

## Presentation to the Fire Board and Chief Johnson

### EDH Training Center:

I have attempted to cause the board to consider the logic underlying the pursuit of an EDH training center. The legacy of what was initially a volunteer fire department is “we can do it ourselves.” Historically they have done a pretty good job of it. But it is time to acknowledge the sophistication and complexity of the emergency services provided by what formerly was just a ‘fire’ department. I believe the issue before the board is training not a training center.

Department and Board focus has been on a Training Facility not on Training.

1. It is a historical belief that a training facility is needed. Antidotally in 2007 I saw budget document that had a projected \$10 million for a training facility. This is before Stations 86 & 87 and Latrobe annex existed and 84 was rebuilt. I wondered why a 50 person department needed a \$10 million dollar center. The budget addressed facility cost but not the concept of ‘training.’
2. In 2021 the belief still exists. The department has between 60-70 fire fighters now and more stations.
3. City Gate documents the department’s statement that the training is failing. Page 116, “ 39.1% of the training hours in the category of “desired training” are not being completed due to a lack of facilities. Also, 71% of the required annual training is not being completed. “ Facilities do exist but personnel are not being sent to them.
4. The report states that “While the frequency of fire occurrence is down considerably, primarily due to modern prevention codes and guidelines, the frequency of firefighter deaths in fires has almost doubled since the 1970s.” At the 12/15/2020 board meeting Chief Johnson stated the department ‘must have good training’. Training is fundamental to protecting fire fighters.
5. Yet according to their own numbers Mandatory Training Policy is not being met. Training appears to be discretionary. Why? The shift battalion chiefs are in charge of each shift. They are responsible for ensuring that training is completed on their respective shifts” page 116 of the report. Why are the battalion chiefs failing?
6. First, if the firemen must first respond to a call, then training is secondary. Potential disruptions are an incentive to not initiate training. Even at a new facility, training will still be secondary to an ‘emergency’ call because it is being located so crews allegedly can respond. It is noted that such an ‘emergency’ is not defined anywhere in the report. So even if critical equipment is at a Center response calls will still intervene. Further, with three battalion chiefs running three programs, is there continuity or consistency in the training? Are chiefs trained in training?
7. A policy that prevents complete focus on the specific training being given will undermine any training plan. Disruptions undermine completed training and lead to inefficient use of time. Yet local response is an underling justification for a ‘local’ facility.
8. The traditional EDH view is ‘have our own’ Center and that will solve the problem. It will only create more problems. Once built the facility will be static. Will it be able to add new facility as

new risks are identified which will require new training? Will development funds always be available? The report page 116 states “even under the best of circumstances, the facility will be under-used most of the time if solely devoted to the department”, another inefficiency.

9. There is no current plan to have a trained ‘training’ staff. It appears the department will train itself and do so through sharing fire experiences as referred to in the body of the City Gate report. A state training facility objective however is to train. The department should use it. A department objective is to protect the community first, not develop training.
10. Any manager who has had to train staff, any kind of staff, knows you need quality trainers and the ability of staff to focus. The routine duties must be set aside or temporarily reassigned. Fire personnel need the same support.
11. Staff should be designated for specified training time. Back-up personnel should be used to address the routine calls of the stations receiving training. That has occurred during wild fire call ups and occurs routinely in mutual aid situations.
12. Will EDH Fire be able to forego the imagery of an ‘EDH Fire Training Center’ and actually address quality training? I hope so.

Respectfully submitted

Richard Ross

RICHARD ROSS

# Critical review of the EDHFD Training Program

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Proposed EDHFD Training Center

**Richard Ross**

**3/18/2021**

Review of consultant documentation of the need for and proposed facility being considered by the El Dorado Hills County Water District (Fire Department) in relation to the Departments Training Program.

## Critical Issues confronting the EDHFD Training Center

### **LACK OF PRIORITY OF TRAINING**

Training is subject to operational disruption. It is admitted that a call for service will be a priority at a Station.

Examples of lack of priority:

1-The station 85 training room is subject to 'first come first serve'. Citizen groups have a priority while meeting rooms are available for them at other public locations; Raley's, CSD, library, several local churches and others.

2-Station 84 tower training value was circumvented by the cell tower antenna. (City Gate report)

3-Poor Training tracking:

The Monthly Operations Report contains occasionally Training summaries or Quarterly reports with little specificity.

