

City of Sycamore Fire Department



FY 2021 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 21 was \$4,341,970. Personnel accounted for 96.3% of the budget (\$4,183,776), while commodities, contractual services, other services, and equipment accounted for \$158,194 or 3.7% of the budget. The Fire Department continued to look for grant opportunities to supplement the operating budget. In FY 21, the Fire Department applied for four grants: received three awards totaling \$234,858.57; one grant application decision is still pending, and one grant application was denied.

Throughout the entire fiscal year, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact upon our emergency operations as well as our emergency and non-emergency activities. The reader should consider the potential COVID-19 impacts as you peruse the information and statistical data. Starting in the fourth quarter of FY 20 and continuing throughout the entire FY21, the COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact upon our emergency responses. For the majority of the fiscal year, we continued to use a higher level of personal protective equipment (PPE) on most emergency responses (fire, non-fire, and EMS) in order to meet the COVID-19 transmission risk.

We experienced a slight decline (-94) in requests for emergency services due to citizen's disease exposure concerns or from the change in routine behavior (fewer vehicle accidents (-41) due to many citizens working from home/children learning from home/restrictions placed upon on shopping/restaurants) from the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline in emergency requests impacted the total number of patients seen (-110) and ultimately the number of patients transported to the hospital (-137). This is the first downturn (-94) in requests for emergency service since FY 15. Up until this fiscal year, and since 2010, we had seen an average growth of requests in emergency service at 3.85% per year.

In spite of the pandemic, 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 five fiscal years. In FY 21, we had 302 responses for patient assist, patient lift assist, or medical alarms. This is an increase of 20% (+50 responses) from the previous fiscal year.

Surprisingly, while EMS (-94) and non-fire responses (-25) decreased, we experienced a slight increase in fire responses (+4). Overall, emergency medical responses continue to dominate much of the Fire Department activity with emergency medical responses accounting for over 82% and fire/non-fire responses accounting for 18% of emergency activity. A majority of the emergency responses (74%) originate in the Fire Station #1 response district (1,763 responses) while the remainder (26%) originate in the Fire Station #2 response district (617 responses).

Some of the most noteworthy emergency responses in FY 21 were: a structure fire at a multi-unit (4 unit) townhouse building at 1542 Timberwood Court, a structure fire at a commercial structure at 126 E. State Street, a structure fire at a multi-unit (6 unit) townhouse building at 942 Arvle Circle, and a structure fire at a single-family residential unit at 322 W. Exchange Street.

On the personnel side, career Fire Lieutenant Tal Hickey retired after 30 years of service. Firefighter/Paramedic Erik Carlson was promoted to Fire Lieutenant and Connor Hickey was appointed as a career Firefighter/Paramedic.

Year in review - emergency response activity FY 21

Requests for Emergency Services	2,380
Total Emergency Medical Service Responses	1,967
Total Fire and Non-fire Responses	413
EMS Responses	2,380
Patients seen	2,064
Patients Transported	1,193
BLS Transports	507
ALS Transports	689
<u>Patients not transported</u>	<u>868</u>
Care given	52
Refused care	816
Advanced life support service upgrade (intercept) provided to neighboring jurisdiction	3
Fire Suppression Responses	77
Structure Fire	35
Vehicle / Motor home	7
Cooking (confined to container)	6
Outside (rubbish & equipment)	14
Refuse (dumpster, trash contained)	0
Brush Fire	14
Chimney	1
Non-fire Responses	336
False / Malicious Alarms	155
Good Intent	81
Burning Complaints	1
Hazardous Conditions	69
Service Calls	30
Additional response information	
Motor Vehicle Accidents	161
Extrications	0
Mutual Aid & Automatic Aid Given	100
Mutual Aid & Automatic Aid Received	82

Total Fire Dollar Loss = \$1,701,610

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).

