

P O N D E R O S A  
**FIREFIGHTER**  
HARRIS COUNTY ESD # 28

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

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

Station 63: 21455 Imperial  
Valley, Houston, TX., 77073

The **WORLD CUP** is Coming to Houston  
*Your Couch May Be the Safest Seat in Town!*



The **2026 World Cup** will bring excitement, energy, and added pressure on roads, lodging, and emergency response across Harris County and our region. While the matches may be in Houston, the impact will reach neighborhoods across our area.

So here is the plain truth:

**If you can stay home... stay home!**

*Think of it as the easiest public safety plan ever: snacks, air conditioning, a couch, and zero parking problems.*

**Call it a safety strategy.**

**Call it a survival plan.**

**Call it “accidentally becoming best friends with your air conditioner.”**

However, you say it, avoiding unnecessary trips during peak event times could be one of the smartest choices you make all summer. In this Summer 2026 issue, you’ll learn why this matters and how the Ponderosa Fire Department is preparing for the ripple effects of one of the biggest events in Houston. As you turn the pages to Station #61, you’ll find safety tips, planning advice, and a match schedule designed to help keep you and your family safe.

<https://www.ponderosavfd.org/>

<https://www.esd28.com>

**Summer 2026**



# HARRIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT #28



Ponderosa Fire Department has achieved the Public Protection Class (PPC) rating of 2!

## How Does the Ponderosa Fire Department **STACK UP** To Other Fire Departments

We depend on the Ponderosa Fire Department as an integral part of public safety, but how does it compare with other departments in the County and across the State?

Between the three categories, Response Time, Scene time, and Clear Time, the Ponderosa Fire Department surpasses with lower times in all three categories when compared to the average times of other departments in Harris County and the average times across the State of Texas. Be assured, these statistics are aged, and we continue to make improvements across the board.

### Ponderosa Fire Department

Harris County • Performance Metrics 2019 – 2024

Trimmed Mean (5%) Response Time

**5.3 min**

↘ 3.8% vs 2019

Trimmed Mean (5%) Scene Time

**13.7 min**

↘ 7.4% vs 2019

Trimmed Mean (5%) Clear Time

**19.1 min**

↘ 6.4% vs 2019

Faster than County Trimmed Mean (5%)

Faster than State Trimmed Mean (5%)

The Ponderosa Fire Department's district is eleven square miles. Still, with mutual aid agreements with other fire departments in the area, the area is much larger. Our district is intersected by two busy roadways, I-45, and FM 1960. Both roads are heavily traveled, and traffic can be stop-and-go at times. With all of this, we were on the scene in an average of 5.3 minutes.

### Performance Trends

Compare Ponderosa Fire Department against county and state trimmed mean (5%)s.

Response Time

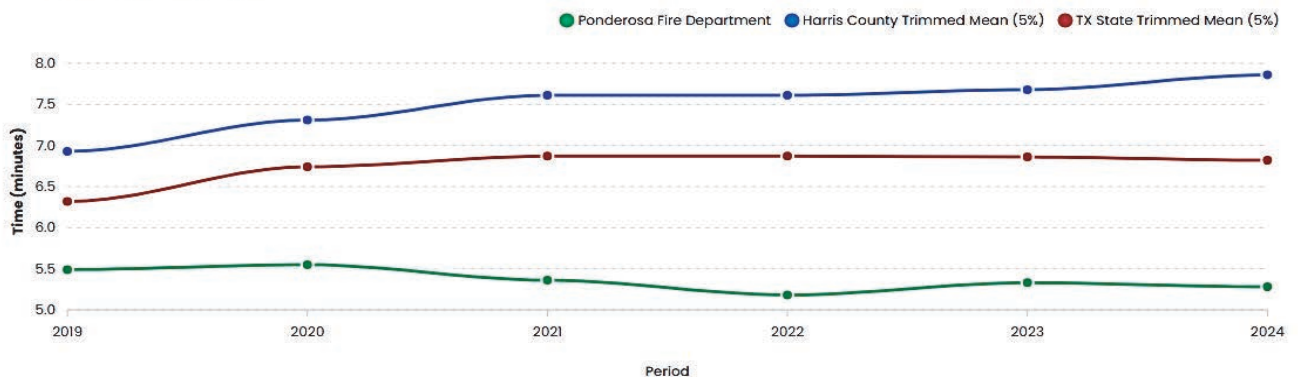
Scene Time

Clear Time

Response Time: Time from alarm to arrival on scene.