Review of OPS reports Since April 2019, 4 reports identified the number of hours of training in a quarter; 3646, 6428, 4135 & 4162. No specificity is given as to who, using terms such as team, crews or personnel or how it is tracked, or time by types. The OPS report includes completion of 'Task Book' as training, which is part of the promotional process.

4-Diverse Oversight:

Three different Battalion Chiefs are responsible for training of each of their shifts. Raises question of uniformity. The Deputy Chief has oversight of the Battalion Chief. No identified procedure for this monitoring except as a paper process

5- Individual training obtained:

The individual fire fighter training record is not clearly identified in the Training Information. This could be an issue of liability if injury occurs due to lack of training. At present no performance appraisal mechanism is presently in place that could track individual training received.

6- Department sites 'Mandatory Training' but it is not identified in the Training documents.

7-Training is provided by fellow EDH fire fighters. As noble as this apprentice approach is, it is only effective in limit conditions and precludes absorption of new concepts, techniques or experiences not already encountered by department staff. A professional training staff would provide a broad span of experience and developed teaching skills.

**JUSTIFICATION FOR A TRAINING FACILITY: HOURS LOST DUE TO LACK OF FACILITIES/** Bad stats/misstatement of report information

The Interact Business Group (IBG) 2016 Report has inaccurate training hour figures. Hours attributed to Operations include 15,000 hours of Volunteers which have not existed in the Department for several years. The inflation factor continues to move through the IBG and City Gate reports as various percentages are asserted.

The statistic of training lost due to lack of facilities is not documented as to type of training. The City Gate report Vol.2 page 116 says '39.1%of desired training is not completed due to lack of facility" It then goes on drawing on the IBG report stating "71% of required annual training is not completed". However IBG never said that. Their report states "in total, 71% of EDHFD annual training has room for improvement" (page 33).

It is also unclear what the base line for the hour's statistics is. Is it per year or some other unit?

Has any oversight Agency, such as State Fire Board, found the EDHFD training to fail to meet required standards?

**TRAINING CENTER LOCATION NEED TO BE NEARBY. Faulty rationale.**

It must be close to 'respond to emergencies". What is the 'EMERGENCY' that would prevent full focus on training, be it at the proposed Center or another training site. These responses presently impede training done at the stations. If 'response' is the rule how does the Center change anything? Once special facility training is underway responding to an 'emergency' is not likely. IBG training schedule (page34) shows set-up and tear-down times of 1 to 2 hours. A team would not be likely to depart quickly if engaged in training with Props. The ability to focus on training is critical to successful absorption of training, either at an EDH CENTER or some other location.

City Gate dispels use of 'Move-up & cover" as used in a large city for EDHFD six stations (p117) but does not address Mutual aid program in the absence of a team.

During the Wild Fire season when teams were dispatched, station coverage was obtained.

Omissions in the Reports:

Neither IBG nor City Gate really discusses training option. The availability of resources at the State Academy in Lone is dispatched as to distant. Why?

Neither report discuss the Mutual Aid utilized in this area as to coverage that would allow distant training.

## **EDHFD TRAINING CENTER LIABILITY**

Every physical plant requires Operational expenses, even sitting idle. City Gate (p116) “even under best of circumstances the facility as proposed will be under -utilized most of the time if solely devoted to the department.” The IBG report (page 35, 36) lists the various Props. Only 2 Props would be used more than 50% of the time, and the vast majority would be used less the 30%. The inefficiency of the facility is glaring. The two reports also differed as to the size of the facility.

City Gate viewed the department’s proposal for the Center as ‘underfunded.’

No other user of the facility has been identified. If EDHFD were to host other fire departments it would now be in the training business. This would entail staff, trainers, monitors, administration and questions of liability associated with the training business.

Once established would the CENTER be static with no further facility or PROPs to address state of the art developments.

The impact of this financial liability is difficult to project. The drain on development funds in both the short and long term could well impede the department’s proper funding new stations. Further the operational cost associated with a facility of this size and complexity will be a significant addition.

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# Critical review of the EDHFD Training Program

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**3/18/2021**

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## Critical Issues confronting the EDHFD Training Center

### LACK OF PRIORITY OF TRAINING

Training is subject to operational disruption. It is admitted that a call for service will be a priority at a Station.

Examples of lack of priority:

1-The station 85 training room is subject to 'first come first serve'. Citizen groups have a priority while meeting rooms are available for them at other public locations; Raley's, CSD, library, several local churches and others.

Opinion-Received. Firefighter training is not limited to just classroom-based training. With the implementation of the Employee Development Center, Firefighters have dedicated classroom space available for their training needs. Hands on training is conducted at locations throughout the community and is not idea for all types of training.

