

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

2022 was a year of tremendous progress for the City of Milton Fire Department. While experiencing dramatic increases in emergency activity, the department has also taken advantage of many opportunities to make improvements in the overall response capability and readiness that will benefit our citizens for many years. As a result, the department remains well positioned to manage the challenges of the future.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITY

This year, after two years of dramatically reduced call load, we experienced a dramatic increase in the overall number of emergency responses. With this increase, 2022 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 10.5%, to 1,284 calls, from 1,162 the previous year.

Rescue calls, consistently the largest portion of our total call load, increased very slightly this year, now totaling 887 calls, amounting to 69% of our total emergency activity. This represents over a 0.3% increase in Rescue calls from 884 in 2021. Rescue calls include: medical emergencies such as strokes, heart attacks, traumatic injuries, falls, etc.; vehicle accidents, including those that involve entrapment, requiring forcible extrication with specialized rescue equipment such as the “Jaws of Life”; as well as 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 2022 we responded to 565 medical rescues, 183 vehicle accidents, and 139 other rescue calls. While the number of medical rescues increased by over 6%, vehicle accidents decreased by nearly 17% and the number of other rescues decreased by over 5%.

Fire calls, while a smaller portion of our total emergency activity, remain our department’s primary responsibility, and are actually 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 are ready at a moment’s notice. The number of fire related calls increased dramatically, up by 76 calls, from 229 in 2021. This year we responded to 305 fire related calls, now amounting to 24% of our total responses. These included 73 structure fires, 10 vehicle fires, 7 brush or wildland fires, 167 activated fire alarms or good intent calls, and 48 other fire related calls, such as illegal burning. Structure fires increased by 46%. Many of these fires were outside of our jurisdiction, where we responded under a mutual aid agreement. Activated fire alarms increased by almost 5%, other categories changed only slightly.

Our smallest category of emergency response, hazardous condition calls, this year made up only 7% of our total 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 conditions, present almost endless complexity, and often require responders to initiate operations with very little information, in a very dynamic environment. This year, the number of hazardous condition calls increased by almost 88%, from 49 in 2021. In 2022 the department responded to 92 hazardous condition calls, including 16 natural gas incidents, 29 electrical incidents, 1 fuel leaks or spills, and 46 other hazardous condition calls.

Nationally recognized standards for fire service response to emergency calls (fires and medical emergencies) establish response time objectives of six minutes or less to 90% of all emergency calls. These response times are measured from the time the 911 call is received by the Santa Rosa County Emergency Communications Center (dispatch) to the time the first department unit arrives on the scene of the emergency. Our department monitors compliance levels for all calls and specifically for fire-related calls. During calendar year 2022, the department maintained a compliance rate of 97.9% on all calls, and 98.5% on fire-related calls. This far exceeds national response objectives and represents an improvement over the previous year's rates of 95.7% and 96.1%, respectively. We also monitor compliance with an objective of providing a full first-alarm assignment of three engines, a chief and a rescue or ambulance, with at least 12 personnel, within 12 minutes to 90% of all working residential fires. Given the relatively limited number of fires that require a full-alarm assignment to manage, there are few of these to track, only nine this year. This year we maintained a 55% compliance rate. For each of the non-compliant calls, the majority of the first-alarm assignment arrived within the objective timeframe, except for only one of the mutual aid engines, which arrived within only a few minutes thereafter. Given our department's reliance on mutual aid to fill our a first-alarm assignment, and the geography of the response area, this is a goal that will be difficult for us to improve without additional staffing within our department.

On 97 occasions last year, our department was dispatched to one emergency call while one or more units were already assigned to a previous call (concurrent calls), an increase from the 73 concurrent calls the previous year. This means that over 7.5% of our emergency calls were received while our department was already responding to, or on the scene of a prior emergency. On three occasions we were dispatched to three simultaneous calls during the same period, and in one instance four separate emergency calls were occurring within our jurisdiction at one time. Five of these concurrent calls occurred in conjunction with mutual aid provided to another jurisdiction. On one occasion a subsequent call was handled by a mutual aid agency providing temporary standby coverage to our district. On 28 occasions Engine 23 was required to respond to a medical emergency in place of Rescue 23, which was managing a previous call. On five occasions, Engine 23 responded to a fire-related call without the crew of Rescue 23. In two cases, Rescue 23 initially responded with a crew of two personnel to a fire related call while Engine 23 was already committed to a call. In every case, a response was made without undue delay, and no calls have gone unanswered. Each of these incidents commits our on-duty response capability, leaving no department units available to respond to a call until one unit completes its current assignment and becomes available to respond to a subsequent call.

