How Toyota Texas’ Fire and Rescue Team Helps Drive Safety Beyond the Road

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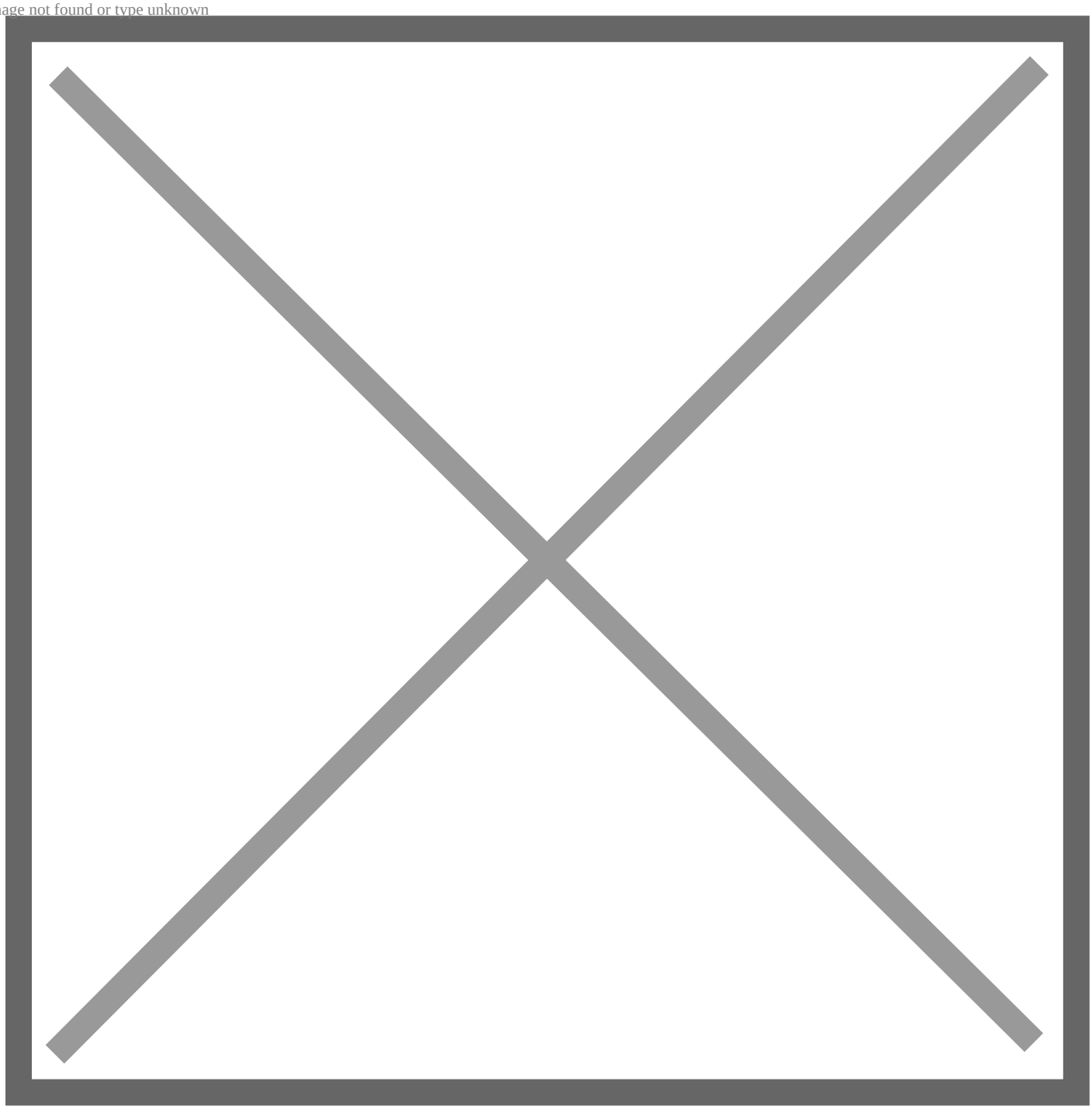


Safety is one of Toyota's top priorities that extends beyond the road and into all aspects of the mobility company. Whether it's helping keep drivers and passengers safe in their vehicles or managing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for employees, Toyota always puts people first.

Did you know that Toyota even has a fire brigade at each of its manufacturing plants in North America? Toyota's Fire and Rescue Brigade is fully capable, ready and willing to take on any emergency that may arise.

At Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Texas (Toyota Texas), the fire brigade operates the same as any local fire station would.

"We have a full-time fire brigade and are authorized to have 18 firefighters," says KB Hallmark, Assistant Chief of Fire and Rescue at Toyota Texas. "Our staff works a 48 hours on/96 hours off schedule — common with municipal fire departments in the area."

He adds, "Our staff members are required to have professional certifications through the Texas Commission on Fire Protection and the Department of State Health Services and receive additional training specific to their duties."

Driving Safety Across the Board

Getting a fire under control and putting it out is an essential part of the job. However, fire suppression is not the Fire Brigade's only duty. Since Toyota manufacturing employees work with potentially hazardous materials and dangerous equipment when they're welding, cutting, brazing, or working with spark-producing machinery — also referred to as "hot work" — the fire brigade also prioritizes fire prevention and upkeep.

"We conduct hot work training, inspect hot works, conduct shop audits and provide guidance on fire safety and fire code issues," Hallmark says. "We inspect the facility's fire suppression and notification systems and schedule for the maintenance and repairs of these items."

