

# **CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**



## **2017 ANNUAL REPORT**

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2017 was by far the busiest year in the history of the City of Milton Fire Department. Overall emergency response activity exceeded the prior year's by more than ten percent, continuing to challenge 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 ACTIVITY

Although we were faced with a marked increase in the overall number of emergency responses, 2017 presented surprisingly few major incidents, requiring more resources than the response of the on-duty initial alarm assignment. The total number of emergency calls increased by 10.15%, to 1877 calls, from 1,704 the previous year.

Rescue calls increased dramatically this year, now totaling 1,608 calls, and still constitute the vast majority of our emergency calls, again amounting to 86% of our total 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, 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 2017 we responded to 1,401 medical rescues, 146 vehicle accidents, and 61 other rescue calls. While the number of medical rescues increased by nearly 16%, the number of vehicle accidents decreased by over 20%, and the number of other rescues dropped 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 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 remained consistent, up by only one call from 198 in 2016. This year we responded to 199 fire related calls, amounting to 10% of our total responses. These included 28 structure fires, 4 vehicle fires, 3 brush or wildland fires, 128 false alarms or good intent calls, and 36 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. This year, the number of hazardous condition calls increased from 47 in 2016. In 2017 the department responded to 70 hazardous condition calls, including 15 gas incidents, 18 electrical incidents, 4 fuel leaks or spills, and 33 other hazardous condition calls.

On 153 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 nearly 11% from the 138 concurrent calls the previous year. This means that over 8% of our emergency calls were received while our department was already responding to, or on the scene of a prior emergency call. On at least 6 occasions we were dispatched to three or more simultaneous calls during the same period of time. On 3 occasions one or more of the concurrent calls occurred in conjunction with mutual aid provided to another jurisdiction. On 5 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 54 occasions Engine 23 was required to respond to a medical emergency in place of Rescue 23, which was managing a previous call, representing a 19% decrease from the 67 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 9 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 2017 relatively few significant incidents occurred requiring more resources than the response of the on-duty initial alarm assignment. During the year, among the 28 structure fires to which we responded, only 7 had extended beyond the incipient stage to become a working fire, requiring aggressive interior firefighting operations to bring them under control. Two of these fires were located outside of the city limits, to which we responded as part of standing mutual aid agreements. On March 14 we responded to a single family residence on Birch Street. The occupants were home at the time of the fire, but were able to escape to safety. They had been cleaning up and many household items had been moved about throughout the house and onto the front porch, creating great difficulty in moving throughout the home. This fast growing fire quickly spread through the dining and living room area before Engine 23 arrived on scene. The fire was quickly brought under control, but not before causing an estimated \$10,000 in damage.

A second working fire occurred four days later, on March 18, on Balkom Street, in the East Milton Fire District. This afternoon fire involved both floors of a two-story home. Engine 23 was requested well into the incident and was assigned to an attack line at an exterior entry to the second floor. The fire was eventually brought under control after an aggressive coordinated attack with the support of five fire departments.

A third fire occurred a month later, on April 21, on Brandon Avenue, off Berryhill Road in the Skyline Fire District. This well-involved fire involved multiple rooms and the attic of a single-family home. Again, we were not on the initial alarm, but were requested by the first arriving officer. Upon arrival, the crew of Engine 23 was assigned to roof operations, opening vent openings, and then supporting interior operations in the garage. This fire was ultimately brought under control after having caused extensive damage to the home.

Very early on the morning of June 1, we were dispatched to a structure fire with possible entrapment on Alabama Street. Based on the dispatch information, the responding Company Officer requested a second alarm, bringing assistance from Skyline Fire District and Fire & Emergency Services Gulf Coast (Navy Fire). The occupants had escaped prior to our arrival, and an aggressive fast attack quickly brought this fire under control. Evidence indicated that this fire had been set in a utility room while the occupants were inside asleep, so an Investigator from the Florida Fire Marshal's Office was requested to conduct an investigation on this fire.

Two weeks later, a lightning strike during a driving thunderstorm caused a fire in the attic of a home on Ridgeview Drive in the Oak Meadows subdivision. Engine 23 arrived on scene to find a small working fire in the attic and initiated a fast attack with a pressurized water extinguisher through the attic scuttle, quickly bringing this fire under control while active salvage operations were undertaken inside, preventing extensive damage to this rather large home.

On October 4 our department was dispatched to a reported structure fire at Country Haven Apartments on Glover Lane. The fire had started on the kitchen stove, but had been held in check by an automatic fire suppression device installed in the kitchen hood. The crew from Engine 23 initiated an interior attack on the unit of origin while checking for any extension. Although the fire was quickly brought under control, it had caused considerable heat and smoke damage to the apartment.

