3.1.6 Public Services

3.1.6.1 Affected Environment

Fire Protection Services

Fire protection and paramedic services for the Project area are provided by the County Fire Department. The jurisdictional engine company for the Project area is Station 107 located at 18239 West Soledad Canyon Road in Canyon Country. This station has two fire engines, a paramedic squad, and a patrol. The triple pumper can pump water at a rate of 1,250 gallons per minute (gpm) (Los Angeles County Fire Department, Capt. R. Hayton, personal communication 1992).

Fire stations in the vicinity, with the distance in miles calculated to Soledad Road, are listed in Table 3.1.6-1.

According to the County Fire Department, general plans for upgrading fire protection in the area have been developed but have not been implemented. In addition, a limited budget has further restricted the Fire Department's ability to meet new growth needs.

Natural Fire Hazards of Project Area

The Project area consists of very rugged terrain in an area described by the Forester and Fire Warden as Fire Zone 4, which is a high fire hazard area. However, the vegetation in the Project area consists mainly of a sparse mosaic coastal sage scrub and semidesert chaparral. The area proposed for the NFSA contains undisturbed native vegetation that is dense chaparral in some areas. Approximately 45 acres of the southern face of the proposed mining area are disturbed and sparsely vegetated because of previous mining operations.

Fire potential is high for the vegetated areas surrounding the Project site including the Angeles National Forest located just south of the Project area. The Angeles National Forest falls under jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service; however, the County maintains a mutual aid agreement with the Forest Service.

The closest hospital to the Project is Newhall Community Hospital. This hospital is approximately 11 miles from the Project site.

Table 3.1.6-1

AREA FIRE EQUIPMENT OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Engine Company	Distance from Site (miles)	Response Time (minutes)	Number of Personnel
Fire Station 107 Engine 107 Engine 307 Paramedic Squad 107	6.0	10.3	9
Fire Station 123 Engine 123	6.7	11.5	3
Fire Station 73 Truck 73 Engine 73 Engine 273	11.4	19.6	4
Sources: Personal Communications, Los Angeles County Fire Department, 1991, 1992 Bee Canyon Specific Plan Draft EIR, October 1995			

3.1.6.2 Environmental Effects

Significance Criteria

The Project's compatibility with the existing fire service availability will be judged based on capacity of facilities or planned capacity of facilities. Those requirements exceeding existing or future capacity will be considered significant impacts.

Significant Impacts

Implementation of the Project may expose structures, equipment, and people to potentially significant fire hazards because of sparks from equipment, storage of fuels, and potential use of explosive materials (see Mitigation Measures PS1, PS2, PS3, and PS4). Equipment will have appropriate devices to reduce the risk of starting an accidental fire, and smoking will be restricted. Fueling operations will be performed under standard operation practices, and fire prevention equipment will be available onsite. Fire prevention training will be conducted based on California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) standards. In addition, no explosives will be stored onsite, and if necessary, explosives will be used only on an infrequent basis. Any operations using explosives will be overseen by a licensed contractor in compliance with local and federal regulations.

The Project Mining Plan proposes the grubbing of vegetation at active areas no sooner than 3 months before initiation of mining. Removal of vegetation will reduce plant density and the fuel for fire hazards in the area of active mining. As mentioned previously, most of the site is

sparsely vegetated or already bare from existing and past mining operations. Therefore, the fire threat from the Project is not considered significant.

Although the Project extends over a 20-year period, it is not expected that additional manpower, equipment, and facilities will be necessary to serve the Project, assuming that fire services make the presently anticipated expansions over the next two decades.

The Applicant shall conform to all Los Angeles County 1994 Uniform Fire Codes including those that apply to any structures constructed in the high fire hazard area. In case of onsite emergency firefighting situations, TMC will make water available to County firefighters and provide earthmoving equipment and manpower to help in wildfire suppression. A 600,000-gallon water storage tank is proposed to be located in Area B of the Project during Phase 1. Water from this tank would be available for onsite fire suppression.

Exact provisions for fire service will be established through consultation with the Fire Department prior to Project implementation. Based on the nature of the Project, amount of disturbed land onsite, and the measures to be incorporated, impacts on fire protection services are considered to be minimal and therefore not significant.

3.1.6.3 Mitigation Measures

The proposed Mining Plan has been designed to mitigate potential impacts on public services. These Project measures include the following:

PS1. Fire prevention training for all employees will be conducted based on Cal-OSHA standards, and fire prevention equipment will be available onsite.

PS2. No explosives will be stored onsite.

PS3. The water storage facilities onsite will be accessible to fire equipment by an all weather road capable of supporting 50,000 pounds. The road width should be a minimum of 26 feet within 25 feet of either side of the tank connection.

PS4. The water storage tanks will have a 4 inch and 2 ½ inch outlet with National Standard threads. These outlets will be no more than 6 feet from the road.

PS5. The minimum road width will be 20 feet throughout the mining operation and must reach to within 150 feet of all buildings and equipment.

PS6. Grades on gravel roads will not exceed 10%. If they are paved, then a 15% grade is acceptable.

PS7. Turnarounds will be provided on any road that exceeds 300 feet or one every ¼ mile to ½ mile. The minimum radius is 32 feet.

PS8. A minimum 200-foot fuel break will be provided around any mining operation.

3.1.6.4 Unavoidable Significant Adverse Effects

The measures proposed above can be feasibly implemented and will reduce the identified impacts to a less-than-significant level. No potential significant unavoidable adverse impacts will remain after mitigation.