

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

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2014 was a milestone year for the City of Milton Fire Department. In April we celebrated our 100th Anniversary as a fire department. Overall emergency response activity was well above the prior year, challenging the department's capacity to meet all calls for service. Members continued to work to complete many ongoing projects, while also accomplishing several long-term goals. All of this activity has placed us in an excellent position to accomplish our primary mission of providing emergency services to the citizens of Milton.

EMERGENCY ACTIVITY

Along with a marked increase in the overall number of emergency responses, 2014 presented several challenging incidents, requiring more than the response of the initial alarm assignment. The total number of emergency calls increased by roughly 8%, up to 1577 calls, from 1,463 the previous year. This increase is attributable to an 11% increase in rescue related calls.

Rescue calls increased this year, now totaling 1,334 calls, and constitute the vast majority of our emergency calls, now 85% of our annual emergency activity. Rescue calls include: medical emergencies such as strokes, heart attacks, traumatic injuries, falls, etc.; all vehicle accidents including those that involve entrapment, requiring forcible extrication with specialized hydraulic tools such as the "Jaws of Life"; and, rescue calls like a child locked in a vehicle, elderly who have fallen and need help back into bed (lift assist), and even the occasional animal rescue. In 2014 we responded to 1,155 medical rescues, 137 vehicle accidents, and 42 other rescue calls.

Fire responses, while always a relatively small portion of our total emergency activity, remain our primary responsibility, and actually are the segment of our responsibility that requires the greatest resources, in terms of equipment, training and personnel. Although the vast majority of fire related incidents are quickly handled by the on-duty crew, we must always respond with the capacity to bring the full capabilities of the department to bear rapidly to effect rescue, protect exposures, and quickly bring a well-developed working structure fire under control. As we can never know when the next "big one" will occur, we must constantly maintain the readiness necessary to manage that incident. This includes continuous training of personnel and maintenance of vehicles and equipment to ensure that all is ready at a moment's notice. The number of fire related calls was down roughly 3% from 185 in 2013. This year we responded to 179 fire related calls, now amounting to 11% of our total responses. These included 33 structure fires, 4 vehicle fires, 4 brush or wildland fires, 113 false alarms or good intent calls, and 25 other fire related calls, such as illegal burning.

Our smallest category of emergency response, hazardous condition calls this year made up 4% of our emergency activity, but represents potentially the most dangerous aspect of our operations to both our members and the public. These include: natural and liquefied petroleum (LP) gas incidents; electrical problems such as downed power lines, arcing lines, and transformer fires; fuel leaks and spills; and, all other hazardous conditions such as chemical releases, train derailments, building collapse, and terrorist acts. These incidents potentially involve very dangerous agents, present almost endless complexity, and often require responders to begin operations with very little information in a very dynamic environment. The number of hazardous condition calls decreased by nearly 16% this year, from 76 in 2013. In 2014 the department responded to 64 hazardous condition calls, including 23 gas incidents, 9 electrical incidents, 6 fuel leaks or spills, and 26 other hazardous condition calls.

On 121 occasions last year, we were dispatched to an emergency call while one or more units were already assigned to a previous call (concurrent calls). This means that nearly 8% of our emergency calls were received while we were already responding to, or on the scene of a prior emergency call. On at least 9 occasions we were dispatched to three or more simultaneous calls during the same period of time. On 4 occasions one or more of the concurrent calls occurred in conjunction with mutual aid provided to another jurisdiction. On 2 occasions a subsequent call was handled by a mutual aid agency providing temporary standby coverage to our district.

In almost every case an appropriate response was made without undue delay, and no calls have gone unanswered. On three occasions our department was unavailable to respond to a subsequent medical emergency call, but each of these calls was handled by the responding ambulance without assistance from our department. On 45 occasions Engine 23 was required to respond to a medical emergency in place of Rescue 23, which was managing a previous call. Each of these incidences of concurrent calls results in a situation in which Engine 23 is not adequately staffed to respond to fire calls with its normal crew complement of four firefighters, creating extreme operational difficulties in addressing the immediate needs on the fireground should a fire occur.