Finally, around 1:30 in the morning of November 16, a residential structure fire with possible entrapment was reported on Seminole Street. This fire had originated in the kitchen and extended to the attic and soon vented through the roof. The residents had been awakened by a working smoke detector and had all evacuated before our arrival. While approaching the scene, the responding Company Officer requested a second alarm, bringing assistance from Skyline Fire District. With their support, a masterstream and multiple exterior hoselines were brought into action against this fire, soon bringing it under control, but not before extensive damage had been done to the structure.

## 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 2017 our department provided mutual aid to other departments on 16 occasions, and received mutual aid on 11 occasions, amounting to .85% and .5% of total calls, respectively. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was provided was reduced by nearly half from 30 in 2016. Two of these calls involved working structure fires where department personnel and resources were involved in active firefighting operations, including working structure fires on Balkom Street and Brandon Avenue. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was requested and received decreased by eight 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. Rescue 23, our 17-year old rescue vehicle, was replaced in June with a new, four-door mini pumper rescue vehicle on a Ford F-550 chassis. After developing detailed specifications and receiving bids, a contract was issued to Sunbelt Fire Apparatus of Fairhope, Alabama to purchase a new rescue vehicle from E-One of Ocala, Florida. This new vehicle is similar to the Midi-pumper rescue previously in service, but with a larger, 4-door, 4-man cab and additional compartment space. The new vehicle also has an automatic transmission, hopefully eliminating the recurring problems associated with the clutch and transmission on the previous unit.

The Fire Chief's 17-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 118,000 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.

Four sets of firefighting turnout gear were replaced, completing our current replacement cycle of maintaining compliance, all sets of gear being ten or fewer years old. In response to member recommendations, station uniforms were upgraded to a dri-weave style of uniform that provides improved comfort while working in the heat. Our hydraulic extrication equipment (Jaws of Life) were tested and serviced. The department's breathing air compressor and cascade system was tested and serviced and all breathing apparatus was flo-tested and serviced. All breathing air cylinders and oxygen cylinders were hydro-tested to maintain safety and compliance on these important pieces of equipment. Required fit testing was conducted for all members to insure a continued proper fit for self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

## SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The department has for many years operated with essentially the minimum necessary staffing required to provide consistent “minimum manning” for fire suppression responsibilities. Whenever an injury or illness occurs that results in a member being removed from normal duty for an extended period of time (more than one or two shifts), it poses an extreme hardship on the department and its members, especially on the effected shift, and results in dramatically increased overtime costs to the city. Recognizing the need to maintain consistent staffing and minimize the negative impacts of an extended injury or illness, the City Council this year approved the addition of a new Firefighter position to increase staffing by one member who can serve as a “Floater,” available to be transferred to cover any temporary vacancy as needed.

Work has continued on the development of a municipal training facility, to also 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, which will include parking, an open training ground with various training props, and a multi-story training building, is specifically designed with integrated training resources. 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 property already owned by the city on Magnolia Street.

## 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.

Hands-on extrication training was conducted on May 3 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. This training proved invaluable on several occasions as the skills practiced were called upon to remove entrapped victims on multiple occasions last year.

Captain Jim Custred attended an EMS Conference at West Florida Hospital in July. Captain Geoffrey Freeman attended Florida Health and Safety Officer, and Legal Issues for Safety Officer classes conducted by the Florida State Fire Marshal’s Office, Bureau of Fire Standards and Training, held at Pace Fire Department. Lieutenant Daryl Auerbach completed Administrative Law, Grant Administration and Resource Development, and Advanced Fire Administration courses toward his Bachelor of Applied Science Degree through St. Petersburg College. Firefighter/EMT Jesse Floyd completed Building Construction for the Fire Service, Company Officer, and Firefighting Tactics and Strategies 1 toward his Associate of Applied Science Degree through Saint Petersburg College, and a Forcible entry class at Holley Navarre Fire Department. On October 24 Chief Reble and Captain Jim Custred attended a 1-day course put on by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), the organization that evaluates a community’s fire protection to establish property insurance rates.

## 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 2017 the fire department conducted 11 school programs, reaching 755 students, 4 fire extinguisher classes, reaching 135 persons and 10 other programs, including station tours, reaching 1,765 people, for a total of 25 programs reaching 2,655 people.

Our department also provides Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Classes 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, 33 individuals were certified in CPR, and 13 in First Aid last year.

