

# **City of Sycamore Fire Department**



## **FY 2022 Annual Report**

### **The Sycamore Fire Department Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Sycamore Fire Department is to selflessly serve our community with the highest quality professional fire and emergency medical services.

#### **Our value statements:**

##### ***Preparedness***

*Our members strive to be best prepared through physical fitness, continued training, and equipment readiness in order to operate in the safest way possible*

##### ***Dedication***

*Our members take great pride and honor providing a loyal service to the community, while respecting the traditions of our profession*

##### ***Honesty/Integrity***

*Our members perform their duties honestly and ethically striving to maintain the trust given to us by the community*

##### ***Teamwork***

*Our members work together to achieve a common goal through mutual trust, respect, and loyalty*

##### ***Selflessness***

*Our members are bravely willing to sacrifice our needs to serve the needs of the community in the course of performing our duties*

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## Executive Summary

The Fire Department budget for FY 22 was \$4,462,581. Personnel accounted for 96.4% of the budget (\$4,301,751), while commodities, contractual services, other services, and equipment accounted for \$160,830 or 3.6% of the budget. The Fire Department continued to look for grant opportunities to supplement the operating budget. In FY 22, the Fire Department applied for three grants (\$276,744.80): received two awards totaling \$18,284.98; one grant application decision is still pending, and one grant application was denied.

In order to provide a clear perspective on the changing emergency response activity levels as related to the COVID-19 pandemic,

- we consider this fiscal year, FY22, the “post covid year” or the “return to normal year”, and
- we consider, FY21, the “covid year”, predicated on the fact that the COVID – 19 Pandemic affected the organization for a full year, and
- we consider, FY20 (11 of 12 months) a non-covid year or “normal year”. The COVID – 19 Pandemic affected only the last month or so of FY20.

Requests for emergency services were up significantly by almost 23% (+544) from FY 21. However, since FY21 is considered the “covid year”, which was considered a down year for emergency activity, you could compare the FY22 responses to FY20, the last normal, non-covid affected year, and you would find that the responses were up by just over 18% (+450). In FY 22, emergency medical responses jumped by 27.9% (+548), while non-fire responses increased slightly (+14) and fire responses decreased (-18). Overall, emergency medical requests for service continue to dominate much of the Fire Department activity with emergency medical responses accounting for over 86% and fire/non-fire responses accounting for 14% of emergency activity. As a growing part of the emergency medical services activity, we continue to see a steady growth in citizen assist requests for service (patient lift assist, medical alarm activations, and citizen medical assist requests) over the past six fiscal years. In FY 22, we had 436 responses for patient assist, patient lift assist, or medical alarms. This is an increase of 44.35% (+134 responses) from the previous fiscal year. In 7 short years, patient assist requests have tripled. We average just over 1 patient assist per day.

To understand how requests for emergency medical services impact our normal daily staffing, consider the following: we are averaging just over 8 emergency requests per day. With the average emergency response taking about an hour, we are experiencing that for one third of every day, the EMS/fire/non-fire response capability is down to one crew of three personnel, and at the same time we are averaging over 1 multiple call incidents per day (408), which means about once a day, both on duty crews are committed to calls (both fire stations are empty at the same time) and we are reliant on off duty personnel recalled to duty or we must request aid from a neighboring jurisdiction to respond to a subsequent emergency.

Some of the most noteworthy emergency responses in FY 22 were: a structure fire at a large, 2 story, single family home at 5982 Clare Road, and a structure fire at a large, 2 ½ story, single family home at 10861 Old State Road.

On the personnel side, Deputy Chief Todd Turner retired after 41 years of service and Michael Mathey was appointed as a career Firefighter/Paramedic.

## Year in review - emergency response activity FY 22

|  |       |              |     |
|--|-------|--------------|-----|
| Requests for Emergency Services  |       | 2,924        |     |
| Total Emergency Medical Service Responses  |       | 2,515        | 86% |
| Total Fire and Non-fire Responses  |       | 409          | 14% |
| <b>EMS Responses</b>   |       | <b>2,515</b> |     |
| Patients seen  | 2,696 |              |     |
| Patients Transported   | 1,510 |              |     |
| BLS Transports   | 649   | 43%          |     |
| ALS Transports   | 862   | 57%          |     |
| <u>Patients not transported</u>  | 1185  |              |     |
| Care given   | 68    |              |     |
| Refused care   | 1117  |              |     |
| Advanced life support service upgrade (intercept) provided to neighboring jurisdiction |       |              | 1   |
| <b>Fire Suppression Responses</b>  |       | <b>59</b>    |     |
| Structure Fire   | 35    |              |     |
| Vehicle / Motor home   | 0     |              |     |
| Cooking (confined to container)  | 6     |              |     |
| Outside (rubbish & equipment)  | 2     |              |     |
| Refuse (dumpster, trash contained)   | 7     |              |     |
| Brush Fire   | 9     |              |     |
| Chimney  | 0     |              |     |
| <b>Non-fire Responses</b>  |       | <b>350</b>   |     |
| False / Malicious Alarms   | 149   |              |     |
| Good Intent  | 89    |              |     |
| Burning Complaints   | 1     |              |     |
| Hazardous Conditions   | 90    |              |     |
| Service Calls  | 21    |              |     |
| <b>Additional response information</b>   |       |              |     |
| Motor Vehicle Accidents  | 160   |              |     |
| Extrications   | 4     |              |     |
| Mutual Aid & Automatic Aid Given   | 156   |              |     |
| Mutual Aid & Automatic Aid Received  | 77    |              |     |

Total Fire Dollar Loss = \$777,070

## Department Overview

The first fire company of the Sycamore Fire Department was officially organized in 1860, just a year after the Town of Sycamore was incorporated in 1859. The Sycamore Town Board approved a \$250 expenditure in May 1860, to buy ladders, hooks, chains, axes, ropes, and buckets necessary to complete the organization of a Hook and Ladder Company. In March 1871, a Special Council Meeting was held to buy land (16' x 62') for \$200 to build a brick firehouse with a \$200 bond sold to fund the building. Later, an appropriation was approved for \$1,500 to fund the firehouse, carriage, ladders, hoses, and rubber buckets for the Hook and Ladder Company.

The Sycamore Fire Department provides Fire Suppression, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, Hazardous Materials First Responder, Fire Prevention, and Public Education services to approximately 20,000 citizens. This service area includes the City of Sycamore (18,519) and the Sycamore Fire Protection District (approximately 2,500). Overall, we service an area of approximately 62 ½ square miles (City of Sycamore - 9.74 square miles).

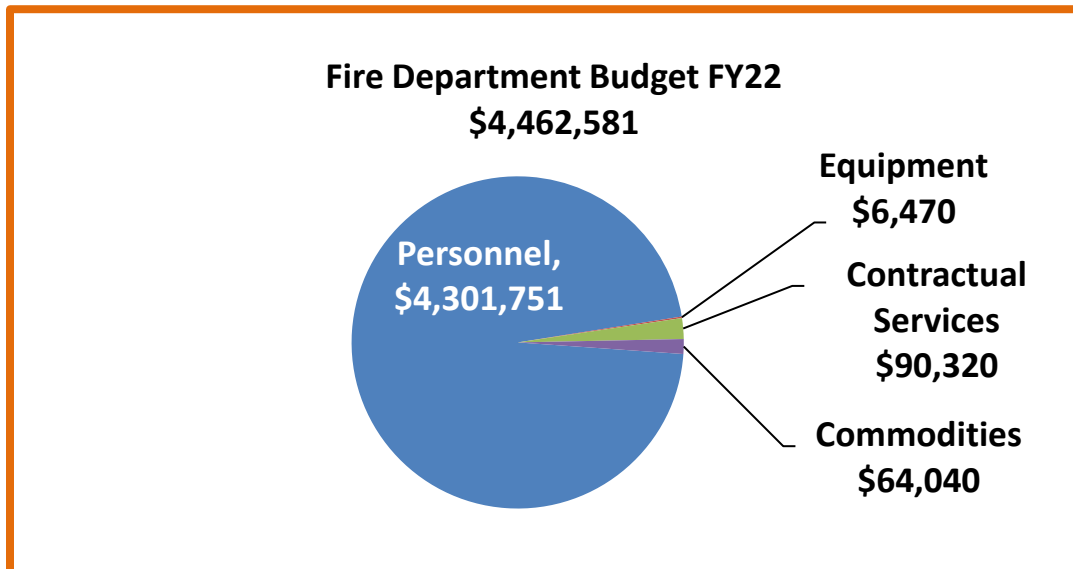
Today, the Sycamore Fire Department is a combination fire department providing 24-hour emergency response, operating out of two fire stations with 30 sworn and 1 civilian employee. The Department is divided into two divisions; an administrative division and an operations division. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) 2016 rating for the City of Sycamore is a Class 4 and the ISO rating for the Sycamore Fire Protection District (unincorporated area outside the city) is a Class 8B.

### Fire Department authorized personnel strength and equipment

The Department's authorized personnel strength is as follows: Fire Chief - 1, Deputy Fire Chief - 2, Fire Lieutenant - 7, Firefighter/Paramedic - 20, and Fire Secretary - 1. The Fire Department maintains four fire engines (two Advance Life Support (ALS), four ALS Ambulances, a heavy rescue squad, two brush/grass units, three Command vehicles, a utility vehicle, a reserve Command vehicle, and a water rescue boat and trailer.

### Fire Department budget

The Fire Department budget for FY 22 was \$4,462,581. Personnel accounted for 96.4% of the budget (\$4,301,751), while commodities, contractual services, other services, and equipment accounted for \$160,830 or 3.6% of the budget.





# Administrative Division activities



**Fire Station #1 - 535 DeKalb Avenue**



**Fire Station #2 - 2100 Frantum Road**

# **Administrative Division activities**

## **Administrative Division - overview**

The Administration Division consists of the Fire Chief, two Deputy Fire Chiefs, and one Administrative Secretary. The Administration Division provides the support for the Operations Division activities which includes: operation budget preparation and administration, grant application and administration, emergency vehicle and equipment repair and maintenance, fire station facility repairs and maintenance, fire and emergency medical service continuing education training, computer system and related software support, fire prevention program including public fire education, and special event planning.

## **A perspective on the statistical impact as related to the COVID – 19 Pandemic**

In order to provide a clear perspective on the changing activity levels as related to the COVID-19 pandemic,

- we consider this fiscal year, FY22, the “post covid year” or the “return to normal year”, and
- we consider, FY21, the “covid year”, predicated on the fact that the COVID – 19 Pandemic affected the organization for a full year, and
- we consider, FY20 (11 of 12 months) a non-covid year or “normal year”. The COVID – 19 Pandemic affected only the last month or so of FY20.

A review of our response data shows that FY 22 (post covid year) outpaced both FY21 (covid year) and FY20 (non-covid year) in 10 of the last 12 months FY 22). In FY 21, the COVID – 19 Pandemic had a significant impact upon our emergency operations as well as our emergency and non-emergency activities.

FY 22 saw a significant improvement in relief from the pandemic which resulted in a return to normal in many aspects of society. As a result, we saw a return and resurgence in emergency activity. While the pandemic is not over in many respects, it is clear that the public’s reluctance regarding calling for assistance has been alleviated. However, we continue to maintain a higher level of personal protective equipment (PPE) on most emergency responses (fire, non-fire, and EMS) to continue to lower the COVID-19 transmission risk to our personnel.

In FY22, we experienced a sharp increase at just under 23% (+544), in requests for emergency services. The bulk of the increase in emergency requests were EMS related, thus the increase in the total number of patients seen and ultimately the number of patients transported to the hospital.

As the pandemic continued through FY22, many of our response personnel were tested for the COVID-19 infection as a result of exposure to suspected COVID infected patients or transported patients that were tested and confirmed positive. In some cases, those exposures resulted in an initial 14-day quarantine and later a five- or ten-day quarantine based on responder vaccine status. To help deal with the evolving medical response to the pandemic, a memorandum of understanding was developed between the labor group and city management. This document helped to provide a frame work to effectively manage a variety of first responder concerns from response to COVID exposures to required quarantines. Throughout the year, we continued to support and periodically change the memorandum of understanding based upon the changes brought forward by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).



Late in FY 21, we began to slowly reengage some of our non-emergency activities (such as training, preplanning, and public education) during the fiscal year, as the threat of exposure lessened.

### **Personnel – retirement**

Deputy Chief Todd Turner retired on July 30, 2021 after 41 years of service to the City of Sycamore.

### **Personnel – appointment/resignation**

On October 4, 2021, former Elgin firefighter Dan Rink was appointed to the Deputy Chief position. He resigned from the position on March 28, 2022.

### **Personnel - new hires**

On November 22, 2021, the Fire Department welcomed career Firefighter/Paramedic Michael Mathey.

### **Personnel - resignation**

- Career Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Perez resigned on March 11, 2022 to take full time employment with the Orland Park Fire Protection District (IL).
- POC Firefighter Intern Drew Diehl resigned on May 5, 2021 to pursue other career opportunities.
- POC Firefighter/Paramedic Carolyn Thompson resigned on May 18, 2021 to take full time employment with another agency.
- Fire Department Chaplain Drew Whitfield retired after 10 years of service on December 31, 2021.
- POC Firefighter/Paramedic Paul Meyer resigned on January 7, 2022 to take full time employment with the DeKalb Fire Department (IL).