Calculated as a 5% trimmed mean, removing the lowest and highest 5% of incident durations before averaging.

Source: NFIRS Public Historical Dataset.



## Scene Time: Time from arrival on scene to clear.

The average time on scene is 13.7 minutes. There are two reasons for this:

- ongoing training and
- the assets we deploy on the scene.

This includes all incidents, from very minor to major. The Ponderosa Fire Department has its own training facility located at Station #63, and our firefighters train as part of their routine.

When we are called to action, we dispatch more trucks than needed. This is done in case a fire escalates. If a fire escalates, the necessary equipment is on scene, and the Ponderosa firefighters do not have to wait for additional support to arrive. Our response matrices assure sufficient resources early in the event.

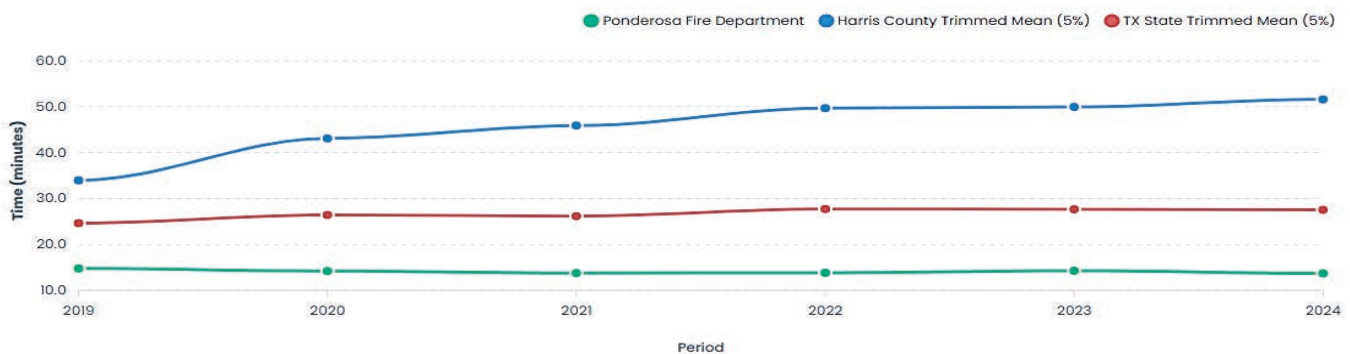
### Performance Trends

Compare Ponderosa Fire Department against county and state trimmed mean (5%)s.



#### Scene Time: Time from arrival on scene to clear.

Calculated as a 5% trimmed mean, removing the lowest and highest 5% of incident durations before averaging.  
Source: NFIRS Public Historical Dataset.



