up and running. Within 15 seconds, the primary generator will power the building. A backup generator acts as a secondary power source if the primary fails. There is also a portable generator if the primary and backup generators fail, which can run the building until utility power is restored or repairs are made to the primary and backup generators. This is peace of mind to all residents that you will be heard in case of emergency by your 9-1-1 center.

Here are some 2023 dispatch totals:

- Fire incidents - 4,780
- Fire alarms - 4,614
- Medical incidents - 9,474

Currently, a national shortage of 9-1-1 dispatchers is causing many agencies to remain understaffed. Fortunately, TECC is fully staffed. Lori Broadrick, Executive Director of TECC, stated, "TECC is fully staffed and is prepared to increase staffing numbers as the needs arise. This is a critical time in our nation when efficient action is needed 24/7. Despite national odds, TECC's competitive pay, expansive benefits, and first responder agency support are attributed to the organization's ability to grow."

Having a united dispatch system helps the fire departments. They frequently assist one another on their fire calls and effectively operate in a coordinated manner. All the computer systems run on the same software programs, and the departments communicate on the same radio frequency. As Fire Chief Fred Windisch said, "We have red and green trucks that run together daily. We know where we all are... all the time."

(Photo Courtesy of TECC)

# Teaching Kids About Fire...



According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), each year about 300 people are killed and \$280 million in property is destroyed in fires attributed to children playing with fire.

Here are some things parents need to know so they can teach their youngsters about the dangers of fire play to help minimize the risk of injuries and fire setting behavior in the future.

## Just the facts...

- Children of all ages set over 100,000 fires annually. Approximately 20,000 of these fires are set in homes.
- Children make up 20% of all fire deaths.
- Over 30% of the fires that kill children are set by children playing with fire.
- At home, children usually play with fire in bedrooms, in closets, and under beds. These are “secret” places where there are a lot of things that catch fire easily.
- Too often, child fire setters are not given proper guidance and supervision by parents and teachers. Consequently, they repeat their fire setting behavior.

Keep matches and lighters out of harm's way in a secured drawer or cabinet and encourage your children to tell you when they find, or encounter matches or lighters you may have missed.

Be alert to evidence that youngsters have played with fire. Be on the lookout for burned matches in favorite “hiding” places. Take the mystery out of fire by discussing the dangers to life and property.

## Fire is a tool..., they need to understand..., not a toy.

In a fire emergency smoke makes it exceedingly difficult to see and children are often frightened when they see a large figure looming through the haze making strange, muffled noises through their breathing apparatus.

Instruct children not to hide from firefighters...they are there to save young lives.

Develop and practice a family home fire escape plan, going through it carefully... step by step.

1. They should be familiar with STOP, DROP, and ROLL if their clothing should catch on fire.
2. Teach them how to crawl low on the floor. Stay low below the smoke and get out of the house as fast as they can and STAY OUT.
3. Make sure your kids know the sound of the smoke alarm and immediately know what to do. Be aware that children sleep deeply and do not always hear it.
4. Never, ever, should a child or parent go back in a burning house. As emotionally charged as this circumstance is, they need to understand they cannot be replaced but a beloved toy can.

Remember, let the firefighters do what they are trained to do... to save lives while you are having the worst moment of your family's life.

Do not put the firefighters or yourself in more danger due to the emotional pull of losing your belongings. Things can be replaced but lives cannot.

# Fire, Fire

## In YOUR DRYER?



Drying clothes is second only to cooking as a cause of residential fires.

Approximately 15,900 residential fires started due to clothes dryers each year with an average loss of \$200 million in property damage. One third of those fires resulted in personal injury.

Occasionally, clothes dryers catch on fire due to thermostat or wiring malfunctions. But many laundry room fires can be prevented by simple home maintenance and awareness.

Month after month, innumerable loads of wet clothes cycle safely through family clothes dryers. However, as water evaporates from each load, minute cloth fibers, pollen, and pet hair leave the fabric and are trapped inside the dryer.

Most of this lint ends up in a screened filter located either inside the dryer door or in a pull-out trap. Heat can buildup and then quickly ignite highly combustible fibers.

A few do it yourself strategies will eliminate lint buildup and avoid what can be a serious, but preventable, fire. Check three critical areas of the dryer: the lint trap, the body of the dryer, and the duct connecting the dryer to the house's exterior vent.

The lint trap should be cleaned after every dryer load. A full trap of lint allows lint to bypass the lint filter and accumulate unseen in other parts of the appliance. If you are wondering why your dryer isn't getting your clothes dry? Check your lint filter, it is full!

If the lint has been allowed to build up in the trap or the appliance is incredibly old, a surprising amount of fibrous material can accumulate inside the appliance near electrical connections and heat. Some models have a removable bottom kick plate. (Remember to unplug your dryer before you do this!) Remove the panel and thoroughly vacuum the interior of the machine. If you are uncomfortable with do-it-yourself maintenance, you can hire a qualified service person.

Lastly, keep your ducts clean with inexpensive lint duct brush cleaners to keep the air flow uninhibited. This will help your dryer work more efficiently and save in costs. Help us prevent dryer fires.



P O N D E R O S A

# FIREFIGHTER

HARRIS COUNTY ESD #28

This publication is intended for the residents within the Ponderosa Fire Department service area. If you received it in error, we hope you still read it and utilize the fire safety information.  
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17061 Rolling Creek Dr.  
Houston, TX 77090



**Fire fighters** are more than just professionals who put out fires. They are your family, your brothers and sisters who risk their lives every day to protect you and your community. They are the ones who run towards danger when everyone else runs away. They are the ones who sacrifice their time, their health, and sometimes their lives for the greater good. They are the ones who show courage, compassion, and dedication in the face of adversity.

**Why do we need fire fighters?** Because they are the heroes we depend on in times of crisis. Because they are the ones who save lives, property, and the environment. Because they are attempting to help you while you are having the worst day of your life. Because they are the ones who make our world a safer and better place. And because they are the ones who inspire us to be brave, generous, and resilient.

**Support your firefighters!** They deserve our respect, our gratitude, and our help. They need our support and advocacy. They need us to stand with them, to cheer them on, and to thank them for their service. Support your firefighters because they are family.