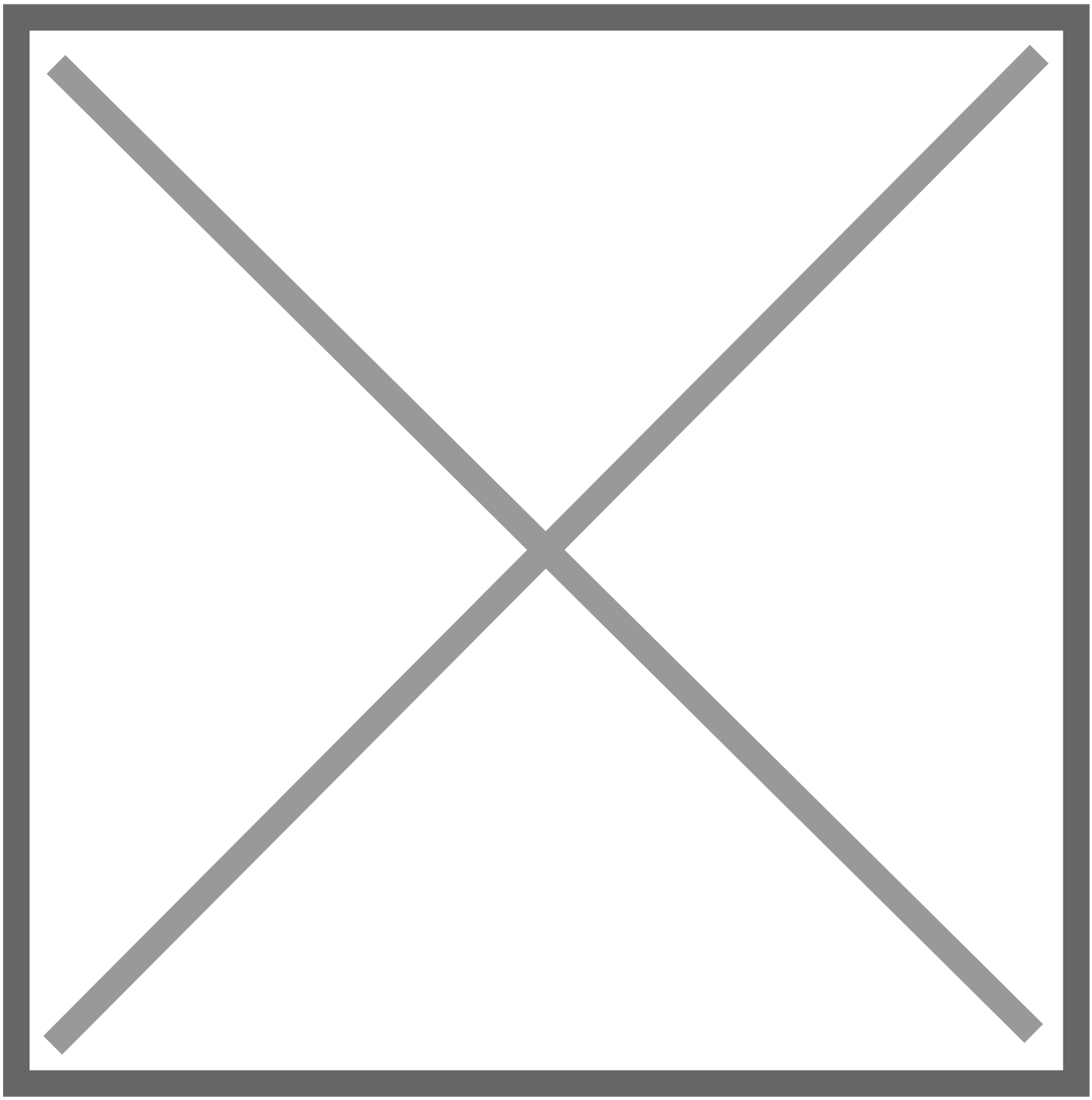
If You See Something, Say Something

The Fire Brigade also provides employees with crucial information that will help keep them safe and help prevent disasters from occurring. For example, due to the hot and dry weather in Texas, they teach employees how to properly discard flammable materials by using smoking receptacles to avoid brush fires.

Hallmark also offers this tip: "The weather is going to get cooler, and now is the time to have a professional check and clean your heaters. The first cold snap of the year always brings false alarms and worse as the accumulated dust burns off inside the heaters."

While Hallmark and his crew work hard to extinguish fires and handle emergencies, they rely on team members to speak up and be proactive rather than reactive.

"It's our goal to keep incidents small, but this only works if we're notified," says Hallmark. "I would much rather help you do your job safely before an incident happens."



All for One, One for All

The Toyota fire brigades consider themselves just the same as any other fire department in their surrounding communities.

Hallmark says, “We’re here and we’re here to help. Our people are trained to the same standards as the fire department just outside our Toyota Texas property, but we are here to serve just the Toyota campus.”

In fact, the Toyota Texas department recently sprang into action to fight a 1-acre grass fire — preventing what could've caused massive halts and production delays.

"Our C-shift did a great job a few months ago by extinguishing a grass fire that started at our railroad tracks," says Hallmark. "The railyard is important to our operations, and the smoke was preventing the rail workers from doing their jobs. Our team arrived and coordinated an attack with the San Antonio Fire Department and put the fire out, with only a minimal amount of downtime."

That swift and successful response is a testament to the Toyota Way philosophy and organizational culture, which continues to drive the company forward.