

**6.0 FIRE SERVICES**

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## 6.0 FIRE SERVICES

### 6.1 Current Functional Service Areas

There are 23 separate fire service areas in Pinellas County. The 60 fire stations, located throughout the County, provide coverage, on the average, for every 4.66 square miles. The entire fire service operation is budgeted \$50.1 million for the 1991-92 budget year. The combined fire stations house a total of 336 pieces of fire equipment, including over 60 advanced life support (ALS) apparatus and 1,177 personnel. There are 23 Chiefs who control budgets ranging from \$35,000 to \$16 million, and staffing complements that range from 5 fire personnel to 330. Exhibit 6-1 illustrates a profile of the 23 fire service areas. Eleven of the fire service areas (nearly half) complement their paid staffing strength with volunteers. The remaining 12 rely entirely on paid staff. Population was used in this profile to provide a relative measure of the size of each fire service area. It should be noted that the population estimates include seasonal residents and tourist in addition to the resident population.

Organized fire services began in Pinellas County prior to 1900, in Tarpon Springs, Safety Harbor, Clearwater, and Saint Petersburg. The last fire department to be organized was the East Lake Fire Rescue on February 4, 1974. This department was originally known as Tarpon Lake Volunteer Fire Department and went through a series of name changes until the present name was established in 1977.



EXHIBIT 6-1  
 PROFILE OF PINELLAS COUNTY FIRE SERVICE AREAS

Fire Service Areas	Fire Stations	Equipment <sup>1</sup>	Staffing Strength <sup>2</sup>	Population 1990 <sup>4</sup>
Belleair	1	4	5 <sup>3</sup>	4,885
Belleair Bluffs	1	4	8	5,253
Clearwater	6	28	167	127,299
Airport (only)	1	4	16	N/A
Dunedin	2	12	39	39,670
East Lake	1	9	24	12,725
Gulfport	1	7	All Volunteer	8,398
Indian Rocks	2	14	36 <sup>3</sup>	19,489
Kenneth City	1	4	All Volunteer	7,901
Largo	5	39	124	97,227
Lealman	2	19	50 <sup>3</sup>	35,644
Madeira Beach	1	6	15 <sup>3</sup>	7,089
Oldsmar	1	9	12 <sup>3</sup>	11,086
Palm Harbor	4	15	45 <sup>3</sup>	55,345
Pinellas Park	4	25	78	48,652
Redington	1	4	11 <sup>3</sup>	7,175
Safety Harbor	2	13	32 <sup>3</sup>	14,667
Seminole	4	27	93 <sup>3</sup>	80,570
South Pasadena	1	8	17 <sup>3</sup>	9,043
St. Pete Beach	2	11	28	11,039
St. Petersburg	13	62	330	330,010
Tarpon Springs	2	7	36	25,753
Treasure Island	1	5	11 <sup>3</sup>	9,528
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>1,177</b>	<b>968,451</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Records

<sup>1</sup> Includes all vehicle equipment.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes volunteer staff.

<sup>3</sup> Use volunteer staff to complement paid staff, total for the county = 265.

<sup>4</sup> Population estimates from Pinellas Planning Department (1-28-91).

Estimates includes permanent residents, seasonal residents and tourists.



## **6.2 Regulations**

In 1973, the Florida Legislature passed a law (73-600) which created the Pinellas County Fire Protection Authority. Under the law the Pinellas County Commission was designated as the Authority, with responsibility to "establish and implement a permanent plan of fire protection for Pinellas County and each of its municipalities". Additionally the law provided for the creation of fire control districts (especially to support unincorporated areas), for levying taxes for the funding requirements, and general oversight of the fire suppression delivery system. During the next 17 years there were 15 such districts established. Although there are remaining pockets of unincorporated areas near Oldsmar and South Pasadena that are still not in any official fire control jurisdiction, they are covered by the County established closest unit response.

Pinellas County actually got a jump on one aspect of the 1973 legislation. In 1971 the Board of County Commissioners assigned the Planning Department the responsibility for a Fire Protection Plan. The plan sought to:

- establish accredited fire protection for all citizens of the County,
- establish positions for full-time fire fighters,
- encourage the upgrading of the local fire service ratings.

Today all fire fighters in the County are accredited, all but two fire service areas have full-time fire fighters, and an evaluation by the Insurance Services Office was recently conducted to establish, for the first time, a county-wide fire service rating. Also, a County Ordinance (84-1) was established in 1984 to create a county-wide fire prevention code, enforceable the same throughout the County. There have also been four volunteer fire departments that have gone out of business with fire services being provided to the areas



by other city fire departments. They are Gandy, High Point, Ridgcrest, and Seminole Park. Gandy fire service is provided by St. Petersburg. High Point's fire service is being jointly provided by Largo and Pinellas Park.

A recent review by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) has established the potential for a county-wide rating of four, with 69 out of a possible 100 points in the classification process. To get a classification of three requires a score of 70 points. The County staff is currently working with the Fire Chiefs Association to improve the rating. With minor improvements, the County could get a rating of three or possibly a two.

Although the legal authority for fire services either has its origin in the state legislature or home-rule charters, there are considered to be seven legal types of fire service operations in Pinellas County. These are:

- 1) Cities which have no unincorporated area to protect
- 2) Districts created special by the legislature
- 3) Cities providing service to unincorporated areas
- 4) Independent "not-for-profit" corporations
- 5) Districts contracting with other fire agencies
- 6) Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU)
- 7) St. Petersburg/Clearwater Airport Authority

Cities Which Have No or Limited Unincorporated Area to Protect - There are 10 cities within Pinellas County which have no or limited unincorporated area to protect. These are:

- Belleair
- Gulfport
- Kenneth City
- Madeira Beach
- Oldsmar (contracts with Florida Power and 2 small unincorporated areas)
- Redington Beach
- St. Petersburg
- St. Petersburg Beach



- South Pasadena (has individual contracts with home owners in unincorporated area adjacent to the City)
- Treasure Island

These cities develop their budgets and submit the necessary documents to the county tax collector to generate the required funds.

