

San Jose Fire Department measures its response time performance against two standards. There is a City performance standard, and a County EMS contractual standard.

San Jose City Standard

The response time performance standard for the City of San Jose applies to all types of incidents (EMS, fire, HazMat, rescue, etc.) and it applies to all incidents handled within San Jose. It does not apply when SJFD resources are called to respond outside of San Jose jurisdiction, but it does apply when SJFD has sub-contracted with another agency to provide emergency service to San Jose residents either as automatic aid (pre-arranged due to fire station proximity) or mutual aid (one-time resource limitations) requests.

The time standard depends upon the severity of the reported incident as determined through the Fire Priority Dispatch System or Medical Priority Dispatch System. The standard is to arrive within 8 minutes to all Priority 1 emergencies and within 13 minutes to all Priority 2 emergencies, measured from the time that a relevant emergency is reported (includes call processing time). This is to be achieved on 80% of incidents.

The response time starts when a Communications call taker confirms that the incident address is within San Jose's jurisdiction, and determines that there is an emergency requiring a Fire Department resource. This is the "notification" time. The response time stops when the first fire department emergency resource arrives on scene. This is the "on scene" time.

If resources are cancelled while en route (such as when a patient self-transport, or when a fire alarm is reported to be a false alarm and has reset), the incident will be reported as late if the performance standard time (8 minutes or 13 minute) has already elapsed because the department did not meet the performance standard. However, if resources are cancelled while en route prior to the performance standard time, the call is not counted as either meeting the standard or not meeting the standard. This is because it is not known whether it would have arrived on time, so there should be no penalty, nor should the department be recognized for meeting its response time.

Santa Clara County EMS Standard

The response time performance standard for the contract with Santa Clara County EMS is specific only to EMS incidents, defined by Santa Clara County to include incidents such as major vehicle accidents.

It does not apply when SJFD resources are called to respond outside of San Jose jurisdiction, but it does apply when SJFD has sub-contracted with another agency to provide emergency service to San Jose residents.

The time standard depends upon the severity of the reported EMS incident, as determined through the Medical Priority Dispatch System. Based upon MPDS incident typing, the fire department sends either a Red Lights & Sirens (Priority 1) or non-Red Lights & Sirens (Priority 2) response. The County contractual standard is to arrive within 8 minutes on Priority 1 EMS incidents and within 13 minutes on Priority 2 EMS incidents. These times are measured from the time that a fire department resource is dispatched to

respond (excludes call processing time). This is to be achieved on 95% of incidents to avoid any reductions in the funding stipend from the County. This is to be achieved on 90% of incidents to have minimal compliance with the County contract.

The response time starts when the first fire department resource is notified to respond. The response time stops when the first appropriate fire department emergency resource arrives on scene. This is the “on scene” time. A resource is appropriate if it has the correctly trained personnel and the correct equipment to handle the emergency incident. A Priority 1 incident requires a licensed Paramedic and Emergency Medical Technician with Advanced Lifesaving Equipment. A Priority 2 incident requires Emergency Medical Technicians with Basic Life Support Equipment.

If resources are cancelled while en route (such as when a patient self-transport, or the ambulance cancels fire department resources), the incident will be reported as late if the performance standard time (8 minutes or 13 minute) has already elapsed because the department did not meet the performance standard. However, if resources are cancelled while en route prior to the performance standard time, the call is not counted as either meeting the standard or not meeting the standard. This is because it is not known whether it would have arrived on time, so there should be no penalty, nor should the department be recognized for meeting its response time.

The county contract provides for exemptions in certain situations. These situations are identified manually at the end of each month, and the exemption must be requested from County EMS.

The County contract also provides special adjustments if a call is upgraded or downgraded while resources are en route, and for the use of “pre-alert” apparatus notifications. These adjustments allow the resetting of the unit notification time. Full details of these situations and all information for reporting response times to County EMS can be found in the attachment, Annex B of the contract between the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County EMS.