## Clear Time: Time from alarm to clear.

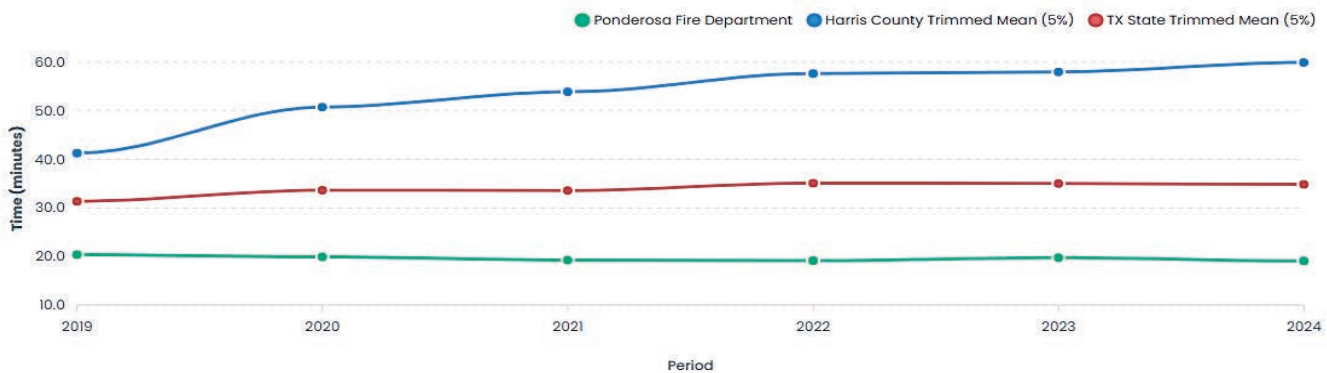
### Performance Trends

Compare Ponderosa Fire Department against county and state trimmed mean (5%)s.



#### Clear Time: Total time from alarm to clear.

Calculated as a 5% trimmed mean, removing the lowest and highest 5% of incident durations before averaging.  
Source: NFIRS Public Historical Dataset.



Overall, we have an excellent Fire Department that cares about our performance and the community we serve. The next time you see a Ponderosa Firefighter, stop and introduce yourself and thank them for their service. You can do this because when you need them the most, on the worst day of your life, they will be there. They appreciate you.

Written by Ken Koenig, Harris County ESD#28 Treasurer



Stay in touch with the Ponderosa Fire Department on Facebook and turn on notifications to get updated postings.

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

## **Ponderosa Fire Department Station #61**



### **World Cup Safety: Big Crowds Bring Big Energy, Safety First**

The Houston region will welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and the scale of this event brings both excitement and responsibility.

Safety must come first. Large crowds, extreme summer heat, international travel, and dense traffic patterns all increase the risk of medical emergencies and public safety incidents. Houston officials have already emphasized that planning for this tournament is a monumental task, involving coordination across local, regional, and federal agencies. (<https://cw39.com/sports/world-cup-2026/houston>)

#### **Let the game stay on the field and let the calm be in the streets.**

Houston will host seven World Cup matches at NRG Stadium, including five group-stage games and two knockout rounds. The first match is scheduled for June 14th, and the final Houston match will take place on July 4<sup>th</sup>. City officials expect 500,000 visitors across the tournament period, along with a 39-day Fan Fest in East Downtown Houston.

To prepare for this influx, Houston's Office of Emergency Management conducted a full match-day walkthrough with state and local first responders, FIFA officials, and the Houston Host Committee. This exercise tested staffing, medical staging, crowd arrivals, in-stadium operations, and post-game departures. The goal was to identify pressure points before 70,000 fans arrive at once. (<https://hoodline.com/2026/04/houston>)

Law enforcement and emergency services support will include the Houston Police Department, Houston Fire Department, Harris County Sheriff's Office, Harris County Fire Marshal's Office, METRO Police, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, Texas Department of Public Safety, and federal partners, including the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

#### **Key Safety Considerations for Residents- HYDRATE with WATER**

Houston's summer heat is a significant public health concern. While not explicitly stated in the sources, the city's emergency planning acknowledges the need for medical surge readiness during major events.

Based on the expected attendance and match timing, residents should anticipate increased demand for emergency services and heavier traffic around NRG Park and East Downtown.

**Road closures will be in effect near the stadium and Fan Fest areas on match days.  
Do remember, we will all be affected in some manner.**

## **Crowd behavior is also a focus of planning.**

FIFA has provided Houston with cultural and behavioral profiles for each team's supporters, including details on fan marches through city streets. This helps local agencies prepare for large, mobile groups and maintain safe movement corridors. Residents can help reduce strain on emergency services by planning and staying aware of match-day conditions.

## **Traffic will be wild, and YOU don't have to match it! PLAN your route to PROTECT your passengers.**

### **Consider the following:**

- Avoid unnecessary travel near NRG Park and East Downtown on match days.

