

# HEARTLAND FIRE TRAINING



## Strategic Plan For Training

Approved 7/28/15



# Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

## Introduction

The Heartland Fire Training Authority (HFTA) has been a model of regional cooperation and collaboration between multiple fire agencies since 1975. When the original members came together with the vision of a regional training center, they were on the cutting edge. This model of a shared facility and shared training programs has served the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) well.

The leaders of today’s fire service find themselves at a similar crossroads. The increase in population will certainly create a larger demand for emergency services, and a need for more Firefighters. As Fire Service Agencies grow they face a growing number of minimum training requirements, an increased complexity of training, and reduced financial resources dedicated toward training.

Some of these concepts are already in progress. For instance, the HFTA partnership with Miramar College is being strengthened by the development of an overall training plan. Through this plan, many mandatory courses currently taught in the Fire Academy will be shifted to the community college system. This could lead to shorter Academies which would reduce the impact on current training facilities, reduce the impact on in-service companies, and lower the price point needed to manage an Academy.

The San Diego region will continue to grow and with it the demands for firefighter training at all levels will increase. Based on SANDAG estimates, the population of the region could grow by another 1.2 million people by 2050.

HTFA 2012 demographics:

Agency	Pop	Sq Miles	On-Duty Firefighters	Number of Companies	Number of FF/medic units	Yearly Incident s Within jurisdiction
Lakeside	65,000	55	17	4	2	6,726
Santee	54,700	17	17	4	2	4,416
El Cajon	100,116	14	23	5	3	10,854
La Mesa	56,250	9	13	4		6,050
Lemon Grove	25,320	4	6	2		3,144
San Miguel	134,000	47	25	6		9,000
Bonita	15,000	5	4	1		1,150
Alpine	17,000	28	5	1		1,448
Viejas	500	3	9	1	1	551
SD Fire Auth	75,000	643	44	15		
Barona			7	1	1	
			169	44	9	43,339



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

In these times, it is increasingly difficult for individual agencies to provide training completely on their own. As in many business operations there is economy in scale, and the HFTA helps provide various group and individual crew training opportunities to ease the burden on individual agencies. There are a number of great examples of shared training occurrences in the past, and now HFTA is looking toward the future and the needs of its member agencies.

### Principles of HFTA Operation

The Heartland Fire Training Authority is provided direction by a Commission composed of elected officials from each member agency. The Commission ensures the Authority is meeting the needs of the member agencies while ensuring public funding is utilized in the most efficient manner possible. Each participating agency is also represented by the Fire Chief of each member and contract agency on the Board of Chiefs. The Chiefs set the goals for training and prioritize maintenance and operation issues used by HFTA Staff. The Training Officers from each agency follow the goals and ensure that training guidelines are being met.

To ensure the training facilities are utilizing the most efficient method possible it becomes important to follow a commonly accepted set of guidelines. These include:

- **Shared training programs and facilities equal operational effectiveness.** The process of training together translates into more effective operations during emergency incidents.
- **Shared training programs and staff.** Agencies share the same needs to deliver mandated and new training programs. By sharing the training programs duplication of effort by individual agencies can be minimized.
- **Provide Training while minimizing the impact to operational coverage.** Agencies should coordinate training activities at HFTA to minimize JPA member coverage issues while preventing facility overcrowding issues.
- **Safety.** Training should be done safely and in accordance with accepted National, State, and Agency standards.
- **Shared ongoing operational costs.** Training facilities and programs have ongoing operational costs that can be shared in a cost effective manner.
- **Cost Neutral sponsored classes.** To the extent possible, sponsored classes should have revenue that covers the expenditures. Classes should be efficient and minimize the impact on the budget.

Having dedicated training facilities provides fire agencies with a place to train, eliminates damage to privately owned property, provides a safe area free from road traffic and other obstacles, it provides props and open space that may not be available in each community as well as managing the environmental impact on water resources. As stated earlier, a shared facility promotes agencies working together which leads to improved emergency groun [Grab



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

d performance. What training programs are essential? What are we trying to accomplish? And ultimately – what do we need to accomplish our goals? These are important questions that when answered provide a strong basis for the operation of training facilities and the effective management of the budget process.