Several incidents of note occurred during the year. Among these was a residential structure fire occurring around 9:00 pm on December 1 at Astor Village, a senior, low-income housing community. We were dispatched to a working structure fire with confirmed entrapment. Milton Police Department was on scene on a related incident and called the fire in. While the three adjoining apartments were rapidly evacuated, Police Officers confirmed the presence of an occupant within the involved unit. After forcing the front door, fire department personnel encountered a well-involved fire in the living room. This was quickly knocked down, and the remainder of the unit was searched. The occupant was located, unconscious in the bathroom and was removed to the safety of a waiting ambulance where he regained consciousness. Subsequent investigation determined that the occupant had set the fire himself when police had attempted to make contact with him, and he had then retreated to the bathroom where he was overcome by smoke, reduced oxygen and carbon monoxide from the fire. He was subsequently charged with arson in this incident.

Earlier in the year, on July 1, quick response to a working kitchen fire in a single-family home on Happy Lane resulted in an effective knock-down of the fire and saving of the structure from catastrophic damage. Comprehensive salvage and overhaul minimized the resulting damage to the structure saving both the tenant and property owner costly losses. The department received expressions of praise from both, as well as from neighbors, for their rapid and effective response to this fire.

Early on the morning of March 4 a fire was reported by Parks Department staff at the concession stand and press box building at Hindall Field at the Milton Sportsplex. A fire had been set in a hallway on the east side of the building using toilet paper and other combustible materials found in the building, and had extended to involve the door frame and wall structure. Again, a quick, aggressive attack saved the structure and resulted in limited fire damage. With quick repairs the building was soon returned to service for the city.

The majority of other structure fires were limited in size, handled through a rapid response and quick, aggressive action to result in minimal fire damage where a major loss would have otherwise occurred. These included: a fire in the water heater in an apartment at Boardwalk

Apartments on May 25; an electrical fire at Beall's Outlet on August 2; a fire in the dryer exhaust vents at Quick Wash coin laundry; and, a kitchen fire at a two-story home on Victoria Drive. Our department responded on first alarm on several other fires in the areas immediately surrounding the city limits, also acting quickly to bring the situation under control. Among these was: a fire in a single-family residence on Syrcle Avenue on January 3; another in a single-family residence on Julia Drive on April 6; a fire from a portable meth lab in a hotel room at the Emerald Sands Hotel on May 21; a kitchen fire in a home on Oakwood Lane on September 5; and, an arson fire in a duplex on Sessions Street on December 5.

Despite these, and a few other fires, vehicle accidents actually presented more challenging situations than any other again this year. Large trucks continue to pose serious safety risks on our local roads. On February 7 a large truck transporting a roll-off container loaded with stumps and other land clearing debris was approaching the light at Highway 90 and Glover Lane. As the traffic ahead slowed to stop at the yellow light, the driver, unable to stop, swerved toward the right, attempting to turn northbound on Glover Lane. The vehicle hit the edge of the drainage ditch and overturned, spilling its load across Glover Lane. On July 21 a fully loaded log truck turning left from Dogwood Drive onto Berryhill Road overturned at the intersection, spilling its load and leaving the driver entrapped in the cab. This second incident was almost identical to an accident that occurred at this same intersection on June 27, 2011.

Other notable vehicle accidents included two in which the vehicles involved were overturned, one in front of Tractor Supply, and the other at Magnolia and Byrom Streets. Two incidents again this year involved a vehicle which collided with a building. The first was on Sanders Street, where a driver lost control of the vehicle which struck the carport and utility room of a house on Oriole Street. The other involved an SUV that left the road on Canal Street, striking the School Board data processing building. In a tragic incident on September 20, a man was crossing the highway after dark on Dogwood Drive near Star Hill Drive and was struck by a southbound vehicle. Despite rapid response and transport via helicopter, the victim did not survive his injuries.