June 14, 2026, Germany vs. Curacao

June 17, 2026, Portugal vs. DR Congo

June 20, 2026, Netherlands vs. Sweden

June 23, 2026, Portugal vs. Uzbekistan

June 26, 2026, Cape Verde vs. Saudi Arabia

### **Knockout Rounds:**

June 29, 2026, Round of 32 (1C vs. 2F)

July 4, 2026, Round of 16 (W73 vs. W75)

- Keep neighborhood streets clear for emergency vehicles. DO NOT park on both sides of the street.
- If hosting a watch party, maintain safe grilling practices and monitor guests' heat exposure.
- Stay informed about road closures and transit adjustments.
- Stay home, stay safe, and if you SEE something, SAY something. (<https://www.fwc26houston.com/matches>)

## **Staying Alert and Reporting Concerns EYES UP. PHONE DOWN. GAME ON!**

Major international events require heightened awareness. Houston and Harris County's emergency planners are working from an all-hazards perspective, and the public plays a significant role in maintaining safety. If you see something that appears unsafe or out of place, report it to local authorities.

Staying alert, staying informed, and speaking up when something does not look right help protect the entire community.

## **The Best Plan is to Plan Ahead for Groceries, Prescriptions, Fuel, and Family Needs before major match days.**

Keep phones charged, monitor local updates, and allow extra time if, for any reason, you must travel on those days. If you have family members who are elderly, medically vulnerable, or sensitive to heat, check on them often and make sure they have what they need well in advance.

## **Large-scale events can test any region's systems.**

The best way to help emergency responders do their jobs is for residents to reduce unnecessary travel, remain patient, and think ahead. Public safety is a shared responsibility, and small decisions at home can make a significant difference across the community.



Stay up to date with Ponderosa Fire Department on their website and be sure to bookmark the page for future access.  
<https://www.ponderosavfd.org>



## Ponderosa Fire Department Station #62

Summer brings long days, backyard gatherings, and plenty of time around the water.



Whether you're enjoying a neighborhood pool, a backyard oasis, or a weekend at the lake, water safety is one of the most important responsibilities we share as a community. The Ponderosa Fire Department responds to water-related emergencies every year, most of which are preventable with simple awareness and preparation.

### Supervision is the First Line of Defense

Drowning is fast, silent, and often looks like stillness. It is not splashing, waving, or noisy. Adults should always maintain constant supervision around the pool. Adults should not be distracted by their phones or conversations. Children should always be within arm's reach. Even strong swimmers can get tired, disoriented, or caught up in the splashing and waterplay of a large pool.

### Secure Your Home Pool

All pools should be secured with a four-sided fence and a self-latching gate. Be sure to remove all toys from the pool when not in use. These random floating toys can attract children back into the pool when an adult is not watching. Keep rescue equipment, (life ring, reaching pole) and a charged phone nearby for emergencies.

Ensure pool drains have anti-entrapment covers to prevent suction injuries. Children cannot resist skimmers, drains, and other pool outlets. If you have guests, especially children, review the pool rules before the fun begins. Warnings are important, and adults should watch those areas that could hurt or entrap a child.

### Life Jackets Save Lives

For lakes, rivers, and open water, life jackets are non-negotiable. Children must wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets. Inflatable arm bands are not safety devices.

Adults should model the same behavior and wear a jacket when boating or paddleboarding. Open water is unpredictable with depth changes, drop-offs, and currents that can surprise experienced swimmers.

### Know the Signs of Distress

Recognizing distress early can prevent tragedy. Watch for a swimmer's head low in the water, gasping or breathing rapidly, hands raised without being able to call for help, or a vertical position with no kicking. If they appear unable to roll onto their back, act immediately.

### Sun, Heat, and Hydration

Water fun often masks early signs of heat stress. Always remember to take breaks in the shade every 30-45 minutes. Drink water regularly if you're thirsty- this is a late sign of dehydration. Apply sunscreen often, especially to children. Heat exhaustion can escalate quickly, even in the water. Avoid drinking alcohol while supervising children and never operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol.

## Learn CPR, Knowing Makes a Difference



Immediate CPR can double or triple survival chances in a drowning emergency. Consider taking a community CPR class. Ensure babysitters, grandparents, and frequent caregivers know basic CPR skills. Seconds matter, and trained hands save lives before responders arrive.

## Respect the Weather

Storms can form quickly in Texas. Exit the water at the first sign of thunder. Wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike before reentering the water. Lightning can strike miles from the storm cell.