Special Districts Created by the Legislature - There are two districts which were created by special acts of the legislature. They are:

- Indian Rocks Fire Control District
- Palm Harbor Special Fire District

These two fire agencies function much like a city. They have their own publicly-elected board of commissioners who prepare and approve the annual budgets for the district. These boards request the county tax collector to collect the taxes or fees from each property owner to meet the districts' budget requirements.

Cities Providing Service to Unincorporated Areas - There are seven cities that provide fire services to unincorporated portions of the county under Florida Statutes 73-600. They are:

- Belleair Bluffs
- Clearwater
- Dunedin
- Largo
- Pinellas Park
- Safety Harbor
- Tarpon Springs



These cities develop a budget and submit it to the County Fire Administrator for review. The cities and the County go through a public hearing process prior to finalizing the budget for the ensuing year.

Independent "Not-for-Profit" Corporations - There are three fire districts that operate under Florida Statute 73-600 that are independent "not-for-profit" corporations. They are:

- Seminole Fire Department
- East Lake Fire and Rescue
- Lealman

These districts operate under Florida Statute 73-600, and submit budgets to the Fire Administration for review prior to inclusion in the county budget. Seminole also contracts with the City of Seminole and the Bay Pines VA Center.

Districts Contracting with Other Fire Agencies - There are two districts created in accordance with Florida Statute 73-600 which no longer operate their own fire department and contract out to other fire agencies. They are:

- Gandy
- High Point

The Gandy fire district services are provided by the City of St. Petersburg, and the High Point services are provided by Largo and Pinellas Park.

Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) - There is only one fire service area in Pinellas County that operates as a Municipal Services Taxing Unit. It is:

- Tierra Verde



The Board of County Commissioners is the governing body which contracts with the City of St. Petersburg for fire services. The City determines the cost of operation and negotiates with the County Fire Administration an annual budget to service the island area.

St. Petersburg/Clearwater Airport Authority - The Airport Authority provides fire services to the airport only, under FAA requirements. The fire fighters are county employees, and are dispatched by the central communication system.

Each of the Fire Service Areas are shown in exhibit 6-2, listing the legal authority, operating authority, mileage rate, and 1991-92 budget. A map of the Fire Services Districts and station locations are shown in exhibit 6-3.

### **6.3 Services**

Measurable progress has been made in the fire service. Although, it still remains fragmented through 23 different administrations, the County has attempted to pull it together through its responsibility as the Fire Protection Authority. An office of Fire and EMS Administration has been established within the Pinellas County Civil Emergency Services Department. There is essentially one person responsible for coordinating a fire service plan for the County. The County Fire Coordinator has recently begun the development of a County Fire Master Plan. The timing on the master plan and the provision of information and data has been very helpful to this study on governmental services improvement. Recent statistical data and other written materials have been an asset in conducting the analysis necessary to understand the intricacies of the fire service system.





