

POTENTIAL TRANSITION OF COUNTY HAZARDOUS MATERIALS PROGRAMS TO CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

JUNE 24, 2025

Proposal and Concept Background

Union representatives and staff in County Hazardous Materials Programs proposed the concept

Discussions on feasibility

Discussions with impacted labor groups

Impacts on the Hazardous Materials Programs responsibility since 2022 fire annexations

Merging the Hazmat Programs into the Fire District

Combines the talents, skills, and expertise of both workforces

Gives the County very robust emergency response capabilities

The CUPA knowledge of facilities will improve emergency response

Knowledge sharing during incidents and inspections

One team reporting to the same supervisor on incidents

Improved workflow, information sharing, facility engagement and enforcement

Integrating California Environmental Reporting System data with CUPA regulatory oversight helps streamline incident assessment and response

Operational Efficiency

Reduced redundancy of inspections, permitting and enforcement

Shared administration, IT systems, and cost recovery efforts

Improved and unified community messaging during incidents

Improved familiarization of the different technologies and equipment used in the field

Improved training for hazmat responders to promote operational effectiveness

Data Sharing, Intelligence, and Training

Access to more useful data during planning and response

Unified data systems can improve risk assessment and pre-incident planning

Staff can be cross trained to perform inspections, handle technical issues, enhancing field capabilities and reducing gaps in coverage

Fire Personnel with Hazardous Materials expertise can strengthen the combined capacity

Centralized and coordinated training for all team members

Unified Community Messaging

Consistent public education and outreach regarding Hazardous Materials, environmental safety, and emergency response

Preparedness drills and public information campaigns are easier to coordinate under one unified agency

Critical incident information is better managed to improve quality, timely distribution, and avoid dissimilar messages

Health Officer unified with one team during emergency response

Stronger Grant and Funding Opportunities

Merged agencies may be more competitive when applying for State and Federal grants for Hazardous Materials, emergency preparedness or environmental protection

Eliminates internal competition for UASI and Homeland Security Grants

Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA)

The Fire District can be the CUPA and would provide services as the CUPA throughout the County

All CUPA programs must be maintained

All CUPA program staff will transition to the District

Renewed emphasis on enforcement

Fees and charges for program sustainability will be regularly audited and updated

Industrial Safety Ordinance (ISO)

The District can administer and enforce this important local safety ordinance

Maintains the intent and ability to collaborate with industry to provide improved safety standards and accountability

Maintains all the available enforcement mechanisms

Committees and Governance

With the exception of the Integrated Pest Management Committee, all existing Hazmat committees will remain

Industrial Safety Ad-Hoc Committee

Hazardous Materials Commission

Martinez Refining Company Oversight Committee

CAER Action Teams

- Notification Team
- Process Safety Team
- Coastal Regional Hazardous Materials Organization

SUMMARY

Merging the County Hazardous Materials Programs into the Fire District creates a unified safety organization that both prevents and responds to hazardous materials threats — improving protection for the public, the environment, and first responders.