## Water Safety Statistics and Why Those Seconds Matter

- Drowning can occur in as little as 20-60 seconds.
- Ninety percent of child drownings happen with an adult nearby.
- Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children aged 1-4 years old.
- Most drownings in young children occur in home pools.
- For every fatal drowning, 5-8 non-fatal drownings require emergency care.
- Brain injury can begin 4-6 minutes after submersion without oxygen. If something looks “off,” you have less than a minute to intervene.

## Window of Time and Seconds that Matter.

- 0-10 seconds: Struggling to breathe; cannot call out.
- 10-20 seconds: Instinctive drowning response; vertical posture
- 20-60 seconds: Critical rescue window
- 60-120 seconds: Loss of consciousness
- 2-4 minutes: Cardiac arrest likely
- 4-6 minutes: Risk of irreversible brain injury.

**Immediately call 911;** seconds count.

Remove the victim from the water quickly and safely. Begin CPR if the person is not breathing and continue until the Ponderosa Fire Department or the Emergency Medical Services arrive.

## A Safe Summer Starts with All of Us

Ponderosa Fire Department is committed to keeping our community safe, but prevention begins at home. With your attentive supervision, proper equipment, and a few simple habits, you can ensure every family enjoys a safe and memorable summer in and around the water. Below are listed references for further education on water safety.

## Be Safe, Be Prepared, and Be Aware.

### References:

*American Red Cross-Water Safety & Drowning Prevention, <https://www.redcross.org>.*

*American Heart Association-CPR & Emergency Response Guidelines, <https://www.heart.org>.*

*U.S. Coast Guard-Life Jacket Requirements & Boating Safety, <https://www.uscgboating.org>.*

*U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission-Pool Safety Campaign, <https://www.poolsafely.gov>.*

## REMEMBER:

Eyes on the water, every time-  
Safety first, in sun or shine.

Watch the pool, stay cool, play kind-  
Safe summer fun gives peace of mind.

Look, listen, stay aware-  
One quick glance shows you care.

Stay alert, phones down, eyes up, beware-  
Distress calls to no one, so be prepared.

**The Ponderosa Fire Department  
The Ponderosa Firefighters  
and ESD #28.**



In an emergency,  
CALL 911.

## Ponderosa Fire Department Station #63



### Community Safety Update

By District Chief, Randy Garza

The Ponderosa Fire Department and ESD #28 are proud to introduce our neighbors to the dedicated team serving our community through the Ponderosa Fire Department (PFD) and Harris County Emergency Services District (ESD) #28.

Since 1972, PFD has proudly served North Harris County with an all-hazards approach, meaning our firefighters are prepared to respond to a wide range of emergencies, from fires and medical calls to technical rescues and other complex incidents.

### Who is ESD #28?



While the Ponderosa Fire Department provides emergency services, ESD #28 is the local government entity that funds them.

- **Here's how the partnership works:**  
ESD#28 collects local sales and property taxes to ensure PFD is well-equipped with stations, apparatus, equipment, and training. This helps us meet state and federal standards and serve our community with dedication and care.
- **What That Means for Residents:**  
This strong partnership has helped the department earn an ISO Class 2 rating, a distinction that places PFD among the nation's top 5% of fire departments and may help reduce homeowners' insurance costs.

### Our Mission & Commitment

*At Ponderosa Fire Department, we are dedicated to protecting our community through proactive fire prevention, emergency response, suppression, and rescue services.*

*Guided by an all-hazards approach, we strive to meet and exceed state and federal standards while operating with professionalism, reliability, and accountability.*

*At our core, we are an inclusive team that values open communication, honesty, and the diverse skills of our volunteers and paid staff.*

*We are committed to fostering a safe, healthful environment where every member is empowered to achieve superior performance.*

*As we welcome new firefighters to our ranks, we are honored to support their professional growth and look forward to a future of shared success and health.*

### Growth in Our Community

To keep pace with our growing neighborhood, the Ponderosa Fire Department is proud to welcome four new full-time firefighters in December 2025. These new members strengthen the shift rosters, ensuring professional and reliable service 24/7. We are excited to see them work and grow as they develop their skills within our organization, and we are optimistic for their success.

