

Memorandum

DATE: April 24, 2024

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Ana Ruiz, General Manager

FROM: Deborah Bazar, Management Analyst II, Visitor Services

Chief Ranger Matt Anderson, Visitor Services

SUBJECT: Ranger Public Safety Report for Calendar Year 2023

SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the enforcement activities and public safety incidents Rangers initiated or responded to on and off Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) lands during calendar year 2023. With the transition to our new reporting software in 2022, comparative data from the preceding year is included for perspective; however, it is too early to identify any emerging trends. Data from previous years is not included in this report, as the current data and the method of collection/analyzation do not correlate with the data in the previous database. Therefore, data prior to 2022 is not comparable to recent data. Violations of District ordinances represent most of the reportable incidents. The most common District violations (excluding parking) continue to be *dog violations*, *after-hours use*, and *entry into closed areas*.

DISCUSSION

Information for this report was generated from the Omnigo software platform, which was launched in January 2022 as the new repository for Ranger records. In addition to citations, written warnings, and incident reports, Omnigo is capable of capturing data from Ranger activity logs and verbal warnings (which were not recorded electronically previously). This creates a new baseline for activity reporting in 2022 that will be built upon in future reports.

Ranger Activity

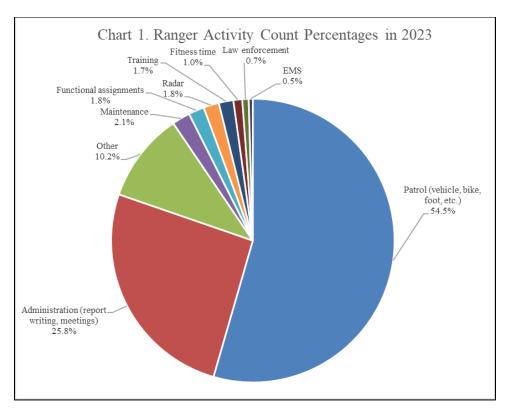
As noted above and in last year's report, a customized feature in Omnigo is the ability for Rangers to record daily activities or tasks performed. The intent of this data collection and analysis is to aid supervisors in providing direction and to better present a picture of the variety of Ranger tasks and their primary activities (by occurrence). There is no measurement of time associated with an activity in this report. Each entry of an activity in Omnigo is simply recording the task as an occurrence or type of activity. See Chart 1 on the next page for more information.

The top activity of District Rangers is patrol by vehicle and foot. The general purpose and value of patrol is to provide frontline public contact, education, site presence, and visitor services on District lands. Rangers are generalist and balance the various concepts and approaches of site

stewardship, maintenance, resource management, interpretation, and law enforcement in the conduct of their duties. During their patrols, Rangers perform minor maintenance, repairs, and address or report safety issues to Land and Facility staff.

Usage of alternate patrol methods such as bicycle and motorcycle patrol have low usage and will be evaluated to decide whether to reemphasize their use. Most of the other listed activities Rangers perform stem from patrol, that are either self-initiated or for which they are dispatched, such as radar for bicycle speed enforcement, law enforcement, emergency medical response (EMS), response to fires, and search and rescue. Second to patrol are the administrative tasks related to patrol, including report writing, citations, and incident reports.

The activity with the lowest occurrence is appearing in court. Testimony in court only occurs when a visitor cited for a violation pleads not guilty and requests a hearing. An explanation of the reason for a citation tends to lead to fewer challenges in court. For a detailed breakdown of Ranger activities, see Attachment 1, Table 1.



Law Enforcement Activity

The focus of law enforcement contacts made by Rangers is focused on the education and enforcement of District ordinances for the protection of natural resources and for public safety and enjoyment. Most contacts that Rangers make are educational in nature regardless of the action taken. Actions taken include verbal and written warnings, citations, and on rare occasions, a physical arrest. Citations are a written promise to appear in court, issued to a visitor who violates a District ordinance or local, state, or federal law. Physical arrests, if they occur, are turned over to the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction. Rangers do not enforce arrestable offenses without the assistance of police officers or sheriff's deputies. Many violations can be addressed and corrected with a verbal or written warning; thus, warnings represent a significant effort by Rangers to address violations at a low level, gain compliance, and educate visitors.

There were fewer recorded violations, including parking violations, in 2023 than 2022. There is not a clear reason for this. Rangers report that adherence to regulations has improved over the years. It will take several years under the new data system to identify trends.