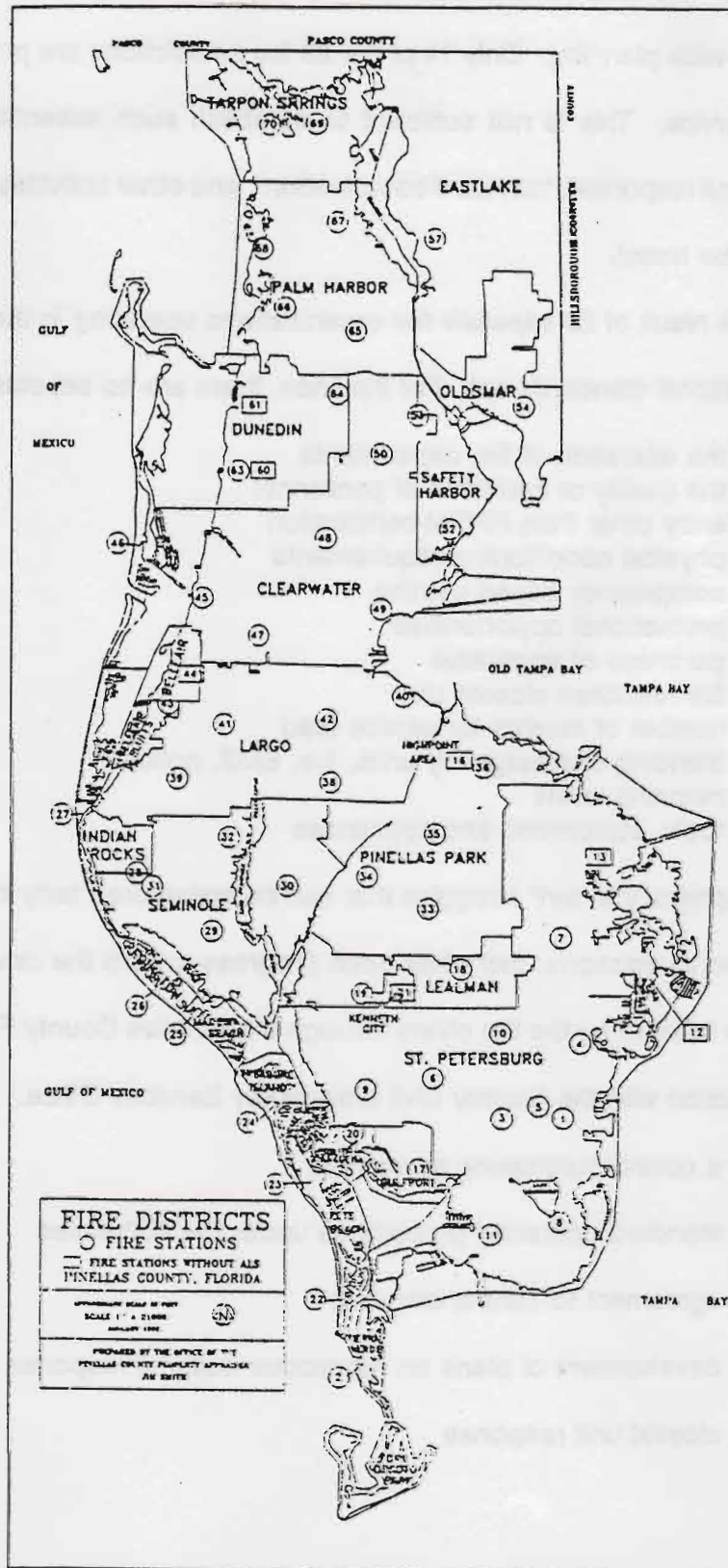
EXHIBIT 6-2  
FIRE SERVICE AUTHORITIES AND COUNTY-WIDE BUDGET 1991-92

Fire Protection Areas	Legal Authority	Operating Authority	Fire Millage Rates	Fire Budget
Belleair	City	City Comm	.621	\$0.170 m.
Belleair Bluffs	City	City Comm.	1.605	\$0.338 m.
Clearwater	City/F.D.	City Manager	1.705	\$7.310 m.
Airport (only)	Air. Authority	Air. Authority	N/A	N/A
Dunedin	City/F.D.	City Commission	2.400	\$2.185 m.
East Lake	County FPA	Bd.of Comm.	1.244	\$1.000 m.
Gulfport	City	City Council	.644	\$0.177 m.
Indian Rocks	Special Tax D.	Bd. of Comm.	\$81/home	\$1.105 m.
Kenneth City	City	City/Lealman	.438	\$0.035 m.
Largo	City/F.D.	City Council	1.499	\$3.907 m.
Lealman	County FPA	Bd. of Comm.	3.253	\$1.956 m.
Madeira Beach	City	City Council	1.400	\$0.424 m.
Oldsmar	City	City Council	2.742	\$0.563 m.
Palm Harbor	Special Tax D.	Bd. of Comm.	1.289	\$2.369 m.
Pinellas Park	City/F.D.	City Council	2.648	\$3.423 m.
Redington	Contract	R.B. Fire Assn.	N/A	\$0.303 m.
Safety Harbor	City/F.D.	City Comm.	2.336	\$1.266 m.
Seminole	County FPA	Volunteer Bd.	2.448	\$4.741 m.
South Pasadena	City	City Council	1.200	\$0.854 m.
St. Pete Beach	City	City Council	1.677	\$1.277 m.
St. Petersburg	City	City Council	2.370	\$15.995 m.
Tarpon Springs	City/F.D.	City Commission	1.861	\$1.174 m.
Treasure Island	City	(no data given)	(no data given)	(no data given)
High Point	Fire District	P. Park/ Largo	P. Park/Largo	P. Park/ Largo
Gandy	Fire District	St. Petersburg	4.225	\$0.356 m.
Tierra Verde	M. S. T. U.	St. Petersburg	1.138	\$0.380 m.
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>				<b>\$51.308 m.</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Records and City Budgets



EXHIBIT 6-3





Even with its Fire Protection Authority responsibilities, the County still suffers limitations to county-wide planning. Only 14 of the 23 fire jurisdictions are provided budgetary support for fire service. This is not sufficient to establish such essential important programs as "closest unit response", "run-card coordination", and other activities where a consensus voice needs to be heard.

As a result of 23 separate fire organizations operating in the County there have been few operational standards set. For instance, there are no set standards for:

- the operation of fire departments
- the quality or condition of personnel
- entry other than FF/PM certification
- physical conditioning requirements
- competency based training
- promotional opportunities
- purchase of apparatus
- fire response closest unit
- number of medics for service load
- blending of emergency units, fire, EMS, police
- manning levels
- tools, equipment, and appliances

In spite of the "turf" struggles that can be considered fairly normal between separately constituted jurisdictions, there has been progress toward the development of some central programs initiated by the fire chiefs through the Pinellas County Fire Chiefs Association and in conjunction with the County Civil Emergency Services Office. Developments include:

- a central purchasing agreement
- standard operating procedures under the 600 series
- agreement to central dispatch
- development of plans on hazardous material response coordination
- closest unit response



Central Purchasing Agreement - Every one of the fire chiefs interviewed agreed that one of the best things that has ever happened to Pinellas County fire service administration is the establishment of a central purchasing agreement. Some estimates of savings that were provided are shown in exhibit 6-4 below. Many chiefs would like to expand the scope of the agreement to include other fire equipment to include vehicles.

EXHIBIT 6-4

SAVINGS THROUGH JOINT PURCHASING

ITEM	USAGE	ITEM COST	ITEM SAVINGS	TOTAL SAVINGS
Hose	10,000 ft.	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$55,000
Shirts	3,402 yr.	\$17.00	\$4.00	\$13,608
Pants	1,134 yr.	\$25.00	\$5.00	\$5,670
TOTAL				\$74,278

Standard Operating Procedures - Several fire service areas throughout the County have adopted the standard operating procedures developed by a task force of the Association. All who have adopted the procedures agree that it will standardize training which can save lives in a multiple alarm fire where several agencies may need to respond and operate as one team.