2-Station 84 tower training value was circumvented by the cell tower antenna. (City Gate report)

Opinion-Received. The Tower at station 84 is still used for some types of training below the level of the cellular tower. It is limited to certain types of training, but the limiting factor is not entirely the cell tower installation.

3-Poor Training tracking: Opinion-Received

The Monthly Operations Report contains occasionally Training summaries or Quarterly reports with little specificity. The training summary included in the Operations report and quarterly reports are just that, Summaries. The Department uses Target Solutions, an industry leader for Firefighter training tracking, and compliance. Over 7,000 Public Agencies Nationwide utilize this system.

Review of OPS reports Since April 2019, 4 reports identified the number of hours of training in a quarter; 3646, 6428, 4135 & 4162. No specificity is given as to who, using terms such as team, crews or personnel or how it is tracked, or time by types. The OPS report includes completion of 'Task Book' as training, which is part of the promotional process. It is not standard practice of any public entity to publish specific training by individual. The Training Tracking software employed by the Department does track all training by employee, including hours, type, topic, certification, continuing education, etc.

The task book should be used as a career development tool, providing a guideline for employees who aspire to advance their knowledge, skills and abilities, and seek to promote through the ranks of the District and/or achieve requisite levels of training (the pre-promotion process). This pre- promotion/enhanced training use of the task book is



considered by the District to be an invaluable tool for successful performance. Yes, a task book is a form of training.

#### 4-Diverse Oversight:

Three different Battalion Chiefs are responsible for training of each of their shifts. Raises question of uniformity. The Deputy Chief has oversight of the Battalion Chief. No identified procedure for this monitoring except as a paper process. The three Battalion Chiefs coordinate SOME training on their shift. The Training Captain works with all three Battalion Chiefs, and the Deputy Chief of Operations to establish a training calendar that ensures that mandated training is completed. Battalion Chiefs will deliver specific training to their respective shifts based on Battalion, Company, or Individual needs. A Battalion Chief will assess the training needs of their specific shift and additional training over and above mandated training will be facilitated. The three Battalion Chiefs will also work with each other to share what they are doing on their shifts. This training more often than not spans all three shifts. Captains will assess their Company needs and facilitate "Officer Determined" training based on this assessment.

#### 5- Individual training obtained:

The individual fire fighter training record is not clearly identified in the Training Information. This could be an issue of liability if injury occurs due to lack of training. At present no performance appraisal mechanism is presently in place that could track individual training received. The individual firefighter training record is contained on the Target Solutions Training Management System utilized by the district. This record is very comprehensive and details the specific training completed by each employee of the District. I am confident that the Department's tracking of Employee training meets and exceeds industry best practices. As stated before, the training records are detailed and comprehensive.

#### 6- Department sites 'Mandatory Training' but it is not identified in the Training documents.

Mandatory Training is identified by several different Local, State, and Federal agencies Including:

Occupational Safety and Health Administration [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

California Occupational Safety and Health Administration [www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/)

National Fire Protection Association [www.nfpa.org/codes](http://www.nfpa.org/codes)

Insurance Service Organization [www.iso.com](http://www.iso.com)

National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians <https://www.nremt.org/>

California Emergency Medical Services Authority <https://emsa.ca.gov/>

El Dorado County Emergency Medical Services Agency <https://www.edcgov.us/EMS/>

7-Training is provided by fellow EDH fire fighters. As noble as this apprentice approach is, it is only effective in limit conditions and precludes absorption of new concepts, techniques or experiences not already encountered by department staff. A professional training staff would provide a broad span of experience and developed teaching skills. **Our employees are just that. "A professional training staff" Many of our employees are certified by State Fire Training to deliver course content for several different disciplines. Several of our employees have trained other firefighters across the state and beyond. Additionally, many of our employees have experience from other agencies prior to joining EDH Fire. Other employees have specific training from other industries such as the US Military, law enforcement, Emergency Medical Services, executive leadership, and communications to name a few.**

**Topic specific training is delivered by individuals from outside of the Department when appropriate and necessary.**

**JUSTIFICATION FOR A TRAINING FACILITY: HOURS LOST DUE TO LACK OF FACILITIES/ Bad stats/misstatement of report information- **Opinion-Received****

The Interact Business Group (IBG) 2016 Report has inaccurate training hour figures. Hours attributed to Operations include 15,000 hours of Volunteers which have not existed in the Department for several years. The inflation factor continues to move through the IBG and City Gate reports as various percentages are asserted. **The report cited was a snap shot in time and that number was accurate.**