Being fully staffed is key to consistent enforcement, providing a highly visible, proactive presence and response in District preserves. During 2022 and 2023, Ranger positions were not fully staffed, making consistent enforcement efforts and presence challenging. When available staffing is reduced, on-duty staff concentrate their efforts on incident response and patrols of high-volume use areas, typically limiting foot patrols and the ability to focus on potential violations in less-visited areas.

District and Non-District Ordinance Violation Summary

Calendar year 2023 saw a 23% decrease in the total number of violations recorded (District ordinances and non-District Ordinances, excluding parking violations) in comparison with 2022. See Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. VIOLATION TYPE, EXCLUDING PARKING VIOLATIONS, IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% change from 2022
District ordinances	3558	2763	-22%
Non-District ordinances	167	98	-41%
Grand Total	3725	2861	-23%

Violations of District ordinances represent most reportable issues. The most common District violations (excluding parking) continue to be *dog violations*, *after-hours use*, and *entry into closed areas*. Nearly every violation has decreased since 2022; one exception was for *entry into closed areas*, which saw a significant increase of 77% compared to 2022. This increase is attributable to temporary storm closures. See Attachment 1, Table 2 for a complete list of District violations in 2022 and 2023.

This is the first year that verbal warnings, observed, and documented incidents are included. (Observed means the ranger saw the violation but was not able to contact the subject; Documented means that the ranger did not see a subject commit the violation but found evidence of it.) See Table 2 below for the top six District violation categories in 2022 and 2023.

TABLE 2. TOP 6 DISTRICT VIOLATION CATEGORIES IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% change from 2022
Dog violations 701.1(b) Dogs prohibited & 701.1(c) Leash required	890	751	-16%
Citation	132	102	-11%
Verbal warning	552	494	-10%
Written warning	206	153	-26%
Observed	0	2	N/A
After hours use prohibited - 805.3	1044	577	-45%
Citation	50	24	-52%
Verbal warning	852	484	-43%
Written warning	142	69	-51%

Entry into closed areas - 805.2(a)	274	485	77%
Citation	40	123	208%
Documented	1	2	100%
Observed	1	0	-100%
Verbal warning	170	287	69%
Written warning	62	73	18%
Segways and electric bicycles - 409.9	224	158	-29%
Citation	12	33	175%
Observed	2	2	0%
Verbal warning	133	70	-47%
Written warning	77	53	-31%
Helmet required - 502.4(a)	217	178	-18%
Citation	3	2	-33%
Verbal warning	193	178	-8%
Written warning	21	11	-48%
Trail use speed limit - 500.1	317	128	-60%
Citation	8	0	-100%
Observed	3	0	-100%
Verbal warning	251	110	-56%
Written warning	55	18	-67%

In addition to District ordinances, there are specific local, state, and federal laws that can be enforced or documented by Rangers on or adjacent to District lands. The most common violation of these non-District ordinances is *vandalism*, followed by *auto burglaries* and *false information*. See Attachment 1, Table 3 for more information.

Parking Violations

There were 598 parking citations issued in 2023, which represent a 25% decrease from 2022. See Table 3 below and Attachment 1, Table 4. The most frequent District-ordinance parking violation continues to be *after hours parking*, with most of them (125, 43%) occurring at Rancho San Antonio County Park—while the number of violations decreased, the percentage occurring at Rancho is the same as 2022 (134, 43%).

TABLE 3. PARKING VIOLATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% difference from 2022
District after hours parking	314	293	-7%
All other District parking violations	168	162	-4%
Non-District parking violations	319	143	-55%
Grand Total	801	598	-25%

Most parking citations issued for non-District parking ordinances in 2023 were for parking in noparking zones along county roadways adjacent to District preserves (58, 41%) with the majority of those occurring along Monte Bello Road (31, 53%). Monte Bello Road dead ends at the trail to Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, but there is no parking allowed because the road is very narrow. The District does have a permit parking lot available for preserve visitors, but it requires an advance permit.

In 2022, most no-parking zone violations occurred at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve along Purisima Creek Road. This was due to the enforcement of a no-parking zone

established in cooperation with San Mateo County at the request of residents to address safety concerns related to high levels of roadside parking along very narrow stretches of the road. This enforcement resulted in a significant spike in parking violation citations starting in 2021 and peaking in 2022. Damage from the 2023 winter storms resulted in the closure of lower Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve and significant damage to Purisima Creek Road. The lack of access to Purisima Creek Road for non-residents resulted in a dramatic decline of no-parking zone violations from 193 in 2022 to 14 in 2023, a 73% decrease.