On three occasions last year our department was called to respond to some form of chemical smell causing symptoms that resulted in the transport on one or more patients to the hospital. In each case, some form of hazardous material incident response was initiated. In the first case a highly irritating odor was detected in the evening in an office building on Highway 90. After considerable sampling and investigation, the problem was found to have been caused by a discharge from a small cylinder of pepper spray. In the second case, 8 parents and teachers were affected by an unknown odor in the Media Center at T.R. Jackson Pre-K Center. No students were effected. The area was isolated and a full haz-mat response was initiated, including technicians from Escambia County Fire Department and Fire and Emergency Services Gulf Coast (Navy Fire). After extensive testing and sampling, no source was found. The building was ventilated, and all patients returned after medical evaluation without any adverse effects. The third incident involved a potential Carbon Monoxide incident in the Hardees restaurant. Three employees were transported to the hospital and gas was shut off to the equipment until an appliance technician could service all cooking equipment and exhaust systems.

Weather presented some particular challenges again last year. On January 6 an unusually hard freeze resulted in several frozen Fire Sprinkler pipes. The problem did not become manifest until the temperature finally began to rise above 32° on January 8, when water began to pour from the broken pipes, activating Fire Alarm Systems at each location. Three weeks later, an unprecedented ice storm struck the area, felling trees and power lines throughout the county and

coating bridges and roads with a thick layer of ice. On the night of January 28, ice on the I-10 bridge over the Blackwater River caused a terrible, multi-vehicle accident that resulted in two fatalities. The following morning folks awoke to find a veritable winter wonderland, and most roads were nearly impassable for more than 24 hours, until the sun shone through on the 30th and the temperature again rose above the freezing mark, allowing the ice to melt. On April 29 a torrential rainstorm hit the area, resulting in record-setting rainfall overnight. Although the city's storm water system handled the rainfall fairly well, flash flooding occurred throughout the region that devastated many homes and required several emergency evacuation responses.

Two calls this year presented situations of mechanical entrapment. On June 12 we were called to remove a worker's pants from the teeth of a gasoline hedge trimmer. This was quickly done with no injury to his leg. Five days later, on June 17, we were called to an office downtown where a worker had gotten her long hair caught in an industrial paper shredder. Attempts by coworkers to free her had gotten her hair more entangled, and had pulled her head tightly against the housing of the machine, putting dangerous strain on her scalp. Due to the design of the machine, and the very awkward position of the entrapped patient, the department had to take very careful and deliberate action to free the patient. In the space of the next hour and a half, the shredder was completely disassembled and the patient was freed without injury and minimal loss of hair.

MUTUAL AID

The maintenance of effective mutual aid agreements is a crucial element in our overall ability to meet the needs of our citizens. While we are able to manage the vast majority of emergency calls with on-duty personnel, supplemented when necessary by the recall of off-duty personnel, incidents do arise wherein the resources of the City of Milton Fire Department alone are not sufficient to manage the situation. In these situations we must call on the support of surrounding fire departments to develop a coordinated response structure. During calendar year 2014 our department provided mutual aid to other departments on 16 occasions, and received mutual aid on 13 occasions, amounting to 1.01% and 0.8% of total calls, respectively. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was provided decreased from 25 in 2013. Several of these calls involved working structure fires where department personnel and resources were involved in active firefighting operations, including working structure fires on Syrcle Drive, Julia Drive, Walker Street and Oakwood Lane. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was requested and received decreased by 12 from the 2013 total of 25 instances.

VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

With minor exceptions, our fleet of firefighting apparatus is in very good shape and has continued to serve us well throughout the year. Rescue 23, our 14-year old rescue vehicle, is the busiest vehicle in the fleet, and continues to experience frequent mechanical issues. We have prepared specifications for a replacement vehicle and are seeking funding options to replace this unit within the next few years. Marine 23's 25-year-old Johnson outboard motor is becoming problematic due to its chronic inability to operate at idle speed without stalling. This motor has been serviced by several different technicians and this does not seem to be a correctable problem. In order to maintain Marine 23 as an effective water-rescue platform, this motor needs to be replaced, preferably with a new 4-cycle 90hp outboard motor that will be more reliable and operate with less noise and exhaust fumes.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year our department marked a major milestone in its history by observing our 100th Anniversary as a department on April 21, 2014, commemorating 100 years of continuous service to our community. The program included a review of the history of our department, the presentation of an American Flag flown over the capital by Congressman Jeff Miller, tolling of the department's original fire bell by the Santa Rosa County Firefighters' Association Honor Guard, and playing of Amazing Grace by the Santa Rosa Pipes and Drums.

TRAINING

As always, training remains a vital part of the fire department's normal activity. With the wide array of situations to which the department is called to respond, it is imperative that all members of the department remain current and proficient in all areas of firefighting, basic life support, technical rescue, hazardous materials, etc. In accordance with the department's annual training calendar, each member undergoes a minimum of 20 hours of in-service training each month. In addition to this company training, many members have participated in additional specialized training.

The department participated in a joint Mass Casualty Exercise aboard NAS Whiting Field on February 20. Hands-on extrication training was conducted on May 8 at the Milton Iron and Metal Company yard in East Milton, allowing members to enhance their skills at performing complicated techniques in using hydraulic extrication equipment to remove an entrapped victim from a vehicle. In September, the department conducted a Fire Service Apparatus Operator course taught by Lieutenant Geoffrey Freeman through the Florida State Fire College. Firefighters Daryl Auerbach, Peyton Blackledge, Jesse Floyd, Paul Gillard, Steve Maddox, Gerrill O'Steen, and Scott Snowden attended this course.

Firefighters Jesse Floyd and Gerrill O'Steen completed the *About Boating Safely* course offered by the US Coast Guard Auxiliary and obtained their Florida Boater ID cards. Firefighter Steve Maddox obtained his Fire Officer I and II certifications. Firefighter Daryl Auerbach obtained his Fire Service Instructor I and Fire Officer I certification. Lieutenant Geoffrey Freeman attended a Tactical Combat Casualty Care course in May. Lieutenant Freeman also obtained his Fire Service Instructor I and II and Fire Officer II certifications.

Members of the department established the means to conduct a "Combat Challenge" style Physical Agility course to improve and assess their abilities and proficiencies in performing a series of physically demanding fire-ground tasks. This evolution, similar to the ESPN Combat Challenge, builds comradery and proficiency through friendly competition.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

While internal training is a crucial element of department operations, external public education remains a very important element of the department's overall fire prevention program. The department operates with a stated goal to, "Put ourselves out of business through fire prevention and public education." While a lofty goal indeed, the department does consistently see a positive impact from our efforts toward educating the public. We would like to think that the reduced number of fire calls over time is at least partly attributable to our success through public education. The department attempts to offer a diversified public education program in an effort to reach all age groups throughout the community. Fire Prevention is taught through school programs, station tours, fire drills, fire extinguisher demonstrations, fire prevention classes, informational displays, and our Fire Safety Puppet Show.

During 2014 the fire department conducted 6 school programs, reaching 330 students, 8 fire extinguisher classes, reaching 186 persons and 9 other programs, including station tours, reaching 2,275 people, for a total of 23 programs reaching 2,791 people.

Our department also provides Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Classes to target groups and the general public. With our outstanding classroom facility, we have been able to increase this program to offer a regular schedule of public classes, and again offer the program to all city employees. We generally offer CPR and First Aid to the public on the first Saturday of each month, and will gladly arrange special classes for groups that desire such training. Through the department's Training Center, headed by Firefighter/EMT Steve Maddox, 35 individuals were certified in CPR, and 16 in First Aid. In addition, all 16 members of the fire department were recertified, and 14 members of the Milton Police Department certified in CPR Pro.



