

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

CITY of MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

2018 was by far the busiest year in the history of the City of Milton Fire Department. Overall emergency response activity exceeded the prior year by nearly six percent, increasingly 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.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITY

This year we experienced a continued increase in the overall number of emergency responses. 2018 presented several challenging incidents, requiring more resources than the response of the on-duty initial alarm assignment. The total number of emergency calls increased by 5.91%, to 1,988 calls, from 1,877 the previous year.

Rescue calls increased modestly this year, now totaling 1,608 calls, and still constitute majority of our emergency calls, amounting to 84% of our total 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 rescue equipment such as the "Jaws of Life"; and, other 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 2018 we responded to 1,417 medical rescues, 191 vehicle accidents, and 66 other rescue calls. While the number of medical rescues increased by only 4%, the number of vehicle accidents increased by over 30%, and the number of other rescues increased by 10%.

Fire responses, while always a relatively small portion of our total emergency activity, remain our agency's primary responsibility, and actually are the segment of our responsibility that requires the greatest resources, in terms of equipment, training and personnel. Although many fire related incidents are quickly handled by the on-duty crew, we must always respond with the capacity to rapidly bring the full capabilities of the department to bear 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 increased dramatically, up by 42 calls, from 199 in 2017. This year we responded to 241 fire related calls, now amounting to 12% of our total responses. This represents more than a 21% increase in fire related activity. These included 34 structure fires, 8 vehicle fires, 4 brush or wildland fires, 160 false alarms or good intent calls, and 35 other fire related calls, such as illegal burning.

Our smallest category of emergency response, hazardous condition calls, this year again 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. This year, the number of hazardous condition calls increased very little, from 70 in 2017. In 2017 the department responded to 73 hazardous condition calls, including 21 gas incidents, 20 electrical incidents, 5 fuel leaks or spills, and 27 other hazardous condition calls.

On 190 occasions last year, we were dispatched to an emergency call while one or more units were already assigned to a previous call (concurrent calls), an increase of over 24% from the 153 concurrent calls the previous year. This means that over 9.5% of our emergency calls were received while our department was already responding to, or on the scene of a prior emergency. On at least 11 occasions we were dispatched to three or more simultaneous calls during the same period of time. On 5 occasions one or more of the concurrent calls occurred in conjunction with mutual aid provided to another jurisdiction. On 6 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 one occasion our department was unavailable to respond to a subsequent medical emergency call, but this call was handled by the responding ambulance without assistance from our department. On 60 occasions Engine 23 was required to respond to a medical emergency in place of Rescue 23, which was managing a previous call, representing a 10% increase from the 54 occasions the prior year. Each of these incidences committed our entire on-duty response capability, leaving us unavailable to respond to any type of call until one unit has completed its current assignment and become available to respond to a subsequent call.

While the department continues to manage the challenges of increasing emergency responses, the dramatically increasing number of concurrent calls is resulting in a troubling number of occasions in which our department is not available to adequately respond to a fire call or other emergency. On at least 11 occasions last year, our department was forced to respond to an incident with less than the specified crew complement necessary to properly manage the incident. In each case, personnel managed to handle the incident without undue difficulties until additional staffing could be freed up or mutual aid resources could arrive. Every time Engine 23 is required to respond to a fire call without its normal crew complement of four firefighters, extreme safety concerns and operational limitations occur, hindering our ability to address the immediate demands on the fireground. Under state law, with less than four personnel on the scene, personnel are limited to exterior operations, unable to initiate the aggressive interior operations which allow us to consistently limit fire growth.