With the increasing number of concurrent calls, there remain a number of occasions in which our department is not available to adequately respond to a fire call or other emergency. On at least eight occasions last year, our department was forced to respond to a fire incident with less than the designated 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 with less than 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 2022 several significant incidents occurred that presented unique challenges to the members of our department. These included multiple working structure fires and serious vehicle accidents. On the evening of January 3, we were dispatched to a commercial structure fire at one of the nursing homes in Milton. A full commercial fire alarm responded to this potential high life hazard call. Engine 23 arrived to find a working fire in a shed adjoining the kitchen area of the building. Engine 23's crew initiated direct fire attack as mutual aid units, along with members of the Milton Police Department, initiated an evacuation of the effected area of the building. This fire was quickly brought under control and did not impact the residents of this facility.

On the evening of February 16, our department was dispatched to residential structure fire on Berryhill Road. On arrival, heavy fire was showing from the garage, with possible extension to the rest of the two-story home. The residents were in the process of evacuation. The crew from Engine 23 initiated a direct attack as mutual aid resources from Skyline and Pace Fire Departments conducted primary search and supported fire attack operations. The fire was brought under control roughly 20 minutes after arrival. Unfortunately, we were called back to the scene a couple hours later, as the fire had rekindled in the roof of the garage. This fire was again quickly brought under control.

On the afternoon of July 19, we were dispatched to a residential structure fire on Alabama Street. Reports were being received of subjects refusing to leave the structure, and of a subject on the roof. Engine 23 arrived to find that all occupants had exited the structure, but flames had vented through the roof of the older wood-frame house. A fast interior attack quickly brought this fire under control.

Around 11:00 pm the evening of August 14, we were dispatched to a commercial structure fire at the old Berryhill School Building on Berryhill Street. Engine 23 arrived to find heavy fire showing through the roof and initiated a defensive attack. Chief 23 quickly arrived to assume command while mutual aid companies were deployed to support a defensive operation. Due to the extent of fire and size of the building, a second alarm was called, ultimately bringing six engines, two ladders, one tanker, four chief officers, an air and a rehab unit. As the fire advanced throughout the roughly 30,000 square foot building, sections of the roof began to collapse. After nearly three hours of combined exterior attacks, the fire was deemed under control, and operations shifted to overhaul, with crews entering with hand lines to extinguish remaining burning debris. All mutual aid resources were released by 11:00 am the following morning, but our department continued to extinguish hot spots for several days. The building was a total loss, and the remaining brick structure was demolished over the next few months.

Around 2:00 on the morning of October 18, we were dispatched to a residential structure fire on Lakeshore Drive, with possible entrapment. Fortunately, both occupants made their escape, but were quickly transported to the hospital by ambulance due to smoke inhalation. Engine 23 arrived to find heavy fire coming from a formally enclosed carport and the front of the house, along with a car in the driveway. The electrical service drop had burned through and fallen in the yard, presenting a serious electrocution threat in that area of the scene. Engine 23 crew quickly knocked down the main body of fire from the exterior and then initiated a fast interior attack through the front door, while mutual aid resources established a water supply and supported interior operations. The two occupants were fine, and this fire was quickly brought under control, although the house was heavily damaged.

Late on the night of December 4, we were dispatched to a residential structure fire on Harvell Street. Engine 23 arrived to find heavy fire coming from the side and rear of the structure. Engine 23 initiated a fast interior attack while mutual aid resources established water supply and supported interior operations, including conducting primary search. It was discovered that a heat lamp had been left on for dogs in the backyard. The occupants had moved out the day before but left the dogs in the yard. The heat lamp had ignited the awning which extended the flames into the soffit and eventually the kitchen window. Although the fire was quickly brought under control, due to the extent of damage, the home was likely a total loss.