This year again, during National Fire Prevention Week, on October 11, we held our fourth annual Fire Prevention Week Open House. This annual event has grown each year and is always a big hit with the community. This 3-hour program features equipment displays and demonstrations, station tours, displays and demonstrations by our community partners, our *Fire Safety Puppet Show*, fire safety demonstrations, and refreshments. This event was attended by over 1,200 people this year and was again deemed a great success.

FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY

The City of Milton Fire Department is also responsible for enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code and Life Safety Code. Chief Reble serves as Life Safety Officer and Fire Official for the City of Milton. With the continued slow economy, development, and the resulting demand for inspections of new construction and new business had dropped off considerably. Chief Reble conducted 37 Life Safety Inspections, 23 Follow-up Inspections, 13 Construction Related Inspections, and 56 plan reviews, totaling 133 inspections and reviews.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Milton Fire Department continued its long tradition of community involvement throughout 2014. Our department presented our Fire Safety Puppet Show in support of a Safety Day aboard Whiting Pines Housing Complex in October. Fire trucks were displayed at 90 Works Kid's Camp in June and the Family First Network's Fall Festival also in October. During Literacy Week, members of the department read to children at Milton Childcare Center at Milton High School. The department participated in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade in January and participated in the dedication of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. monument, carried the Milton High Panther in the Homecoming Parade in October, participated in the Veterans Day Parade in November, and again delivered Santa Claus at the end of the annual Milton Christmas Parade in December.

INTO THE FUTURE

The work of the past several years has put our department in a very strong position, confident of our ability to meet the demands of serving and protecting the residents of Milton. We will continue to examine department staffing needs in order to insure that we will remain always ready to provide the high level of service our citizens have come to consistently expect from our agency. Our new fire station facility provides us with the resources that will be needed to sustain our high level of service for many years to come. The addition of our newest fire engine, with the associated realignment of our fleet, puts us in a very strong position from a firefighting point of view. While the department must soon look to replace Rescue 23, our 14-year old first-due rescue vehicle, we find ourselves well equipped to meet the continued demands of protecting the lives and property of our citizens well into the future. We look forward to our next 100 years of service to our community.

**City of Milton Fire Department
Always Ready ... Always There**

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2014

ACTIVITY REPORT

ALARM RESPONSES

FIRE CALLS

TYPE:	Vehicle Fire	Structure Fire	Brush Fire	Alarm*	Other**	Total
NUMBER:	4	33	4	113	25	179

* Includes false and unintentional alarms, smoke scares, good intent, etc.

** Includes fire investigations, unauthorized burns, etc.

RESCUE CALLS

TYPE:	Medical Response	Vehicle Accident / Extrication	Other	Total
NUMBER:	1155	137	42	1334

HAZARDOUS CONDITION CALLS

TYPE:	Natural Gas*	Electrical Problems**	Fuel Leak/Spill	Other	Total
NUMBER:	23	9	6	26	64

* Includes gas leaks, smell of gas, etc.

** Includes downed power lines, transformer fires, arcing wires, etc.

MUTUAL AID:

GIVEN:	16	1.01%	RECEIVED:	13	0.82%
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TOTAL CALLS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2014