### **Service awards**

Annual service awards were presented to City employees at the December 20, 2021 City Council Meeting. The following Fire Department personnel were recognized:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| • Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Perez        | 5 years  |
| • Fire Department Chaplain Drew Whitfield | 10 years |
| • Lieutenant Erik Carlson                 | 15 years |
| • Firefighter/Paramedic Mike Hardesty     | 15 years |
| • Lieutenant Adam Honiotes                | 15 years |
| • Firefighter/Paramedic Ian Wheeler       | 15 years |
| • Lieutenant Shaun Penn                   | 25 years |
| • Fire Department Secretary Becky Hepker  | 25 years |

### **Grant applications and awards**

The Fire Department continues to look for grant opportunities to supplement our operating budget. In FY 22, the Fire Department applied for three grants (\$276,774.80); received two awards (one from an FY21 application) totaling \$18,284.98; one application decision is still pending; and one grant application was denied.

The following is a brief description of the grant application and the disposition of the current or pending grant applications:

- A grant request (\$247,378.08) was submitted (January 2022) through the Assistance to Fire Fighter Grant (AFG) program for power stretcher and power load for the four ambulances. The award decision is pending.

- A grant request (\$24,396) for an electrostatic sprayer and fogger was submitted (October 2021) through the Office of the State Fire Marshal Small Tool and Equipment grant program. We were denied a grant award.
- A grant request (\$5,000) was submitted (November 2021) to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to purchase two tablets for the two Advanced Life Support Engines. We were awarded a grant of \$4,921 on March 2022.

### **New pumper-tender in emergency service**

On May 18, 2020, the Sycamore City Council approved a contract with Rosenbauer for the purchase of a replacement 3,000-gallon pumper-tender for \$586,000.00. This pumper-tender vehicle was set to replace a 1989, 2,000-gallon pumper – tender. The majority of the funding came from a grant (\$365,000) from the Sycamore Fire Protection District. The vehicle was delivered to Sycamore from the manufacturer on November 19, 2021. After the outfitting of loose equipment, response personnel orientation and familiarization training, the vehicle was placed into emergency service on February 25, 2022.

### **Quartermaster program**

Lieutenant Darrin Hepker continues to serve as the Department's Quartermaster. He facilitates the procurement and replacement of Department issued uniforms and firefighting structural fire gear for new and existing employees. In FY 22, we replaced four turnout coats and 3 turnout pants that were past their service life or damaged, from the Fire Department's capital budget.

### **Vehicle maintenance program**

The Fire Department currently has a fleet of four fire engines (2 ALS), four ALS ambulances, two brush fire vehicles, one heavy rescue squad, three Chief (Command) vehicles, one semi-rigid inflatable boat, one reserve Command vehicle, and one utility vehicle. Deputy Fire Chief Art Zern oversees the Department's vehicle maintenance program. Lieutenant Dan Marcinkowski serves as the Department's Mechanic Coordinator and Lieutenant Adam Honiotes, Firefighter/Paramedics Brad Belanger and Eric Walker serve as the Mechanic Assistants. In FY 22, we performed periodic preventive maintenance in-house on Fire Department vehicles and performed or facilitated repairs as needed to various vehicles in the fleet. The most noteworthy activities were:

- Completed required annual fire pump testing of all fire engines (4)
- Completed required annual NFPA vehicle inspection on all fire engines (4) and Squad #2

### **Tools and equipment maintenance program**

Deputy Fire Chief Art Zern oversees the Department's tool and equipment maintenance program. In FY 22, we performed periodic preventive maintenance and repair on most Fire Department tools and equipment. The most noteworthy activities were:

- Completed required annual testing of all ground ladders
- Completed required quarterly air quality tests on breathing air compressor
- Completed required annual service on breathing air compressor
- Completed required annual service on the hydraulic rescue tools
- Completed annual service on the cardiac monitors and automated external defibrillators
- Completed required scheduled high-pressure air bag testing
- Completed annual ambulance patient stretcher maintenance

- Completed required scheduled self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) cylinder hydro testing and recertification
- Completed annual flow test on all SCBA regulators
- Completed required annual portable fire extinguisher maintenance
- Completed required annual electrical glove testing

### **Fire Station - facility maintenance**

Deputy Fire Chief Art Zern oversees the Department's facility maintenance and repair program. Maintenance and repair of the fire station buildings are performed by the Mechanic Coordinator, the Mechanic Assistant, Public Works personnel, and outside contractors. The most noteworthy activities during FY 22 were:

- Facilitated required annual Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) boiler inspection at Fire Station #1
- Completed required annual service on emergency generator at Fire Station #2
- Completed required annual testing of sprinkler system at Fire Station #1 and #2
- Completed required annual testing of fire alarm system at Fire Station #1 and #2
- Completed Station #1 and #2 spring HVAC system maintenance and fall heating system maintenance

### **Fire Station - facility improvements**

- New roof installation – In early FY21, Fire Station #2's roof was damaged from a severe thunder storm. We contacted our insurance provider and received a settlement. The new roof was installed in May 2021.
- Wheel chair lift replacement – In order to maintain handicapped accessibility at Fire Station #1, we were required to address operational issues with the current 30+ years old wheel chair lift. We opted for the partial replacement option which essentially replaces the platform, call stations, and electronic controller. We are waiting on a requested variance from the State Fire Marshals Office to authorize the install. The installation is anticipated for June 2022.

### **Computer system improvement**

Fire Chief Peter Polarek oversees the Department's computer system including software and hardware. In FY 22, we continued to maintain the Fire Department computer system working with our IT contractor KMB Computing.

### **Fire Prevention Program**

Deputy Fire Chief Art Zern oversees the Department's Fire Prevention program which includes public fire education. Throughout the year, various fire prevention needs are addressed which include: review of building plans for new construction for fire and life safety code compliance; the management of the Knox Box (secure key box) program, dealing with code enforcement/fire safety issues as they arise, monitoring third party fire alarm, sprinkler system, and hood/duct inspections for compliance and follow up, if needed. We continue to utilize the service of the Compliance Engine. The Compliance Engine collects (at no cost to the city) organizes and categorizes inspection reports from third party contractors who inspect, test, and maintain fire protections systems. This web based computer program allows us to be more efficient in the monitoring of required sprinkler, fire alarm, and hood/duct annual or semi-annual testing requirements. We are able to track and drive code compliance, reduce false alarm activity, and provide a much safer community through third party inspection reporting and maintenance.

### **Knox Box program - commercial**

A Knox Box is a small, wall-mounted safe that holds building keys for Fire Departments to retrieve in emergency situations. Since 1995, any building in Sycamore protected with an automatic fire alarm, automatic fire suppression system (sprinkler system) or is inaccessible as a result of security measures are required to have a Knox Box. In an emergency, Fire Department personnel using the Knox Box can quickly enter a building without having to force entry. With the maturity of the City of Sycamore Knox Box program, building keys potentially can be outdated with the change of owners/occupants or entry door lock changes. The Fire Department's continuing challenge is to keep those building keys current in each Knox Box.

### **Knox Box program - residential loan program**

The Fire Department partnered with the Family Service Agency and the Roberts Family Foundation to establish a residential Knox Box program. This program targets residents of the City of Sycamore and the Sycamore Fire Protection District with existing medical or physical conditions which could render them unable to open a locked door in an emergency. Like the commercial Knox boxes, a residential Knox Box is a 4" by 5" safe - like device that is designed as a rapid entry system allowing secure emergency access for the fire department. The residential Knox Boxes are designed to be installed over the top a resident's front entry door. When a fire breaks out or there is a medical emergency, a Knox Box device allows for immediate entry into buildings and properties without forced entry, damage, or delay. If an emergency arises, the first responders are able to access the Knox Box for the house keys to allow entry into the house without forcing entry or waiting for a key holder. In FY 22, we loaned out nine residential Knox Boxes and had two previously issued Knox Boxes returned to be reissued.

### **Fire Prevention - public education activities**

Firefighter/Paramedic Ian Wheeler serves as the Department's Fire Prevention Education Coordinator. He coordinates all public fire education activities and oversees the six members performing various presentations. Normally, the Public Education group provides presentations to various age groups at outside locations and at each of the fire stations, this activity was curtailed due to the continuing COVID pandemic.

Normally, a significant portion of the public fire education effort is during Fire Prevention Week, which is the first full week of October (October 3-9, 2021). This year's theme was "Learn the sounds of fire safety". We typically use the national Fire Prevention Week theme as the foundation for the various month-long presentations to the over 3,000 pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade school children. However, due to the lingering effects of the pandemic in the school system, our public fire educators were not able to spend time with individual classrooms, but instead, made presentations to much larger groups (school assemblies).

### **Fire Prevention - Fire Department Annual Open House cancelled**

Due to the lingering impact of the COVID pandemic, the October Fire Department Open House was cancelled due to large gatherings public health concerns.

### **Special event permit review**

In early FY 21, special events in the City of Sycamore were still under significant restrictions, but, as the year went on and the restrictions were loosened, many special events were held.

**Firefighter behavioral health presentations**

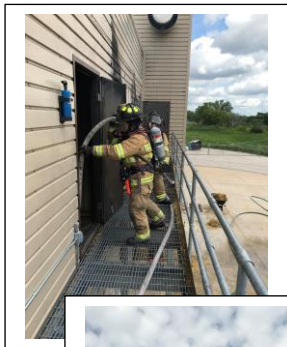
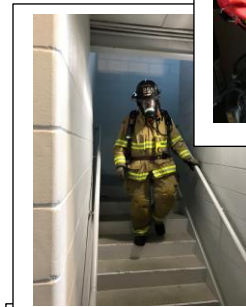
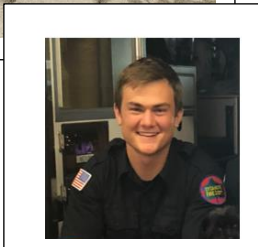
Deputy Fire Chief Art Zern continued to participate with the Illinois Firefighter Peer Support Team which is a group of Illinois firefighters and mental health professionals that serve in a peer driven support network for firefighters. This group's mission is to serve the fire service family by providing trained peer supporters who can give confidential, appropriate, and supportive assistance.

Deputy Chief Zern worked with the DeKalb County Mental Health Board to secure a \$10,000 grant which funds mental health and wellness services to Fire Department members and their families.

**Firefighter cancer prevention efforts continue**

We continue to support efforts to reduce the risk for cancer through the reduction of firefighter exposure to the byproducts of combustion. We continue to emphasize the reduction of personnel contamination through the implementation of post fire actions (fire wipes, gross decontamination) at the scene of the emergency and back at the fire station (personnel shower, structural fire gear washing).

# Operations Division activities





# **Operation Division activities**

## **Emergency operations overview**

Requests for emergency services were up significantly by almost 23% (+544) from FY 21. However, since FY21 is considered the “covid year”, which would be a down year for emergency activity, you could compare the FY22 responses to FY20, the last normal, non-covid affected year, and the reader would find that the responses were up by 18% (+450). In FY 22, Emergency medical responses jumped by 27.86% (+548), while non-fire responses increased slightly (+14) and fire responses decreased (-18).

We continue to see a steady increase in citizen assist requests for service (patient lift assist, medical alarm activations, and citizen medical assist requests) over the past six fiscal years. In FY 22, we had 436 responses for patient assist, patient lift assist, or medical alarms. This is an increase of 44.35% (+134 responses) from the previous fiscal year.

Overall, emergency medical responses continue to dominate much of the Fire Department activity with emergency medical responses accounting for over 86% and fire/non-fire responses accounting for 14% of emergency activity. The majority of the emergency responses (72%) originate in the Fire Station #1 response district (2,102 responses) while the remainder (28%) originate in the Fire Station #2 response district (822 responses).

## **Post COVID -19 Pandemic impact, return to “normal”?**

Starting at the very end of the fourth quarter of FY 20 and continuing throughout the entire FY21, the COVID-19 Pandemic continued to have a significant impact upon our emergency operations and the numbers of responses. However, in FY21, and as the pandemic and its impact has receded, our emergency activity has jumped significantly. We continue keeping our guard up as we continue to use a higher level of personal protective equipment (PPE) on most emergency responses (fire, non-fire, and EMS) and adjust operational procedures to minimize the COVID-19 transmission risk.

## **Significant emergency incidents**

The most noteworthy emergency responses in FY 22 were:

- Structure fire at 5982 Clare Road on June 12, 2021
- Structure fire at 10861 Old State Road on June 13, 2021
- Structure fire at 6175 Route 64 on February 21, 2022

## **Emergency medical services**

The Fire Department operates four Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances. The Sycamore Fire Department participates with the Kishwaukee Hospital Emergency Medical Services System and operates under the medical direction of the emergency room physicians at Kishwaukee Hospital. The Deputy Fire Chief – Training/EMS oversees the Emergency Medical Services program with the assistance of Firefighter/Paramedic Bill Reynolds who serves as the Department’s Paramedic Coordinator.

## **Emergency medical services – COVID 19 continues to affect EMS operations**

Starting in late FY20 and continuing through to FY22, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the provision of emergency services. Over the course of the fiscal year as the number of infections declined, we still had to maintain a minimum degree of

personal protection above and beyond what we typically would do. The procurement of personal protective equipment was extremely challenging due to supply chain issues and in many cases, we found marked increase in costs for medical supplies including personal protective equipment.