Central Dispatch - Just recently St. Petersburg Fire Department became the last agency to begin using the Pinellas County Central Dispatch system. Every agency interviewed had nothing but praise for the central system. The computer aided dispatch (CAD) system is



designed to get the proper fire and EMS units to respond to the emergency scene within 26 seconds of the time the phone rings in the dispatch center. The computers are on-line 24 hours a day and are ready to activate radio encodes on both the VHF and 800 MHz radio system. The computer has the capability to select the nearest or most appropriate response vehicle from over 512,000 phone number locations, or more than 410,000 addresses within the County.

Hazardous Materials - The increased use and transportation of hazardous materials has escalated the risk of catastrophic incident occurring throughout the County. The specialized knowledge required to safely respond to incidents has required the development of special HAZMAT teams in the County. The team is made up of Palm Harbor, Seminole, Largo, Pinellas Park, and St. Petersburg. An emergency plan has been developed that identifies facilities, transportation routes, response and notification procedures, evacuation plans, training programs and communication coordination.

Closest Unit Response - Until recently, there has not been a requirement for fire departments to respond the closest units to fire incidents. However, in October of 1990, the Board of County Commissioners signed a Mutual Aid Agreement with each Fire agency to dispatch the unit which is predetermined to be closest to the emergency scene without regard to the jurisdiction where the emergency occurs. The jurisdictions have signed the agreement. The benefits are numerous:

- It is cost effective by sharing resources and personnel.
- It provides a greater level of safety by responding quicker.



- There is no lost motion determining who should respond and who should be in charge at the fire ground.

In 1990 there were 106,429 fire and EMS incidents throughout Pinellas County. This amounts to approximately one incident for every nine persons in the County. Of the incidents approximately 4,983, or 5%, involved fire. The remaining were non-fire, or medical emergency incidents. Exhibit 6-5 illustrates the number of incidents per fire service area. The highest incidents for fire service were in East Lake, Belleair and Belleair Bluffs. The lowest percentage were in Gulfport, South Pasadena and St. Petersburg Beach.

#### 6.4 Personnel

Staffing Levels - There are approximately 1,177 fire service personnel working in the 23 fire protection agencies throughout the County. Those fire service personnel serve approximately 968,451 citizens in the County, or 823 citizens per employee. Exhibit 6-6 provides a comparison of the average population served by the fire service agency, along with the variation of number served over or under the average.

As a general indicator, Palm Harbor provides service to the highest ratio of citizens per employee at 1,230. In the upper quartile, other agencies serving 1,000 or more citizens per employee are Dunedin and St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg Beach provides service to the lowest ratio of citizens per employee at 394. In the lower quartile, other agencies serving 600 or less citizens per employee are East Lake, Indian Rocks, Madeira Beach, Safety Harbor, and South Pasadena.



EXHIBIT 6-5  
RATIO OF FIRE TO TOTAL INCIDENTS BY FIRE SERVICE AREA, 1990

Fire Service Areas	Total Incidents	Fire Incidents	Non-Fire Incidents	Ratio of Fire Total
Belleair	453	48	405	0.11
Belleair Bluffs	512	52	460	0.10
Clearwater	16,535	642	15,893	0.04
Airport (only)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dunedin	2,874	156	2,718	0.05
East Lake	838	109	729	0.13
Gulfport	1,976	57	1,919	0.03
Indian Rocks	2,677	100	2,577	0.04
Kenneth City	506	32	474	0.06
Largo	11,185	541	10,644	0.05
Lealman	4,996	197	4799	0.04
Madeira Beach	1,383	86	1,297	0.06
Oldsmar	837	61	776	0.07
Palm Harbor	3,867	217	3,650	0.06
Pinellas Park	7,086	380	6,696	0.05
Redington	802	50	752	0.06
Safety Harbor	2,056	122	1,934	0.06
Seminole	6,293	281	6,012	0.04
South Pasadena	1,572	40	1,532	0.03
St. Pete Beach	1,755	55	1,700	0.03
St. Petersburg	32,262	1,578	30,684	0.05
Tarpon Springs	2,688	124	2,564	0.05
Treasure Island	1,092	41	1,051	0.04
High Point	PPark/Largo	PPark/Largo	PPark/Largo	PPark/Largo
Gandy	St.Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete
Tierra Verde	St. Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106,429</b>	<b>4,983</b>	<b>101,446</b>	<b>0.05</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Records



**EXHIBIT 6-6  
AVERAGE POPULATION SERVED BY FIRE SERVICE  
AREA AND BY STAFFING STRENGTH**

Fire Service Areas	Staffing Strength	Population 1990*	Population Served Per Employee	Number Served Over Average
Belleair	5	4,885	977	154
Belleair Bluffs	8	5,253	657	-166
Clearwater	167	127,299	762	-61
Airport (only)	16	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dunedin	39	39,670	1,017	194
East Lake	24	12,725	530	-293
Gulfport	All Volunteer	8,398	N/A	N/A
Indian Rocks	36	19,489	541	-282
Kenneth City	All Volunteer	7,901	N/A	N/A
Largo	124	97,227	784	-39
Lealman	50	35,644	713	-110
Madeira Beach	15	7,089	473	-350
Oldsmar	12	11,086	924	101
Palm Harbor	45	55,345	1,230	407
Pinellas Park	78	48,652	624	-199
Redington	11	7,175	652	-171
Safety Harbor	32	14,667	458	-365
Seminole	93	80,570	866	43
South Pasadena	17	9,043	532	-291
St. Pete Beach	28	11,039	394	-429
St. Petersburg	330	330,010	1,000	177
Tarpon Springs	36	25,753	715	-108
Treasure Island	11	9,528	866	43
<b>TOTALS &amp; AVERAGE</b>	<b>1,177</b>	<b>968,451</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Records

\* Population estimates from Pinellas Planning Department (1-28-91).  
Estimates includes residents, seasonal residents and tourists.





Exhibit 6-7 lists employees by classification in each fire service agency. As of the November 1991 report, there were 779 fire fighters throughout the County, 355 command staff members, 45 support staff, 15 mechanics, and 265 volunteers.