In 2018 several significant incidents occurred requiring more resources than the response of the on-duty initial alarm assignment. During the year, among the 34 structure fires to which we responded, 14 had extended beyond the incipient stage to become a working fire, requiring aggressive interior firefighting operations to bring them under control. Eight of these fires were located outside of the city limits, to which we responded as part of standing mutual aid agreements. At 6:00 o'clock on the evening of January 8, during a thunder storm, we were called to a fully involved, abandoned single family residence on Galt City Road, in Bagdad Volunteer Fire Department's district. This fire required the efforts of several departments, working together through standing mutual aid agreements, to bring it under control. A second working fire occurred sixteen days later, on January 24, on Sinclair Street, in the Skyline Fire Rescue District. This daytime fire involved a portion of the living space and had extended into the attic of this single-story home. Engine 23 was requested on a second alarm early the incident and was assigned to an attack line in the interior of the building. The fire was eventually brought under control after an aggressive coordinated attack with the support of five fire departments.

A third fire occurred eleven days later, on February 4, on Osceola Street, just outside the city limits, in the Skyline Fire Rescue District. This well-involved fire involved a utility building behind the home. In this case, we were on the initial alarm, and Engine 23 arrived to begin initial fire attack and quickly bring this fire under control.

Near 10:00 o'clock on the evening of February 22, our department, with the assistance of Skyline Fire Rescue and Fire and Emergency Services Gulf Coast (Navy Fire), was dispatched to a structure fire at Park Place Apartments on Park Avenue. Dispatch reported that they had received multiple calls reporting flames showing. Engine 23 secured a water supply, laying a line from a hydrant at Park Avenue and Byrom Street, and arrived to find heavy fire coming from a first floor bedroom window in a two-story, eight unit apartment building. Flames had already extended to the second floor bedroom window directly above. A second alarm was requested, bringing Bagdad and Avalon Fire Departments to assist. An aggressive fast attack by Engine 23's crew, in conjunction with coordinated search and rescue, and fire attack by mutual aid companies to check for extension quickly brought this fire under control. Additional resources assisted with unit-by-unit search and overhaul. The State Fire Marshal's Investigator was requested who determined that the fire had been started by a juvenile playing with matches. Two occupants of the apartment were treated on scene for minor burn injuries and released. Due to the effective fire attack, all occupants of the building, with the exception of the two involved units, were able to return to their apartments the next day.

Five days later, on the morning of February 27, while on an inspection tour of the Carter Crossing construction project, we were dispatched to a residential structure fire on Marin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Engine 23, Rescue 23 and Chief 23 arrived to find heavy smoke coming from the roof of the older, single-family home and requested a second alarm, bringing assistance from Skyline Fire, Avalon Fire and Navy Fire, as Engine 23 established water supply from a nearby hydrant. The occupants had escaped prior to our arrival, and an aggressive fast attack quickly brought this fire under control.

At 3:44 o'clock on the morning of March 23 our department was dispatched to a residential structure fire on Mary Street, near Berryhill Street. Engine 23 arrived to find heavy fire involvement of the front porch and living room area of this older, single-story, wood-frame home. The occupants had escaped, but two animals, (a dog and cat) were still in the home. A second alarm was requested as Engine 23 initiated an aggressive interior fast-attack, quickly bringing the fire under control. Mutual aid companies assisted with secondary search and overhaul. Sadly, both animals died in the fire. Six days later we were requested as part of the initial alarm to a residential structure fire on Kingswood Drive, just west of the city limits, off of Northrop Road. Engine 23 arrived early in this incident to initiate fire attack as other responding apparatus attempted to establish a water supply from a distant fire hydrant. This fire was brought under control with moderate damage to the structure. Three days later we responded as part of the initial alarm to a working residential fire on Julia Drive. Engine 23 was asked to establish a water supply from a nearby hydrant, laying 5-inch hose to the scene.

On May 1, Marine 23, our department's rescue boat, was dispatched to a mutual aid call involving a heart attack victim, on the Blackwater River, north of the city limits. Along with Boat 15 from East Milton Fire Department, Marine 23 searched the river to locate the victim in a slough off the main river channel. CPR was initiated, and the patient was transferred to Boat 15 for transport to the dock while Marine 23 took the victim's boat, with his granddaughter on board, in tow to the Navy Boat Docks boat ramp.