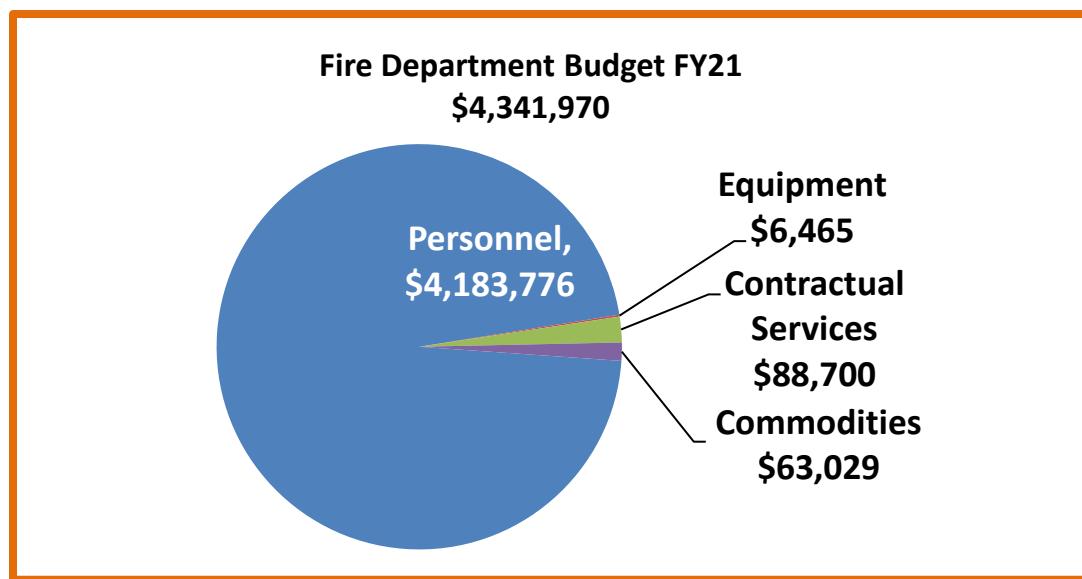
Today, the Sycamore Fire Department is a combination fire department providing 24-hour emergency response, operating out of two fire stations with 36 sworn and 1 civilian employee. The Department is divided into two divisions; an administrative division and an operations division. The Insurance Services 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 - 19, Paid-on-call Firefighter - 18, and Fire Secretary - 1. The Fire Department maintains four fire engines (two ALS), four Advance Life Support (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 21 was \$4,341,970. Personnel accounted for 96.3% of the budget (\$4,183,776). Commodities, contractual services, other services, and equipment accounted for \$158,194 or 3.7% 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.

COVID – 19 Pandemic

Throughout the entire fiscal year, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact upon our emergency operations as well as our emergency and non-emergency activities.

Starting in the fourth quarter of FY 20 and continuing throughout the entire FY21, the COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact upon our emergency responses. For the majority of the fiscal year, we continued to use a higher level of personal protective equipment (PPE) on most emergency responses (fire, non-fire, and EMS) to meet the COVID-19 transmission risk.

We experienced a slight decline (-94) in requests for emergency services due to citizens disease exposure concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline in emergency requests impact the total number of patients seen and ultimately the number of patients transported to the hospital.

Several of our response personnel were diagnosed as a COVID-19 test positive along with a number of first responders that were exposed to tested or highly suspected COVID infected patients that then required the 14-day quarantine. Early on during the pandemic, a memorandum of understanding was created and periodically modified to keep pace with the employee health concerns with this new disease. In addition, we curtailed much of our non-emergency activity (such as training, preplanning, and public education) during the fiscal year in order to minimize personnel exposure to others. We continued to restrict all public access to city buildings including the fire stations.

In early February 2021, the COVID vaccine (Moderna) was made available to first responders. Approximately 96% of the response personnel participated with the two-shot regimen. The vaccine, along with mask wearing and social distancing, has helped to further reduce the risk of infection to our first responders.

Personnel – retirement

Lieutenant Tal Hickey retired on November 30, 2020 after 32+ years of service to the City of Sycamore.

