



Every Second Counts...

The Valley Center Fire Protection District is here for you in any emergency.
Your help can make a difference!

Help us find you quickly!

We love the rural lifestyle that we all share in Valley Center. But there are some drawbacks to “Country Living”. It’s a long way to the grocery store. It’s potentially a long way from the fire station to your house. There isn’t a lot we can do about that. There are some things that you can do to help shorten the time it takes for our crews to get to your fire or medical emergency! Lets talk for a minute about address signage. There is a large section of the Fire Code devoted to address signs for residential and commercial properties. But, it essentially comes down to this: Can we find your place quickly? That’s all there is to it! Let’s take a look at an example.

Imagine that it’s a “dark and stormy night”. You’ve slipped in the mud while feeding the horses and twisted your ankle. Nobody else is home. Fortunately, you have your cell phone and can call 911. (A side note: Our turnout time, the time from the 911 call to the engine/ambulance rolling out the door, is under 2 minutes 90% of the time). Now, think about how easy it will be for us to find you. It’s dark. You have a large property. Maybe you have a gate. Is your house easy to find? Would it be easy for somebody who has never been there before to find? In the dark?



That’s what address signs are all about. We need you to give us the tools to help us find you quickly. With a twisted ankle, the extra ten minutes it might take would only be uncomfortable. But, what if it was more serious? A heart attack? Thirty seconds could be the difference between life or death.

Here are our guidelines on address signs for a residence:

- 4" high letters with at least ½" stroke on a contrasting background. We really like the black letters on a white reflective background, or white reflective letters on a black background. Black letters on a dark brown post are not much help at 2AM.
- Place the address on your house and at the entrance to your driveway in an area where we can see it from a distance. Ask yourself, can I see these from the road?
- If you are placing the numbers on a mailbox or signpost, place the address on both sides. We might have units coming from either direction, or they might have missed it and turned around.
- If you live in a development with curbs, have the numbers painted on the curb.
- If you live on an easement, have them on a sign at the intersection of your easement and the main road. Addresses only, names won't help us like they will the UPS driver. Work with your neighbors and go in together on a sign with all your addresses. It will look nice, help everyone, and oh, yes, the fire code requires it too.



Think about it. Driving home next time to your little piece of paradise, play a thought experiment in your mind. Imagine that you have never been there before, and all you have is a street address (because that's all we'll have!). What can you change to make it easier? If you have questions or would like help or advice, please call our Community Risk Reduction Division at 760-751-7600. We are happy to help!

Question of the day: We hear questions from folks in the community all the time in our day-to-day interactions. We thought it might be nice to put some of them in this article. Here's one: **"Why does the engine run with the ambulance to medical calls? Isn't that an expense that isn't needed?"**

Well, the answer is simple: We need tools and the people to use them. We have no idea exactly what we might find at that emergency. It could range from a twisted ankle to a full on cardiac arrest with a house on fire behind a locked gate. So, we have to send the best combination of people and tools to deal with whatever we find on the scene. We can't wait for the ambulance to call for an engine after they get there, it might be too late. And yes, sometimes it's 'overkill', but when lives are at stake, we can't afford to send 'too little, too late'.

Thank you!

Jim Davidson

Fire Marshal

Valley Center Fire Protection District

760-751-7600

28234 Lilac Road

Valley Center, CA, 92082