

**ORDINANCE NO. 903**  
**AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE**  
**REGULATING VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside ordains as follows:

- Section 1. **FINDINGS.** The Board of Supervisors finds that:
- a. Volunteer fire companies have historically provided fire protection services in many unincorporated areas of the County.
  - b. As a result of population growth and development, the Fire Department in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (“CAL-FIRE”) now provides fire protection services throughout the County.
  - c. Where the County has established an adequate level of service, over 60 volunteer fire companies continue to exist which increases the possibility that responses to emergency situations by more than a single entity could result in the mismanagement of incidents and create confusion to those who are seeking aid.
  - d. Regulation of volunteer fire companies is warranted to coordinate resources and better serve communities.

Section 2. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate the formation and continued existence of volunteer fire companies in the County.

Section 3. **AUTHORITY.** This ordinance is adopted pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 14831 which provides in pertinent part: “the board of supervisors of a county which has a population of 1,000,000 or more on or after January 1, 1985, may, by ordinance, regulate the formation and continued existence of fire companies.”

Section 4. **DEFINITIONS.** As used in this ordinance, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- a. **Board.** The Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside.
- b. **County.** The County of Riverside.
- c. **Existing Volunteer Fire Company.** A volunteer fire company formed prior to the effective date of this ordinance.
- d. **Fire Department.** The Riverside County Fire Department.
- e. **New Volunteer Fire Company.** A volunteer fire company formed after the effective date of this ordinance.
- f. **Volunteer Fire Company.** A company organized pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 14825 et seq.

Section 5. **NEW VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES.** No volunteer fire company shall be formed after the effective date of this ordinance unless the Board approves its formation. An application for formation shall be filed with the Fire Department. The Fire Department shall review the application and make a recommendation to the Board. The Board may approve the application if it determines each of the following:

- a. A reasonable level of fire protection services does not already exist;  
and

- b. The provision of supplemental or competing fire services by any other entity would not result in the mismanagement of emergencies or in confusion to those seeking aid.

Section 6. EXISTING VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES. The Fire Department shall make a recommendation to the Board concerning all volunteer fire companies existing on the effective date of this ordinance. An existing volunteer fire company may continue to exist only if the Board makes the determinations specified in Section 5. above within one-hundred and eighty (180) days of the effective date of this ordinance.

Section 7. ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS AND CRITERIA. The Fire Department, through its Fire Chief, shall manage and control the ongoing operations of any new or existing volunteer fire company as provided in the County Volunteer Fire Company Operating Policy Manual. In addition, any new or existing volunteer fire company shall at all times:

- a. Comply with the provisions of Division 12, Part 4 of the Health and Safety Code (Health and Safety Code Section 14825 et seq.) as written on the effective date of this ordinance and as it may from time to time be amended.
- b. Comply with any plan adopted by the Board for the delivery of fire protection and emergency medical services in the unincorporated areas of the County.
- c. Procure and maintain insurance for all its volunteer fire company owned property, real or personal, in accordance with the current standards provided by the County of Riverside Risk Management Office, in effect today and as may be amended from time to time.

Section 8. VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES. Any volunteer fire company violating any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be guilty of an infraction punishable by (1) a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100) for a first violation; (2) a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200) for a second violation within one year; (3) a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) for each additional violation within one year. Violations of this ordinance may be prosecuted by county authorities in the name of the people of the State of California. The penalties herein are in addition to any other remedies provided by law and the payment of any penalty herein shall not relieve a volunteer fire company of the obligation to correct the violation.

Section 9. SEVERABILITY. If any provision, clause, sentence or paragraph of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

Section 10. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after its adoption.

**Adopted:** 903 Item 3.18 of 12/07/2010 (Eff: 01/06/2011)