

Brown Out FAQ

What is a brownout?

A brownout is a commonly used phrase in the Fire Service. A brown out is when you temporarily take an Engine or Ladder Company out of service and redistribute the staff to fill in personnel gaps in other.

How is the reduction in overtime achieved?

Currently when personnel are needed to maintain the minimum staffing of 22 Firefighters per shift, those shortages are filled with overtime personnel. Using brownouts will allow the Department to redistribute its personnel and limit overtime to achieve a savings in overtime. When a company goes out of service (brown out), that piece of equipment is no longer used for that shift, the personnel (3 Firefighters from that Engine Company or Ladder Company) are redistributed to other in service Companies which require staffing due to vacation, personal, union, IOD, etc.

Who will respond when a company is browned out and what will happen to response times?

A surrounding Engine or Ladder Company that is currently staffed with a minimum of 3 Firefighters will respond to the emergency (Important note: NFPA 1710 the recommended staffing for an Engine Company is 4 Firefighters, and 5 Firefighters for a Truck Company).

How were companies chosen for brownouts?

Companies were chosen based on information and data related to:

- Response times based on NFPA 1710
- Size of the service area and capability of perimeter companies to respond (web of coverage)
- Workload based on call volume
- Facility security

The Department will continuously review any fluctuations in response times based on personnel and equipment deployment to ensure that we are responding to the needs of our citizens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. (NFPA 1710 states, fire suppression resources shall be deployed to provide for the arrival of an engine company within 240 seconds)