At 10:40 on the evening of May 18, Engine 23 was dispatched as part of the initial alarm to a residential fire in an older, single-story wood frame home on Dogwood Drive. This well-involved fire involved the resources of several fire departments to bring it under control.

At 3:59 on the morning of Monday, June 18, our department, assisted by Skyline Fire and Navy Fire, were dispatched to a commercial structure fire at a beauty salon on Park Avenue. Engine 23 arrived to find heavy smoke throughout the building and had to force entry into the involved unit to access the fire. The fire was quickly extinguished and smoke cleared from the adjoining units without damage to adjoining businesses.

On July 18, Engine 23 was dispatched to a structure fire in a storage building on Sunray Drive, just outside the City Limits in Skyline Fire District. Because the structure was located well away from the nearest access road, the crew deployed an “extended lay,” a procedure allowing the crew to quickly deploy attack lines as far as 400 feet, and initiated a fire attack, quickly bringing the fire under control.

The department responded to a residential structure fire on Harvell Street on Saturday afternoon, September 22, to find smoke and flames showing from the rear of the single-family home. All occupants had evacuated prior to our arrival. Having responded directly to the scene, without securing a water supply, Engine 23 requested a second alarm and initiated interior attack operations as they awaited the second-due engine to secure a water supply. The well-involved fire was quickly brought under control, and mutual aid companies assisted with overhaul.

MUTUAL AID

The maintenance of effective mutual aid agreements remains a critical 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 2018 our department provided mutual aid to other departments on 19 occasions, and received mutual aid on 20 occasions, amounting to .96% and 1% of total calls, respectively. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was provided nearly doubled from 11 in 2017. Eight of these calls involved working structure fires where department personnel and resources were involved in active firefighting operations. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was requested and received increased by three from the prior year.

VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

With one exception, our fleet of emergency apparatus is in very good shape and has continued to serve us well throughout the year. The Fire Chief’s 18-year old command vehicle (2001 Chevy Tahoe) was purchased used from the city of Longwood, Florida in 2004, with 53,000 miles on it. It now has over 120,000 miles and has suffered numerous mechanical and electrical problems, and is in great need of replacement. It is planned to include the replacement of this vehicle, with a similar new vehicle in next year’s budget.

Among the budgeted equipment acquisitions were the following new equipment items:

- A SetCom Intercom Headset System for Engine 23 – This state of the art system integrates the emergency radio system with a multi-functional intercom that allows all members to hear essential radio traffic and talk between crew members, while also allowing officer to transmit on the radio and protects all member’s hearing from siren and engine noise.

- SimRad GO9 XSE Chartplotter Navigation System for Marine 23 – This integrated navigation system provides GPS, mapping, depth finder, and side scan sonar into a single large display screen to provide dramatically improved search and rescue capability for our primary water rescue vessel.
- Res-Q-Jack RJ3 Jackstand Stabilization and Lifting Strut - Integrated lifting jack to match existing system, providing improved shoring with built-in lifting capability for overturned vehicles.

Our first-due rescue vehicle was replaced the previous year with a 2017 E-One mini-pumper rescue on a Ford F550 chassis. With the acquisition of this new vehicle, the 17-year-old retired rescue vehicle was sold this year through an internet auction site for \$14,500. This additional revenue allowed us to acquire some much needed additional equipment that had not been included in the year's budget.