Fire fighters are shown on the personnel roster as accredited fire fighters. They may also be emergency medical technicians and paramedics. Command staff members consist of lieutenants, deputy chiefs, district chiefs, assistant chiefs, fire chief, EMS officer, fire prevention officer, and public education officer. Support staff consist of secretaries and clerical assistants. Mechanics are classed as having a fire vehicle maintenance specialty. Most mechanics operate from the Seminole Fire Department or the Clearwater Fire Department. St. Petersburg is shown as having 2 mechanics. The St. Petersburg mechanics are not on staff, but assigned by the fire department and operate from the central city garage. Volunteers are assigned to 11 fire service agencies. Those agencies are identified in exhibit 6-1.

Exhibit 6-8 shows the ratio of employees to supervisors for each fire service agency. Supervisors are defined as lieutenants, deputy chiefs, district chiefs, assistant chiefs, and the fire chief. The difference between the numbers displayed in this exhibit and those displayed under Command Staff in exhibit 6-7 are the EMS officers, fire prevention officers, and the public education officers.

The average for the County is 2.71 employees for each fire supervisor. Those agencies with ratio's exceeding 3 employees per supervisor (less top heavy) are Clearwater, Safety Harbor, South Pasadena, and St. Petersburg. Those agencies with ratio's below 2 employees (more top heavy) are Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, East Lake, Oldsmar, Palm Harbor, and Treasure Island.



EXHIBIT 6-7  
FIRE EMPLOYEES BY CLASSIFICATION

Fire Service Areas	Fire Fighter	Command Staff	Support Staff	Mechanic	Volunteer
Belleair	3	2	0	0	20
Belleair Bluffs	3	4	1	0	13
Clearwater	117	47	3	3	0
Airport (only)	10	5	1	1	0
Dunedin	24	14	1	0	0
East Lake	9	14	1	1	0
Gulfport	0	0	0	0	34
Indian Rocks	21	12	3	1	10
Kenneth City	0	1 P.T.	0	0	25
Largo	84	36	4	1	0
Lealman	34	14	2	1	28
Madeira Beach	10	4	1	0	18
Oldsmar	6	5	1	0	22
Palm Harbor	27	16	2	0	15
Pinellas Park	51	24	4	0	0
Redington	3	7	1	0	5
Safety Harbor	22	9	1	0	20
Seminole	57	30	6	5	31
South Pasadena	12	4	1	0	12
St. Pete Beach	18	8	2	0	0
St. Petersburg	237	85	8	2	0
Tarpon Springs	25	10	1	0	0
Treasure Island	6	4	1	0	12
High Point	PPark/Largo	PPark/Largo	PPark/Largo	PPark/Largo	PPark/Largo
Gandy	St.Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete	N/A
Tierra Verde	St. Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete	St. Pete	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>266</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Records



EXHIBIT 6-8  
RATIO OF EMPLOYEES TO SUPERVISOR

Fire Service Areas	Fire Fighter	Supervisors	Employees Per Supervisor
Belleair	3	2	1.50
Belleair Bluffs	3	4	0.75
Clearwater	117	37	3.16
Airport (only)	10	5	2.00
Dunedin	24	11	2.18
East Lake	9	9	1.00
Gulfport	0	0	N/A
Indian Rocks	21	9	2.33
Kenneth City	0	1 P.T.	N/A
Largo	84	29	2.90
Lealman	34	13	2.62
Madeira Beach	10	4	2.50
Oldsmar	6	5	1.20
Palm Harbor	27	14	1.93
Pinellas Park	51	18	2.83
Redington	3	4	0.75
Safety Harbor	22	7	3.14
Seminole	57	23	2.48
South Pasadena	12	4	3.00
St. Pete Beach	18	8	2.25
St. Petersburg	237	66	3.59
Tarpon Springs	25	10	2.50
Treasure Island	6	4	1.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>2.71</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Records



Salary Comparison - Throughout the interview process with fire chiefs and their staff members there was concern registered with the extreme variations in pay among jurisdictions within the County.

A salary comparison study conducted by the City of Madeira Beach in April of 1991 illustrates the variation. Data was collected for selected classifications from eight cities. The range for fire fighter EMT starting salary was \$15,704 to \$21,486. The maximum salary for fire fighter EMT ranged from \$22,776 to \$29,615. The average salary for this class was \$23,054. The variation from lowest to highest was approximately \$6,000.

The range for fire fighter P/M starting salary was \$19,802 to \$23,849. The maximum salary ranged from \$28,517 to \$32,698. The average salary for this class was \$26,342. The variation from lowest to highest was approximately \$4,000.

Fire lieutenant starting salaries ranged from \$17,264 to \$28,585. Maximum salaries ranged from \$25,168 to \$39,728. The average salary for this class was \$27,717. The variation from lowest to highest was approximately \$12,000.

### 6.5 Financial

The combined budget for all fire jurisdictions within Pinellas County is in excess of \$50 million for FY 1991-92. The Pinellas County Fire Administration budget is less than 0.4% of the total at \$243,000.

The method of raising revenue for fire services is primarily through an ad valorem millage assessment of the residents. (Millage rates are shown in exhibit 6-2). The only jurisdiction that operates differently is the Indian Rocks Fire Control District, which assesses a flat rate of \$81 on every household.



Contractual arrangements with other jurisdictions or commercial entities, is another way for a jurisdiction to raise revenue. Currently there are several jurisdictions that have contracts for services.

The incorporated areas provide approximately 77% of the required funding. The remaining 23% is derived from the unincorporated areas of the County. Salaries represent nearly 80% of all Fire Services and Suppression funds. Nearly 13% represents operating expenses. Approximately 4% is dedicated to capital improvement, and nearly 2% is dedicated to retiring debt service.

