

# City of San Rafael



# S.A.F.E.



# TEAM



# 2024

Specialized Assistance For Everyone  
Information Report

## What is the SAFE Team?

The San Rafael Specialized Assistance For Everyone (SAFE) Team launched on March 27, 2023. This program is a collaborative effort based on the CAHOOTS model deployed in Eugene, Oregon, which is the leading model for emergency crisis intervention and prevention.

The goal of the SAFE team is to address crisis response, prevention and intervention for our most vulnerable community members experiencing mental health issues, substance abuse issues and homelessness. This team is made up of civilian first responders (Crisis Counselor and Emergency Medical Technician), who will respond to and proactively address calls for service that have traditionally burdened law enforcement, emergency medical services and health care providers.

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## When do I call the SAFE Team?

In early 2023, the City of San Rafael contracted with Petaluma People Services Center to manage the SAFE Team, who works in partnership with the police and fire department, County Behavioral Health, local hospitals and many community-based organizations to meet the needs of individuals in crisis. The SAFE teams deal with a wide range of mental health-related crises, including conflict resolution, welfare checks, substance abuse, suicide threats, and more, relying on trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques. SAFE Team staff members are not law enforcement officers or paramedics and do not carry weapons or advanced life-saving equipment. Their training, experience and coordination with community-based organizations are the tools they use to ensure a non-violent resolution of crisis situations. They also handle non-emergent medical issues, avoiding costly ambulance transport and emergency room treatment. The SAFE Team operates 7 days/week, 365 days/year from 8 A.M. – 8 P.M. To request services for SAFE, community members can call **415-458-7233 (SAFE)** or San Rafael Police Department's non-emergency line 415-485-3000.



## What does the SAFE Team do?

The suite of services provided by the SAFE Team include responding to calls for service involving suicidal subjects, welfare checks, counseling, first aid/bandage care, and harm reduction options. The SAFE Team will also provide de-escalation training for businesses and community groups.

# Specialized Assistance For Everyone



## SAFE Team Statistics (March 2023 – March 2024)

- **Calls for Service Handled – 3152**

The SAFE Team serves both the housed and unhoused community. 48% of calls for service involve the unhoused community.

The SAFE Team prioritizes calls for service involving community members in crisis. People in crisis could be experiencing suicidal ideations, depression, mental health trauma, grief, post traumatic stress, or many other conditions that may require someone to reach out.

The SAFE Team was able to assist **75 Suicidal subjects and conducted 982 welfare checks.**

One of the goals of the SAFE Team is to divert clients who have minor medical complaints from the Emergency Department to free up staff and first responders for higher priority incidents. The SAFE Team is able to render care for low level medical complaints, take preventative measures or transport to a health clinic for follow-up care. Since the SAFE Team's inception, there were:

- **113 Emergency Department Diversions**
- **152 Ambulance Diversions**

The SAFE Team also handles calls for service involving chronic inebriants and illicit substance abusers by transporting them to detox centers, providing drug/alcohol counseling, or transporting to staff service. This prevents the community member from being arrested and possibly entering the justice system.

- **125 Jail/Criminal Justice Diversions**

### Additional Statistics:

Age of Clients	# of Clients Served
0-24	146
25-44	736
45-64	624
65+	377

Data not collected due to refusal to specify, unable to locate, etc. - 981

## What Does a Successful Outcome Look Like?

A successful outcome with SAFE Team can be any of the following:

- Helping someone access shelter or long-term housing.
- Deescalating someone in crisis and being able to help them tap into healthy coping skills.
- Assisting someone in becoming medication compliant.
- Delegating a mediation between agitated parties.
- Referring individuals to counselling, medical care, or voluntary mental health assessments.
- Distributing food, water, and clothes to those most vulnerable in the community.
- Preventing and diverting medical and mental health patients from regional Emergency Departments.
- Safety planning and facilitating care for folks experiencing suicide ideation.

## Real SAFE Team Stories

- SAFE spent two hours with a suicidal teen at the top of parking garage and was able to deescalate him and talk him down from jumping, SAFE then facilitated the teen to receive care at a local hospital.
- SAFE spent several months working with an unhoused woman to secure housing after being on the street for three years. After continued contact and referrals, SAFE was able to finally get the individual into long term shelter.
- SAFE spent three hours with a Veteran experiencing a crisis relating to his PTSD and intoxication. SAFE was able to empathize, validate, deescalate, and connect him to Veteran Affairs services. SAFE was also able to get him connected to his son, whom he had not talked to for several years. A couple weeks later, he was receiving counseling, was in AA, and rekindled his relationship with his son.