1577

TOTAL CALLS IN 2014: 1577

TOTAL CALLS IN 2013: 1463

PERCENTAGE INCREASE: 7.79%

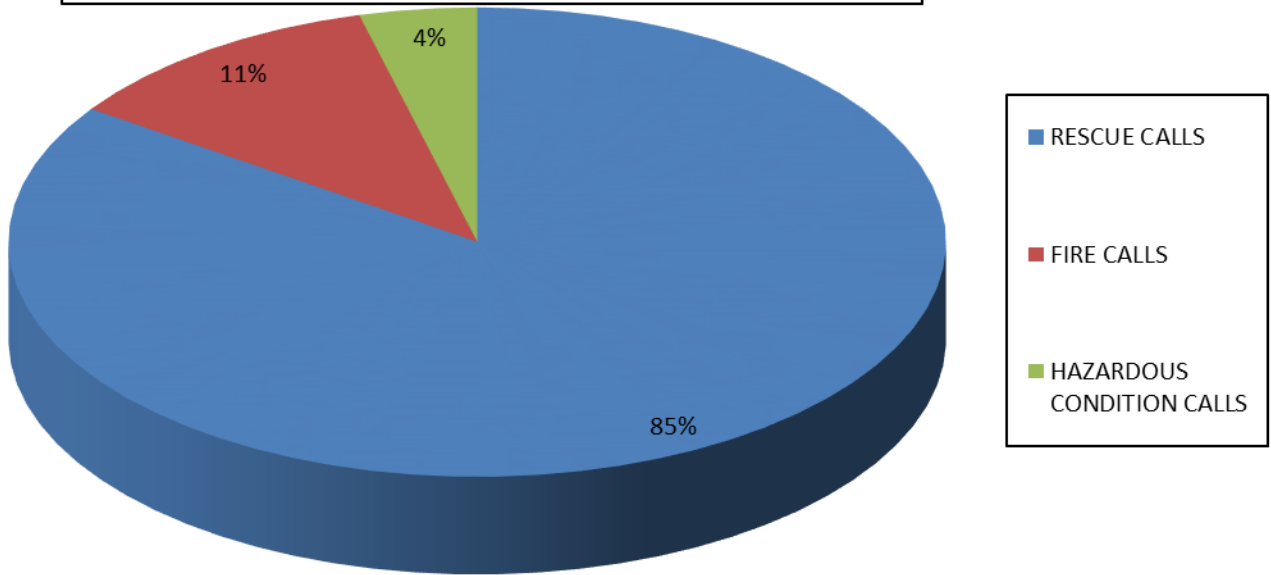
PUBLIC EDUCATION

TYPE OF PROGRAM:	School Class	Extinguisher Demo	Fire Drill	Other	Total
Number Conducted:	6	8	0	9	23
Number Attending:	330	186	0	2275	2791

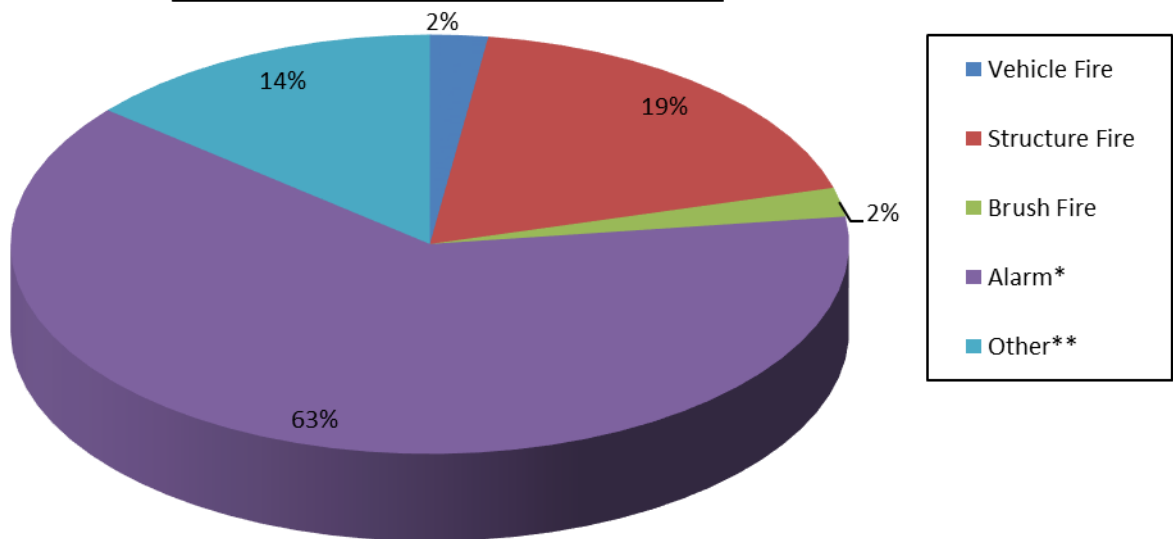
LIFE SAFETY

TYPE:	Life Safety Insp.	Follow-up	Construction	Pre-plan	Plan Review	Total
Number:	37	23	13	4	56	133