Personnel – promotion

On December 5, 2020, Firefighter/Paramedic Erik Carlson was promoted to Fire Lieutenant with the retirement of Tal Hickey.

Personnel - new hires

On January 4, 2021, the Fire Department welcomed career Firefighter/Paramedic Connor Hickey.

Personnel - resignation

- Former Intern and POC Firefighter Jake Turner resigned on July 15, 2020 to take full time employment with the Bartlett Fire Protection District (IL).
- Former Intern and POC Firefighter Mike Mathey resigned on December 16, 2020 to take full time employment with the Plainfield Fire Protection District (IL).
- On April 30, 2021, Intern Drew Diehl completed his three-year commitment to the Intern program and is completing his paramedic licensure requirements with another agency.
- POC Firefighter trainee Cole Flatter resigned on October 13, 2020, to continue his paramedic training with another fire department.
- POC Firefighter trainee Alex Castritsis resigned on October 15, 2020, to continue his paramedic training with another fire department.
- POC Firefighter trainee William Becker resigned on January 11, 2021.
- POC Firefighter trainee James Cole resigned on January 11, 2021, due to family commitments.

Service awards

Annual service awards were presented to City employees at the December 21, 2020 City Council Meeting. The following Fire Department personnel were recognized:

• Firefighter/Paramedic David VanDusen	5 years
• Firefighter/Paramedic Nick Young	10 years
• Fire Chief Peter Polarek	10 years
• Firefighter/Paramedic Eric Walker	15 years
• Firefighter/Paramedic Brad Belanger	20 years
• Deputy Chief Todd Turner	40 years

Retired personnel

On May 15, 2020, retired Fire Chief Larry Haeffner passed away after a short illness. Chief Haeffner served the City of Sycamore from 1971 to 1998. He served as a Firefighter/EMT, Fire Lieutenant, and the last six years of his career as Fire Chief.

New Incident Reporting Software

In June 2020, the Fire Department was informed by the parent company of our existing software vendor (Visual Fire) that they were discontinuing to support the software by the end of the year and were switching existing customers to their primary reporting software (ESO Fire Incidents). After negotiating with the vendor and providing personnel training, the Fire Department officially switched to ESO Fire Incident reporting Software on November 1, 2020.

Apparatus and equipment tracking software (Check it)

In late 2019, the Fire Department began using new software (Check it) to better streamline the daily vehicle and equipment checks. During FY 21, all of the remaining vehicles were added to the system thus allowing the daily shift personnel to use tablets to document all daily and weekly equipment and vehicle checks. This effort is helping us to move toward a paperless environment.

Grant applications and awards

The Fire Department continues to look for grant opportunities to supplement our operating budget. In FY 21, the Fire Department applied for four grants: received three awards totaling \$234,858.57; one application decision is still pending, and one grant application was denied.

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

- A grant request (\$338,116) was submitted (March 2019) through the Assistance to Fire Fighter Grant (AFG) program for replacement self-contained breathing apparatus. We received a grant award of \$218,534.29 (July 2020).
- A grant request (\$200,860.80) for powered patient stretchers and loading system was submitted (January 2021) through the Assistance to Fire Fighter Grant (AFG) program. The award decision is pending.
- A grant request (\$26,000) for four portable 800 MHz dual band radios was submitted (January 2020) 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 2020) to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to purchase video laryngoscopes and suction units for the two Advanced Life Support Engines. We were awarded a grant of \$5,544.28 on March 2021.

New pumper-tender

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 1,500 GPM pumper-tender vehicle is set to replace a 1989, 2,000-gallon pumper – tender. The majority of the funding has come from a grant (\$365,000) from the Sycamore Fire Protection District. The vehicle is expected to be delivered in the late summer or early Fall, 2021.