After Hours (Non-parking)

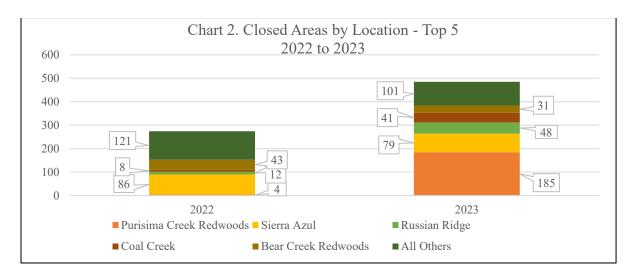
Table 2 on page 3 shows the total after hours (non-parking) violations for 2022 and 2023. There were 577 after hours violations documented in citations, verbal warnings, and written warnings in 2023. This is a 45% decrease from 2022.

Closed Areas

Closed area violations increased by 77% in 2023 compared to 2022. The biggest change was in Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, which increased 4525%. This was due to significant temporary closures in the preserve following the winter storms of 2023. Russian Ridge (temporary weather-related road and preserve closures), Coal Creek (Alpine Road Trail temporary construction closure), and Rancho San Antonio (Farm Bypass Trail temporary closure) also had significant increases in closed area violations. Sierra Azul and Bear Creek Redwoods were down in 2023. See Table 4 below and Attachment 1, Table 5 for details.

TABLE 4. CLOSED AREA VIOLATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% change from 2022
Purisima Creek Redwoods	4	185	4525%
Sierra Azul	86	79	-8%
Russian Ridge	12	48	300%
Coal Creek	8	41	413%
Bear Creek Redwoods	43	31	-28%
All others	121	101	-17%
Grand Total	274	485	77%

Chart 2 below shows the closed area violations according to the five locations with the highest average violation in 2023, with all the other preserves summed for comparison. There were 485 closed area violations issued in 2023.



Dog Violations

There were 751 Dog violations in 2023, a 16% decrease compared to 2022. Most of the dog violations in 2023 were for *dogs prohibited* (507), a decrease of 9% from 2022. The other offense was *leash required* (244), a 27% decrease compared to 2022. See Attachment 1, Table 2 for details.

Chart 3 below shows the preserves with the five highest dog violations in 2023. The preserves with asterisks next to the names do not allow dogs. See Attachment 1, Table 6 for more information.



Bicycle Violations

Table 5 below shows the distribution of bicycle offenses by violation in 2022 and 2023. Total bicycle violations for 2023 (546) decreased by 39% compared to 2022. The most frequent bicycle violation in 2023 was *helmet required* (178, 33% of total).

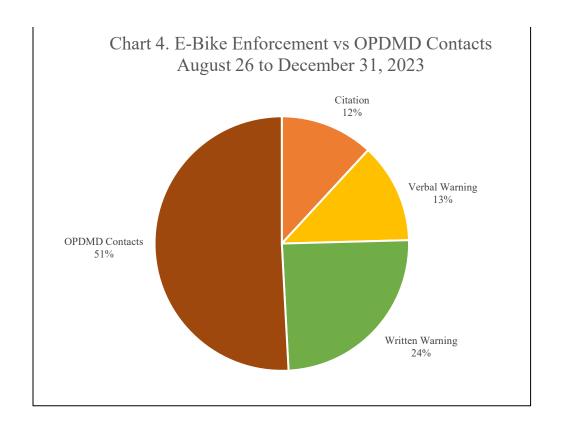
TABLE 5. BICYCLE VIOLATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% change from 2022
Bicycle – helmet required	217	178	-18%
Bicycle – e-bike	224	158	-29%
Bicycle – speed	317	128	-60%
Bicycle – closed area	76	67	-12%
Bicycle – unsafe operation	22	10	-55%
Bicycle – night riding	44	5	-89%
Grand Total	900	546	-39%

E-bike Violations vs. Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD) Contacts

Last year, Rangers reported many e-bike contacts did not result in a citation or warning because the rider states they are using the device due to a mobility disability (allowed under the District's OPDMD policy). By law, Rangers must accept their credible assurance of a qualifying mobility disability, and no proof is required. In an effort to track these contacts, in late August of 2023, Rangers began collecting data on e-bike enforcement to track OPDMD contacts versus violations. Table 6 below shows the number of e-bike enforcement contacts versus OPDMD contacts from late August to December 2023. Chart 4 shows the percentage of those OPDMD

contacts versus citations, verbal warnings, and written warnings for e-bike violations. From late August 2023 through December 2023, ~51% of all e-bike contacts made were riders claiming a mobility disability. We will continue to track these contacts to provide a larger data set for analysis and inclusion in next year's report.