Each brings a powerful sense of duty, a commitment to service, and a passion for protecting the community we call home. As they begin this next chapter with the Ponderosa Fire Department, we are proud of our new professionals and look forward to the skill, energy, and dedication they will bring to the department in the years ahead.



**Congratulations to our recruits joining the Ponderosa Fire Department!**

### **Meet Firefighter Barrett Sivley**

**Barrett Sivley brings both heart and dedication to the Ponderosa Fire Department.** He was born in Modesto, California. Barrett's journey took him across several states before eventually bringing him back to Texas. He spent much of his childhood in Frisco, where family, sports, and strong values helped shape the person he is today.

Growing up, Barrett enjoyed an active and close-knit family life. He spent countless hours at his older brother's football and baseball games, made memories with family around Dallas, and developed a deep appreciation for the people closest to him. Those experiences helped instill in him a caring nature and a selfless mindset, qualities that continue to define him today.

Outside of the department, Barrett enjoys staying active and connected to the things he loves most. Whether he is working out, playing guitar, fishing, or making the trip back to Tyler to spend time with family, he values both discipline and balance in his life. His commitment to personal growth and the people around him is evident in everything he does.



Those who know Barrett best describe him as caring and selfless, someone who consistently puts others before himself. That spirit of service, combined with his work ethic and positive character, makes him a strong addition to the Ponderosa Fire Department and a firefighter our community can be proud to know.

### **Meet Firefighter Jasmine Roman**



**Born and raised in Chicago, Jasmine brings a strong work ethic, determination, and a team-first mindset to the Ponderosa Fire Department.** Before joining the fire service, she worked for a forestry company, where she developed the discipline, resilience, and teamwork skills that prepared her well for the demands of this profession.



Duty,  
Pride,  
Commitment

## Curtis J. Cook Training Facility



That experience helped shape the focused and hardworking attitude she brings to the department each day.

Outside of work, she enjoys cooking and working out; two interests that reflect both her creativity and her drive to keep improving. Whether she is in the kitchen trying something new or pushing herself in the gym, she values growth, discipline, and balance in all areas of life.

When she is off duty, she continues to invest in herself, both physically and mentally, always seeking ways to be better prepared for the job's responsibilities and challenges. Family and friends describe her as a true go-getter. Someone who sets goals, follows through, and gives herself all to everything she does. Her determination, commitment, and positive spirit make her a wonderful addition to the Ponderosa Fire Department, and we are proud to welcome her to the team.

### Meet Firefighter Peter Vu



**Peter Vu grew up in the northwest Houston area and is proud to serve the same kind of hardworking community that helped shape him.** From an early age, he was drawn to hands-on work and the value of being part of a dedicated team; qualities that naturally led him to a career in the fire service.

Peter was inspired to become a firefighter by a desire to make a real difference in people's lives, especially during difficult moments. To prepare for the job, he focused on building his physical fitness, strengthening his mindset, and learning everything he could about the profession. That dedication continues to guide him as he grows in his role and gains experience with every shift.

Outside of the department, Peter enjoys staying active, working on personal projects, and spending time with friends and family. Those closest to him describe him as hardworking, dependable, and always willing to help others; someone who takes pride in doing things the right way. His commitment to service, growth, and the community makes him a valued addition to the Ponderosa Fire Department.

### Meet Firefighter Ethan Romeo

**Raised in a military family, Ethan grew up moving every three years before finally landing in Texas,** where a summer lifeguard job and the unforgettable rescue of a drowning toddler set the course for his life. Inspired by firefighters since childhood, he fast-tracked his career straight out of high school, graduating from the TEEX Fire Academy and RC Health EMT Academy before joining the department at just 20 years old.

On duty, Ethan brings a steady, resilient presence to high-stress emergencies, from

zero-visibility structure fires to lifesaving welfare checks. He studies local territory, trains relentlessly, and maintains peak physical fitness, all to master the tools and tactics of the trade.