#### **New Lucas chest compression device**

We were the recipient of a \$13,364 grant from the Illinois State Fire Marshal's Small Tool Grant for one Lucas Chest Compression device. The Lucas chest compression device, when applied to a patient in a cardiac arrest, will deliver the manual chest compressions that would be normally provided for by one of the responding crew members. These devices are able to provide continuous, high quality chest compressions, thereby freeing up paramedics to perform other needed patient care tasks. The chest compression device helps to increase a patient's chance of survival from cardiac arrest. This device has been placed on a third ambulance.

#### **Replacement cardiac monitor/defibrillators**

In late 2020, the Fire Department was notified by the Kishwaukee Emergency Medical Services System that we must upgrade our cardiac monitoring capability on the two Advanced Life Support engines by October 2022. The first monitor/defibrillator was placed into service in early May.

#### **New replacement self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) in service**

In July 2020, we received an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) award of \$218,534.29 for the replacement of all of our SCBA's (31 self-contained breathing apparatus, air cylinders, and facepieces) and associated equipment (required modifications to the air system on Squad #2 and the breathing air compressor at Fire Station #1). The equipment was received in March 2021 and orientation training on the new equipment was conducted in April, May, and June of 2021. We placed the new equipment into emergency service in early July 2021.

#### **Emergency Medical services continuing training and education**

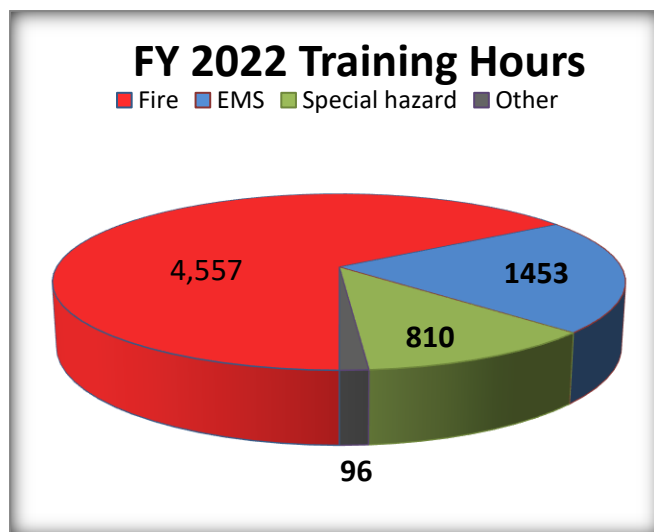
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) requires all certified paramedics to successfully complete 25 hours of continuing education each year and emergency medical technicians - basic to complete 15 continuing education hours per year. The required continuing medical education is provided to both Fire Department paramedics and emergency medical technician - basics by the Kishwaukee Hospital EMS System staff. In January 2022, all Fire Department certified paramedics successfully completed the Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) recertification course.

#### **Difficult airway manikin donation**

In October 2021, the Sycamore Lions Club approached the Fire Department about sponsoring a project in honor of Gene Listy. Gene served as a City of Sycamore firefighter for over 50 years and he was an active member of the Sycamore Lions Club for 20 years. On November 18, 2021, members of the Sycamore Lions Club presented a check to the Sycamore Fire Department for \$2,160 for the purchase of a difficult airway manikin. The difficult airway trainer is used to help firefighter/paramedics practice airway intubation techniques on patient's with challenging airway conditions. This device will help to keep our paramedic airway intubation skills sharp.

## Fire basic and continuing training

The Deputy Fire Chief – Training/EMS oversees the Department's fire training program which includes both in-house and outside training schools. However, with the pandemic, most outside school offerings were curtailed to the risk of infection. Thus, 6,916 training hours were performed by Fire Department personnel with all of the hours performed in-house. Much of this documented training provides reinforcement and refresher (continuing education) training of achieved fire service certifications. For in-house training, the Deputy Fire Chief – Training/EMS assigns various monthly continuing fire education training topics, provides supporting training information, and the required training is delivered through training committee instructors and company officers to shift personnel.



## Training hours FY 22

In FY22, 6,916 training hours were performed by Fire Department personnel. Training hours are divided into four categories:

- Fire training (4,557 hours) - includes fire equipment, fire apparatus, building construction, driver's training, fire operations review, fire investigation, and various fire drills.
- Emergency Medical Service (EMS) training (1,453 hours) - includes required continuing monthly medical training in various areas which enable the emergency medical technicians (basic and paramedic level) to meet the hourly requirements by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).
- Special hazards training (810 hours) - included hazardous materials and technical rescue response training.
- Other training (96 hours) – this category includes the review of SOG's, Policy, and Procedures, review of streets, required NIMS training, firefighter and officer orientation, and safety training.

## Training program - Fire Department Training Committee

In order to continue to improve our in-house training program, the Deputy Fire Chief – Training/EMS leads the Training Committee which is composed of six shift personnel who are charged with the development of the monthly training calendar as well as assisting with the delivery of monthly in-house training courses.

## **Training certifications**

The effects of the pandemic continued to affect outside training opportunities. Many classes that were offered were in high demand due to many classes cancelled during the height of the pandemic. A number of our members were able to attend some training certification classes which resulted in a handful of Fire Department personnel receiving state certifications:

- Firefighter/Paramedics Connor Hickey and Mike Mathey attended Advanced Firefighter Technician certification training.
- Lieutenant Jim Ward attended the Health and Safety Officer certification training.
- Firefighter/Paramedics Scott Flatter and Ian Wheeler attended Fire Investigator certification training.
- Firefighter/Paramedic Robert Maciejewski attended Water Operations certification training.
- Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Perez attended Hazardous Materials Technician certification training.
- Firefighter/Paramedic Christian Conlon attended Structural Collapse Operations certification training.
- Firefighter/Paramedic Mike Mathey attended Vehicle and Machinery Operations Technician certification training.

## **Hands on training – live fire training**

The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) requires that firefighters participate in live fire training on a semi-annual basis. Over the course of three days (June 21,22,23, 2021) at the Elgin Community College – Burlington Campus, fire personnel participated in a number of live fire exercises in Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmospheres.

## **Hands on training - surface water rescue and ice rescue**

The Fire Department continued to practice surface water rescue and ice rescue response procedures on small lake/ponds in Sycamore in July 2021 and January 2022. In open water, we practiced small boat evolutions with the semi-rigid inflatable boat and Rapid Deployment Craft (RDC). We also practiced various victim rescue techniques in the open water with simulated near drowning victims. In the ice environment, crews continue to practice with the Rapid Deployment Craft (RDC) in order to continue to improve our emergency response efficiency.

## **Personnel - POC Firefighter program**

The Paid-on-call (POC) Firefighter program is designed to supplement the career staffing of the Fire Department. Paid on call firefighters are required to meet minimum training requirements, minimum activity requirements, and required ride time. Since the opening of the second fire station in 2008, the number of paid on call members have diminished. By the end of FY22, with the loss of the three POC members due to job change and retirement, we have no traditional POC Firefighter personnel. Due to the training requirements and the time commitment, we are transitioning from the traditional POC Firefighter program to the new POC Firefighter/Apprentice program.

## **Personnel - POC Firefighter/Apprentice program**

The Firefighter Apprenticeship program is a three-year commitment where POC Firefighter/Apprentice agree to work four, 24-hour shifts per month (non-compensated) with an assigned firefighting shift in addition to attending required coursework or college

courses toward a degree. The program requires the POC Firefighter/Interns to complete the following coursework over the course of three years: Basic Operations Firefighter certification, Emergency Medical Technician - Basic licensure, and Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic licensure. As part of the program, apprentices can earn up to 15 preference points as part of the Sycamore Firefighter candidate testing process, which could give them an advantage in the future fulltime firefighter/paramedic hiring process.

The Fire Department is authorized up to six firefighter/apprentices and with the delay in hiring for one year (COVID related) and with the revamping of the program, we currently have no Interns/Apprentices presently working through the program.

### **Special Teams - MABAS Division #6**

Fire Department special team (Hazardous Material and Technical Rescue Team) training development continues through grant funding from the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF). ITTF funding is used to pay tuition and back fill to send members of the Hazardous Materials and Technical Rescue Team to required basic training.

**Hazardous Material Response Team continuing training** – Team members: Fire Lieutenant Erik Carlson, and Firefighter/Paramedics Bob Maciejewski, John Pink, Nick Young, and Eric Saxton, attended MABAS Division #6 continuing education in FY 22. New team member, Firefighter/Paramedics Nick Perez completed the required basic training as Hazardous Materials Technician.

**Technical Rescue Team continuing training** – Team members: Fire Lieutenant Adam Honiotes, and Firefighter/Paramedics Bill Reynolds, Dustin Ruby, Andy Powers, Mike Hardesty attended MABAS Division #6 continuing education in FY 22. New team member Firefighter/Paramedic Christian Conlon attended Structural Collapse Operations training and new team member Firefighter/Paramedic Matt Anderson is waiting for opening for the next available courses.

**Fire Investigation Team continuing training** - Team members Lieutenants Dan Marcinkowski, Jim Ward, Ryan Gustafson, and Firefighter/Paramedics Pat Dulzo, Brad Belanger, and Eric Walker attended fire investigator continuing education as part of the fire investigator certification maintenance requirements. Two new team members, Firefighter/Paramedics Scott Flatter and Ian Wheeler completed the required basic training as Fire Investigators.

### **Statewide Urban Search and Rescue Team (IL-TF1)**

Fire Chief Peter Polarek (Task Force Leader) and Lieutenant Erik Carlson (Hazardous Material Manager) continue to serve as members of the State's Urban Search and Rescue Team (IL-TF1).

### **Fire Station and emergency vehicle maps**

Lieutenant Darrin Hepker continues to maintain all of the Fire Department map books and response maps for both fire stations and fire department emergency vehicles.

### **SCBA maintenance and repair**

Firefighter/Paramedic Scott Flatter oversees the maintenance and repair of all of the Department's self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). This effort includes the required flow test of all SCBA air packs (30), RIT packs (3), the required annual SCBA face piece testing with each firefighter (31), and the required quarterly breathing air quality testing of the breathing air compressor.

**Atmospheric monitoring instruments/thermal imaging camera maintenance and repair**

Lieutenant Erik Carlson oversees the maintenance and repair of all of the Department's atmospheric monitoring instruments and thermal imaging cameras. He calibrates the atmospheric monitoring instruments quarterly to ensure dependable and accurate response readings.

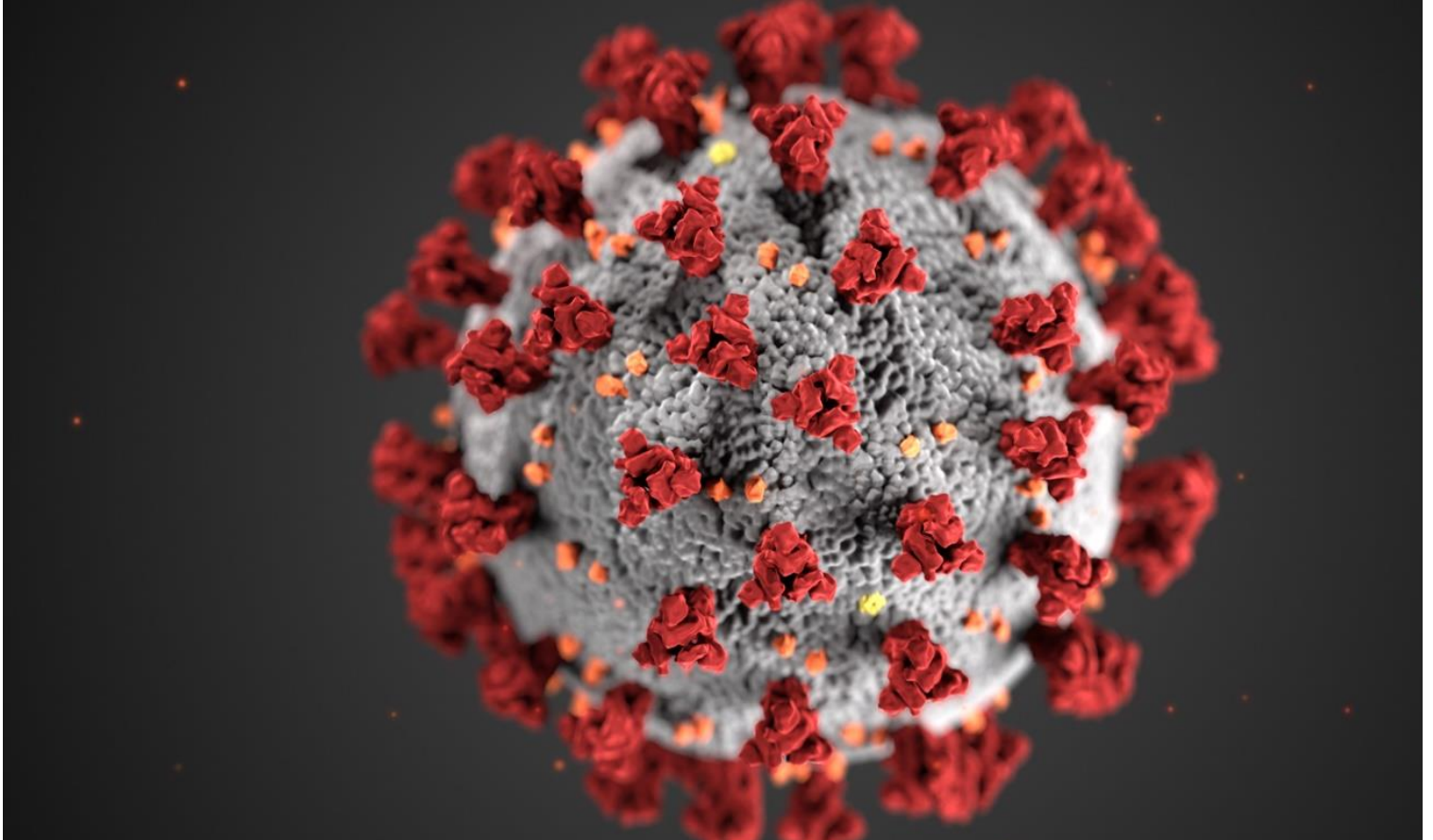
**Firefighters wear pink in October**

For the fourth straight year during the entire month of October, all on-duty City of Sycamore Firefighters wore a special navy/pink Fire Department uniform t-shirt to show support for Breast Cancer Awareness. The t-shirts featured the traditional pink ribbon and pink lettering of the Breast Cancer Awareness Foundation entwined with the Sycamore firefighters' motto of "Pride and Honor".