TABLE 6. E-BIKE ENFORCEMENT vs. OPDMD CONTACTS	Late-Aug to Dec 2023
E-Bike enforcement	58
Citation	14
Verbal Warning	15
Written Warning	29
OPDMD Contacts	60



Auto Burglaries

Auto burglaries in 2023 (15) remained the same as in 2022 (15). Most auto burglaries during 2023 occurred at Rancho San Antonio County Park (47%). See Attachment 1, Table 7 for a complete list by location.

Incident Response

There are many incidents (non-law enforcement events that are documented with an incident report) that Rangers respond to or observe while on patrol both on and off District lands. Rangers provide crucial initial response to accidents, medical calls, fires, and searches for lost or missing visitors. A Ranger's knowledge of District lands is vital to locating incidents that often are reported with very vague location descriptions and providing guidance to responding agencies. Their response to incidents off District lands provides critical initial support and assistance to other public safety agencies, our neighbors, and local communities.

The total number of incidents was 155 in 2023, a 30% decrease compared to 2022 (see Attachment 1, Tables 8 and 9 for details).

Forty-five (33% of total) non-fire incidents occurred off District lands in 2023. Of those, vehicle accidents (23) were most common, followed by road hazard/traffic control (9), bicycle accidents (5), other accidents (4), other incidents (3), and search and rescue (1). See Attachment 2 for a list of offsite other accidents and other incidents.

Ninety (66% of total) non-fire incidents occurred on District lands in 2023. Of those, other accidents (28) were most common, followed by hiking/running accidents (21), bicycle accidents (14), vehicle accidents (9), other incidents (8), search and rescue (8), and road hazard/traffic control (2). See Attachment 2 for a list of onsite other accidents and other incidents.

There was a total of 20 fire incidents in 2023. Of the 18 fire incidents on District lands in 2023, eleven (11) were *fires without a permit*, four (4) were *active fires*, two (2) were *fires found extinguished*, one (1) was a *report only*. Of the two (2) fire incidents off District lands, one (1) was a *vehicle fire* and one (1) was an *active fire*. See Attachment 1, Table 9 for more information. Active fires are any fire that is still burning. Only two of the four active fires on District lands spread into the wildland and both of those were contained under one acre by District and fire agency response.

Rangers responded to seven (7) fatalities in 2023. Three (3) were *suicides*, one (1) was an *act of nature (falling tree)*, one (1) was a *cardiac emergency*, one (1) was caused by a *vehicle accident (offsite)*, and one (1) was a *drowning (offsite: Stevens Creek Reservoir)*. All Rangers are trained to a minimum medical first responder level and professional rescuer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In these incidents, Rangers often were first on scene, took over patient care from bystanders, secured the scene for law enforcement or the coroner, provided CPR until relieved by fire or paramedics, assisted with rescue, and/or provided traffic control.

NEXT STEPS

This report and analysis are used by command staff and supervisors to assist in identifying patrol and outreach priorities. Areas of focus will include continued outreach for multi-use trail awareness and education, consistent education and enforcement of e-bike use, dogs off leash, closed area patrols, and bicycle speed.

Visitor Services is working with Human Resources to fill five current Ranger vacancies, including two (2) new positions approved as part of the Financial and Operational Sustainability Model (FOSM) and two (2) overfill positions previously approved by the Board. The intent of the overfill positions is to modulate the impact of staff vacancies and leaves of absence. Full staffing provides for more consistent education, proactive enforcement, and incident response.

Attachment

Attachment 1 - Ranger Activity Data 2023 Attachment 2 - List of Other Incidents and Accidents

Attachment 1 - Ranger Activity Data 2023

TABLE 1. RANGER ACTIVITY COUNT IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY	
IN 2023	Count
Patrol - vehicle	13703
Administration	3052
Report writing (citation)	2664
Patrol - foot	1304
Report writing (incident report)	862
Meeting	581
Maintenance	572
Functional assignments*	499
Radar	490
Training	462
Fitness time	278
Law enforcement	204
EMS	129
Mutual aid	87
Special assignment	82
Resource management	69
Interpretive program	61
Non-emergency event/call	54
Training - FTO	39
Patrol - e motorcycle	35
Search and Rescue	34
Outreach	34
Patrol - UTV	32
Patrol - bike	30
Fire	20
Training - instructing	19
Interpretive program - prep	13
Patrol - motorcycle	11
Court	9
Grand Total	25429

^{*}Functional assignments inlcude counter or wildlife camera collection, maintaining the fire cache/medical supplies, bike maintenance, etc.