### The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will focus on our training goals, or the “What are we trying to accomplish?” This is followed by answering the question: “What are the resources we need to accomplish our goals?” One area that is a departure from typical Strategic Plans is the identification of “WHO” and assigning it to the various tasks. Due to the nature of the JPA members and the constant change in personnel assignments, the Heartland Training Officers are responsible for training coordination and content, while the Heartland Fire Chiefs, through the Training Manager, are responsible for listing overall priorities and daily business management.

The Overall Training Goals of HFTA include:

1. **Skill Acquisition**
2. **Skill Maintenance**
3. **Specialty Skill Acquisition**
4. **Promotional Preparation**

#### Goal #1: Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition is centered on training for new, untrained personnel. In the past this training was accomplished by each individual agency after a person was hired or through an Academy joint effort available to all members of the JPA. Now and into the future it appears that most Academy Recruits will be pre-employment students. Providing Fire Academies is a good way to evaluate the labor pool by watching them during this training phase.

**Objective 1A:** \_Train 48 new recruits per year

Justification: JPA member agencies collectively average the hiring of 5 – 15 new employees per year. On average 1 person in 3 gets selected, therefore a minimum pool of at least 45 recruits is needed.

Action 1A1: Provide 1-2 FF1 Academies per year at 24 recruits each.

Action 1A2: Have recruits attend prerequisite classes at the Community College.

Action 1A3: Follow IFSAC and PROBOARD certification systems.

Action 1A4: Implement State FF1 requirements.



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

Action 1A5: Minimize impact on training facility and instructors.

Action 1A6: Explore the concept of a Regional Academy by partnering with other agencies.

Support needs:

- Additional grinder space
- Additional classroom space
- Additional A/V support such as instructional videos

**Objective 2A:** Facilitate Physical Ability Tests for new hires

Justification: Member agencies run approximately 10 physical abilities tests per year. Space is needed to run the exams while minimizing the impact to in-service training sessions.

Action 2A1: Ensure all facilities have the equipment to perform a PAT

Support needs: Additional grinder space to minimize impact to in-service company training, more props- both stationary and portable.

### **Goal #2: Skill Maintenance**

Skill maintenance ensures basic and advanced skills for current full time and reserve firefighters are maintained. Historically, companies have been assigned a three hour block, twice a month to train. An assigned drill system would make time at the training facility more efficient and allow companies to return to district in a shorter time. Companies that need more time are still able to use the full time allotment.

**Objective 2A:** Provide In-service training for basic skill maintenance.

Justification: Companies need a place to train that is not subject to public traffic, with dedicated areas for ladder operations, where water can flow in a controlled, environmentally safe area.

Action 2A1: Simulate responses to the following type of emergencies:

- Structure fire
- Vehicle Fire
- Vegetation Fire
- Multi Patient Medical Incidents
- Hazardous Material Emergencies

Action 2A2: Provide in service training for:



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

- Engine Company OPS
- Truck Company OPS
- Truck Academy

Support needs: Grinder space, portable props.

**Objective 2B:** Provide specific drills for each company to complete each month, JPA member wide.

Justification: It is important that Firefighters maintain all of the basic skills employed by the job to ensure efficiency and safety on emergency incidents.

Action 2B1: Training Officers will set goals annually.

Action 2B2: To reduce management redundancy, all JPA member agencies should follow the same schedule and perform the same drills each month.

Action 2B3: All skills will come from a common task book.

Action 2B4: Scheduled training should not adversely affect JPA member coverage.

Action 2B5: Concept is to keep companies in-service longer.

Action 2B6: Increase training accountability through improved record keeping.

Action 2B7: Skill maintenance will be performed at three primary levels

- Individual
- Individual company (Plan A)
- Multi Agency – Multi Company (Plan B)

Support needs: Grinder space, portable props.