## 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 40 Life Safety Inspections, 16 Follow-up Inspections, 24 Construction related Inspections, and 59 plan reviews, totaling 139 inspections and reviews.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Milton Fire Department continued its long tradition of community involvement throughout 2017. On May 20 members of the department coordinated the Waterfest portion of the Milton in May Festival. Waterfest was held on the city's festival area between Elmira and Willing Streets on Pine Street, and included many free water slides and similar activities for children. Throughout the year the department supported three other Waterfest events in Milton.

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, Milton Childcare Center at Milton High School and Family First Network's Fall Festival. 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 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. Marine 23 was in service as a patrol boat for the Blackwater Pyrates' annual Great Milton Duck Race on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 soon undermine our response capability. We must closely 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. We anticipate that the near future will see the need to increase minimum on-duty staffing by at least two additional positions in order to 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. This will allow us to maintain operational readiness, 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 16-year old command vehicle, our fleet is well equipped 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 2017

#### ACTIVITY REPORT ALARM RESPONSES

##### FIRE CALLS

TYPE:	Vehicle Fire	Structure Fire	Brush Fire	Alarm*	Other**	Total
NUMBER:	4	28	3	128	36	199

\* 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:	1401	146	61	1608

##### HAZARDOUS CONDITION CALLS

TYPE:	Natural Gas*	Electrical Problems**	Fuel Leak/Spill	Other	Total
NUMBER:	15	18	4	33	70

\* Includes gas leaks, smell of gas, etc.  
 \*\* Includes downed power lines, transformer fires, arcing wires, etc.

MUTUAL AID:	GIVEN:	16	0.85%	RECEIVED:	11	0.59%
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<b>TOTAL CALLS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2017</b>	<u>1877</u>	<b>TOTAL CALLS IN 2016:</b>	<u>1704</u>
<b>TOTAL CALLS IN 2017:</b>	<u>1877</u>	<b>PERCENTAGE INCREASE:</b>	<b>10.15%</b>

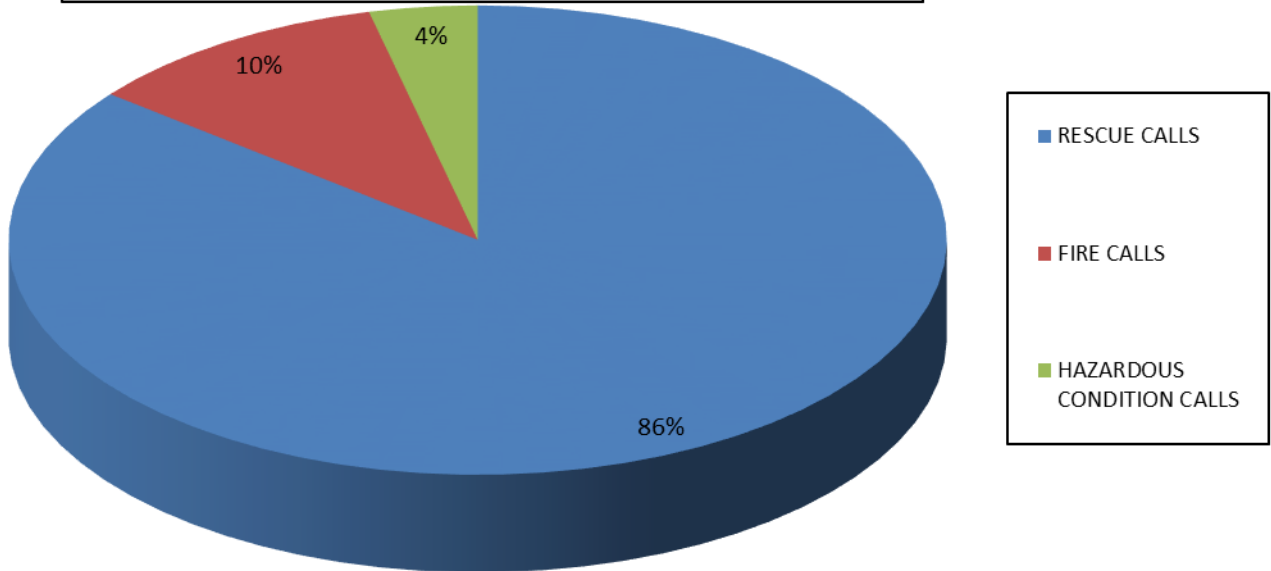
#### PUBLIC EDUCATION

TYPE OF PROGRAM:	School Class	Extinguisher Demo	Fire Drill	Other	Total
Number Conducted:	11	4	0	10	25
Number Attending:	755	135	0	1765	2655