In the space of a week in July we responded to three serious vehicle accidents. The first, on Dogwood Drive, just north of the city limits, involved a vehicle fleeing from law enforcement. The vehicle struck the vehicle of a woman turning into church, killing her, flipping their own vehicle and injuring occupants of the fleeing vehicle. The following morning, a motorcyclist was struck and killed at the intersection of Stewart and Magnolia Streets. Six days later, a driver experienced a medical emergency while travelling north on Dogwood Drive. His car left the road, taking out several feet of guard rail before striking a power pole, breaking it in two and dropping live wires onto the traffic lanes of Dogwood Drive. The patient was found without a pulse and was quickly extricated from the vehicle. CPR was initiated and he was transported to the hospital. The vehicle later caught fire while being pulled up the slope by the tow truck.

In November, an accident occurred at the entrance to the Emergency Room of Santa Rosa Medical Center. The driver was apparently hurrying to the ER and suffered a medical emergency that caused him to lose control of the vehicle and crash into a tree, which stopped the vehicle from crashing into the waiting room. Hospital staff hurried outside to assist the patient, who was removed from the vehicle and CPR was administered. While our crews were on the scene of this incident, another vehicle accident occurred on Dogwood Drive involving a vehicle roll-over. Engine and Rescue 23 arrived to find an occupant entrapped in the overturned vehicle and forcibly extricated the patient.

MUTUAL AID

Maintenance of effective mutual aid agreements remains a critical element in our overall ability to effectively protect our community. While we are able to manage the majority of emergency calls with on-duty personnel, certain types of incidents, such as working structure fires, require additional resources to adequately manage the situation. In these circumstances, we rely on the support of surrounding fire departments to assemble a coordinated response structure. Under pre-designated "Box Alarms," mutual aid resources are automatically dispatched to certain types of calls based on the nature and location of the incident. Working with our surrounding mutual aid partner departments, this year we have adjusted many of these box alarms to provide greater consistency on initial fire responses, both inside and outside the city, to improve overall fire response capability throughout the area.

During calendar year 2022 our department provided mutual aid to surrounding departments on 85 occasions, and received mutual aid on 41 occasions, amounting to 6.62% and 3.19% of total activity, respectively. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was provided by our department increased, from 55 in 2021. At least 13 of these calls involved working structure fires where personnel and resources from our department were involved in active firefighting operations. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was received from other departments increased dramatically from 17 the prior year.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

In conjunction with the Florida State Fire Marshal's Safety Program, this year we conducted a thorough review and update of all of the department's operational Standard Operating Procedures. These changes reflect improved techniques, equipment and capabilities of the past few years, and allow the department to employ recognized best practices to the best advantage at all emergency incidents. At the direction of the county's medical director, Dr. Kim Landry, changes have been made to certain medical response recommendations, providing for a cold response (no lights or sirens) to several non-life-threatening call types. It is hoped that by reducing the number of times fire apparatus and ambulances respond through traffic with lights and sirens activated, safety will be improved without adverse patient outcomes.

VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

Our fleet of emergency apparatus remains in generally good condition to meet the needs of our community. Our first-due engine spent six weeks out of service for routine maintenance and repairs early in the year. Our second-due spent over seven weeks out of service for general maintenance issues over the course of the year. As a consequence, we spent many weeks relying on our thirty-five-year-old reserve engine to sustain our operations. Our rescue was out of service for eleven days over the course of the year. Despite these equipment lapses, we were able to maintain our normal level of service in the city at all times. Early in the year a contract was executed for a new front-line fire engine, with delivery expected in early 2023. This new apparatus will be a Pierce Sabre triple-combination pumper from Ten-8 Fire Apparatus of Defuniak Springs. When this new engine arrives, our current first-due engine, a 2012 E-One, will be moved to second-due status, and our second-due, a 1998, E-One, will be moved to reserve status. Our reserve engine will then be retired but retained exclusively as a parade truck.

Our existing fleet of MSA FireHawk Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) range in age from 9 to 16 years old. Compatible units are no longer available for purchase and existing units will soon not be supported for repair. Six new SCBA will be purchased with the new fire engine. These will be the new MSA G1 model, which will not be compatible with our existing individually issued facepieces. This will necessitate replacement of facepieces for each member with new facepieces that are compatible with the new units, and replacement of obsolete SCBA on our rescue and second-due engine to remain operational with a compatible fleet of SCBA. Replacement of the remaining SCBA was approved in the 2023 budget and approved for purchase by City Council in December. The new SCBA will be placed in service in conjunction with the new fire engine.