**Objective 2C:** Maintain NFPA, State, ISO, and OSHA mandated skills for classes such as:

- HAZ MAT
- RT-130 Wildland refresher
- Safety Classes (SDGE, etc)
- Command Training for Officers

Justification: A number of agencies provide governance or recommendations that are considered the standard for training. For some annual requirements, it is more efficient for agencies to coordinate together to provide training rather than train individually. A partial list of oversight agencies includes:

Regulatory



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- Presidential Directives
- California Public Safety Code Title 19
- California Health and Safety Codes
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

### Standards Recommendation

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Insurance Services Office (ISO)
- International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC)
- Pro Board Fire Service Professional Qualification System

Action 2B1: Continue Plan B Group Training.

Action 2B2: Continue Scheduled night drills.

Support needs: Classroom, Grinder space, portable props.

### **Objective 2D:** Provide Specialty Skill Maintenance

Justification: Many Firefighters have been trained to a higher level in certain specialties, especially rescue. Incidents requiring specialty training are low frequency but high risk and the skills needed to mitigate the problems decline rapidly if not practiced.

Action 2D1: Coordinate quarterly training days for firefighters from all member agencies to practice skills.

Support needs: Provide props for firefighters to practice specialty skills. This includes:

- Rubble pile
- Confined Space prop
- Trench Rescue prop
- Fuel Spill prop
- Shoring walls
- High Angle rescue area
- Low Angle rescue area
- Vehicle rescue area



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

### **Goal #3: Specialty Skill Acquisition**

In the past, the Central and East JPA members relied upon the response of specialty equipment and personnel from the City of San Diego and other outside agencies. The response was contingent on the resource availability and often had a long response time. Having the JPA members develop increased capabilities in Rescue, HazMat, Truck Operations, and other areas ensures a more timely response and improved teamwork.

#### **Objective 3A:** Provide advanced Technical Rescue Training

Justification: There are many areas within the JPA members that would require the use of advanced rope skills and/or confined space equipment. Offering classes allows folks to obtain these skills.

Action 3A1: Provide Rescue Systems 1 classes.

Action 3A2: Provide Rescue Systems 2 classes.

Action 3A3: Provide Confined Space Rescue classes.

Action 3A4: Provide Low Angle Rope Rescue Operational classes.

Action 3A5: Provide Trench Rescue classes.

Action 3A6: Study the need to provide FEMA Structural Collapse classes.

Action 3A7: Study the need to provide FEMA Technical Rope Rescue classes.

Support needs: Provide props for firefighters to practice specialty skills. This includes:

- Rubble pile
- Confined Space prop
- Trench Rescue prop
- Shoring walls
- High Angle rescue area
- Low angle rescue area

#### **Objective 3B:** Provide Truck Academy

Justification: Truck Companies within the JPA are critical and specialized. Providing a location for training reduces the cost to individual agencies and enhances Fireground Operations.

Action 3B1: Provide SD County Training Officers' Truck Academy Curriculum to JPA members.

Support needs: Provide props for firefighters to practice Truck skills. This includes:



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

- Roof / Ventilation Props
- Vehicle Extrication and Rescue area
- Multi story structures
- Strip Mall Structures
- Salvage

### **Goal 4: Promotional Preparation**

There is a demonstrated need to prepare the next generation of leaders and managers at all levels. While the Fire Officer series is important, well rounded officers should be exposed to a broader range of subjects such as advanced personnel leadership and management, the budget process, political considerations, and long term planning to name a few. This could be done by providing a Chief Officer Academy and a Company Officer Academy that could be attended by member agencies. Each Fire Department should evaluate their internal succession plan and apply their training needs to the formulation of the curriculum.

**Objective 4A:** Offer State Fire Officer Certification Classes.

Justification: Many agencies require Fire Officer Certification for eligibility to take a promotional exam, or to act. These Fire Officer classes can be hard to find through other sources due to budget constraints.

Action: 4A1: HFTA would offer all of the currently required classes needed to obtain a California State Certified Fire Officer Certification.

Support needs: Classrooms with A/V equipment and grinder space for simulations.

**Objective 4B:** Offer State Chief Officer Certification Classes

Justification: Many agencies require Chief Officer Certification for eligibility to take a promotional exam, or to act. These Chief Officer classes can be hard to find through other sources due to budget constraints.

Action: 4A1: HFTA would offer all of the currently required classes needed to obtain a California State Certified Chief Officer Certification.

Support needs: Classrooms with A/V equipment and grinder space for simulations.