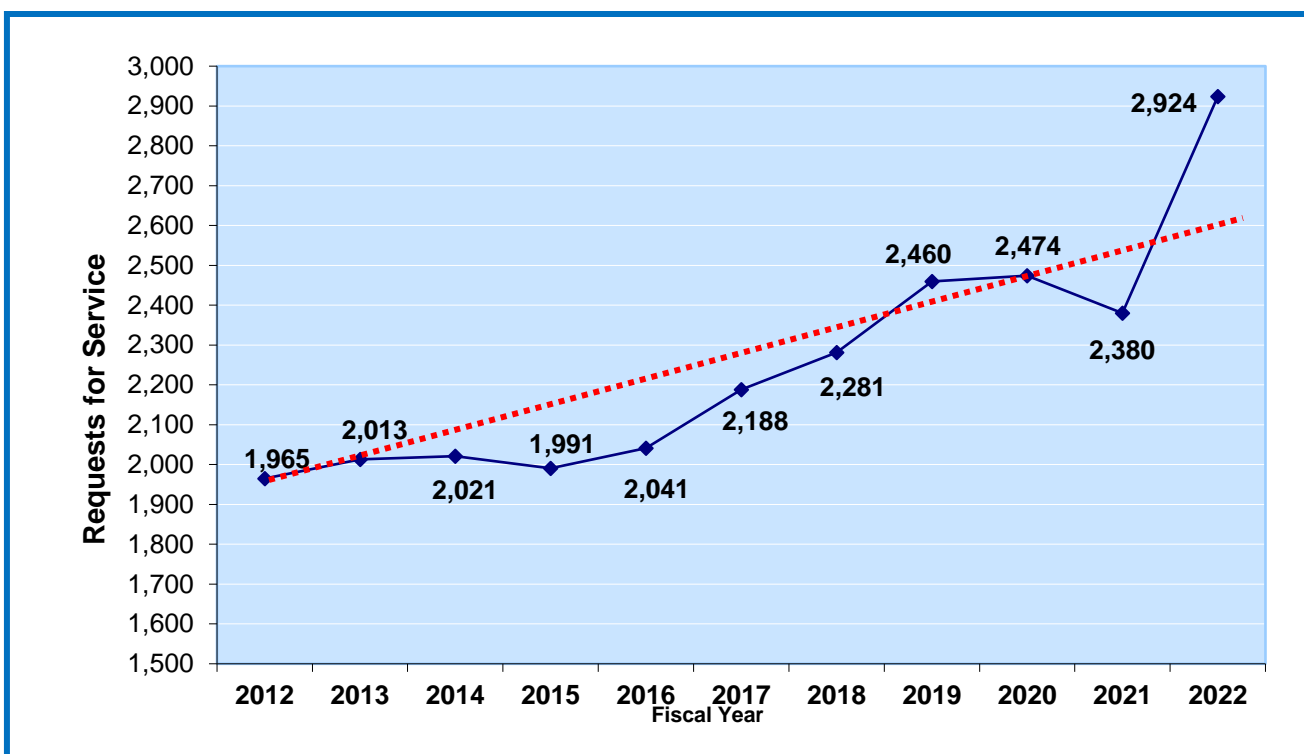
# Operations - emergency response statistics

COVID – 19 Pandemic  
March 2020 – April 2021 (FY21) Greatest impact on emergency response

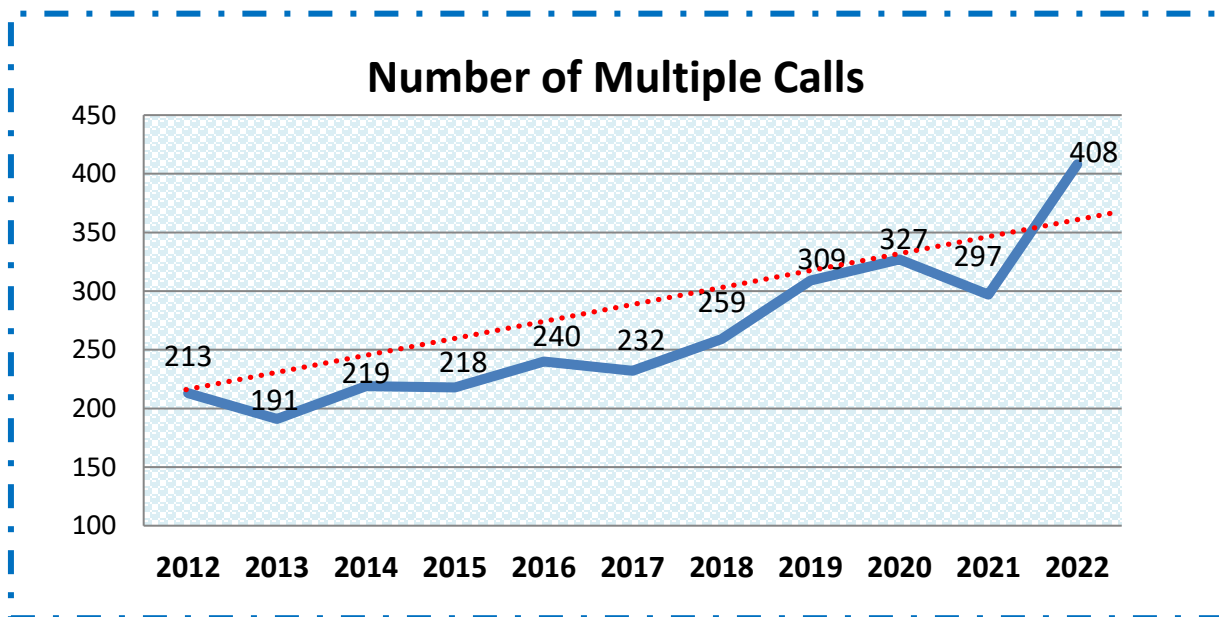


In order to put into perspective the short term (one year) impact of the COVID pandemic on emergency responses, we suggest that the reader of this report look at the data in the longer term perspective in order to truly see the baseline trends in emergency activity.

## Requests for Emergency Service FY12 – FY 22



In FY 22, we received 2,924 requests for emergency service. This was a 22.85% (+544 incidents) increase from the previous fiscal year. We average just over 8 emergency requests per day.



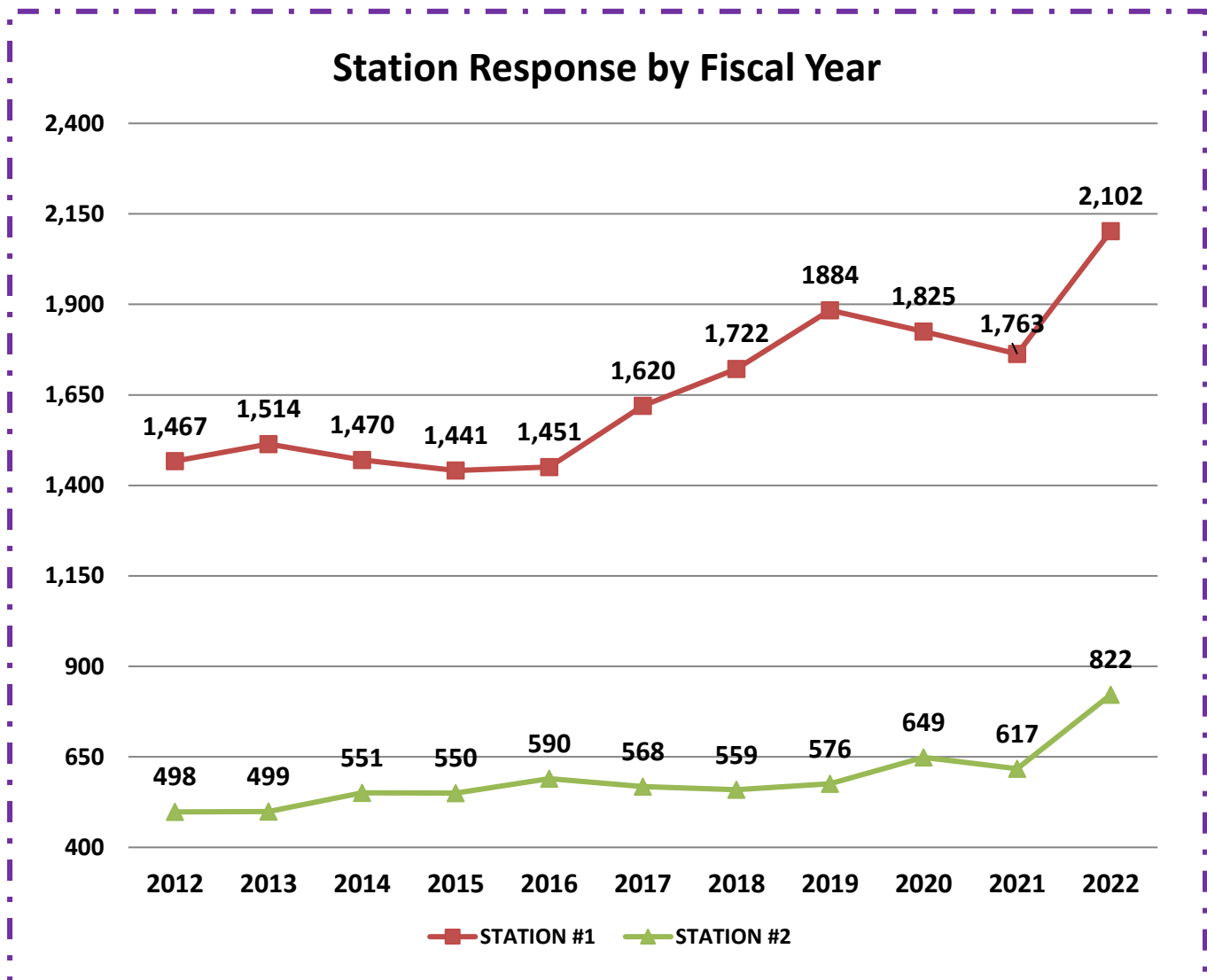
In FY 22, there were 408 occasions where we experienced simultaneous calls for emergency service (both fire stations out on one or separate emergency responses). On average, this is equivalent of 1.11 multiple calls per day. FY 22 multiple call events were up 37.4% (+111) from the previous fiscal year. Multiple call events necessitate the recall of off duty career members to staff the fire stations and reserve equipment to meet any additional emergency call needs.

