

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
TUESDAY, MAY 05, 2026**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 1**

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING:  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE XX OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDINANCE CODE, RELATING TO SAN DIEGO  
COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE  
AREA CHARGES AND FEES (05/05/26 - FIRST READING; 05/19/26 - SECOND  
READING UNLESS ORDINANCE IS MODIFIED ON SECOND READING)  
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

On February 27, 2024 (FP01), the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) Board of Directors approved the ambulance transportation fee increase to maintain current services within the SDCFPD Ground Ambulance Service Area (ASA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 25-26. The ASA includes the entirety of the SDCFPD as well as the Deer Springs, Valley Center, Alpine, and a portion of the San Miguel Fire Protection Districts. Ambulance operating areas have historically relied upon insurance revenue from transports to hospitals to recover costs. However, rural communities with large geographic areas and small population centers are more costly to serve and generally are overrepresented by public insurance programs that reimburse at lower rates than private health plans. Public plans, such as Medicare and Medi-Cal, pay a fixed rate based upon regulation and statute that is below the actual costs for ambulance transport to the hospital.

San Diego County Fire (County Fire), on behalf of the ASA, recently conducted a review of fees to ensure compliance with Board of Supervisors Policy B-29, *Fees, Grants, and Revenue Contracts - Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery* (Board Policy B-29), which requires County departments to recover the costs to provide services to agencies or individuals. As a result, County Fire is proposing actions that support the cost of providing services, while ensuring fair and equitable fee levels for the public. After reviewing the current fees and rates, County Fire staff is proposing to increase three fees and decrease one fee. The Auditor and Controller reviewed and approved the supporting documentation and the methodology for establishing the fees in this proposal for FY 2026-27.

The proposed ambulance transport user fee received support from the SDCFPD Fire Advisory Board and would be consistent with County Service Area 17's proposed fees, which is another ambulance service that is managed by County Fire. In the ASA, the average collection rate on fees assessed is about 28% due to various reimbursement rates from Medicare, Medi-Cal, commercial insurance, and patient private pay. Since 100% of the fees assessed on ambulance transports are not collected, full cost recovery for services will not be achieved in FY 26-27 and a waiver of Board Policy B-29 is being requested. The proposed fees in the ASA have a 5% escalator through FY 28-29, to align with the annual increase in contract costs that support the operations of the ASA.

Today's action requests that the SDCFPD Board of Directors approve amendments to Article XX of the San Diego County Administrative Code to fees charged for services by the SDCFPD ASA.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

On May 5, 2026:

1. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading):  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE XX OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDINANCE CODE, RELATING TO SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE AREA CHARGES AND FEES.
2. Waive Board Policy B-29, *Fees, Grants, and Revenue Contracts - Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery* which requires full cost recovery for services.

If, on May 5, 2026, the SDCFPD Board takes action as recommended, then on May 19, 2026:

1. Consider and adopt (unless ordinance is modified on second reading):  
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE XX OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, RELATING TO SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE AREA CHARGES AND FEES.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Advanced (Paramedic) and Basic (Emergency Medical Technician) Life Support ambulances are critical components to an emergency medical services system that seeks to reduce health disparities in our region. San Diego County Fire, on behalf of the San Diego County Fire Protection District, worked with outside consultants to establish a service plan and quality assurance measures to meet the minimum requirements for residents in rural communities. Updating the fee schedule will have minimum impacts to our lowest-income and most vulnerable residents.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed action to update the ambulance transportation fees in the San Diego County Fire Protection District supports efforts for County programs, operations, and contracts that reflect the values and priorities, including equitable service delivery, to residents in our region. The proposed fee increase protects our lowest-income residents while promoting an equitable emergency medical services program that is closer to full cost recovery to operate the system.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact in the current fiscal year. If approved, this request will result in an estimated increase in revenue of \$0.85 million in the ASA in Fiscal Year 2026-27. Costs and revenue for this request will be included in the Fiscal Year 2026-28 CAO Recommended Operational Plan for the ASA. The funding source is fees paid by entities or individuals for services.

A waiver of Board of Supervisor Policy B-29: *Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts - Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery* is requested because the proposed fees will not cover the current operating costs for services in the ASA. The unrecovered cost, estimated at \$10.0 million, will be funded with existing General Purpose Revenue and property tax revenue. There is no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Director Anderson, seconded by Director Aguirre, the Board of Directors of the San Diego County Fire Protection District closed the Hearing and took action as recommended, and took action to further consider and adopt the Ordinance on May 19, 2026.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Lawson-Remer

NOES: Desmond

ABSENT: Montgomery Steppe

State of California)  
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the San Diego County Fire Protection District.

ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board of Directors



**Signed**

**by** Andrew Potter