

# San Francisco Fire Department



## New Fireboat Project



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Chief of Department

# Overview of Project

Every year San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) fireboats respond to hundreds of calls for service. From Pier Street Box responses to saving lives and property, our vessels are ready to respond at a moment's notice. Both of our existing vessels are over 50 years old and require a lot of time and money to maintain and keep operationally ready. The SF Bay Region is home to several large commercial ports and two international airports. It is important we continue to protect the Bay Area and having a new state of the art vessel will ensure we can provide excellent service for the next 50 years.

The San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) is in the process of purchasing a new all hazards marine response firefighting vessel. The SFFD was awarded a Port Security Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to fund the construction and delivery of the vessel. This is a much needed asset that will make San Francisco, along with the entire SF Bay Region, much safer and better prepared to deal with a maritime emergency.

## History of SFFD Fireboats

Fireboats have been part of the SFFD since 1878. The first fireboat in the San Francisco Fire Department was the *Governor Irwin*, Fireboat Co. 1, located at the Broadway Street Wharf. The vessel was a tugboat owned by the State of California and was fitted with pumps, a turret, hose discharge outlets and a hose-locker. In 1909, the *David Scannell* and *Dennis T. Sullivan* were placed into service. These were large steam-powered vessels that protected San Francisco's waterfront and Bay until 1954.



Dennis T Sullivan



Dennis T. Sullivan at a large pier fire

## Current Fireboats

*Fireboat Phoenix* was built in 1954 and commissioned in 1955. Phoenix, known as Fireboat Co. 1, is located at Pier 22 ½. Phoenix's mechanical systems are all powered with diesel fuel and the 89-foot vessel has a pumping capacity of 9600 gallons per minute.

*Phoenix's* first call to action came on April 2, 1955. A four-alarm blaze at the Ferry Building greatly damaged the north end of the building; losses came to \$750,000.

*Phoenix* played a notable role in the response to the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. At 5:04 pm on October 17, 1989, a major earthquake rumbled through the San Francisco Bay Area. One of the hardest-hit locations was the Marina District of San Francisco. Subsequent to a sharp aftershock, a fire broke out in a three-story building in the area. At 6:16 pm, *Phoenix* was called to assist. At 7:00 pm, *Phoenix* was ready to pump at the Marina lagoon. *Phoenix* connected hoses to an engine company and to two ladder trucks and commenced pumping seawater from the bay. *Phoenix* worked until all the Marina fires were under control, pumping seawater continuously for 15 hours at the rate of 6,400 gallons per minute, a total of 5.5 million gallons (20.8 ML). *Phoenix* is credited with saving the area from further destruction. One of Diane Feinstein's last mayoral acts was to save the City's only fireboat from suggested budget cuts. Some 21 months later the earthquake struck. Feinstein wrote that the boat "unquestionably saved the Marina from a greater catastrophe".



Ferry Building 1955



Phoenix Underway

## Current Fireboats Continued

*Fireboat Guardian* was built in 1951 and was put into service in 1990. The Guardian, known as Fireboat Co. 2, is located at Pier 22 ½. Guardian's mechanical systems are all powered with diesel fuel and the 88-foot vessel has a pumping capacity of 24,000 gallons per minute.

The *Guardian* was a gift to the people of San Francisco from two anonymous and very generous donors from the Marina district who gave \$300,000 towards the purchase of the vessel shortly after the earthquake of October 17, 1989. It was their way of saying "thank you" for a job well done by the *Phoenix*,



The San Francisco Fire Department is the only department in the SF Bay Region to staff a large fireboat 24/7, 365 days a year. The SFFD always has one of the two vessels in service with the second vessel in reserve status. SFFD Vessels are staffed with 7 members.

# **SFFD Fireboat Response Capabilities**

The SFFD Fireboats provide the following services for San Francisco and the SF Bay Region:

- Firefighting
- Marine Firefighting
- Search and Rescue
- Emergency Medical Services
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Marine Spill Response
- Marine Salvage
- Dive Operations
- Special Event Standbys
- Safety Zone Enforcement
- USCG Assistance
- Public Relations
- Water Displays
- Auxiliary Water Supply System Support
- Portable Water Supply System Support

# New Fireboat

The San Francisco Fire Department put together a project development team for this project. The team began with research and development and reached out to other departments across the country that have recently received new fireboats. The team gathered all of the information and then took into account the special need the vessel must have to be the best fit for the SF Bay Region. Some specific needs the vessel must have are the ability to support the Auxiliary Water Supply System (AWSS) and Portable Water Supply System (PWSS). These were the two backup water supply systems that saved the Marina District in 1989. Once the SFFD had a concept of what type of vessel was best for the region, the department hired Jensen Maritime Consultants Inc. to design the new vessel.

Plans and specifications were completed by Jensen. The San Francisco Fire Department applied for a Port Security Grant from FEMA to fund the purchase of the new vessel. In 2013, FEMA awarded the SFFD 7.6 million dollars to fund the project. Special thanks to the following individuals and their staff for supporting this project and helping with the final approval:

- Senator Diane Feinstein
- Representative Nancy Pelosi
- Secretary Janet Napolitano
- Assistant FEMA Administrator Brian Kamoie
- Assistant FEMA Administrator Robert Fenton
- USCG Sector SF Captain of the Port Greg Stump
- Mayor Ed Lee

The new CBRNE response vessel will be 88-feet long and will be equipped to respond to any marine-based emergency anytime anywhere in the region. Some of the noticeable improvements to having the new vessel: Enhanced fire pump system that will pump 15-20 thousand gallons per minute, enhanced foam firefighting system for the suppression of petroleum-based fires, patient treatment area for EMS response, radiation detection equipment, remote firefighting systems that will prevent firefighters being exposed to heat and smoke, enhanced search and rescue capabilities, rapid deployment rescue boat and RWC, state of the art advanced marine electronics, command center, and on-board compressor for filling air bottles for firefighting and dive operations.