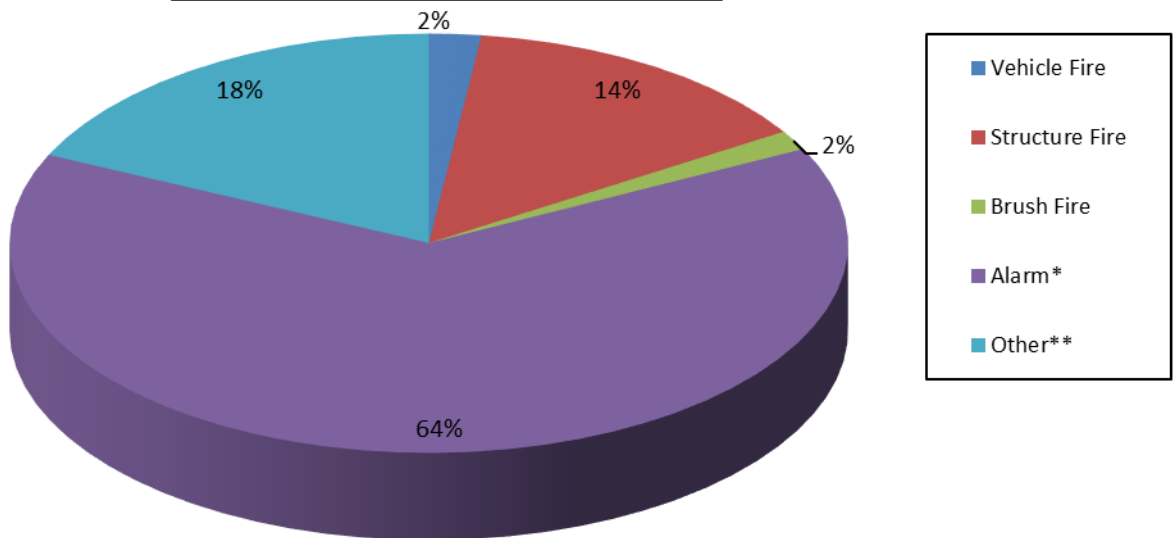
#### LIFE SAFETY

TYPE:	Life Safety Insp	Follow-up	Construction	Pre-plan	Plan Review	Total
Number:	40	16	24	5	59	144

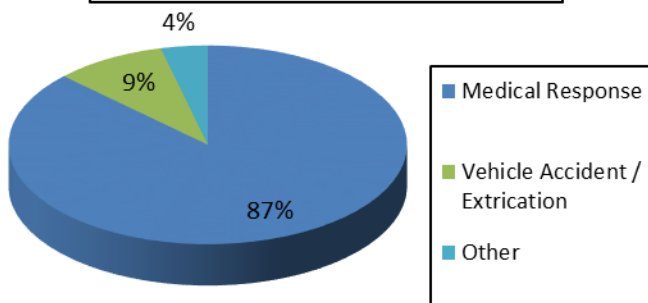
# EMERGENCY RESPONSES CALENDAR YEAR 2017