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

**Objective 4C:** Deliver a “Captains” Academy to member Officers and specifically those on the current promotional list.

**Justification:** This Academy would focus on common issues faced by Company Officers when managing stations and personnel. It would also focus on local and county policy and procedures, operational approaches and terminology, and other important items that would prepare individuals for the transition into a formal leadership role.

**Action: 4A1:** Form a working group to review member agency succession plans and establish course curriculum.

**Action: 4A2:** Identify potential pool of instructors from inside and outside the JPA.

**Action: 4A3:** Establish a class schedule.

**Action: 4A4:** Present the curriculum.

**Support needs:** Classrooms with A/V equipment and grinder space for simulations.

**Objective 4D:** Deliver a “Chiefs” Academy to member Officers and specifically those on the current promotional list.

**Justification:** This Academy would focus on common issues faced by Battalion and Division level Chief Officers when managing various aspects of a Fire Department. It would also focus on Budgets, Politics, Long Range Planning, local and county policy and procedure, operational approaches and terminology, and other important items that would prepare individuals for the transition into a Chief Officer role.

**Action: 4A1:** Form a working group to review member agency succession plans and establish course curriculum.

**Action: 4A2:** Identify a potential pool of instructors from inside and outside the JPA.

**Action: 4A3:** Establish a class schedule.

**Action: 4A4:** Present the curriculum.

**Support needs:** Classrooms with A/V equipment and grinder space for simulations.



## Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

### Infrastructure to support training

The primary focus of the Heartland Fire Training Authority is to provide a training facility and programs that support all of its JPA member agencies. Each of the identified training goals includes a list of support needs. The support needs include a combination of fixed facilities, mobile facilities and training programs that can serve the JPA members and further support the training goals that have been agreed upon by the leaders of the JPA.

A review of the demographic information shows an increase in the population over the next 50 years which will require an increase in the demand for Emergency Services. As Fire agencies expand to meet these needs, the training needs will also increase. It would be prudent for current Fire Service Leaders to prepare for the needs of future leaders.

The training facility has served the JPA members well but is increasingly in need of repair and has reached capacity. Exploring an expanded partnership and entering into a Mutual use agreement with San Diego County for access to their new training site in Casa de Oro. The addition of a second site will provide expanded capacity for facility and training programs. It will also allow additional apparatus and personnel to train simultaneously while offering additional props and other support materials. This would ensure that members maintain and enhance area operational effectiveness by supporting the concept that agencies training together builds interpersonal relationships between Fire Departments that will last well into the future.

Funding for this regional training system would come from a variety of sources. The foundation begins with the existing membership and contract partners. The method that establishes a budget and determines member assessments has been successful for many years for HFTA. The pursuit of grant funding provides an additional source of revenue for future training. Identifying sources of capital funding is a critical component of this plan. Capital funding may come from new partners or donations. If adequate capital funding cannot be obtained through creative partnerships, this plan may require exploring loan programs that would be supported by long- term commitments by JPA members.

The success of this Strategic Plan will depend on critical items. Funding for the capital costs of a second facility must be identified. The development of a second facility allows the JPA to expand beyond the current membership. With the expansion of our facilities, additional partners can be added. This addition of partnerships is crucial to keeping the JPA member assessments at an acceptable level.

The Heartland Fire Training Authority has developed a five year Capital Improvement Plan to assist in the planning and construction of a second facility. Included in that plan are a set of priorities and a rough time line. Refer to that document for a detailed list of items.



# Heartland Fire Training Authority Strategic Plan For Training

---

## Summary

The HFTA training programs and facilities have served the community well so far, but changes need to be made. A need exists for improved Officer training and specialized firefighter training programs along with the update of existing programs to meet changes in State Curriculum. To meet the hiring needs of agencies, an additional or larger academy and entry level programs should be added, which creates the need for additional partnerships for facilities. Some of the goals listed in the document may have already been realized but many need modernization. This should be done while ensuring the ability for on-duty crews to maintain their skills. Member training needs and activities are concurrent and overstepping capacity therefore a guiding set of priorities should be developed. With member agencies working together to create a vision of future training needs, the next generation of fire professional will be well positioned to meet the challenges placed before them.