In April, we were awarded a Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant of \$19,725.00 for the purchase of new battery-operated hydraulic extrication equipment. This new equipment, which consists of a TNT 28-volt battery powered 1¾" Brute Force C-Cutter and TNT 28-volt battery powered 24" spreader, will be placed in service on the new fire engine when it arrives.

After waiting more than a year and a half for delivery, in November the department took delivery of a new Yamaha 9.9 horsepower four-stroke outboard motor for Boat 23, our 14-foot jon boat used for flood rescues. This motor replaces our 25-year-old Gamefisher outboard which has been out of service for the past year and restores this vessel to service.

In conjunction with our review of Standard Operating Procedures, several pieces of equipment were added or replaced. Reflecting the recently constructed multi-story buildings within our response area, we have modified our hi-rise packs carried on the fire engines to allow rapid deployment of hose from a multi-story building's standpipe system. A new chlorine gas meter was purchased to provide monitoring capabilities for potential chlorine gas leaks. Two new portable radiation detectors were purchased to replace obsolete older devices. A set of chemical test cards was purchased to provide chemical detection at potential terrorist incidents.

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 company training, many members have participated in additional specialized training. Having been offered the opportunity to utilize a house that was to be demolished, on November 10 the department conducted multi-agency, multi-company training with Pace and Avalon Fire Departments. This unique training opportunity allowed members of our department to work together with our mutual aid partners in a series of evolutions simulating challenging situations that require coordinated response in accordance with established procedures. This training greatly helped all participants to improve inter-agency coordination and refine seldom-used skills.

On April 4, four members of the department participated in the Pensacola Beach Firefighters Challenge. After weeks of grueling training and practice, Lieutenant Ricky Beech, Lieutenant Steve Maddox, Firefighter/EMT Jason Plank and Firefighter Kody Grimes ably represented the City of Milton Fire Department in this annual competition. On May 4, Captain Jim Custred and Lieutenant Daryl Auerbach participated in Santa Rosa County Emergency Management's annual hurricane exercise. In December, Firefighter Kody Grimes participated in the Pensacola Beach High Rise Operations Conference.

All of the department's EMTs renewed their bi-annual licenses this year. Lieutenant Daryl Auerbach renewed his Instructor III certification and Chief Reble renewed his Instructor I. Chief Reble completed a Firefighting Tactics and Strategies course. Firefighter/EMT Jesse Floyd completed courses in Domestic & International Terrorism, Introduction to Hazardous Materials, Public Speaking, and Florida Incident Safety Officer, completing the coursework necessary for his Associates Degree in Fire Science from Saint Petersburg State College.

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 attempts to offer a diversified public education program in an effort to reach all age groups throughout the community. The COVID-19 pandemic had forced us to curtail nearly all of our public education activities in 2021, but this year we were able to resume our outreach activities. During 2022 the fire department conducted three school programs, reaching 370 students, three fire extinguisher classes, reaching 77 persons, one fire drill reaching 120 persons and nine other programs, reaching 1210 people, for a total of 16 programs reaching 1777 people.

FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY

The City of Milton Fire Department is also responsible for enforcing the Florida Fire Prevention Code and Life Safety Code. Chief Reble serves as Life Safety Officer and Fire Official for the City of Milton, inspecting new businesses and reviewing all new commercial developments for code compliance and permitting. Inspections and permitting continued at a steady pace. This year Chief Reble conducted 27 Life Safety inspections, 10 Follow-up inspections, 41 Construction related inspections, and 62 plan reviews, totaling 141 inspections and reviews.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Milton Fire Department has maintained a long tradition of active community involvement. In May of this year, the department hosted a neighborhood block party to maintain the strong relationship we enjoy with the residents in the neighborhood of our fire station. This activity was well-attended and enjoyed by all in attendance.

Engine 23 and Rescue 23 participated in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade in January, carried the Milton High Panther in the Homecoming Parade in November, led the start of Big Brothers/Big Sisters' Fenner Memorial Bike Ride, participated in the Santa Rosa County Veteran's Day Parade and participated in the annual Milton Christmas Parade in December, winning a First-Place award for a community entry. Marine 23 again led the Blackwater Pyrates' Lighted Christmas Boat Parade.