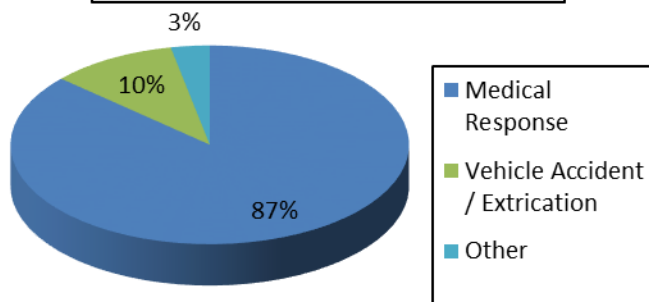
EMERGENCY RESPONSES CALENDAR YEAR 2014



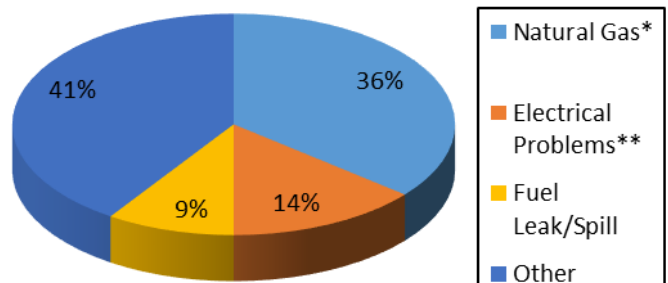
FIRE CALLS



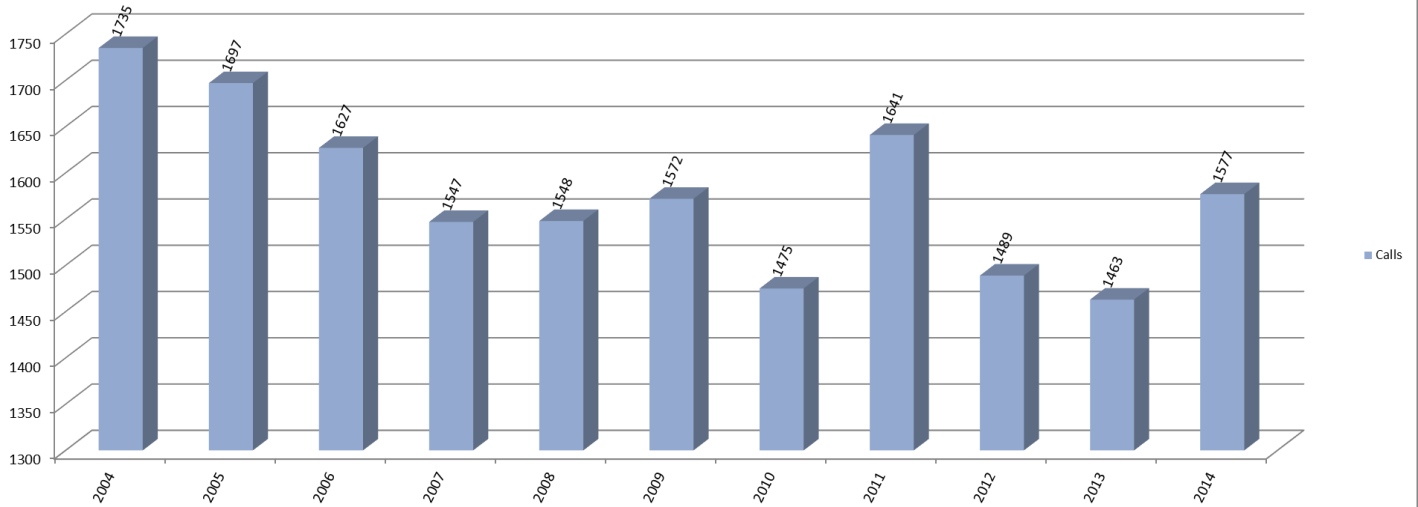
RESCUE CALLS



