



Lockett Ranches Fire District

March 2022

To all our Lockett Ranches owners and neighbors –

Long-time residents of Lockett will recognize that firefighting in our area is complicated by lack of access to water. With no fire hydrants in most of the community and the inability to access stored water in home cisterns, firefighters are usually required to bring water to the fire. As the attached communication from Battalion Chief Torsten Palm indicates, the Flagstaff Fire Department (FFD) has a plan for doing this - although carrying it out depends on access to the site of the fire for needed equipment.

Each of us should take a critical look at the access issue and do in advance what might be needed to improve access on our properties for emergency equipment. The Owner's Association **Lot Review process** covers this item. If an owner wishes professional advice on these issues, carrying out a Lot Review is an easy and free way to get it. Information on how to arrange for a Lot Review by a FFD Firewise professional can be found at the bottom of the landing page on the Fire District website at <http://firedistrict.lockett ranches.com>.

It should also be noted that FFD does NOT contractually guarantee a timely response to a call for help. While they will do their best to arrive as soon as possible, there may be circumstances that prevent that timely response such as: weather issues particularly snow; terrain barriers; and quoting from the fire protection contract "*fire, flood, windstorm, breakdown or other damage to equipment, power failure or any other cause beyond the reasonable control of the CITY*", and "*CITY requirements to provide services to any or all parts of the entire service system, including its own residents, Mutual Aid Partners, or contract/IGA holders within its jurisdictional limits.*"

We all pay in county taxes a fair amount for fire and emergency medical response protection, and it is in our individual and collective interests to make sure emergency vehicles can get to our properties. Also, to state the obvious: preventing fires in the first place is the best way to protect our homes and those of our neighbors from a fire disaster.

The Fire District periodically sends communications via email to owners and residents of Lockett Ranches on topics related to fire safety in our community. Our email distribution list currently has only 42 names on it – about 23% of our owners. Feel free to share this communication with your friends and neighbors living in Lockett Ranches. If an owner or resident wishes to receive future emails of this sort, they can send an email to contact@lockett ranches.com and we will add them to our list.

The Fire District has the following protocols regarding list management: adding a name is strictly voluntary, the list will be confidential, and will not be used for any purpose other than to disseminate information to list members about important fire district issues.

On behalf of the Lockett Ranches Fire District,

John Noll
Lockett Ranches Fire District Chairperson
jhnoll76@gmail.com

Fighting Fire with a lack of Hydrants

First let me address your concern about fighting fires without fire hydrants directly near the scene. In many of our communities surrounding the city, fire hydrants are sparse. We prepare for this by using fire department Water Tenders and portable water tanks carried on the Water Tenders.

When we do have a working structure fire, there typically will be 6 fire engines responding with each carrying about 500 gallons of water in their tanks. When fire hydrants are not present, we also dispatch one or two 3600–3800-gallon water tenders depending on the scene. These water tenders will drop a 3000–4000-gallon portable tank, quickly fill it, and then run to the closest adequate hydrant to fill and return. We call this a “Water Shuttle, or Tender Shuttle operation. On scene, our Incident commanders determine how much water supply is needed, and how many water tenders will be needed to keep up with the water flow. We use our fire engines to pull water out of the portable tank(s) for firefighting so the Water Tender(s) can run back and forth to the hydrants. Once the fire is out and the scene is secured, we will drain and pick the portable tanks back up along with the rest of our equipment. This is an operation that is quite common for us with the large volume of homes and responses in the communities surrounding Flagstaff.

For a typical working structure fire, in an area that lack fire hydrants, we assign the following units

- 2 Battalion Chiefs (Incident Command and Operations)
- 6 Fire Engines (500 gallons each)
- 1-2 Water Tenders (3600-3800 gallons each)

This puts 20-24 people on the scene. If there is a need for more units and people due to scene complexity or other reasons, we can add another Battalion Chief and 3 more Engines. It is extremely rare that we go above the initial units listed above on most fires, but our response system is designed to continually scale up until the problem is mitigated.

In the case of a Wildfire, we assign a similar compliment of units and equipment, and we also can utilize our internal Wildland hand crew (12 people), along with a wide compliment of US Forrest Service units to mitigate whatever issue that may arise.

We appreciate the concern from the community to provide access to private water sources, but it can be more hassle than it is a benefit. If we do connect to a private water tank, that tank is then considered contaminated, and would need to be professionally cleaned before returning to use. Luckily, close to the Lockett Ranches community there are multiple good fire hydrants which we can quickly fill from for a Water Shuttle operation. The primary roads are also very adequate to support Water Shuttle operations. We do appreciate the support from the community members in thinking about supporting operations. Good working hydrants are the best, but we have a system to work around not having them.

Access to homes can be one of the biggest concerns

One of the biggest challenges in many of our communities is access to the homes. This can range from tight driveways, vehicles and equipment blocking access, trees and branches encroaching on

the access, lack of adequate turn around space at the end of long driveways, and wintertime snow which can make access impossible.

This time of year, a good fire prevention task is to maintain good access to homes for emergency response use. As noted above, we may dispatch up to 9 units to a working structure fire. Ideally, we need to get at least two of them close to the structure (50 feet away). In the case of a medical emergency, the closer we can get to the home the better. If the community members can work to keep their driveways clear of snow, and maintain access for responding units, this is one of the most helpful things that can be done.

Thank you for being proactive in being informed and maintaining safety in your community. I hope this can answer some of your questions. Please feel free to reach out if you have any other needs.

Thank you,
Torsten Palm
Battalion Chief
B Shift



Type I Engine: This structural fire fighting engine is the basic service delivery unit for FFD. It carries an inventory of all-risk equipment allowing for immediate response to Emergency Medical Services/Rescue/Fire Suppression.



Water Tender: The apparatus is a mobile water supply to provide fire suppression water to areas without fire hydrants. (rural, wildland, interstates, etc.). Two of these might be needed for “water shuttle” operations.