## Emergency response by Fire Station location

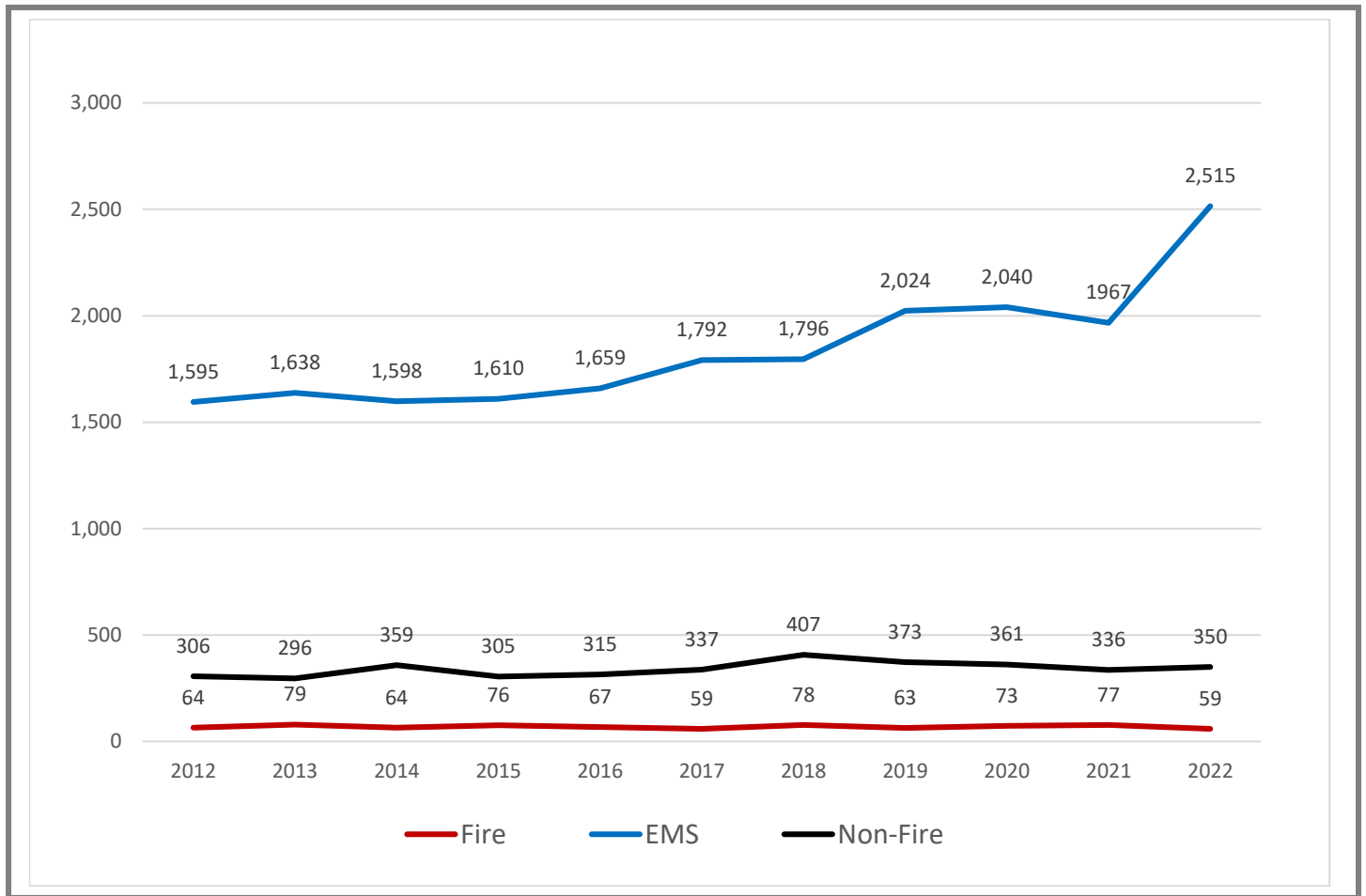
The boundary between Station #1 and #2 runs east and west. Station #2's response area is the north half of the city, while Station #1's response area is the south half. Geographically speaking, the dividing line from the west to the east - all land north of and including Route 64, including the intersection of Route 64 and Peace Road, Peace Road north of Route 64 to the south branch of the Kishwaukee River. The Kishwaukee River east to a point north of the Stone Prairie subdivision and then the line moving east to County Line Road south of Mt. Hunger Road.

Seventy-two percent of our initial responses were from Station #1, with a call volume of 2,102. This station response area is the most populated and on multiple call occasions, Fire Station #2 duty crew and/or off duty recalled personnel would cover calls in this district. Fire Station #2 received 822 calls (28%) dispatched as the initial response station.

## Emergency responses by Fire Station history FY 12-22



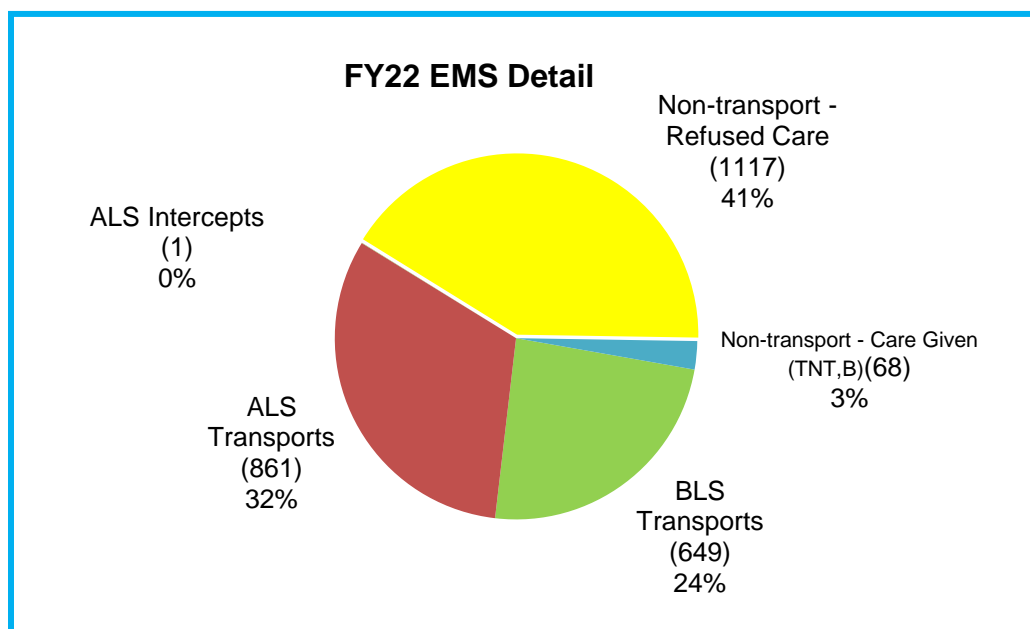
## Emergency Medical/ Non-fire/Fire response history FY 12- 22



| YEAR     | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| EMS      | 1595 | 1638 | 1598 | 1610 | 1659 | 1792 | 1796 | 2024 | 2040 | 1967 | 2515 |
| Non-fire | 306  | 296  | 359  | 305  | 315  | 337  | 407  | 373  | 361  | 336  | 350  |
| Fire     | 64   | 79   | 64   | 76   | 67   | 59   | 78   | 63   | 73   | 77   | 59   |
| TOTALS   | 1965 | 2013 | 2021 | 1991 | 2041 | 2188 | 2281 | 2460 | 2474 | 2380 | 2924 |

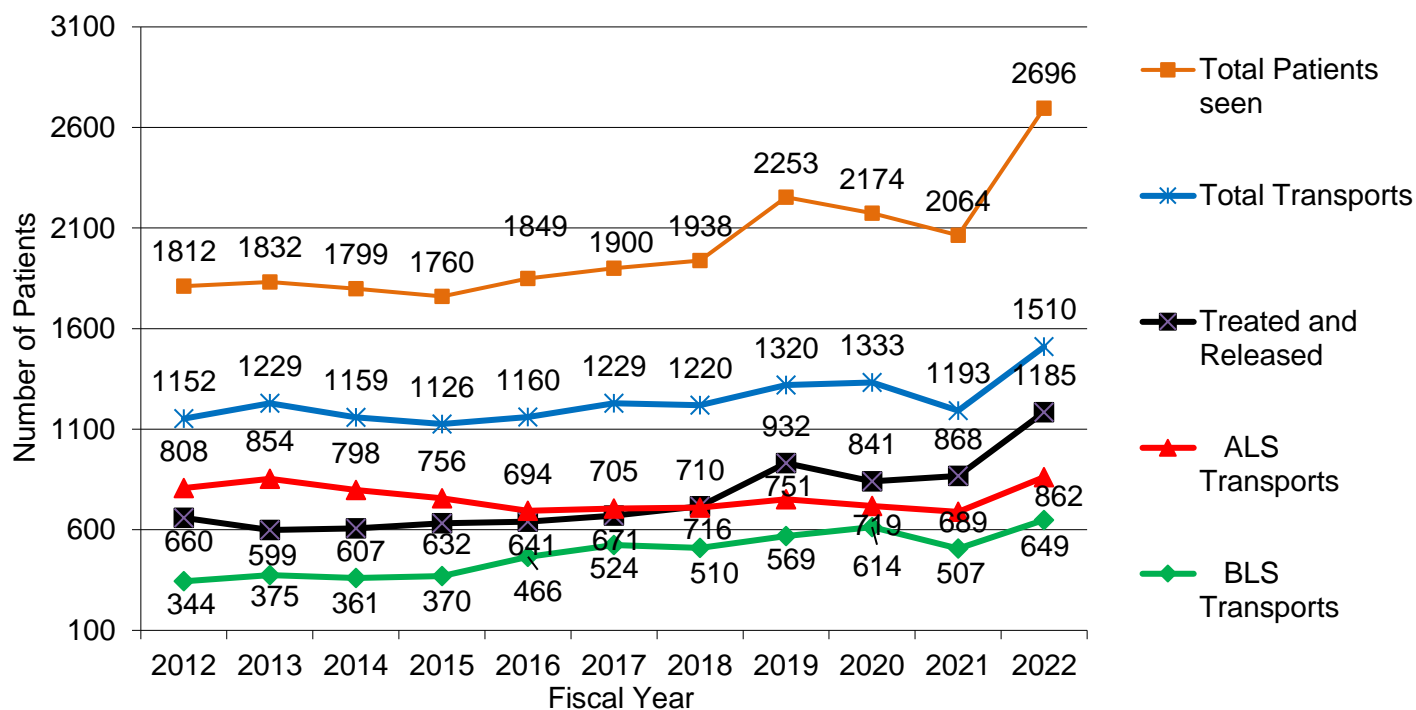
Over the course of the last 11 years, we have seen an average increase of almost 96 incidents per year in EMS, fire, and non-fire calls.

## Emergency Medical Services activity FY 22



In FY 22, emergency medical requests increased (+548) from the previous fiscal year. We responded to 2,515 emergency medical service requests, encountered 2,696 patients, and transported 1,510 patients to the hospital.

## Emergency Medical Services activity FY 12-22



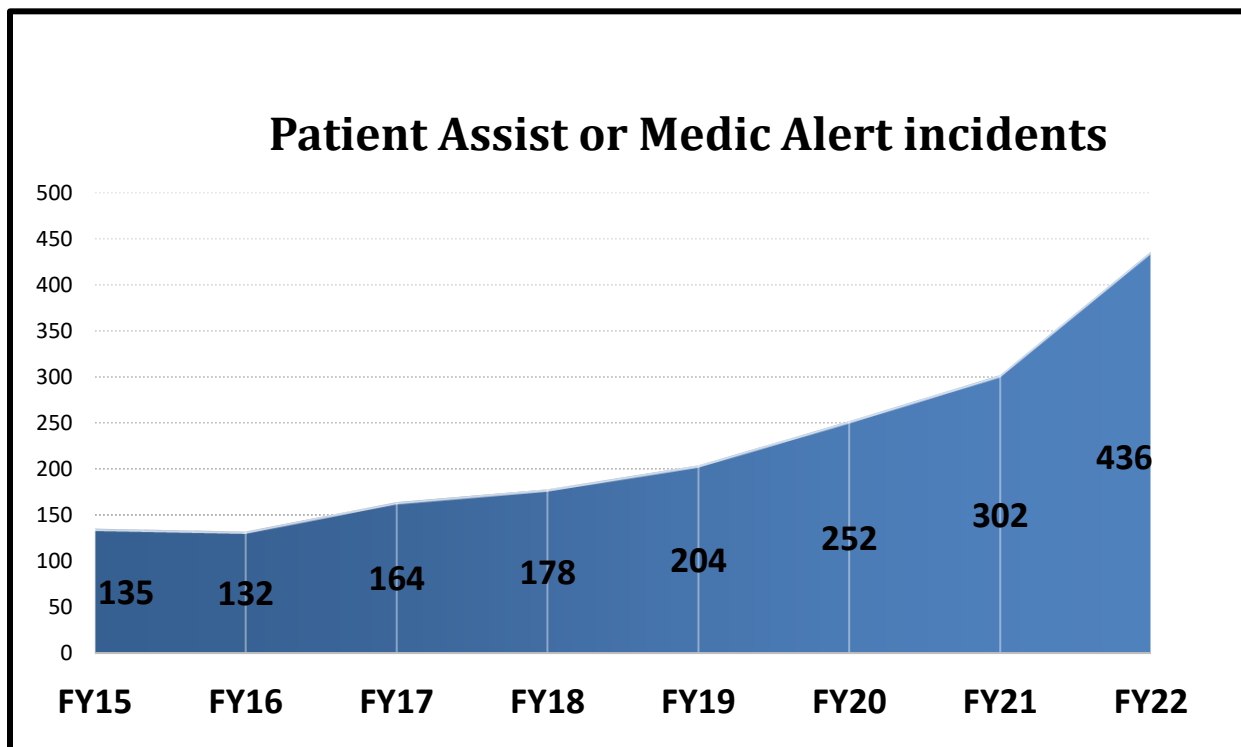
Emergency medical activity increased sharply by almost 28% from FY21. In FY 22, the Fire Department saw more patients (+632) and we transported 317 additional patients to the hospital from the previous year.

## Emergency Medical Services – lift assists/medical alarms

Approximately twelve years ago, we first began to take note of a need for this category of service. The increasing demand for this type of service request has impacted our ability to deliver emergency services. Originally, we experienced a relatively infrequent request to assist a citizen back into a chair or bed because the care giver, spouse, or family member could not physically help. These service requests have evolved to a point where we are experiencing just a little over 1 request per day. These daily service requests usually involve medical alarm activations, assist a patient from a fall from a chair or bed, or assist a patient from an automobile into/out of the home for a medical visit/procedure.