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 21, we replaced five turnout coats and 2 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 21, 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

- Replaced the brakes on Engine #2
- Replaced the fire pump governor on Engine #2
- Replaced the tires on Engine #2
- Replaced the tires on Medic #1
- Replaced the fuel injectors on Medic #4

Tools and equipment maintenance program

Deputy Fire Chief Art Zern oversees the Department's tool and equipment maintenance program. In FY 21, 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 21 were:

- Facilitated required annual Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) boiler inspection at Fire Station #1
- Facilitated required annual OSFM wheel chair lift 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

- Replaced the roof on Fire Station #2 due to the previous years storm damage
- Starting in mid-April 2021, we began the (\$75,000) Fire Station #1 upstairs living quarters remodel which entailed the replacement of kitchen cabinets, appliances, flooring, and installation of a range hood; new flooring in day room and computer suite; new flooring in locker room; and new flooring and bathroom fixtures in men's locker room.

Computer system improvement

Fire Chief Peter Polarek oversees the Department's computer system including software and hardware. In FY 21, 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 protection 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 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 21, we loaned out nine residential Knox Boxes and had no 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 COVID pandemic.

Normally, a significant portion of the entire public fire education effort is during Fire Prevention Week, which is the first full week of October (October 4-10, 2020). This year's theme was "Serve up Fire Safety in the Kitchen". 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 5th grade school children. However, with the school children learning remotely, our typical in-person gatherings were curtailed. Thus, we were forced to place greater emphasis on media or social media presentations.

Fire Prevention - Fire Department Annual Open House cancelled

Due to the COVID pandemic, the October Fire Department Open House was cancelled due to public health concerns.

Special event permit review

Due to health concerns related to the pandemic, special events in the City of Sycamore were restricted. Thus, we did very few reviews or issue of special event permits for the approximately 60 special events that typically occur each year.

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.

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 down slightly by 3.8% (-94) from FY 20. Emergency medical responses decreased slightly (-73) in activity, while fire responses increased (+4) and non-fire responses decreased slightly (-25).

COVID -19 Pandemic impact

Starting in 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. For the majority of the fiscal year, we continued to use a higher level of personal protective equipment (PPE) on most emergency responses (fire, non-fire, and EMS) and adjust operational procedures to meet the COVID-19 transmission risk.

We experienced a slight decline (-94) in requests for emergency services due to citizen's disease exposure concerns or from the drastic change in routine behavior (fewer vehicle accidents (-41) due to many citizens working from home/children learning from home/restrictions placed upon on shopping/restaurants) from the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline in emergency requests directly impacted the total number of patients seen (-110) and ultimately the number of patients transported to the hospital (-137). This is the first downturn (-94) in requests for emergency service since FY 15. Up until this fiscal year, since 2010, we had seen an average growth of requests for emergency service at 3.85% per year.

In spite of the pandemic, 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 five fiscal years. In FY 21, we had 302 responses for patient assist, patient lift assist, or medical alarms. This is an increase of 20% (+50 responses) from the previous fiscal year.

Surprisingly, while EMS and non-fire responses decreased, we experienced a slight increase in fire responses (+4). Overall, emergency medical responses continue to dominate much of the Fire Department activity with emergency medical responses accounting for over 82% and fire/non-fire responses accounting for 18% of emergency activity. The majority of the emergency responses (74%) originate in the Fire Station #1 response district (1,763 responses) while the remainder (26%) originate in the Fire Station #2 response district (617 responses).

Significant emergency incidents

The most noteworthy emergency responses in FY 21 were:

- Structure fire at 1903 Brickville Road on June 6, 2020
- Structure fire at 1217 Wild Street on June 8, 2020
- Structure fire at 1542 Timberwood Court on August 29, 2020
- Structure fire at 660 Hill Street on September 5, 2020
- Structure fire at 126 E. State Street on September 17, 2020
- Structure fire at 942 Arvel Circle on February 26, 2021
- Structure fire at 322 W. Exchange Street on February 27, 2021

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. Deputy Fire Chief Todd Turner 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 response

Continuing throughout FY21, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the provision of emergency medical services. All emergency medical responses required high levels of personal protective equipment along with risk avoidance techniques to reduce the potential exposures of the responding crew. After the response was complete (transport to the hospital), crews are required to decontaminate the ambulance, ambulance equipment, and themselves which causes greater ambulance crew out of service time. This resulted in the call back of off duty personnel to staff reserve response equipment while the extensive decontamination was conducted. During the fiscal year, the procurement of personal protective equipment was extremely challenging as well as the cost of PPE has nearly doubled in price.