Exhibit 6-9 shows the budgeted amount for fire operation by fire service area. The cost of operation is compared to the 1990 population for each area, with a cost per resident calculated. The average cost per resident county-wide is \$52. Those jurisdictions with costs exceeding \$75 per resident (high cost) are East Lake, Safety Harbor, South Pasadena, and St. Petersburg Beach. Those jurisdictions with costs less than \$40 (low cost) per resident, with paid fire fighters, are Belleair, Largo, and Treasure Island.

#### **6.6 Current Level of Cooperation**

There is a common thread of cooperation that runs through nearly all fire service agencies. All agencies belong to and subscribe to a mutual aid automatic response system. All contract with the county tax collector, for tax collection services. Nearly all jurisdictions interviewed indicated a high level of cooperation through the County Fire Chiefs Association. In addition to these agreements there are also separate and special agreements between fire protection agencies, and with commercial entities.



**EXHIBIT 6-9  
COST OF FIRE OPERATION BY FIRE  
SERVICE AREA AND COST PER RESIDENT**

Fire Service Areas	Budget 1991-92	Population 1990*	Cost/Resident
Belleair	\$170,000	4,885	\$35
Belleair Bluffs	\$338,000	5,253	\$64
Clearwater	\$7,310,000	127,299	\$57
Airport (only)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dunedin	\$2,185,000	39,670	\$55
East Lake	\$1,000,000	12,725	\$79
Gulfport	\$177,000	8,398	\$21
Indian Rocks	\$1,105,000	19,489	\$57
Kenneth City	\$35,000	7,901	\$4
Largo	\$3,907,000	97,227	\$40
Lealman	\$1,956,000	35,644	\$55
Madeira Beach	\$424,000	7,089	\$60
Oldsmar	\$563,000	11,086	\$51
Palm Harbor	\$2,369,000	55,345	\$43
Pinellas Park	\$3,423,000	48,652	\$70
Redington	\$303,000	7,175	\$42
Safety Harbor	\$1,266,000	14,667	\$86
Seminole	\$4,741,000	80,570	\$59
South Pasadena	\$854,000	9,043	\$94
St. Pete Beach	\$1,277,000	11,039	\$116
St. Petersburg	\$16,731,000	330,010	\$51
Tarpon Springs	\$1,174,000	25,753	\$46
Treasure Island	\$204,000	9,528	\$21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$51,512,000</b>	<b>968,451</b>	<b>\$53</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Records

\* Population estimates from Pinellas Planning Department (1-28-91).

Estimates includes permanent residents, seasonal residents and tourists.



Belleair

Agreements - On mutual aid they receive more than they provide. Largo provides ALS first responder service.

Belleair Bluffs

Agreements - Largo provides first responder service.

Clearwater

Agreements - Provide service for the entire fire district beyond the city limits.

Indian Rocks

Agreements - Provide vehicle maintenance to Redington Beach. Provide fire service to the four towns of Indian Shores, Indian Rocks Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores.

Contract - with county tax collector to collect taxes.

Largo

Agreements - Provide first responder ALS to Belleair Bluffs, Belleair, and full fire service to the western half of High Point.

Lealman

Contract - with Kenneth City 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., 5 days a week. Outside this time frame they charge on a per call basis.

Madeira Beach

Agreement - provide back up service to Redington Beach. Have offered to provide full service for \$50,000, which is a very inexpensive proposal.

Pinellas Park

Agreement - provide full fire service to eastern half of High Point. Have vehicle maintenance agreement with Seminole.

Safety Harbor

Agreement - provide service to unincorporated area of Safety Harbor and Oldsmar.

Seminole

Contract - for fleet maintenance with 7 fire departments; Belleair Bluffs, Belleair Beach, Oldsmar, Palm Harbor, St. Petersburg Beach, and South Pasadena. Have a by-the-job agreement with Largo, Pinellas Park, and St. Petersburg. Revenue amounts to \$74,000.

South Pasadena

Agreement - On mutual aid, runs out of jurisdiction over 400 times per year, with 25 runs coming into the jurisdiction.



Contract - provides service to Brookwood, Golf Club Estates, and Pelican Creek. Charges residents a flat fee, revenue is approximately \$46,000 per year. Has a vehicle maintenance contract with Seminole.

St. Petersburg Beach

Contract - with Seminole for vehicle maintenance.

St. Petersburg

Agreement - with City of Tampa for westbound lanes of the Gandy highway and bridge over Tampa Bay.

Contract - with 4 entities, the county EMS, Gandy fire district, Tierra Verde Municipal Services Taxing Unit, and the County Parks Department for Fort Desoto Park. Revenue is approximately \$6 million.

**6.7 Issues - Charter/Interlocal Agreements**

There are several major issues that surfaced during the course of this study. We have combined many of those issues into three; Combined Fire Stations, Single Fire District, and Joint Purchasing of Equipment. A map of the County along with the placement of fire stations in each geographic area was shown in exhibit 6-3. A discussion of the issues along with their cost savings, advantages, and constraints is presented below.