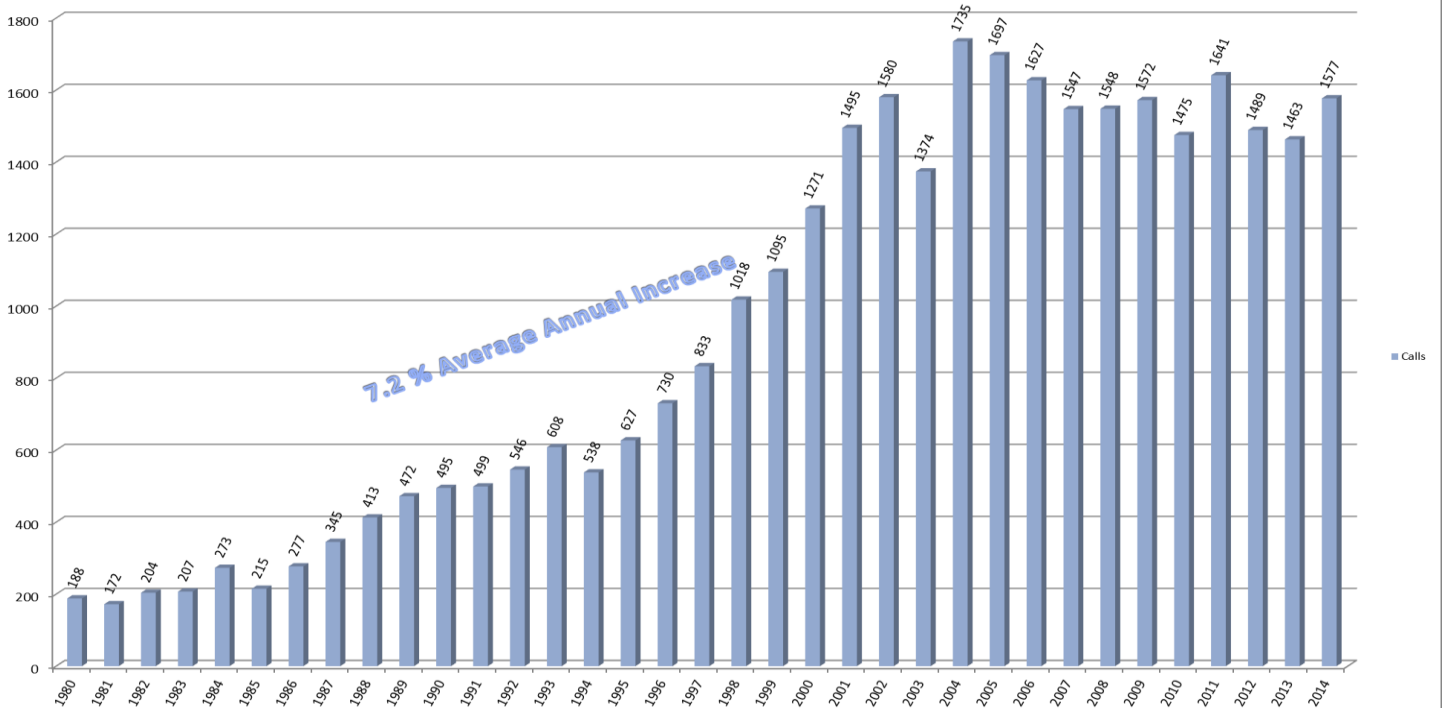
HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS



Emergency Calls 2004 - 2014



Emergency Calls 1980 - 2013



Annual Cost Comparison