Replacement cardiac monitor/defibrillators

The Fire Department was notified by the manufacturer in early 2021 that two of our four cardiac monitor/defibrillators were in danger of failing due to a potentially faulty motherboard. The manufacturer offered a replacement incentive which essentially allowed the replacement of a 7½ and 8-year-old cardiac monitor/defibrillator for the price of one. We were able to take advantage of the offer and the replacement equipment was placed into service in late April 2021.

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. We purchased one monitor/defibrillator with FY22 capital budget monies and placed the equipment in service in late April 2021.

Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) replacement project

In March 2020, we had applied for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for \$338,116. In July 2020, we received an award of \$218,534.29. With the addition of city dollars, we were able to purchase 31 self-contained breathing apparatus, air cylinders, facepieces, and make to 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 began in April 2021. We plan to place the new equipment in emergency service by 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 March 2021, all Fire Department certified paramedics successfully completed the Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) recertification course.

Fire basic and continuing training

Deputy Fire Chief Todd Turner 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, 5,967 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, Deputy Fire Chief Turner 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 21

In FY21, 5967 training hours were performed by Fire Department personnel. Training hours are divided into four categories:

- Fire training (3,258 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 (1,491 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 (1,085 hours) - included hazardous materials and technical rescue response training.
- Other training (133 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, Deputy Fire Chief Todd Turner 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

While most outside training was curtailed due to the pandemic, some select outside training continued (EMS continuing education, paramedic training courses, fire investigation recertifications, or on-line training) which resulted in a handful of Fire Department personnel receiving certifications or licensures due to their previous (pre-COVID) training commitments:

- POC Firefighter/Intern Mike Mathey received Paramedic licensure from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).
- POC Firefighter/EMT-B Carolyn Thompson received Paramedic licensure from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).
- Fire department personnel attained various fire certifications through the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) in this fiscal year. The newly achieved certifications were for Basic Operations Firefighter (1), Hazardous Materials Operations (1), Fire Service Vehicle Operator (6), Rope Technician (2), Water Operations (2) and Fire Investigator recertification (2).

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 2020 and January 2021. 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. The Fire Department currently employs two POC Firefighters (including one Chaplain classified as a POC Firefighter and currently, no POC Firefighter/Interns).

POC Firefighter/EMT-P Carolyn Thompson completed all of the requirements of the paramedic program and received her paramedic license in March, 2021.

POC Firefighter/EMT-B Paul Meyer started paramedic training in September 2020. The paramedic training program encompasses classroom instruction and clinical experience over an 11-month period. In addition, the paramedic students are required to complete 500 hours of ride time on the ambulance to gain field experience. It is anticipated that Paul will complete the paramedic training course and requirements by late summer 2021, and he will be eligible to challenge the National Registry license exam shortly thereafter.

Temporary restriction to the POC Firefighter and Intern programs implemented due to the risk of COVID transmission

From May through July, 2020, all part time personnel - POC Firefighters and POC Firefighting Interns were restricted from participating in the POC programs due to the risks of the COVID pandemic. Beginning in August 2020, in order to minimize the exposure risks to the career personnel, existing POC personnel were restricted from participation in the Sycamore program if they had an affiliation with another fire agency. As a result, some POC members opted to resign in order to pursue their affiliation with other agencies. Once Intern or POC members met this requirement, they were allowed to re-engage with their training and participation.