- 800 feet (16 sections) of 2½-inch Hi-Combat attack hose and 400 feet (8 sections) of 1¾-inch Hi-Combat attack hose to replace 20+ year old cotton jacket hose and provide full hose load changes for all front-line apparatus.
- Air Bags and Controller – Paratech Maxiforce air lifting bag three-bag system of small, medium and large bag, with hoses, regulator/isolation valves and controller to replace department's existing, out of date air lifting bag system. Existing system was placed in training status.
- Honda generator with integrated light kit – New Honda EU2200ITA 2,200 watt portable “suitcase” generator with integrated 500 watt light kit to provide convenient, portable scene lighting. This unit provides improved capability than older 1,000 watt system which has been placed in reserve status.
- Replacement helmets – Replaced all existing firefighting helmets, most reaching their 10-year life cycle, with new Cairns 1044 Traditional Fire Helmet.
- Replaced remote controls on remaining four bay doors – Completed replacement of original bay door remote controls with improved system with greater range and reliability.
- Miller door edge sensors on all apparatus bay doors – Replaced existing, non-functioning air hose system with Miller electric door edge sensors on all eight apparatus bay doors to provide required door closure safety feature.
- Wireless remote control for winch on Rescue 23 – Wireless remote provides fully functional operation of rescue winch on front of Rescue 23 without limitations and safety concerns of wired remote.

The department's breathing air compressor and cascade system was tested and serviced and all breathing apparatus was flow-tested and serviced. Our breathing air compressor and fill station was serviced and tested to maintain safety and compliance on these important pieces of equipment. Required flow-testing and maintenance was conducted to insure continued proper operation for all self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After months of training and preparation, a county-wide, Critical Incident Stress Management Team was established through the Santa Rosa County Firefighters Association's Chaplains Corps, and corresponding departmental policies have been adopted to implement this new resource. This team, made up of trained mental health professionals and peer counselors from multiple agencies, will provide essential training and post-incident care to help avoid instances of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicide following critical traumatic events.

Last year represented the final year of the prevailing three-year collective bargaining agreement between the City of Milton and the Milton Professional Firefighters – Local 2944. After very cordial negotiations, a new three-year agreement was reached with no significant changes from existing conditions, providing a continued stable working relationship for the near future.

Planning work has continued on the development of a municipal training facility, to be funded by the Fire Service Assessment. This facility will be designed to provide practical, hands-on training opportunities for not only the fire department, but also the police department and public works to meet mandated training requirements throughout the city. This facility will finally replace the fire department's former training facility that was razed in 2005, after Hurricane Ivan, to construct the city's Warehouse and Garage facility. Site design has been completed, and site work will be started this year for the new facility that will be located on Magnolia Street.

In December of this year, representatives from the Insurance Service Office (ISO) arrived to perform an updated Community Fire Protection Rating Assessment on our department. Having previously provided several forms and requests for information, which had been gathered over the prior months, the survey went very well and, although results will not be available for several weeks, all indications are that we will maintain our favorable Class 4 rating, or even potentially improve this rating. We will eagerly await results in the coming year.

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. Our department hosted a region-wide Critical Incident Stress Management Class in August. This class provided essential skills and training to the members of the new CISM Team. Chief Reble and Captain Jim Custred both attended this class for the department.

Hands-on extrication training was again conducted on March 13 at the Milton Iron and Metal Company yard in East Milton, allowing members from all three shifts to enhance their skills at performing complicated techniques in using hydraulic extrication equipment to remove an entrapped victim from a vehicle. Through our internal bi-annual Emergency Medical Technician recertification program, headed by Captain Jim Custred, all of the department's EMTs were recertified. Captain Jim Custred attended a Firefighter Cancer Awareness seminar in Panama City. He also attended a class on responding to Autistic patients at Escambia County Fire Rescue, and the EMS conference at West Florida Hospital. Chief Reble, Captain Jim Custred, Firefighters Jesse Floyd, Ellis O'Steen and Michael Van Why all attended a Fire Service Course Delivery class taught by Captain Geoffrey Freeman at our department in June.

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. 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, educational presentations, informational displays, and our Fire Safety Puppet Show. During 2018 the fire department conducted 10 school programs, reaching 489 students, 6 fire extinguisher classes, reaching 136 persons, two fire drills, reaching 160 people and 14 other programs, including station tours, reaching 755 people, for a total of 32 programs reaching 1,540 people.

Our department also provides Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid training to target groups and the general public. We will gladly arrange classes for groups that desire such training. Through the department's Training Center, headed by Lieutenant/EMT Steve Maddox, 78 individuals were certified in Community CPR, and 58 in First Aid last year. 37 City of Milton employees were certified in Community CPR and First Aid. All 16 members of the City of Milton Fire Department were also recertified in BLS CPR.