INTO THE FUTURE

2022, while presenting a dramatic increase in emergency activity, also afforded the department many opportunities to make progress toward improved response capability. We remain confident of our ability to meet the demands of serving and protecting the residents of Milton. We are very well positioned to meet the challenges of the future. We must continue to closely monitor department staffing needs in order to ensure that we will remain always ready to provide the high level of service that our citizens have come to consistently expect from our department. We will also continue to monitor and prepare for the effects of future growth, including the development of multi-story properties driving the need for additional equipment and personnel.

Our fleet of equipment is in good shape 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 ensure 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

ACTIVITY REPORT CALENDAR YEAR 2022

ACTIVITY REPORT

ALARM RESPONSES

FIRE CALLS

TYPE:	Vehicle Fires	Structure Fires	Brush Fires	Alarms*	Other**	Total
TOTAL:	10	73	7	167	48	305
MONTHLY AVG:	0.83	6.08	0.58	13.92	4.00	25.42

RESCUE CALLS

TYPE:	Medical Responses	Vehicle Accidents / Extrication	Other	Total
TOTAL:	565	183	139	887
MONTHLY AVG:	47.08	15.25	11.58	73.92

HAZARDOUS CONDITION CALLS

TYPE:	Natural Gas*	Electrical Problems**	Fuel Leak/Spill	Other	Total
TOTAL:	16	29	1	46	92
MONTHLY AVG:	1.33	2.42	0.08	3.83	7.67

MUTUAL AID TOTAL: GIVEN:	85	6.62%	RECEIVED:	41	3.19%
MONTHLY AVERAGE: GIVEN:	7.08	6.62%	RECEIVED:	3.42	3.19%

TOTAL CALLS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022

1284

AVERAGE CALLS PER MONTH FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022

107.0

PUBLIC EDUCATION

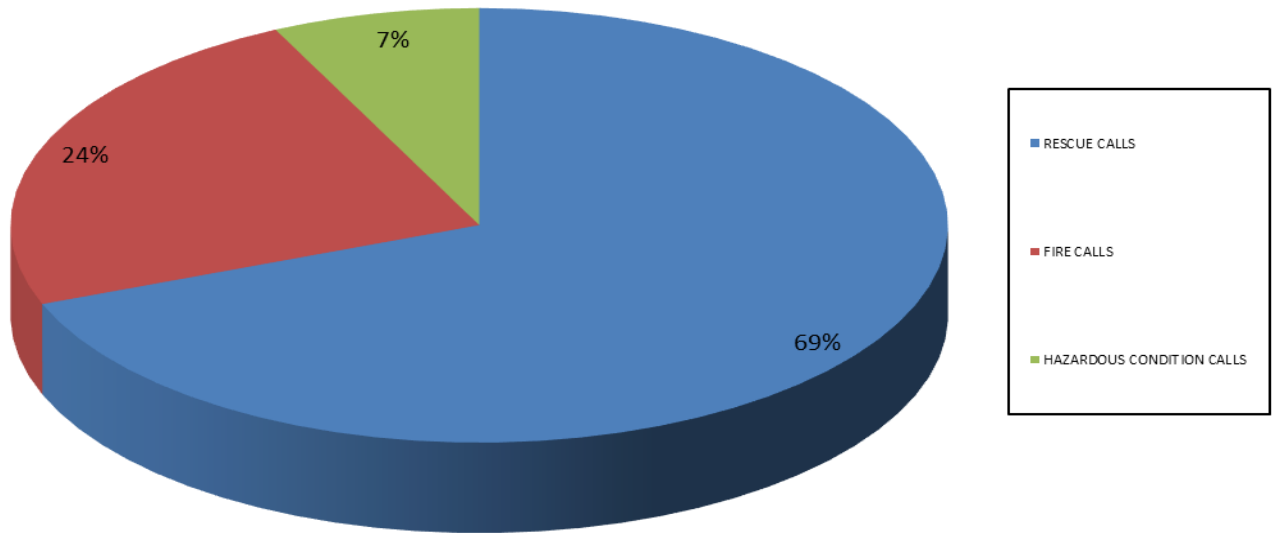
TYPE OF PROGRAM:	School Class	Extinguisher Demo	Fire Drill	Other	Total
Number Conducted:	3	3	1	9	16
Number Attending:	370	77	120	1210	1777

