



CASE STUDY **Kern County
Fire Department**

Boosting Training Efficiency for 500+ Firefighters Spread Across 8k+ Sq Mi

You have to stay organized when you have over 500 firefighters, EMTs, and administrative staff supporting and providing emergency fire and medical coverage for an 8,000+ square mile jurisdiction. Serving roughly 800,000 citizens in 41 communities, responding to 87,000+ annual calls, providing mutual aid to 14 neighboring organizations, and keeping hundreds of personnel properly trained at 47 stations is a big responsibility.

Located about three hours north of Los Angeles, California, the Kern County Fire Department (KCFD) is able to keep training and compliance on track for its sprawling jurisdiction with the help of an online training management system, [Vector LMS](#), that enables:

- The department to directly disseminate essential communications to all members
- Leadership to provide authorities with accurate and complete records quickly
- The training division to develop relevant training programs easily
- Training captains to deliver curated instruction conveniently
- Supervisors to track and assess training progress instantly
- Personnel to access and complete required tasks from any web-enabled device

Deputy Chief Butch Agosta has been with the department for 21 years and oversees the department's training division. Chief Agosta shared how the centralized training platform has helped the department save time and effort while meeting multiple partners' and regulatory authorities' training and compliance requirements.



Task Books Help Meet Multiple Training Requirements

Using Vector's best-in-class training platform's **Credentials** feature, Chief Agosta developed custom task books that meet the department's needs while also meeting the requirements of several partnerships, regulatory agencies, and industry standards.

Below is a sample of custom task books that help keep the training division at KCFD organized:



KCFD Training Program Credential - covers topics specifically needed to meet Bakersfield College partnership which provides access to a shared training center and budget for training software. It also meets NFPA and ISO requirements.



ISO Training Facility Credential - when ISO-required training can be completed and tracked through the LMS training platform along with ISO facility-required training, members are motivated and engaged with "easy wins" for completed online training that keeps them working toward their training goals.



General Staff Credential - includes mandated training required by the department and CAL or Fed OSHA for civilian employees.



Seasonal Firefighter Credential - 90 additional members serve during the 10 month fire season. Includes required seasonal training and annual mandated training (anti-harassment, code of conduct, etc.).



Administration Communication Credential - digitally delivers action or policy communications with required electronic confirmation of acceptance helps keep members accountable and documentation complete.



EMS Credential - includes all requirements to meet Kern County EMS standards, which also meets state standards. Partnership with Kern County EMS enables KCFD to log into Kern EMS' Vector Solutions' training platform for a smooth transition of EMS training.



Recruit Academy - each recruit academy gets a credential to track progress. Complete training records are digitally stored and retrievable for members from day 1 in the fire service.

By utilizing the task books' alerts and reporting functions, members and leadership have clear insight into training progress and receive notifications when due dates are approaching, overdue, or completed. Chief Agosta said, "It helps keep everyone on pace. It shows immediate supervisors where their folks are up the chain, all the way to the Operations Chiefs."

Overcoming In-Person Training Challenges with Online Learning

County requires anti-harassment training downtown

When the county of Kern moved to require all county employees to attend in-person anti-harassment training downtown, Chief Agosta knew it would create a significant challenge to coordinate the department's hundreds of employees on shifts without compromising coverage or adding to overtime. Vector's trusted built-in content provided Chief Agosta with a solution. He reached out to the county and was able to get approval for his members to complete the required training online.

"I sent them the Vector Solutions anti-harassment training, and they approved for us to utilize it instead of having to attend the class downtown."

— **Butch Agosta**, Deputy Chief
Kern County Fire Department (CA)

New equipment care and use training

Kern County Fire Department uses several different types of equipment and even has state-owned equipment. To ensure all members receive standardized instruction on the care and usage of new equipment, personnel develop training that is delivered online through the training platform.

"Everyone gets the training, and everyone understands how to operate the equipment; even though we may only have 5 Cal OES Type 3 Fire Engines in the whole department, we're able to provide that training across the 8,000 square miles and 47 stations all at once."

Easy Access to Important Information and Resources Unites Members

Utilizing the platform's Bulletin Board to share critical data trackers, frequently used forms, resources, and other pertinent information with members as soon as they log in reinforces a culture of support, care, and camaraderie.

Helpful quick links you can find on KCFD's bulletin board include:

- First due response guidebook
- Carcinogen exposure tracker
- Industrial hygiene training
- Backlog exposure tracker
- Monthly fire chief message
- Injury forms
- CISM resources

"Vector Solutions is web-based, so the more items I can put on the platform that personnel can reach with any cell phone, any internet service, the better. It makes it easier for them to access departmental documents, as opposed to having it stuck in the intranet where it is not always accessible."

Dynamic Training Platform Enhances Department's Training Insights

Like many departments, before Kern County Fire Department implemented [Vector Solutions' online training platform](#) in 2013, it primarily used spreadsheets to track training. Back then, training tracking only reflected the number of hours trained across 5-6 topics and did not include any training details or documented completions.

"We really didn't have a good way of tracking our training until we partnered with Vector Solutions,"

— **Butch Agosta**, Deputy Chief
Kern County Fire Department (CA)