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. Following several years of a slow economy, development, and the resulting demand for inspections of new construction and new business, has begun to pick up noticeably. Last year Chief Reble conducted 35 Life Safety Inspections, 17 Follow-up Inspections, 46 Construction related Inspections, and 29 plan reviews, totaling 133 inspections and reviews. Among these was the extensive oversight of the construction of Carter Crossing, a new three-story, 93-unit senior housing development. This new wood-framed multi-family residential building is equipped with full Automatic Fire Sprinkler System, Automatic Fire Alarm, and Class III Standpipe system, and was carefully inspected throughout its construction to ensure compliance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code. Carter Crossing represents the largest new commercial construction project within the City of Milton in many years.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Milton Fire Department continued its long tradition of community involvement throughout 2018. Fire apparatus were displayed at the Santa Rosa County Health Department's Mommy and Me event at Carpenters Park, Milton High School's DUI Awareness event, National Night Out and Back To School Bash at the Guy Thompson Community Center, W. H. Rhodes Elementary, Gospel Projects Club Day, Deliverance Tabernacle Child Development Center, Capstone Academy and Milton Childcare Center at Milton High School. Engine 23 and Rescue 23 again participated in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade in January, carried the Milton High Panther in the Homecoming Parade in September, and again delivered Santa Claus at the end of the annual Milton Christmas Parade in December. Marine 23 was in service as a patrol boat for the Blackwater Pyrates' annual Great Milton Duck Race on July 4th, and again led the Pyrates' Lighted Boat Parade on the Blackwater River 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. In most respects we are very well positioned to meet the demands of the future. The rapidly increasing emergency call load, however, stands to undermine our response capability. We must closely monitor 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. We anticipate that the very near future will see the need to increase on-duty minimum staffing by at least two additional on-duty members in order to consistently staff Rescue 23 as a separate company, thereby greatly increasing our overall operational flexibility while allowing Engine 23 to consistently operate as a 4-man engine company. To effect this change will required nine additional personnel, but will allow us to maintain operational readiness in the future, even while handling the dramatically increasing number of emergency medical calls to which we are called to respond. We will also continue to monitor and prepare for the effects of future growth, including the development of multi-story properties that will further drive the need for additional equipment and personnel.

With the exception of the Fire Chief's 18-year old command vehicle, our fleet of equipment is well prepared to meet the continued demands of protecting the lives and property of our citizens well into the future. Our fire station facility is well-suited to serve our current needs for many years to come. With the pending development of a new integrated training facility, we eagerly anticipate opportunities to continue to enhance our skills and operational capabilities to provide an even higher level of service to our community. We will continue to examine all aspects of our operations to insure that we remain at the highest readiness to meet the demands of any emergency that we may encounter. We look forward to continuing our tradition of dedicated service to our community.

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

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2018

ACTIVITY REPORT

ALARM RESPONSES

FIRE CALLS

TYPE:	Vehicle Fire	Structure Fire	Brush Fire	Alarm*	Other**	Total
NUMBER:	8	34	4	160	35	241
	*	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:	1417	191	66	1674

HAZARDOUS CONDITION CALLS

TYPE:	Natural Gas*	Electrical Problems**	Fuel Leak/Spill	Other	Total
NUMBER:	21	20	5	27	73
	*	Includes gas leaks, smell of gas, etc.			
	**	Includes downed power lines, transformer fires, arcing wires, etc.			