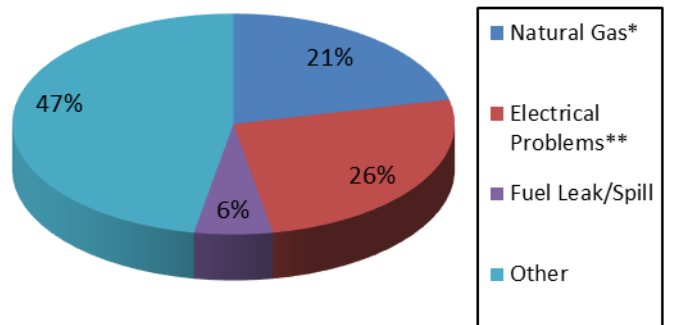
## FIRE CALLS



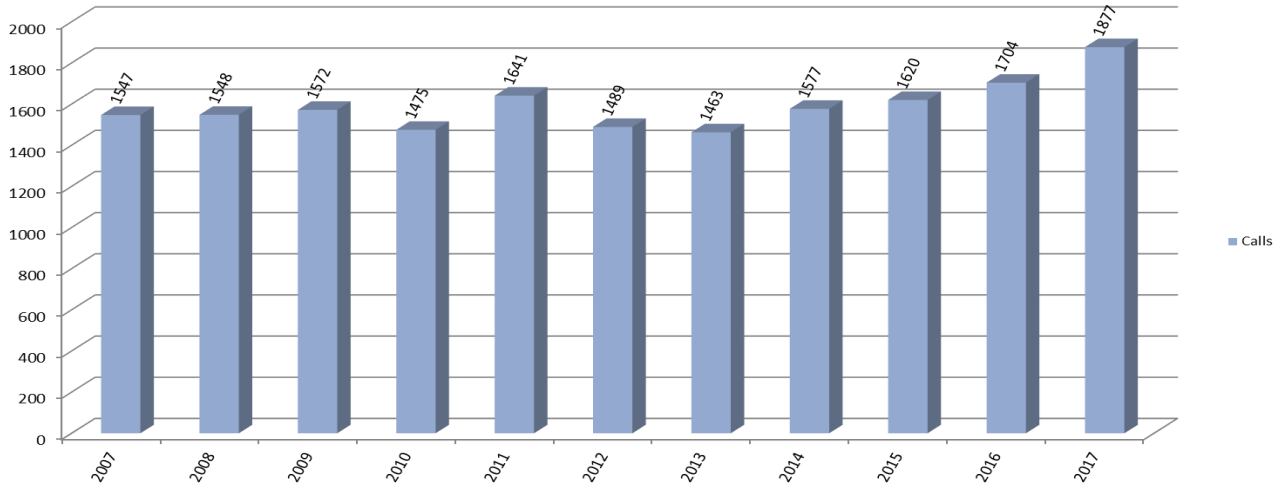
## RESCUE CALLS



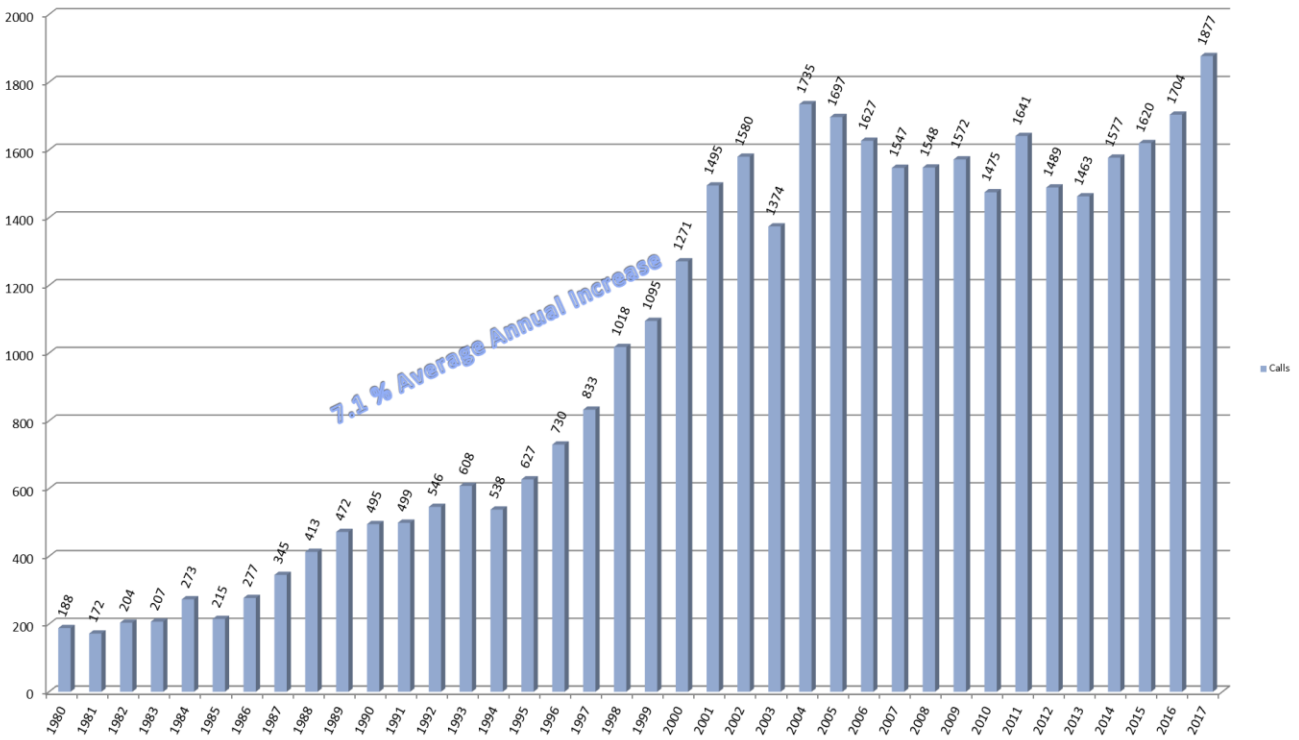
## HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS



### Emergency Calls 2007 - 2017



### Emergency Calls 1980 - 2017



### Annual Cost Comparison