Personnel - POC Firefighter/Intern program

The Intern program is a three-year commitment where POC Firefighter/Interns agree to work four, 24-hour shifts per month (non-compensated) with an assigned firefighting shift in addition to attending a full college course load. 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. In FY 2021, we did not hire any new POC Firefighter/Interns due to the pandemic. The Fire Department is authorized up to six college interns and with the delay in hiring for one year and the two members completing the time requirements of the program, we currently have no Interns presently working through the program.

In May 2020, POC Firefighter/Intern Mike Mathey successfully completed all of the training requirements (Basic Operations Firefighter, Emergency Medic Technician - Basic, and paramedic licensure) and the three-year time commitment to the Intern Program. He was reclassified as a POC Firefighter/EMT-P.

In late April 2020, POC Firefighter/Intern Drew Diehl successfully completed most of the training requirements (Basic Operations Firefighter, Emergency Medic Technician - Basic, and paramedic class completion) and the three-year time commitment to the Intern Program. He still has to pass the National Registry Paramedic Examination along with receiving a favorable recommendation from his paramedic preceptors.

POC Firefighter/Intern program proposed changes

In August, 2019, a new state law was signed enacting legislation which allowed for the creation of Firefighter Apprenticeship programs. In mid-2020, a Fire Department committee was formed to look at the possibility of changing the current Firefighting Intern Program into a Firefighting Apprenticeship program. The newly proposed Apprenticeship provisions build upon the existing Intern Program to increase the potential of a Firefighter Apprentice to be offered a career Sycamore Fire Department position by the addition of Apprentice Preference Points to the Firefighter Candidate testing process with more frequent comprehensive personnel evaluations and a heightened expectation of the Firefighter/Apprentice performance. We hope to adopt the draft provisions by the Fall 2021.

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 Firefighter/Paramedics Bob Maciejewski, Scott Flatter, John Pink, Erik Carlson, Nick Young, and Eric Saxton attended MABAS Division #6 continuing education in FY 21.

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 21. New team

members Firefighter/Paramedic Matt Anderson and Christian Conlon are waiting for training courses to open up.

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.

Statewide Urban Search and Rescue Team (IL-TF1)

Fire Chief Peter Polarek (Task Force Leader) and Lieutenant Erik Carlson (Hazardous Material Specialist) 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.