MUTUAL AID:	GIVEN:	19	0.96%	RECEIVED:	20	1.01%
-------------	--------	----	-------	-----------	----	-------

TOTAL CALLS FOR	CALENDAR YEAR 2018		1988		
TOTAL CALLS IN 2017:	1988		TOTAL CALLS IN 2017:	1877	
	PERCENTAGE INCREASE:		5.91%		

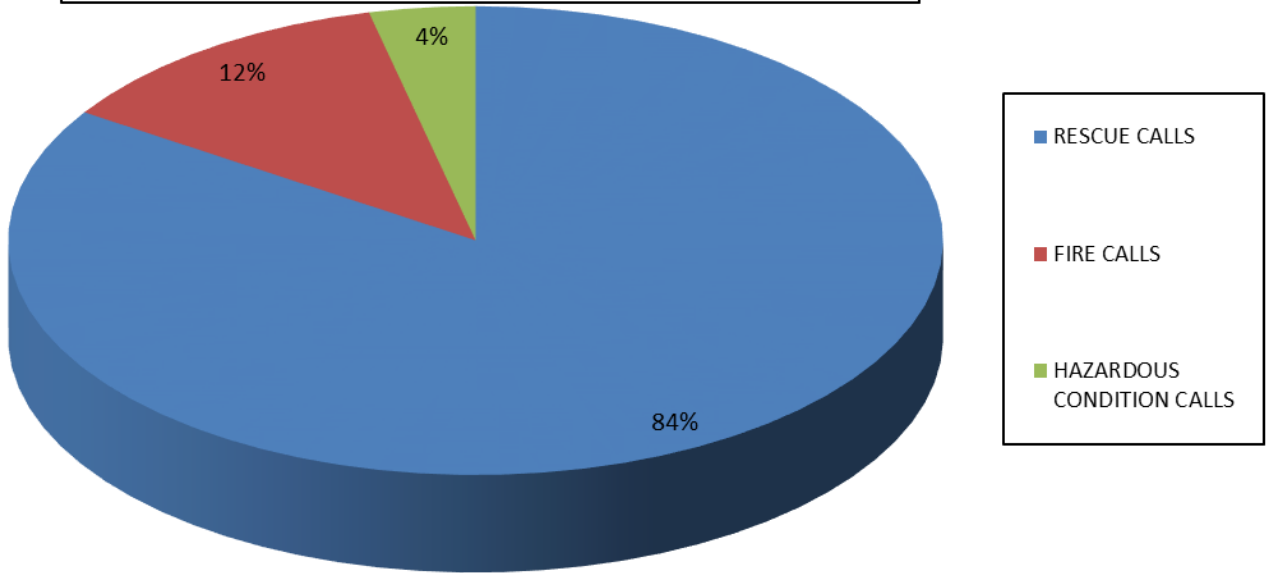
PUBLIC EDUCATION

TYPE OF PROGRAM:	School Class	Extinguisher Demo	Fire Drill	Other	Total
Number Conducted:	10	6	2	14	32
Number Attending:	489	136	160	755	1540

