



INCIDENT NEWS RELEASE

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Woodland Fire Department Trains on New Safety Equipment

Firefighters with the Woodland Fire Department have been training almost everyday for the past several weeks on the use of their new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) recently purchased to replace old and unreliable units. Firefighters wear SCBA on their back as a source of fresh air providing them respiratory protection when entering hazardous atmospheres due to smoke or chemicals. These SCBA have 30-minute bottles which can last as little as 10-15 minutes depending on the level of exertion firefighters undergo in a burning structure.

These new SCBA have the latest in safety features and are very different from the SCBA we have now. The training started with an orientation to basic operations and evolved into very technical and tactical training so that firefighters become very comfortable wearing and using these units, and operation becomes intuitive. In addition to the intense heat and noise, there is absolutely no visibility inside a burning structure and firefighters need to know where each control lever and button is on their SCBA from repetitive training and use because they won't be able to see them if they have a problem or malfunction. Firefighters have also been training on rescuing each other simulating a malfunction or collapse, and practicing how they can connect their SCBA to their comrade's SCBA in an evolution called "buddy breathing".

The Woodland City Council recently authorized the Fire Department to enter into a multi-year lease-purchase agreement in order to buy the SCBA because there was not enough money available to purchase them outright. Applications to secure grants through Homeland Security since 2007, and the federal Assistance to Firefighter's Grant program since 2008, were rejected. Because of ongoing reliability and liability issues the Fire Department could not wait any longer to replace the units. The replacement of our SCBA became a firefighter safety issue and we needed to move forward immediately with their replacement.

The new SCBA are compatible with many of the other fire departments in the County that Woodland FD works closely with including Davis, UC Davis, Dixon, and West Sacramento. The battery of training evolutions are winding down and then each firefighter will be thoroughly tested on every element of the SCBA before they will be placed into service early next week.

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