In FY 22, we had 436 responses for patient lift assist or medical alarms. This is an increase of just over 44% (+134 responses) from the previous fiscal year. One could attribute the root cause of this need is due to the number of seniors who do not have a support system of family, friends, or neighbors to help them in their time of need, thus they have come to rely upon the Fire Department for this type of assistance.

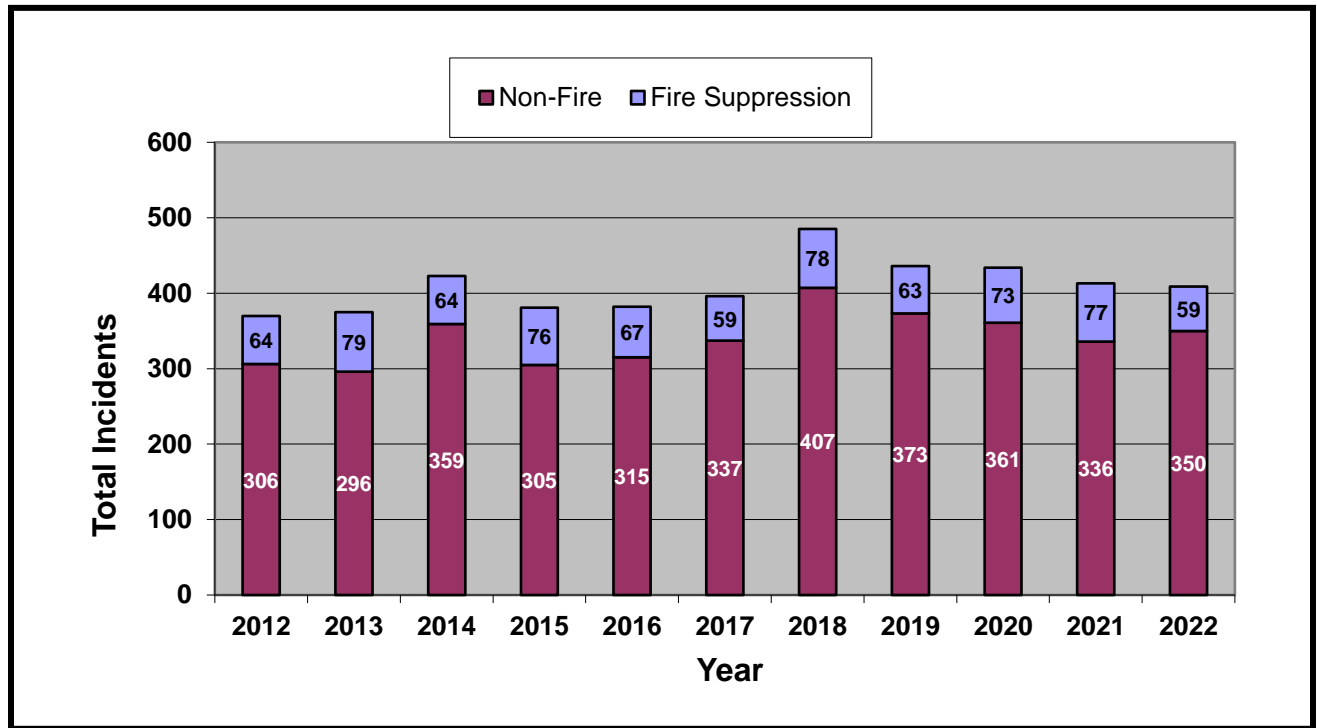
Based on regional and national trends, we anticipate that these types of service requests will continue to grow based upon the size and age of the resident population continuing to live at home with a non-existing or limited support system.



Over the last eight years, the demand for this serve has tripled. We are responding to over one (1.19) lift assist per day.



## Fire and Non-fire Incidents FY12-22



Non-fire response increased (+14), while fire responses decreased (-18) from FY21. Generally, over the past 11 years, non-fire responses have remained relatively stable, averaging about 340 incidents), while fire incidents average about 69 incidents.

## Fire and Non-fire Incidents FY 22

### Fire Suppression Responses

**59**

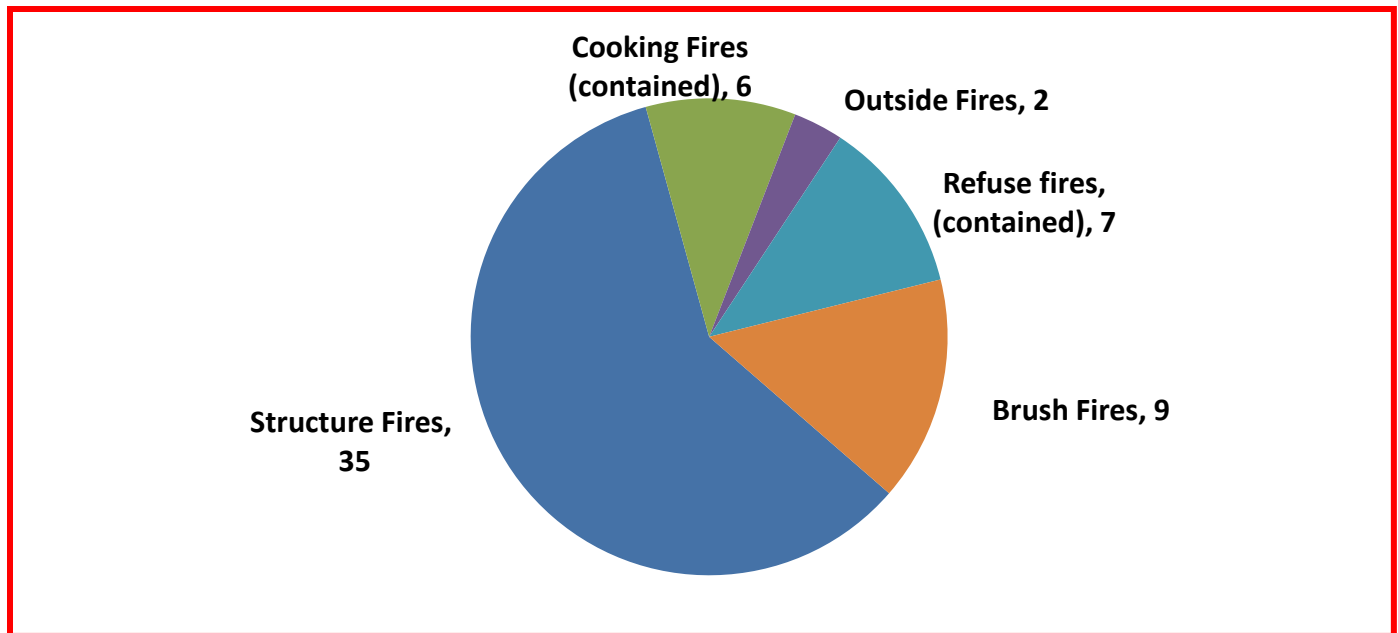
|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Structure Fire                     | 35 |
| Vehicle / Motor home               | 0  |
| Cooking (confined to container)    | 6  |
| Outside (rubbish & equipment)      | 2  |
| Refuse (dumpster, trash contained) | 7  |
| Brush Fire                         | 9  |
| Chimney                            | 0  |

### Non-fire Responses

**350**

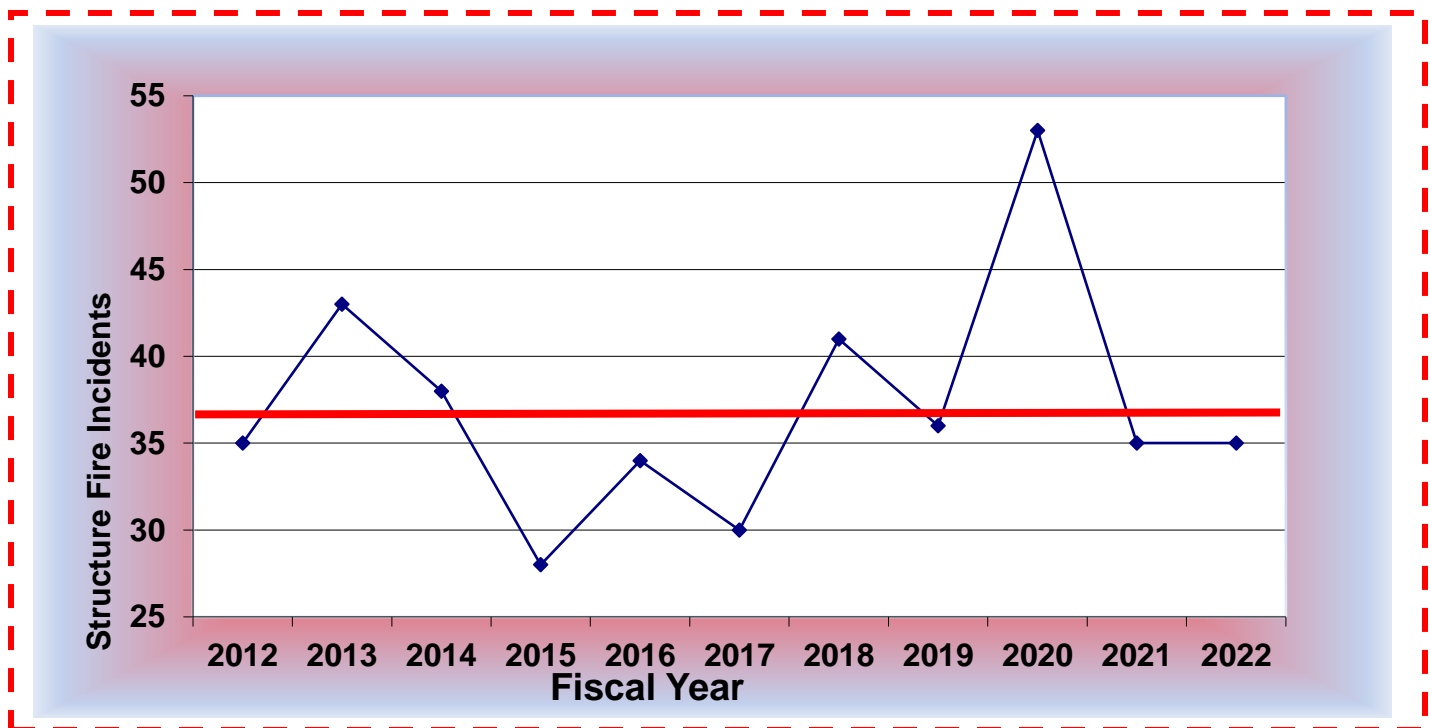
|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| False / Malicious Alarms | 149 |
| Good Intent              | 89  |
| Burning Complaints       | 1   |
| Hazardous Conditions     | 90  |
| Service Calls            | 21  |

## Fire suppression responses FY 22



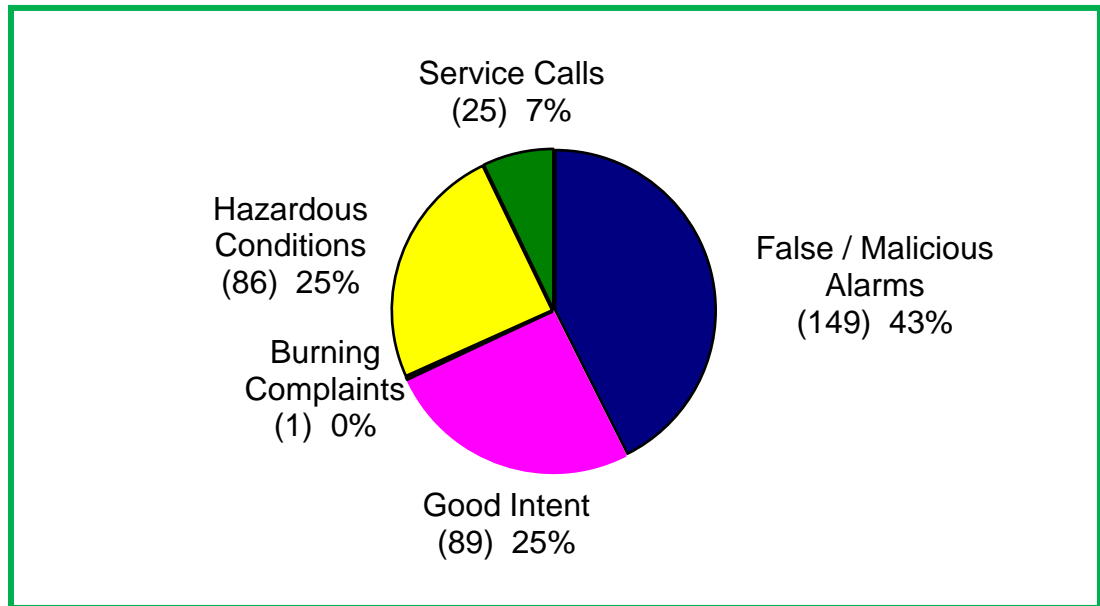
In FY 22, vehicle, outside, brush, and chimney fire responses decreased (-25), while refuse fires increased (+7).