ISSUE:	COMBINATION AND ELIMINATION OF SEVEN FIRE STATIONS
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**COST SAVINGS**

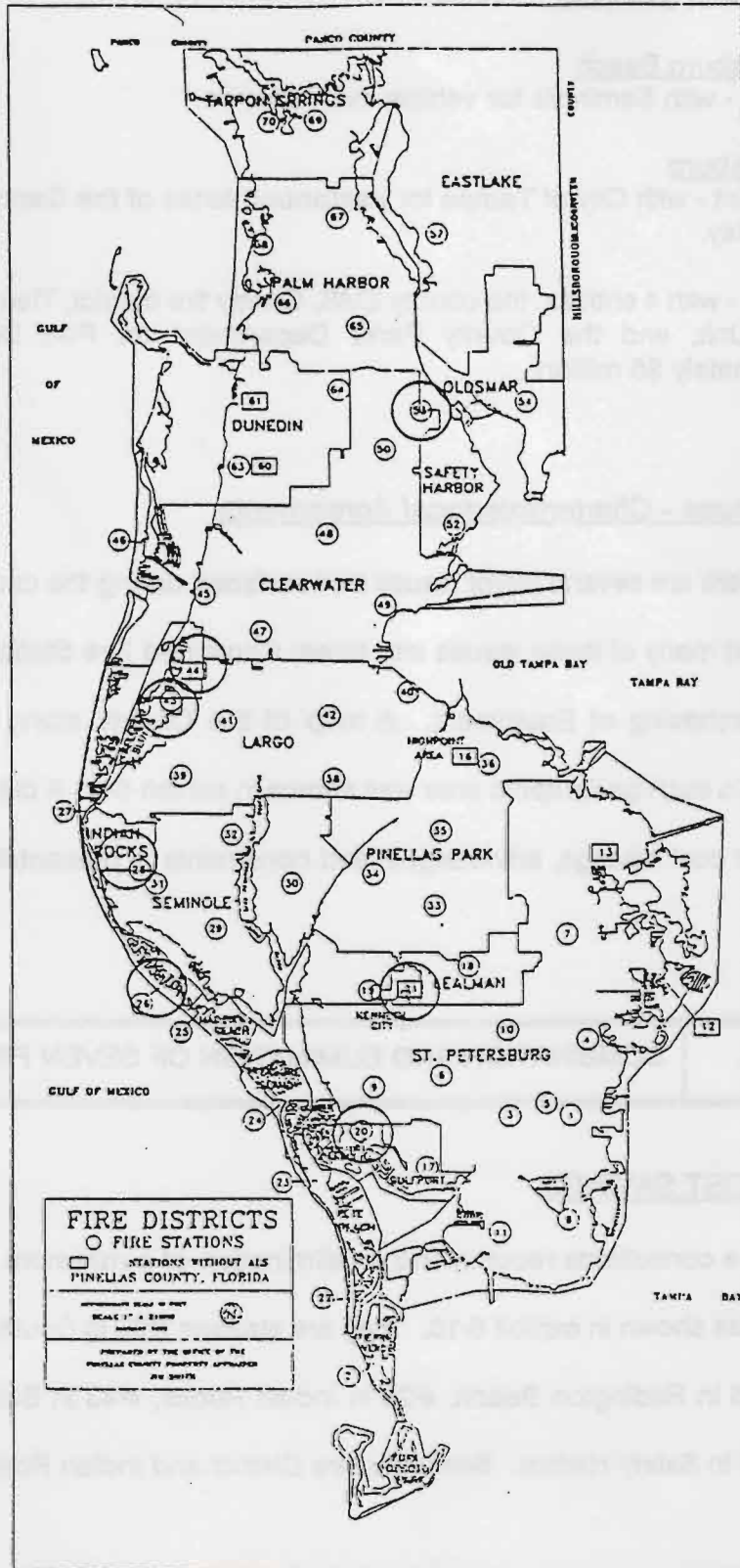
The consultants recommend an elimination of a minimum of seven fire stations in the County, as shown in exhibit 6-10. They are stations #20 in South Pasadena, #21 in Kenneth City, #26 in Redington Beach, #28 in Indian Rocks, #43 in Belleair Bluffs, #44 in Belleair, and #53 in Safety Harbor. Seminole Fire District and Indian Rocks Fire District are currently





EXHIBIT 6-10

FIRE STATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR ELIMINATION





negotiating the closing of station # 28 and merging the activity with station #31. The final implementation is expected to occur in fiscal year 92-93. The reason for recommending the closing of the seven stations is their proximity to other stations, see exhibit 6-11, and the low rate of activity for both Fire and EMS, see exhibit 6-12.

The average annual cost for the seven stations recommended for closing are shown in exhibit 6-13.

The potential for savings is approximately \$2.4 million if operating costs, equipment, and personnel were all discontinued without consideration to employee placement. Attrition of employees, or reassignment to other stations for other tasks, would reduce the amount of savings. There could be additional savings if equipment could be discontinued, and sold on the open market. With the low activity percentages in each of the stations under recommendation there is reason to believe that equipment could be reduced substantially.

ADVANTAGES

The advantages to the elimination of certain stations will reduce administrative and equipment costs, reduce territorial claims, and increase efficiency of remaining fire stations.

CONSTRAINTS

- Requires the jurisdictional authorities, like the Seminole and Indian Rocks recent example, to recognize a problem and take the initiative to correct it.
- F.S. 73-600, Section 8 also requires authorization by the governing body of that department prior to abolishing a department.
- Currently, there's no central administrative authority that can make decisions on the placement or planning of fire stations in the County.



