

Chief explains SLTFD staffing

Lake Tahoe News asked South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston about staffing issues at station two.

Here is his response:

“Fire station two has two personnel assigned to it; a shift commander whose role is to provide 24-hour dedicated supervision to the on-duty resources, provide for consistency, safety and accountability for daily crew assignments and to coordinate all emergency responses.

“We also have one engineer assigned to the squad at that station whose emergency response capabilities include rescue systems, ventilation, forcible entry, advanced life support EMS and a variety of technical rescue components that the department has. This deployment supports our additional engine and medic units deployed at stations one and three.

“Our daily staffing has remained consistent at 10 and we staff up based on conditions that include red flag wildland warnings, inter-facility transfers that take medic units off the hill and for special events that require a more robust emergency response.

“We now also for the first time meet the national standard for an effective fire response delivering 15 personnel to a first alarm assignment with our automatic aid agreement with Lake Valley, staffing can also be augmented with mutual aid from Tahoe Douglas, CalFire and USFS.

“We were able to dedicate a shift commander based on our recent collective bargaining agreement which met a significant city goal, and we accomplished this with no increase to our budget, no addition of personnel all within our modest staffing levels. We implemented this approximately 30 days ago and have found that a dedicated

shift commander has improved our operations immensely.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report