Off duty, he's a hands-on craftsman who builds furniture, competes in family sports, and restores his vintage 1970 Harley chopper, a hands-on craft that mirrors the precision, patience, and discipline he brings to the fireground.

Known by family, friends, and crew as dependable and level-headed, Ethan is constantly pushing himself to learn, improve, and serve. In the next five years, he aims to become a fire apparatus driver and earn specialized certifications in swift water, rope, and wildland rescue.

At the heart of it all is a promise Ethan brings into every shift: to show up prepared, lead with respect, and be the steady professional the community can rely on when everything else is falling apart.

### **Additional News:**

**In May 2026, the Ponderosa Fire Department welcomed six new full-time Firefighters and EMTs**, a milestone that reflects both the district's growing call volume and our commitment to maintaining a strong, reliable staffing across all stations. This expansion strengthens our ability to respond faster, operate more safely, and provide the high-quality service our community expects.

Each new hire brings fresh energy, advanced training, and a shared dedication to the department's core values, ***Duty, Commitment, and Pride***, reinforcing the depth of our team and the future of our service.

### **Combustibles: A Small Fire, A Big Reminder**

A recent 911 call to the **Texas Emergency Communication Center (TECC) (911)** sent Engine 63 to what began as a routine structure fire dispatch and was quickly upgraded to a full box. Crews arrived to find smoke drifting from a patio, where improperly discarded smoking materials had ignited nearby combustibles. Thanks to fast action and a contained burn area, the fire was extinguished quickly with no injuries reported.

While the incident was minor, the message is not: **combustibles ignite easily, spread quickly, and turn preventable moments into emergencies.**

Properly disposing of smoking materials, keeping patios and porches clear of clutter, and maintaining working smoke alarms are among the simplest, most effective ways to protect your home and your family.



For our newest firefighters, calls like this are more than routine responses. They're the real-world lessons that shape a career. Every incident has its own flavor, its own environment, and its own human variables. That's why the training is extensive and relentless: because no call is ever textbook, and no two scenes unfold the same way.

These early experiences teach recruits how quickly a small oversight can become a fire, how fast conditions shift, and how awareness and prevention matter just as much as suppression. It's where classroom knowledge meets the unpredictable reality of the field and where the instincts of a firefighter begin to take root.

Preparedness isn't abstract. It's built call by call, decision by decision, and reinforced every time a simple hazard is caught before it becomes a life-changing emergency.

# 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 this newsletter in error, we hope you still read it and utilize the fire safety information. Copyright 2026, ESD #28, Ponderosa Fire Department

17061 Rolling Creek Dr.  
Houston, TX 77090



## Ponderosa Deputy Chief Makes Infant Rescue- Training and Instinct in Action

During an annual hose testing at Headquarters on May 19, 2026. Ponderosa crews were interrupted by a resident reporting an apartment fire across the street. Deputy Chief 6003, Scott Windisch, immediately grabbed a radio and ran through the complex's man-gate, where he found heavy smoke and fire rolling off a first-floor patio.



Inside, a grandmother was attempting to extinguish the flames. Windisch moved her to safety and asked if anyone else was inside.

*“Yes, my baby granddaughter is in the back bedroom.”*

What happened next wasn't hesitation or guesswork; it was 40 years of training, muscle memory, and firefighter instinct taking over. Windisch dropped low, crawled beneath the smoke layer, navigated the apartment by touch and heat, and located the infant. He carried the infant out and transferred safely to the arriving crews. The child was unharmed.

A full structure fire response was dispatched, bringing units from Ponderosa's 61, 62, and 63 along with mutual aid from Klein, Spring, and Little York Fire Departments. The fire was quickly contained with no injuries to civilians or responders.

For Deputy Chief Windisch, this was the first live rescue of his four-decade career, a moment that underscores a truth every firefighter knows: ***you train for the call you hope never comes. When it does come, you're ready.*** Because preparedness isn't a slogan, it's a discipline. It's hose testing on a weekday morning. It's crawling drills, smoke conditions, search patterns, and repetition. It's the quiet confidence that when someone's worst moment arrives, you will not freeze. You will act. And on this day, that training saved a life.



Ponderosa Fire Department  
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