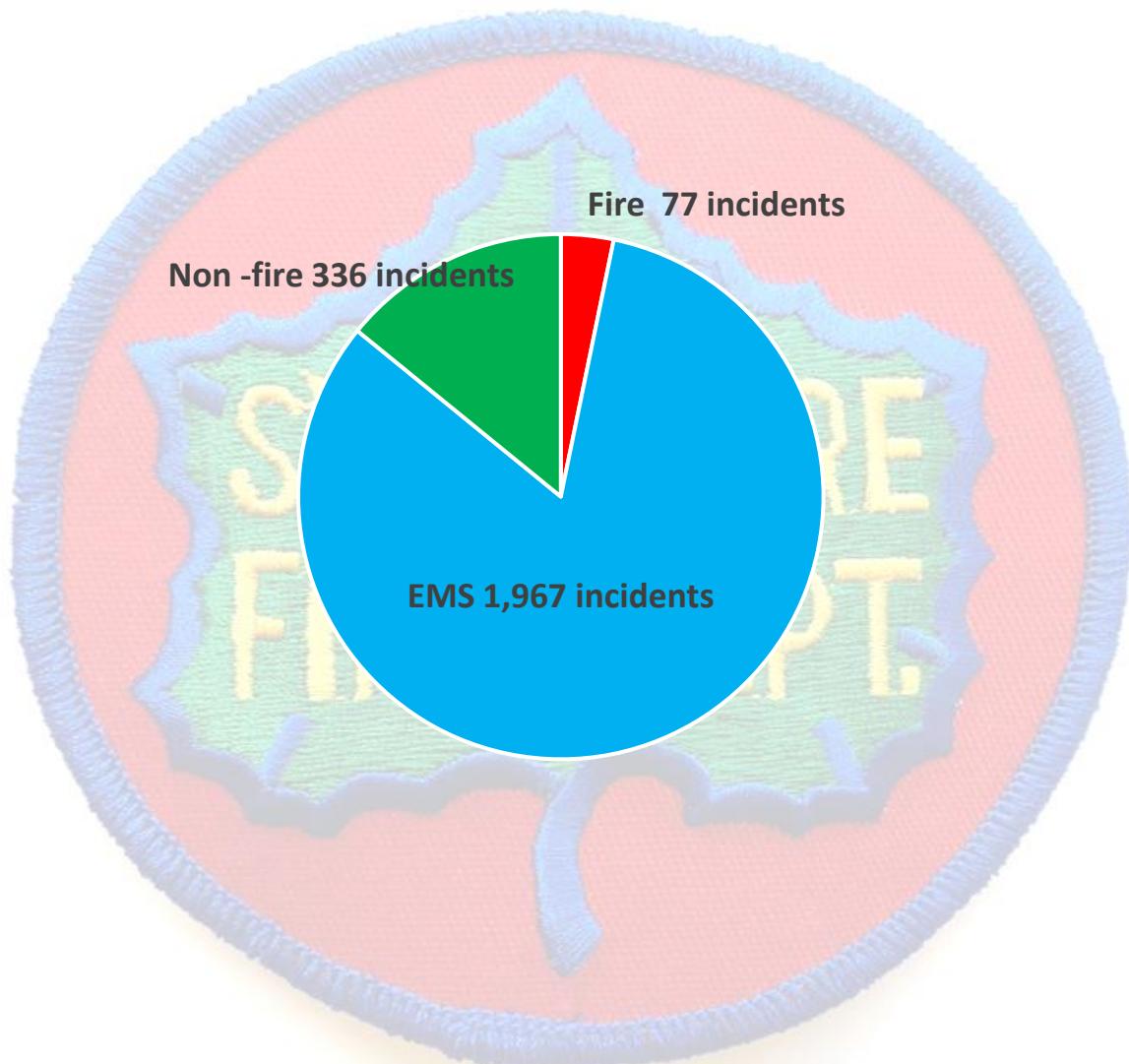
Atmospheric monitoring instruments/thermal imaging camera maintenance and repair

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.