LIFE SAFETY

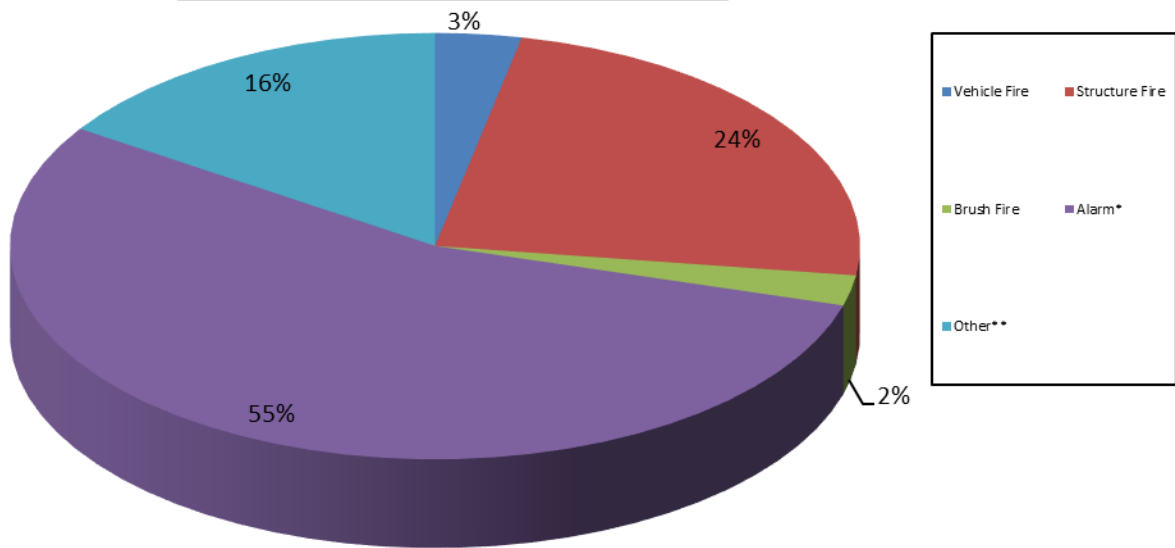
TYPE:	Life Safety Insp	Follow-up	Construction	Pre-plan	Plan Review	Total
Number:	27	10	41	1	62	141

EMERGENCY RESPONSES

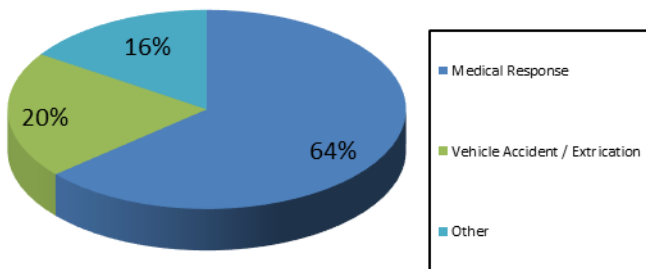
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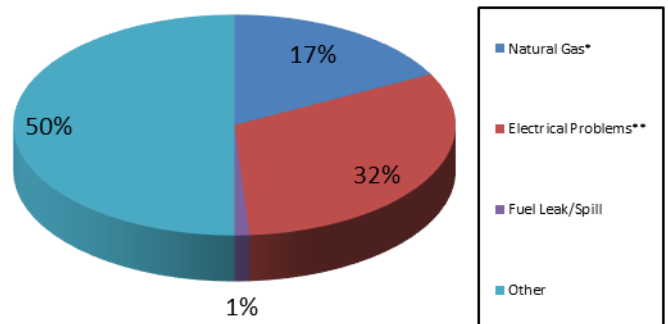
FIRE CALLS