TABLE 2. VIOLATIONS OF NON-PARKING DISTRICT ORDINANCES, IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% change from 2022
After hours	1044	577	-45%
Citation	50	24	-52%
Verbal Warning	852	484	-43%
Written Warning	142	69	-51%
Dogs prohibited	558	507	-9%
Citation	56	55	-2%
Verbal Warning	399	375	-6%
Written Warning	103	77	-25%

NON-PARKING DISTRICT			%
ORDINANCES, IN ORDER			change
OF FREQUENCY IN 2023			from
continued	2022	2023	2022
Closed area	274	485	77%
Citation	40	123	208%
Documented	1	2	100%
Observed	1	0	-100%
Verbal Warning	170	287	69%
Written Warning	62	73	18%
Other District violation	387	362	-6%
Citation	23	34	48%
Documented	36	37	N/A
Observed	2	4	100%
Verbal Warning	281	243	-14%
Written Warning	45	44	-2%
Dogs - leash required	332	244	-27%
Citation	76	47	-38%
Observed	0	2	N/A
Verbal Warning	153	119	-22%
Written Warning	103	76	-26%
Bicycle - helmet required	217	178	-18%
Citation	3	2	-33%
Verbal Warning	193	165	-15%
Written Warning	21	11	-48%
Bicycle - e-bike	224	158	-29%
Citation	12	33	175%
Observed	2	2	0%
Verbal Warning	133	70	-47%
Written Warning	77	53	-31%
Bicycle - speed	317	128	-60%
Citation	8	0	-100%
Observed	3	0	-100%
Verbal Warning	251	110	-56%
Written Warning	55	18	-67%
Bicycle - closed area	76	67	N/A
Citation	4	8	N/A
Verbal Warning	42	42	0%
Written Warning	30	17	-43%
Off road vehicle	7	13	N/A
Citation	1	1	0%
Documented	0	4	N/A
Observed	0	1	N/A
Verbal Warning	6	7	17%
Campfires	12	11	-8%
Documented	0	2	N/A
Verbal Warning	9	4	-56%
Written Warning	3	5	N/A

TABLE 2. VIOLATIONS OF NON-PARKING DISTRICT ORDINANCES, IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023 continued	2022	2023	% change from 2022
Bicycle - unsafe operation	22	10	-55%
Verbal Warning	20	9	-55%
Written Warning	2	1	-50%
Fishing	22	9	-59%
Citation	3	1	-67%
Documented	0	2	N/A
Verbal Warning	14	3	-79%
Written Warning	5	3	-40%
Camping	21	6	-71%
Citation	3	0	-100%
Documented	4	3	-25%
Verbal Warning	2	1	-50%
Written Warning	12	2	-83%
Bicycle - night riding	44	5	-89%
Citation	3	0	-100%
Verbal Warning	31	3	-90%
Written Warning	10	2	-80%
Dump/litter	1	2	100%
Documented	1	2	100%
Grand Total	3558	2763	-22%

TABLE 3. VIOLATIONS OF			
NON-DISTRICT NON-			%
PARKING ORDINANCES,			change
IN ORDER OF			from
FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	2022
Vandalism	20	20	0%
Auto burglaries	15	15	0%
False information	3	8	167%
Theft	8	6	-25%
Resisting peace officer	10	6	-40%
Assault	5	4	-20%
Alcohol - poss. by a minor	0	1	N/A
Other crimes	106	38	-64%
Grand Total	167	98	-41%

TABLE 4. NON-DISTRICT PARKING VIOLATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% change from 2022
No parking zone	254	58	-77%
Park in violation of sign	40	36	-10%
Disabled parking	21	33	57%
Other parking violations	3	13	333%
Blocking road/driveway	1	2	100%
No parking after hours	0	1	N/A
Grand Total	319	143	-55%