The statistic of training lost due to lack of facilities is not documented as to type of training. The City Gate report Vol.2 page 116 says '39.1%of desired training is not completed due to lack of facility" It then goes on drawing on the IBG report stating "71% of required annual training is not completed". However IBG never said that. Their report states "in total, 71% of EDHFD annual training has room for improvement" (page 33). **EDH Fire strives to deliver high quality immersive training to our employees. Training does occur but can be enhanced by the addition of the training center. Training can also be more comprehensive and incorporate high risk/low frequency training that is not currently offered.**

It is also unclear what the base line for the hour's statistics is. Is it per year or some other unit?

Has any oversight Agency, such as State Fire Board, found the EDHFD training to fail to meet required standards? **No, it is the responsibility of each Fire Department to ensure that Training is in compliance. EMS training is regulated by EMSA and is validated and verified by licensure cycles.**

**TRAINING CENTER LOCATION NEED TO BE NEARBY. Faulty rationale. Opinion-Received**

It must be close to 'respond to emergencies". What is the 'EMERGENCY' that would prevent full focus on training, be it at the proposed Center or another training site. These responses

presently impede training done at the stations. If 'response' is the rule how does the Center change anything? Once special facility training is underway responding to an 'emergency' is not likely. IBG training schedule (page34) shows set-up and tear-down times of 1 to 2 hours. A team would not be likely to depart quickly if engaged in training with Props. The ability to focus on training is critical to successful absorption of training, either at an EDH CENTER or some other location.

City Gate dispels use of 'Move-up & cover" as used in a large city for EDHFD six stations (p117) but does not address Mutual aid program in the absence of a team. **Mutual aid is not routinely used for "move up & cover". The exception would be multi agency training. The impact would not be fair to other communities as they do not rely on EDH for this purpose either.**

During the Wild Fire season when teams were dispatched, station coverage was obtained.

Omissions in the Reports:

Neither IBG nor City Gate really discusses training option. The availability of resources at the State Academy in Lone is dispatched as to distant. Why? **The State academy is located roughly 45 minutes from EDH which equates to 1hr 30 min of travel time. Additionally, the State operates two training centers, one north and one south. Both are heavily impacted and are not routinely utilized for local government training. These centers are also primarily designed to meet the State firefighting focus which is primarily wildland firefighting. CalFire operates several Contracted Fire departments, and they do not utilize the State fire training facilities routinely either. A training center in EDH would keep resources close to our response area.**

Neither report discuss the Mutual Aid utilized in this area as to coverage that would allow distant training.

### **EDHFD TRAINING CENTER LIABILITY**

Every physical plant requires Operational expenses, even sitting idle. City Gate (p116) "even under best of circumstances the facility as proposed will be under -utilized most of the time if solely devoted to the department." The IBG report (page 35, 36) lists the various Props. Only 2 Props would be used more than 50% of the time, and the vast majority would be used less the 30%. The inefficiency of the facility is glaring. The two reports also differed as to the size of the facility.

City Gate viewed the department's proposal for the Center as 'underfunded.' **Yes, the training center is not being proposed as an enterprise fund.**

No other user of the facility has been identified. If EDHFD were to host other fire departments it would now be in the training business. This would entail staff, trainers, monitors, administration and questions of liability associated with the training business.

Once established would the CENTER be static with no further facility or PROPs to address state of the art developments.

The impact of this financial liability is difficult to project. The drain on development funds in both the short and long term could well impede the department's proper funding new stations. Further the operational cost associated with a facility of this size and complexity will be a significant addition. **The Development Impact Study takes in to account the building of a Fire Training Facility. Funds have been collected for this purpose for many years. It is the Fire Chief's and Board of Directors responsibility to ensure that the delivery of Fire and EMS Services are planned for today and well into the future.**

**Many Fire Departments across the Nation operate Fire Training Facilities. Some are staffed, but most are unstaffed and are used on a planned basis. Specific training would be facilitated by off shift staff as well as instructors for other agencies.**

**EDH has contracted with an Industry leading consultant to ensure that we build a facility that relevant, efficient, and as cost effective and possible.**

**The risk to our community continues to grow with the Community. It is my responsibility to ensure that our Firefighters are well trained, operationally ready, technically, and tactically proficient.**

**It is my professional opinion utilizing my 30 + years of experience and focus on Firefighting training, that this training facility is needed, appropriate, and past due.**