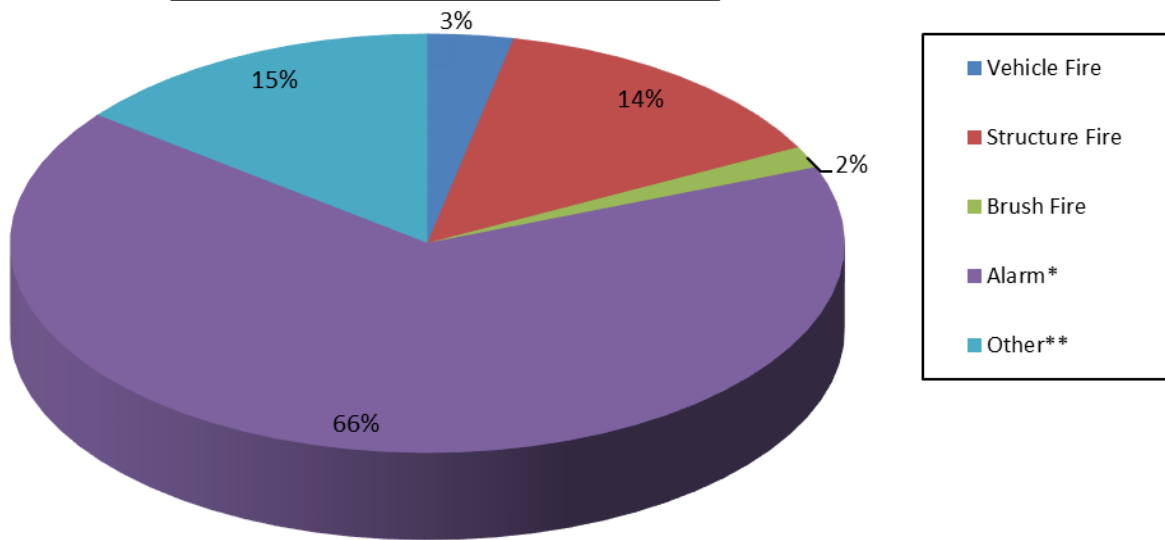
LIFE SAFETY

TYPE:	Life Safety Insp	Follow-up	Construction	Pre-plan	Plan Review	Total
Number:	35	17	46	6	29	133