TABLE 5. CLOSED AREA VIOLATIONS BY LOCATION IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY IN 2023	2022	2023	% change from 2022
Purisima Creek Redwoods	4	185	4525%
Sierra Azul	86	79	-8%
Russian Ridge	12	48	300%
Coal Creek	8	41	413%
Bear Creek Redwoods	43	31	-28%
Rancho San Antonio	6	22	267%
El Corte de Madera	55	20	-64%
Windy Hill	11	13	18%
Monte Bello	3	12	300%
Cloverdale	0	9	N/A
La Honda Creek	31	7	-77%
Pulgas Ridge	0	6	N/A
Thornewood	12	4	-67%
Long Ridge	2	4	100%
Fremont Older	0	4	N/A
Skyline Ridge	1	0	-100%
Grand Total	274	485	77%

TABLE 6. DOG			
VIOLATIONS BY			0/0
PRESERVE LOCATION IN			change
ORDER OF FREQUENCY			from
IN 2023	2022	2023	2022
Rancho San Antonio	139	117	-16%
El Corte de Madera	71	101	42%
Sierra Azul	70	90	29%
Windy Hill	106	73	-31%
Purisima Creek Redwoods	105	68	-35%
Russian Ridge	52	53	2%
Pulgas Ridge	71	46	-35%
Thornewood	48	34	-29%
Fremont Older	32	26	-19%
La Honda Creek	37	21	-43%
Monte Bello	22	21	-5%
Skyline Ridge	30	20	-33%
St. Josephs Hill	17	15	-12%
Bear Creek Redwoods	47	15	-68%
Long Ridge	9	12	33%
Los Trancos	10	11	10%
Picchetti Ranch	11	8	-27%
Coal Creek	1	6	500%
Ravenswood	6	4	-33%
El Sereno	4	4	0%
Saratoga Gap	1	3	200%
Long Ridge	1	0	-100%
Field Office	0	2	N/A
Offsite	0	1	N/A
Grand Total	890	751	-16%

TABLE 7. AUTO BURGLARIES BY		
LOCATION	2022	2023
Rancho San Antonio	8	7
Windy Hill	0	2
Purisima Creek Redwoods	2	2
Offsite	1	1
Bear Creek Redwoods	0	1
Pulgas Ridge	0	1
Los Trancos	0	1
Picchetti Ranch	1	0
Skyline Ridge	1	0
Russian Ridge	1	0
Saratoga Gap	1	0
Grand Total	15	15

TABLE 8. NON-FIRE INCIDENT RESPONSE IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY	Offsite		Onsite		Total		% change
IN 2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	from 2022
Vehicle accident	27	23	20	9	47	32	-32%
Accident - other	3	4	42	28	45	32	-29%
Hiking/Running accident	0	0	19	21	19	21	11%
Bicycle accident	4	5	22	14	26	19	-27%
Other incident	2	3	7	8	9	11	22%
Road hazard/traffic control	13	9	0	2	13	11	-15%
Search and rescue	0	1	2	8	2	9	350%
Equestrian accident	0	0	2	0	2	0	-100%
Grand Total	49	45	114	90	163	135	-17%

TABLE 9. FIRE INCIDENTS IN 2023	Documented	Verbal Waring			Grand Total
OFFSITE	0	0	0	2	2
Vehicle fire	0	0	0	1	1
Active fire	0	0	0	1	1
ONSITE	6	4	5	4	18
Fire without permit	2	4	5	0	11
Active fire	0	0	0	4	4
Fire found extringuished	2	0	0	0	2
Report only	1	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	5	4	5	6	20

Attachment 2 – List of Other Accidents and Other Incidents

Other accidents for offsite incidents include the following for 2023:

- Accident/Medical: environmental heat/cold etc.(2)
- Accident/Medical: illness (1)
- Accident/Medical: not defined (1)

Other incidents for offsite incidents include the following for 2023:

- Animal incident: domestic (2)
- Animal incident: wildlife (1)

Other accidents for onsite incidents include the following for 2023:

- Accident/Medical: act of nature (1)
- Accident/Medical: cardiac emergency (2)
- Accident/Medical: environmental heat/cold etc. (6)
- Accident/Medical: illness (6)
- Accident/Medical: other (6)
- Accident/Medical: psychiatric other (4)
- Accident/Medical: psychiatric suicide (2)
- Accident/Medical: not defined (1)

Other incidents for onsite incidents include the following for 2023:

- Animal incident: domestic (4)
- Animal incident: wildlife (1)
- Contraband/Weapons: firearm/ammunition (1)
- Landing zone (2)