## Fire suppression responses FY 12-22



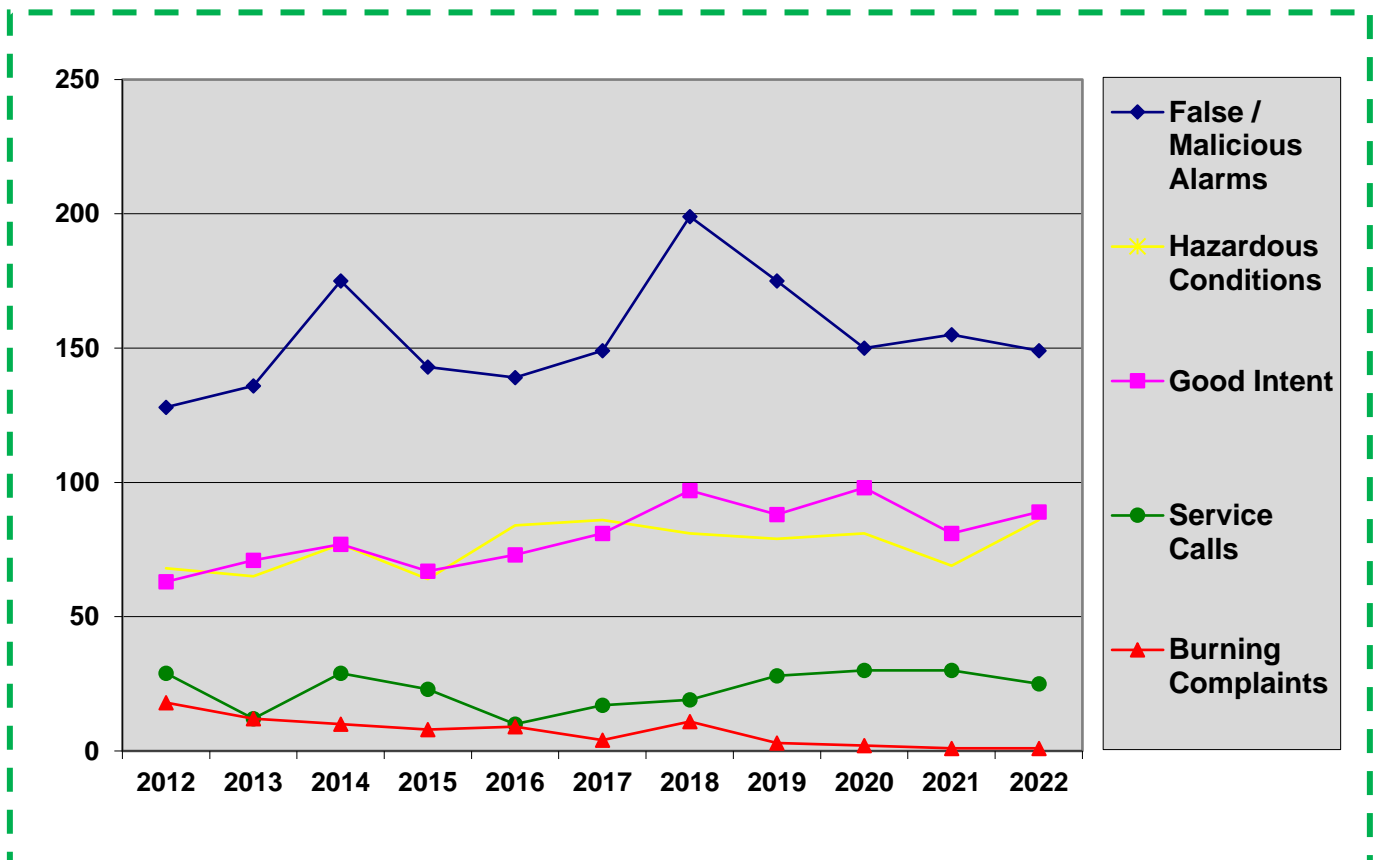
In FY 22, structure fire suppression responses did not change from the previous fiscal year. The solid red line indicates the average number (37) of fire suppression responses over the last 11 years.

## Non - fire responses FY 22



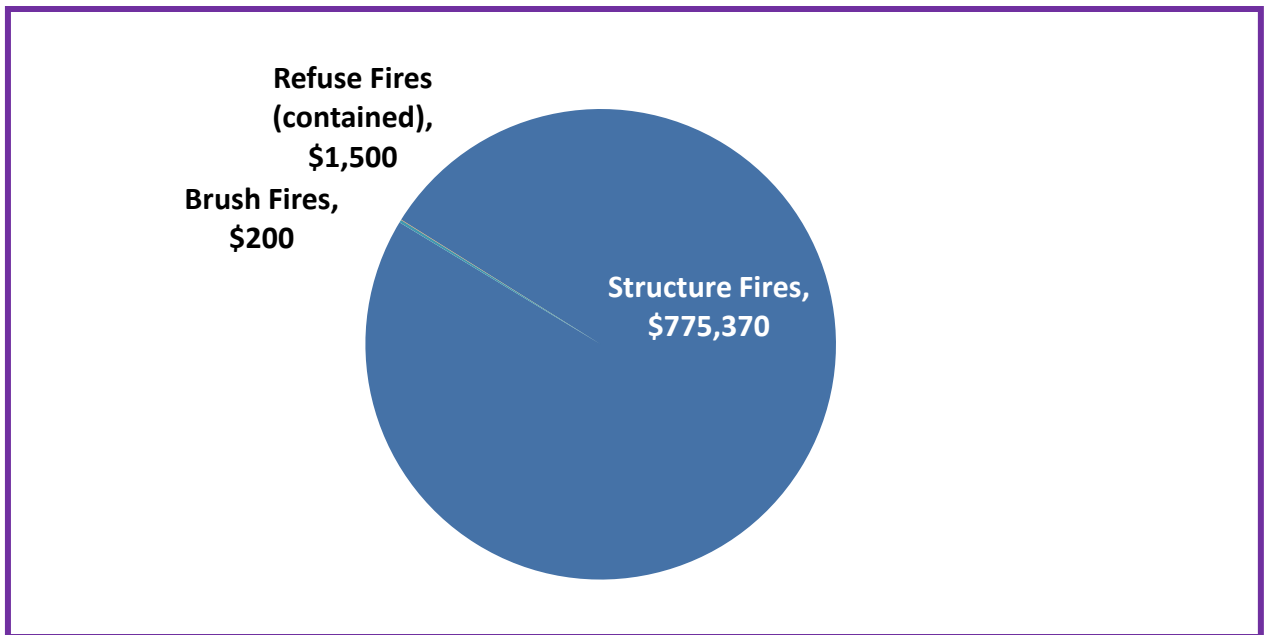
In FY 22, false/malicious alarms and service calls decreased slightly (-11) while good intent and hazardous conditions increased (+25) in frequency.

## Non - fire responses FY 12-22



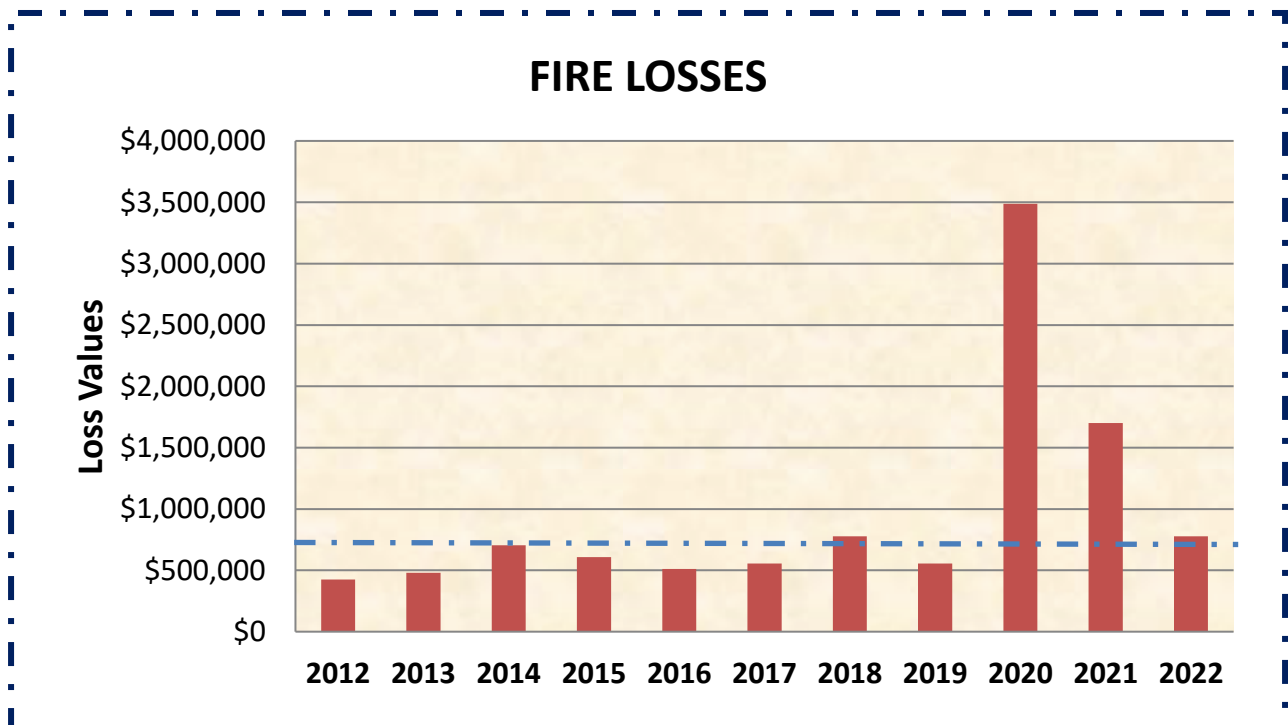
In FY 22, overall non-fire responses were up slightly (+14). Two of the five non-fire categories increased and two of the categories decreased from the previous fiscal year. Overall, the various non-fire response category activity level continues to generally trend in a flat (hazardous conditions, service calls, burning complaints) to slightly upward (false alarms, good intent) manner.

## Fire loss FY 22



In FY 22, we reflected dollar loss of \$777,070 resulting from 15 of the 59 reported fire suppression responses.

## Fire loss history FY12 – FY 22

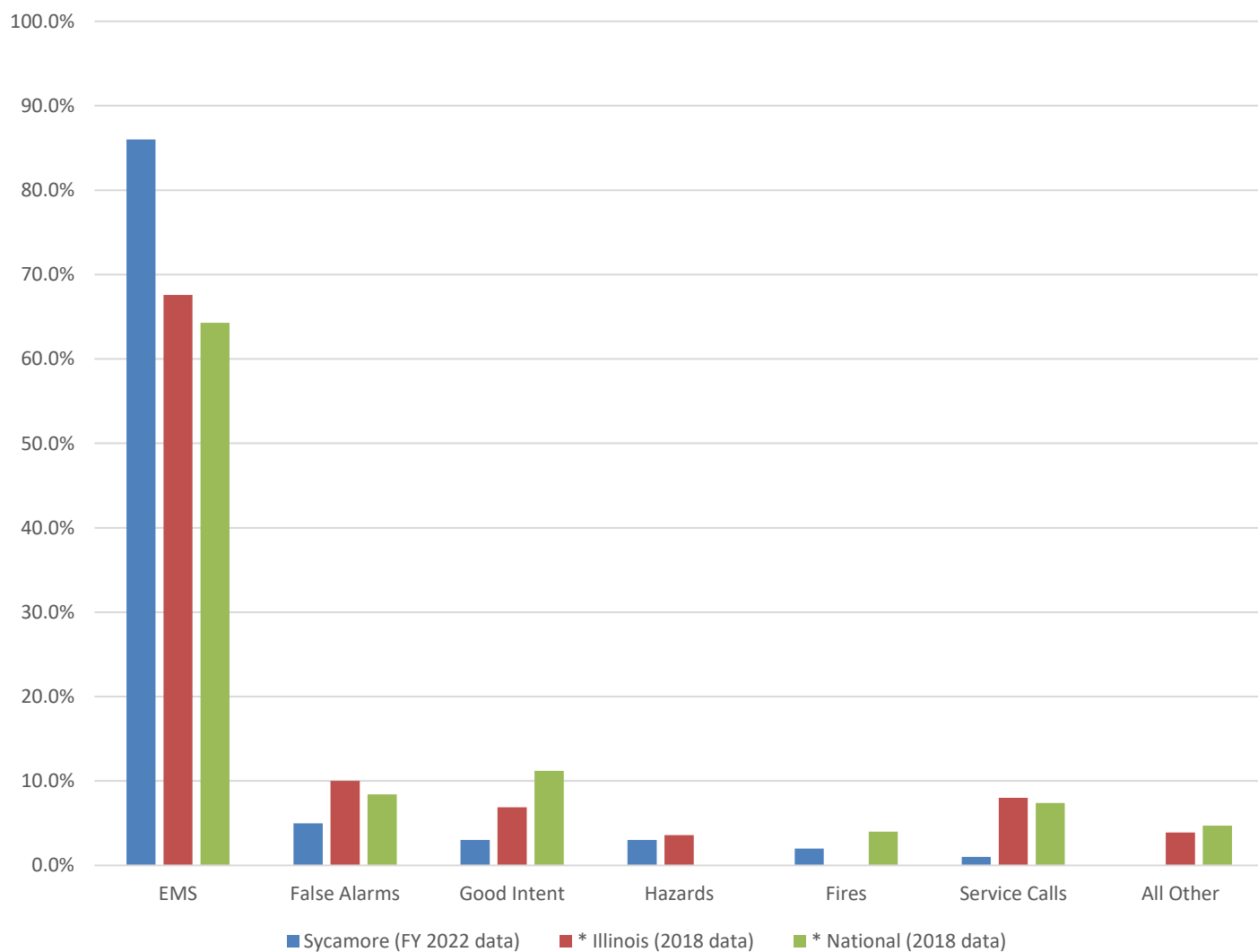


In FY 22, the annual reported fire loss was \$777,070. While we had the same number of structure fires as compared to the previous fiscal year, they were less costly. The average fire loss for the past 11 years is \$962,350. If one removed the FY20 fire loss (\$3,488,260), the average would be \$709,759. Regardless of the measure used, FY22's dollar loss of \$777,070 was slightly higher than the average.