EXHIBIT 6-11

COVERAGE FOR CLOSED STATIONS

CITY	STATIONS	COVERAGE
South Pasadena	# 20	# 9, St. Pete & # 23 St. Pete. Bch
Kenneth City	# 21	# 19, Lealman
Redington Beach	# 26	# 25, Madeira
Indian Rocks	# 28	# 31, Seminole
Belleair Bluffs	# 43	# 41, Largo
Belleair	# 44	# 41, Largo, # 45 and 47 Clearwater
Safety Harbor	# 53	# 50 Clearwater & # 54 Oldsmar

EXHIBIT 6-12

1990 STATION HOURS BUSY, FIRE & EMS

Station	Hours Active Fire	Hours Active Fire/EMS	Hours Available	% Busy Fire	% Busy Fire/EMS
# 20	503	183	8,760	0.057	0.021
# 21	84	0	8,760	0.010	0.000
# 26	52	427	8,760	0.006	0.049
# 28	10	339	8,760	0.001	0.039
# 43	278	446	8,760	0.032	0.051
# 44	154	0	8,760	0.018	0.000
# 53	79	486	8,760	0.009	0.056

Source: County EMS/Fire Administration



EXHIBIT 6-13

AVERAGE COST OF STATION OPERATION PER YEAR

STATIONS		AVERAGE COST PER STATION
South Pasadena	# 20	\$ 420,550
Kenneth City	# 21	\$ 41,450
Redington	# 26	\$ 267,666
Indian Rocks	# 28	\$ 506,304
Belleair Bluffs	# 43	\$ 329,570
Belleair	# 44	\$ 198,960
Safety Harbor	# 53	\$ 598,510
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 2,363,010</b>

Source: County Fire Coordinator Budget Records

CHARTER ISSUES

Combination and elimination of fire stations would require interlocal agreements or a Charter amendment.

ISSUE: CREATION OF SINGLE FIRE DISTRICT FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

COST SAVINGS

The establishment of a single fire board managing a single fire district for all entities in the County will help to save the \$2.4 million in the fire station elimination issue, discussed above, in addition to a percentage of fire administration that now exists in each fire service entity. Exhibit 6-7, previously presented, illustrates the current personnel distribution by fire



protection area throughout the County. There are 779 fire fighters, 355 command staff, and 45 support staff. In exhibit 6-8, the command staff figures have been narrowed down to purely supervisory staff (287), and compares them to the fire fighter staff, to show less than 3 fire fighters for every supervisor. If each supervisor has purely supervisory duties the ratio could be lessened considerable without doing harm to the fire fighting capability of Pinellas County. If the ratio was increased by one more person to equate the ratio of St. Petersburg, the result would be 210 supervisors, or 77 less than are on staff today. Using the average starting salaries for lieutenants (\$27,717), as discussed in Section 6.4 of this report, and multiplying that times 77 (\$2,134,209), plus 40% for benefits (\$853,683), projects a savings to the taxpayers of \$3 million.

Additionally, there would be cost savings for a reduced staff fleet. Avoiding future vehicle purchases, at \$15,000 per vehicle, would save another \$1.1 million. There would also be an expected cost savings for clothing and other personal equipment that would not be needed.

Total cost savings for a single county-wide fire district should be expected to exceed \$6.5 million.

### ADVANTAGES

The chief advantage is that it will fix responsibility for effective implementation of a county-wide fire services plan and allow for the reduction of administrative and operational overhead. A county-wide system could eliminate some equipment, land and building costs. It will provide central guidance on planning, policy and enforcement issues, and will provide the environment to set standards for:



- the operation of fire departments
- the quality or condition of personnel
- entry other than FF/PM certification
- physical conditioning requirements
- competency based training
- promotional opportunities
- salaries and benefits equalization
- purchase of apparatus
- fire response closest unit
- run cards, oversight authority
- blending of emergency units, fire, EMS, police
- manning levels
- tools, equipment, and appliances

Oversight authority for run cards will save dispatcher interpretation and reduce potential conflict that could result from uncoordinated development of run card policy.

More effective use of closest unit response will allow sharing of resources, heighten the level of safety, and provide a credible united front to the County residents.

### CONSTRAINTS

The legal process to rescind certain agreements as identified in F.S. 73-600 will require referendums throughout the County, making immediate unanimous agreement tenuous, and giving greater weight to phasing in an implementation plan in stages.



**CHARTER ISSUES**

Creation of a single fire district would require a Charter amendment.

<b>ISSUE:</b>	<b>JOINT PURCHASING OF EQUIPMENT</b>
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**COST SAVINGS**

The joint purchasing of equipment can be accomplished through an interlocal agreement, the same as the current joint purchasing agreement. Nearly all clothing and supplies are currently purchased under this agreement, saving a minimum per year of \$75,000, as shown in exhibit 6-4. The purchase of engines, pumpers, aerials, rescues, and squads has never been done before on a standard specification, joint bidding basis as best as can be recalled from the current chiefs.

Without information on the life and life expectancy of all vehicles now maintained by fire service entities, and cost savings available on volume buying, there is no exacting method for determining a cost savings on joint vehicle purchases. If the savings amounts to 10-15% of the current purchase prices, the savings should amount to a minimum of \$15-20,000 savings per vehicle. The count of fire vehicles in Pinellas County is shown in exhibit 6-14.

A turnover of 4-5 engines, pumpers, aerials, or squads should net over \$100,000 annually to the citizens of Pinellas County.



EXHIBIT 6-14

FIRE VEHICLES IN PINELLAS COUNTY, 1991

VEHICLES	INVENTORY
Engines	58
Pumpers	23
Reserve Engines	22
Aerials	14
Rescues	29
Squads	13
Cars	101
Pickups	16
Other	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>309</b>

Source: ISO Survey

ADVANTAGES

Expected to reduce the per unit cost of fire apparatus similar to reducing the per unit cost on fire hose and clothing.

CONSTRAINTS

It will be necessary to get agreement on standards for engines, pumpers, squads, rescue units, and ladder or platform trucks.





**CHARTER ISSUES**

The joint purchasing of equipment can be accomplished through interlocal agreements.

**SUMMARY**

In summary, the cost savings that could expect to materialize by adopting the study recommendations would amount to more than \$6.5 million. The summary is shown in exhibit 6-15.

**EXHIBIT 6-15**

**PROJECTED COST SAVING FOR FIRE SERVICES**

RECOMMENDATION	COST SAVINGS
Combined Fire Stations	\$2,363,010
Single County-wide Fire District	\$4,100,000
Joint Purchasing of Equipment	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,563,010</b>