



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 09/03/2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Fire Department

2025-354

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:

HAZMAT RESPONSE AGREEMENT-CORONA FIRE AND MURRIETA FIRE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks Council to approve a cooperative aid agreement for the City of Corona Fire Department to provide hazardous materials emergency response services to the City of Murrieta. The City of Murrieta Fire & Rescue does not maintain its own Hazardous Materials Response Team, and this agreement will ensure access to specialized services when needed. The Corona Fire Department staffs one of only four Office of Emergency Services (OES) certified Hazardous Materials Response Teams in Riverside County, positioning the Department as a regional resource with training, personnel, and equipment necessary to safely and effectively mitigate hazardous materials incidents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Approve the Hazardous Materials Response Cooperative Agreement with the City of Murrieta.
- b. Authorize the City Manager, or their designee, to execute the Hazardous Materials Response Cooperative Agreement with the City of Murrieta.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The City of Corona Fire Department (CFD) maintains a Type II OES-certified Hazardous Materials Response Team, one of only four certified teams in Riverside County, alongside the Hemet Fire Department, Riverside City Fire Department, and Riverside County Fire Department. Recognizing both the regional hazard risk and the absence of a local team in Murrieta, the Cities of Murrieta and Corona have negotiated a Cooperative Agreement to formalize the provision of hazardous materials emergency response services. Under this agreement, CFD will provide personnel, equipment, and expertise to hazardous materials incidents in Murrieta's jurisdiction when requested, subject to resource availability and Corona's primary responsibility to its own jurisdiction.

Incidents involving the release of hazardous substances pose significant risks to public health, safety, the environment, and require specialized resources for effective mitigation. While Murrieta Fire & Rescue (MFR) provides comprehensive emergency response services to its community, it does not maintain a dedicated Hazardous Materials Response Team. To address this operational gap, MFR has historically relied on countywide and statewide mutual aid frameworks, including the Riverside County Fire Mutual Aid Plan and the California Emergency Services Act. While these systems ensure access to specialized resources, they often involve "Assistance-by-Hire" requests that may delay immediate deployment or incur direct costs to the requesting agency.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed Cooperative Agreement enhances regional public safety by ensuring agencies have reliable access to specialized hazardous materials response without creating or staffing their own teams. For Corona, this arrangement strengthens interagency partnerships and reinforces its role as a regional leader in special operations, while preserving operational discretion and the ability to prioritize local needs.

From a fiscal perspective, the agreement establishes a cost-effective framework. No reimbursement is required for the first six hours of CFD's response. If an incident requires services beyond that period, the arrangement transitions to an "Assistance-by-Hire" model, with the City of Murrieta responsible for personnel costs at the City of Corona's adopted hourly rate, in addition to the cost of disposable supplies and materials used. This model provides Murrieta with predictable cost exposure, while ensuring that Corona is reimbursed for extended deployments.

Operationally, the agreement specifies that Murrieta will retain incident command authority within its jurisdiction, while requesting Corona's technical support as needed. Both agencies retain their independence, including responsibility for personnel compensation, insurance, and liability coverage. The agreement is voluntary in nature, clarifies indemnification obligations, and is authorized under California Government Code Section 55632.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is limited financial impact associated with the recommended actions. There is no reimbursement for the first six (6) hours of hazardous materials response provided by the

Corona Fire Department within Murrieta's jurisdiction; however, if a response extends beyond six hours, the agreement transitions to an Assistance-by-Hire arrangement under which Murrieta reimburses Corona at the City's adopted hourly rate for hazardous materials team services, plus the cost of disposable supplies and materials. All costs associated with staffing, wages, benefits, insurance, and routine equipment maintenance remain the responsibility of each jurisdiction, ensuring that Corona does not incur ongoing expenditures while providing a clear mechanism for cost recovery in the event of prolonged or resource-intensive incidents.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action merely approves an agreement, and there is no possibility that approving the recommended action will have a significant effect on the environment.

PREPARED BY: BRIAN YOUNG, FIRE CHIEF

REVIEWED BY: BRIAN YOUNG, FIRE CHIEF

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit 1 – Cooperative Agreement