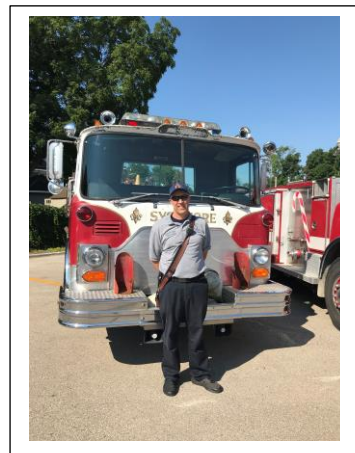
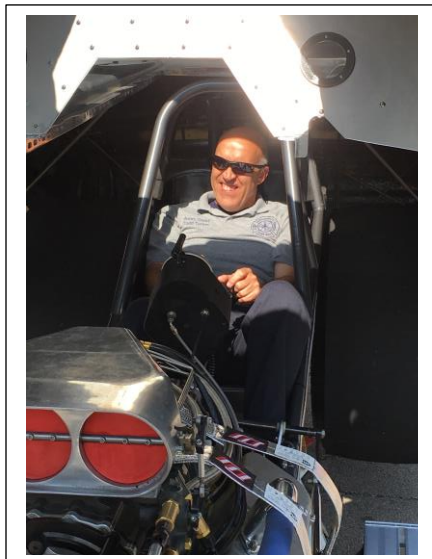
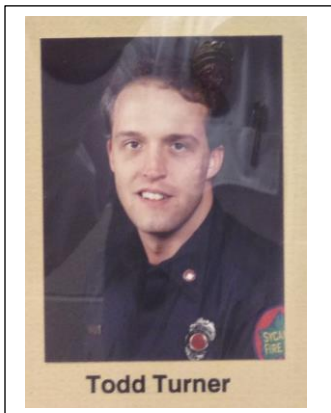
## How does the Sycamore Fire Department emergency response experience compare to Illinois or National averages?

Incident Type Comparison  
Sycamore vs. State and National Averages

\* Most recent data available



# Special activities/events





## **Special activities/events**

### **September 11 Memorial Service**

This past year marked the twentieth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. On early Saturday, September 11, 2021, the Fire Department hosted a short program at the Sycamore Park near the Good Tymes Shelter. A small gathering attended, which included many active and retired members of the Sycamore Fire Department, members of the Sycamore Police Department, and citizens from the community.

### **Firefighter's Honor Guard**

The Sycamore Firefighter's Local 3046 Honor Guard is a dedicated group of firefighters that volunteer to help to provide dignified and honorable funeral and memorial services to active and retired firefighters and their families. During FY 22, Sycamore Firefighter's Honor Guard members and Fire Department personnel participated in a number of area fire service funerals.

### **Foreign Fire Insurance Fund**

The Foreign Fire Insurance Fund is set by state law for the benefit and maintenance of all members of the Fire Department. The Sycamore Foreign Fire Insurance Board (commonly known as the 2% Fund) administers tax proceeds collected from insurance companies doing business within the State of Illinois, but physically located outside the State of Illinois. The Sycamore Foreign Fire Board is comprised of seven members who represent the Fire Department membership. The Board administers approximately \$40,000 per year. Listed below is a highlight of some of the larger purchases made in FY 22:

- Continued to fund the cost of a subscription service for text, voice and app emergency dispatch notification system (I am Responding) for all employees
- Funded wooden personnel lockers for newly renovated living area at Fire station #1
- Funded public education supplies for the Fire Department public education program
- Funded work out equipment for both fire stations (leg press machine and weight balls)
- Funded work out equipment annual maintenance for both fire stations

### **Kishwaukee Education Consortium (KEC) Emergency Medical Technician program**

The Sycamore Fire Department actively participates with the Kishwaukee Education Consortium (KEC) Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-B) training program. The KEC Fire Emergency Medical Technician program is a vocational training program for High School students interested in Emergency Medical Services as a possible career. The Sycamore Fire Department provides classroom space during the school year, provides access to EMS training equipment, and allows student access to the ambulance vehicles. Firefighter/Paramedic Bill Reynolds serves as the Sycamore Program Coordinator (and Lead Instructor) and the following Sycamore Fire personnel serve as instructors:

- Lieutenant Jim Ward
- Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Young
- Firefighter/Paramedic Eric Saxton
- Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Perez
- Firefighter/Paramedic Christian Conlon
- Firefighter/Paramedic Connor Hickey

### **Sycamore Firefighter's Pension Fund**

The Sycamore Firefighter's Pension Fund Board oversees and manages all of the assets contributed by the firefighter employees and the City of Sycamore. This Fund covers the sworn active and retired career personnel of the Fire Department. The Firefighter's Pension Fund Board consists of five members: President Eric Walker, Secretary John Pink, Trustee Marc Doty, Trustee Brandon Diviak, and Trustee Peter Polarek.

### **Sycamore Fire Preservation Company**

The Sycamore Fire Preservation Company continues to work toward preserving the history of the Sycamore Fire Department. The group is working with the DeKalb County History Center toward the dedication and revocation of a small structure on the Museum grounds. Recent efforts include working with an architect on future building renovation plans along with some fund-raising efforts to fund the projects. Ultimately, it is the goal of the group to have a permanent home for the "Stutz" Fire Engine and other Fire Department memorabilia.

### **Community activities – Local #3046 College Scholarships awarded**

In 2021, Sycamore Firefighters Local #3046 awarded one Sycamore High School student graduate with a \$500 scholarship to put toward future college costs.

### **Community activities - Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)**

Each year, Sycamore Firefighter's Local 3046 members participate in a number of fund-raising activities that benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). In 2021, Sycamore Firefighter's Local 3046 members collected almost \$3,400 for MDA.

### **Community activities - Meals on Wheels**

During the entire month of November, 2021, a number of Sycamore Fire personnel (with increased safety precautions) volunteered to deliver the Voluntary Action Center (VAC) Meals on Wheels to Sycamore residents.

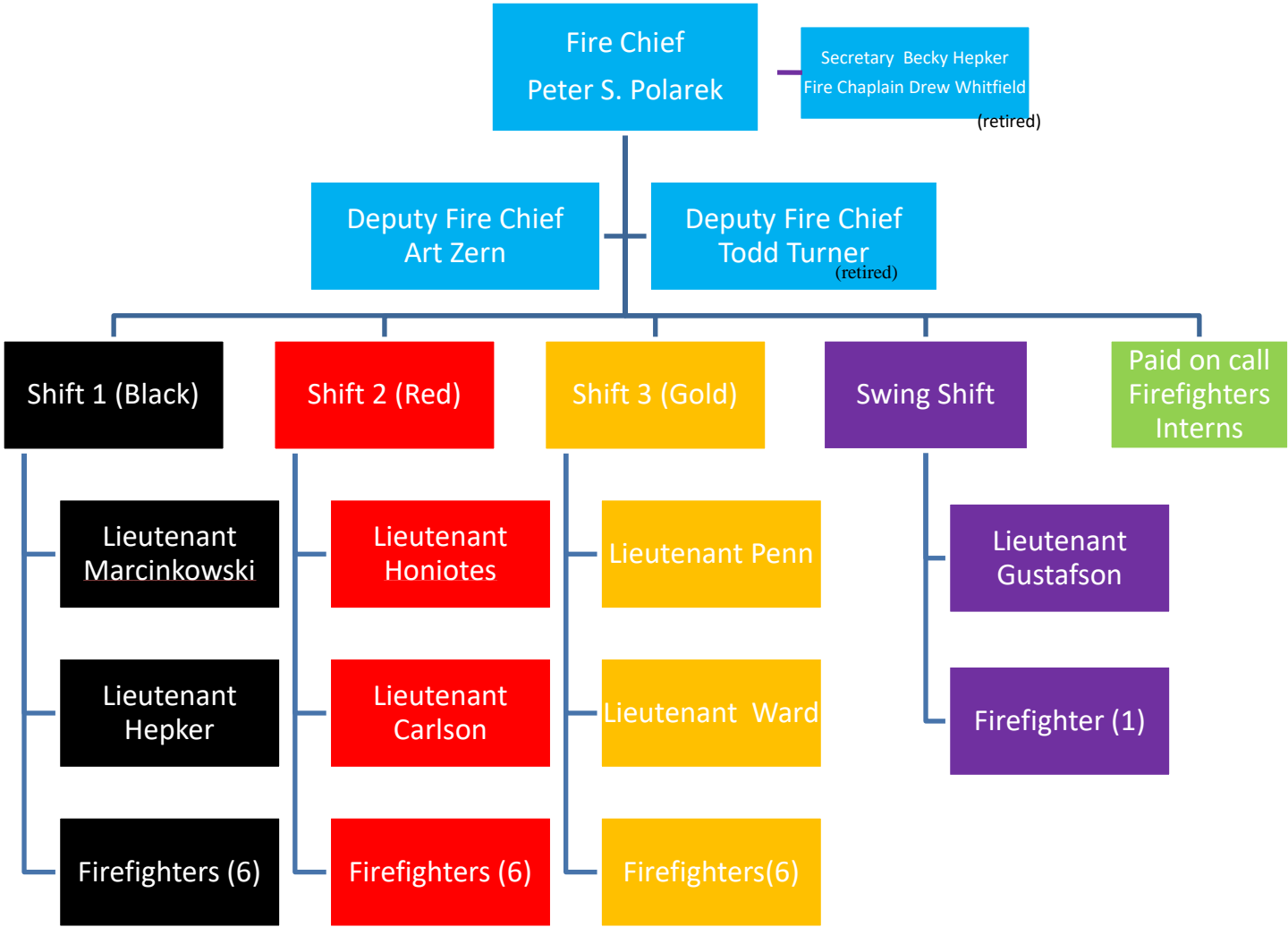
### **Community activities - Family Service Agency support**

At Christmas time 2021, Sycamore Firefighters Local 3046 members joined forces with DeKalb Firefighters Local 1236 to donate complete turkey dinners to 25 local families.

### **Community activities - Sycamore High School Home Coming Powder Puff Football game**

In the Fall of 2021, the Sycamore High School Powder Puff Football Homecoming celebration resumed. Three Sycamore Firefighter's Local 3046 members (Firefighter/Paramedics Eric Saxton, Nick Perez, and Connor Hickey) coached the junior girls for a touch football game versus the Police Department coached senior girls. The girls participated in 6 practices to get ready for the big game. Despite all of the preparation, the junior girls came up short in a bitter contest 32-24.

# Fire Department Organizational chart



# Sycamore Fire Department personnel roster as of May 1, 2021

## Administration

|                   |   |                  |
|-------------------|---|------------------|
| Fire Chief        | P | Peter S. Polarek |
| Deputy Fire Chief | B | Art Zern         |
| Deputy Fire Chief | P | Todd Turner      |
| Secretary         |   | Becky Hepker     |

|          |  |                   |
|----------|--|-------------------|
| Chaplain |  | J. Drew Whitfield |
|----------|--|-------------------|

## Shift 1 (Black)

|             |   |                  |
|-------------|---|------------------|
| Lieutenant  | P | Dan Marcinkowski |
| Lieutenant  | P | Darrin Hepker    |
| Firefighter | P | Brad Belanger    |
| Firefighter | P | Scott Flatter    |
| Firefighter | P | John Pink        |
| Firefighter | P | Eric Walker      |
| Firefighter | P | Ian Wheeler      |
| Firefighter | P | Nick Young       |

## Shift 2 (Red)

|             |   |                  |
|-------------|---|------------------|
| Lieutenant  | P | Adam Honiotes    |
| Lieutenant  | P | Erik Carlson     |
| Firefighter | P | Bob Maciejewski  |
| Firefighter | P | Bill Reynolds    |
| Firefighter | P | Mike Hardesty    |
| Firefighter | P | Matt Anderson    |
| Firefighter | P | Christian Conlon |
| Firefighter | P | Connor Hickey    |

|                 |   |                  |
|-----------------|---|------------------|
| POC Firefighter | P | Carolyn Thompson |
|-----------------|---|------------------|

## Shift 3 (Gold)

|             |   |                |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| Lieutenant  | P | D. Shaun Penn  |
| Lieutenant  | P | Jim Ward       |
| Firefighter | P | Pat Dulzo      |
| Firefighter | P | Brian Thompson |
| Firefighter | P | Dustin Ruby    |
| Firefighter | P | Eric Saxton    |
| Firefighter | P | David VanDusen |
| Firefighter | P | Nick Perez     |

|                       |   |            |
|-----------------------|---|------------|
| Prob. POC Firefighter | B | Paul Meyer |
|-----------------------|---|------------|

## Swing shift

|             |   |                |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| Lieutenant  | P | Ryan Gustafson |
| Firefighter | P | Andy Powers    |