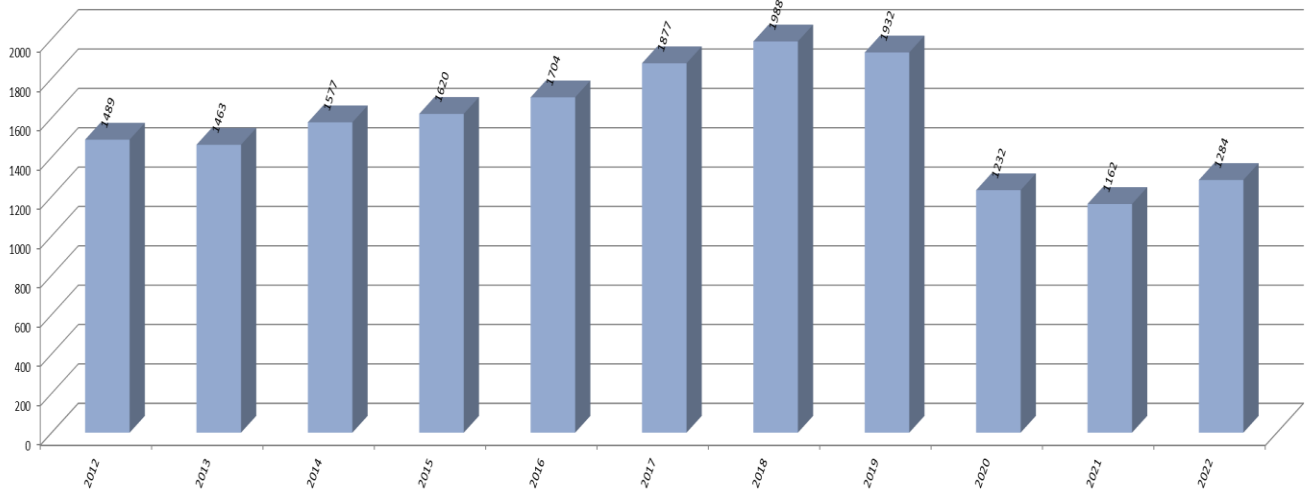
RESCUE CALLS



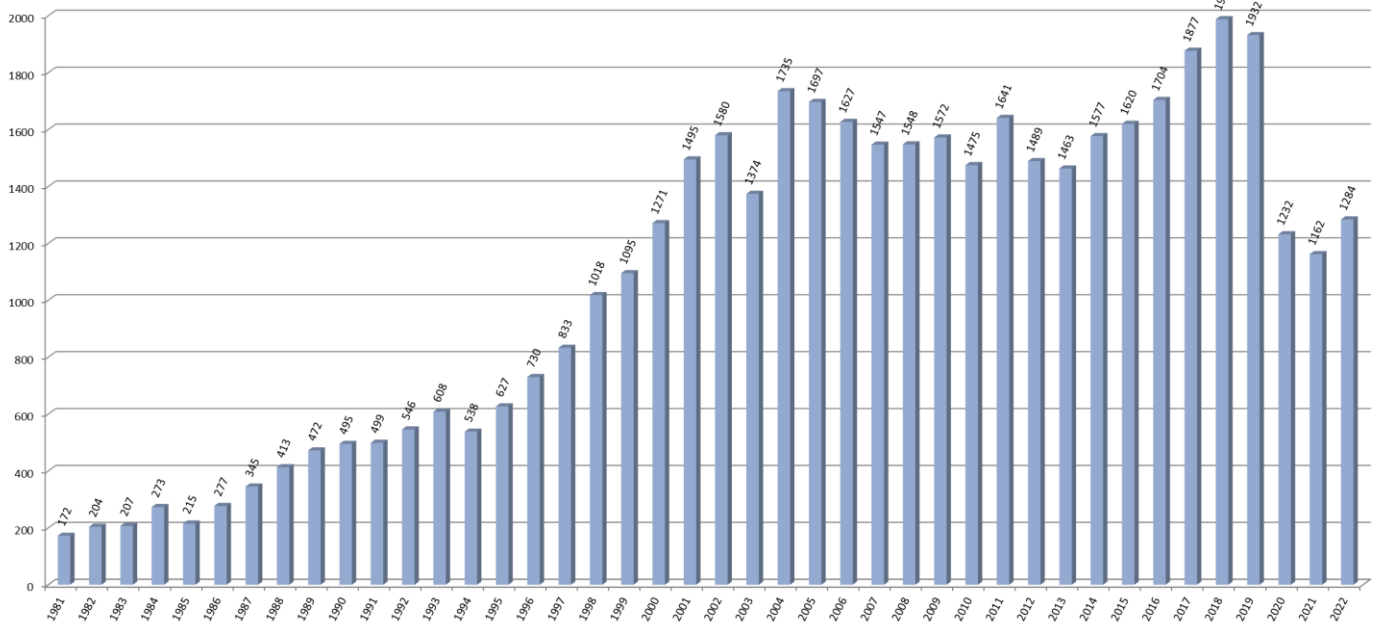
HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS



Emergency Calls 2012 - 2022



Emergency Calls 1980 - 2021



Annual Cost Comparison