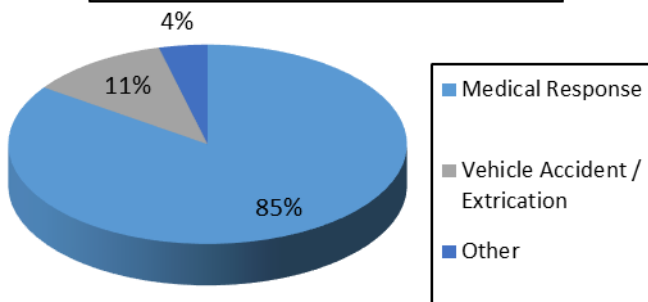
EMERGENCY RESPONSES CALENDAR YEAR 2018



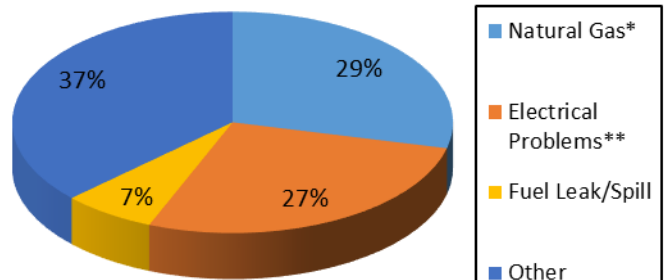
FIRE CALLS



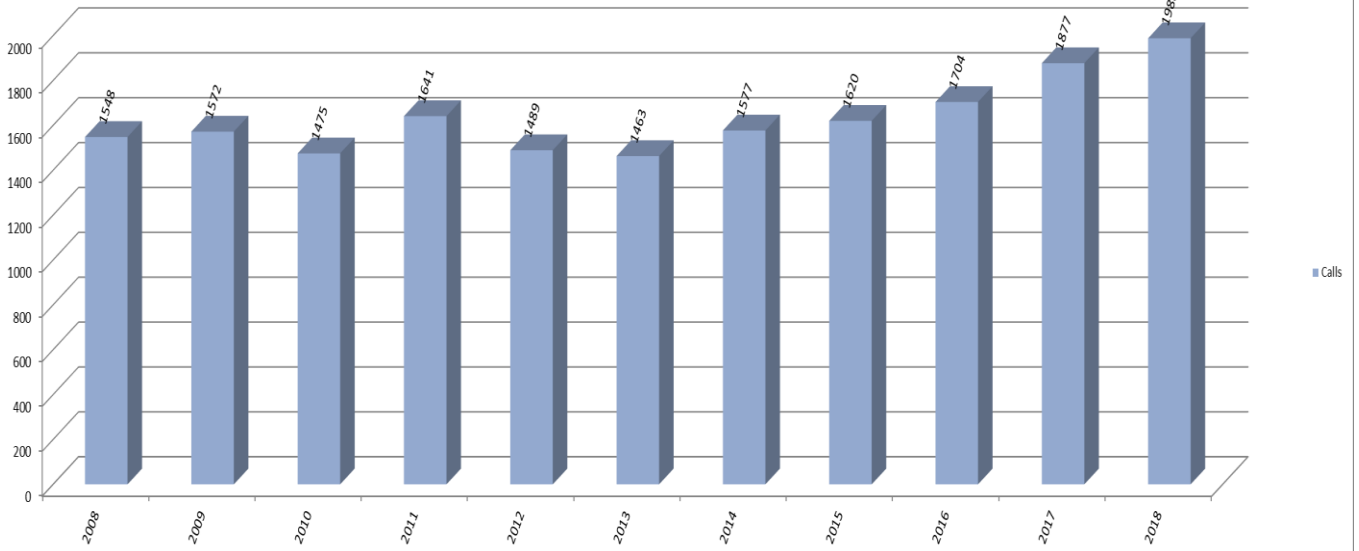
RESCUE CALLS



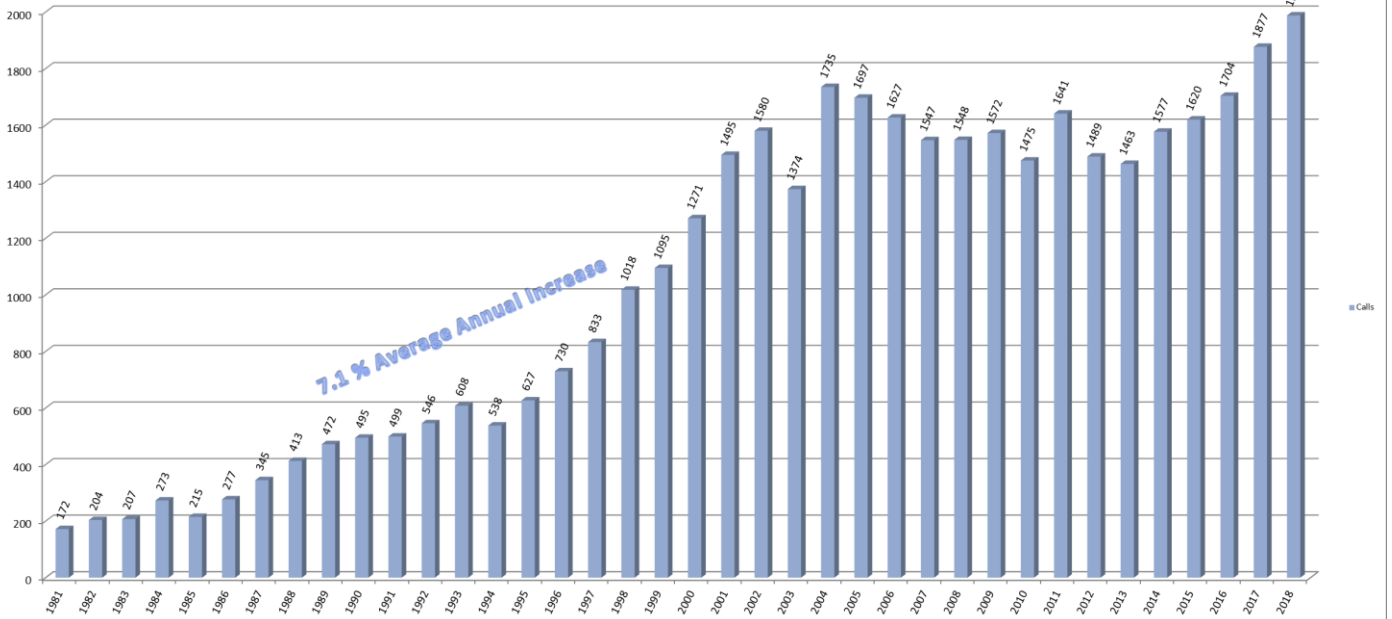
HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS



Emergency Calls 2008 - 2018



Emergency Calls 1980 - 2018



Annual Cost Comparison