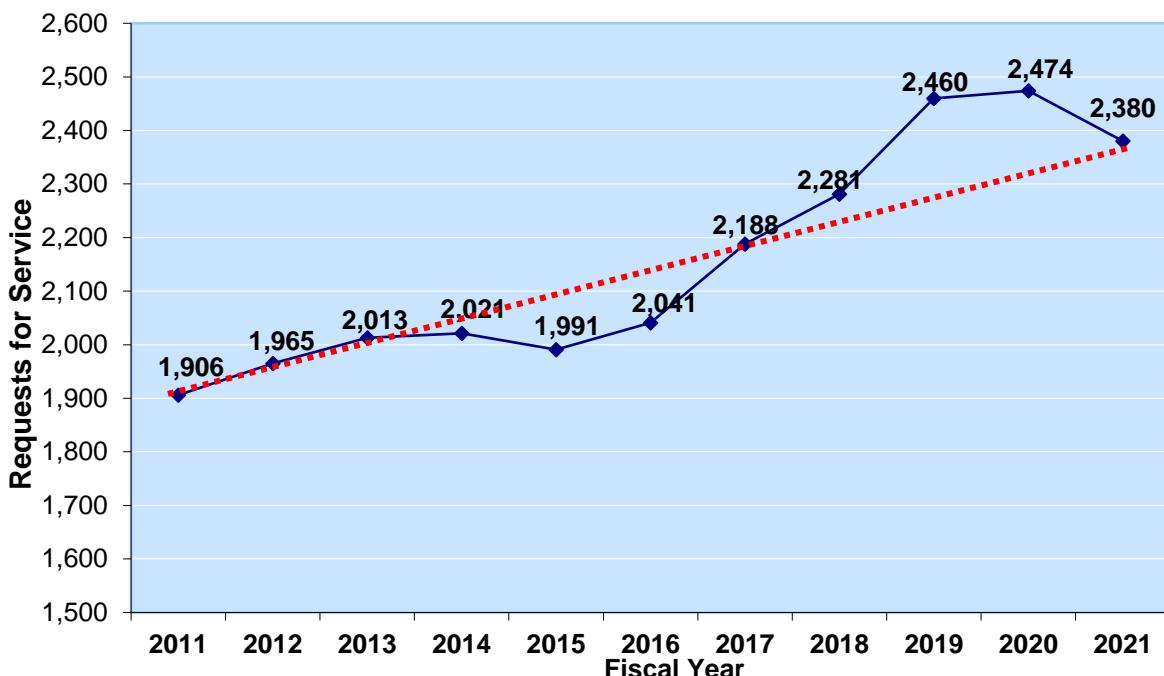
Firefighters wear pink in October

For the third 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".

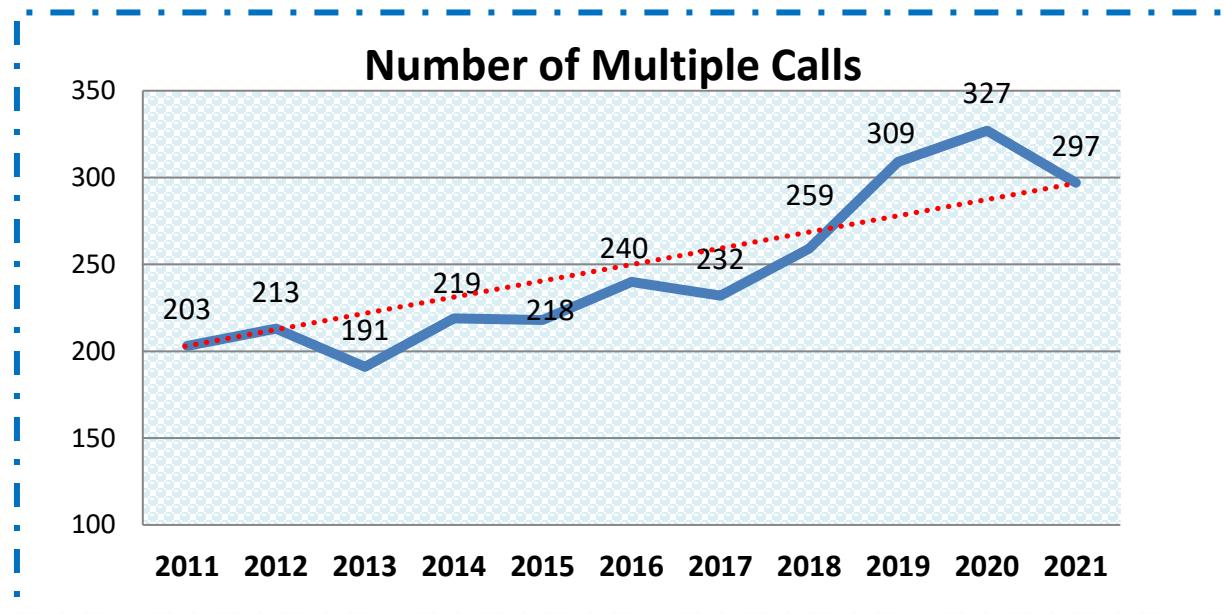
Operations - emergency response statistics



Requests for Emergency Service FY11 – FY 21



In FY 21, we received 2,380 requests for emergency service. This was a 3.8% (-94 incidents) decrease from the previous fiscal year. Up until this pandemic year, for the previous 9 of the last 10 years, the average increase was 3.85% per year (about 78 calls increase per year).



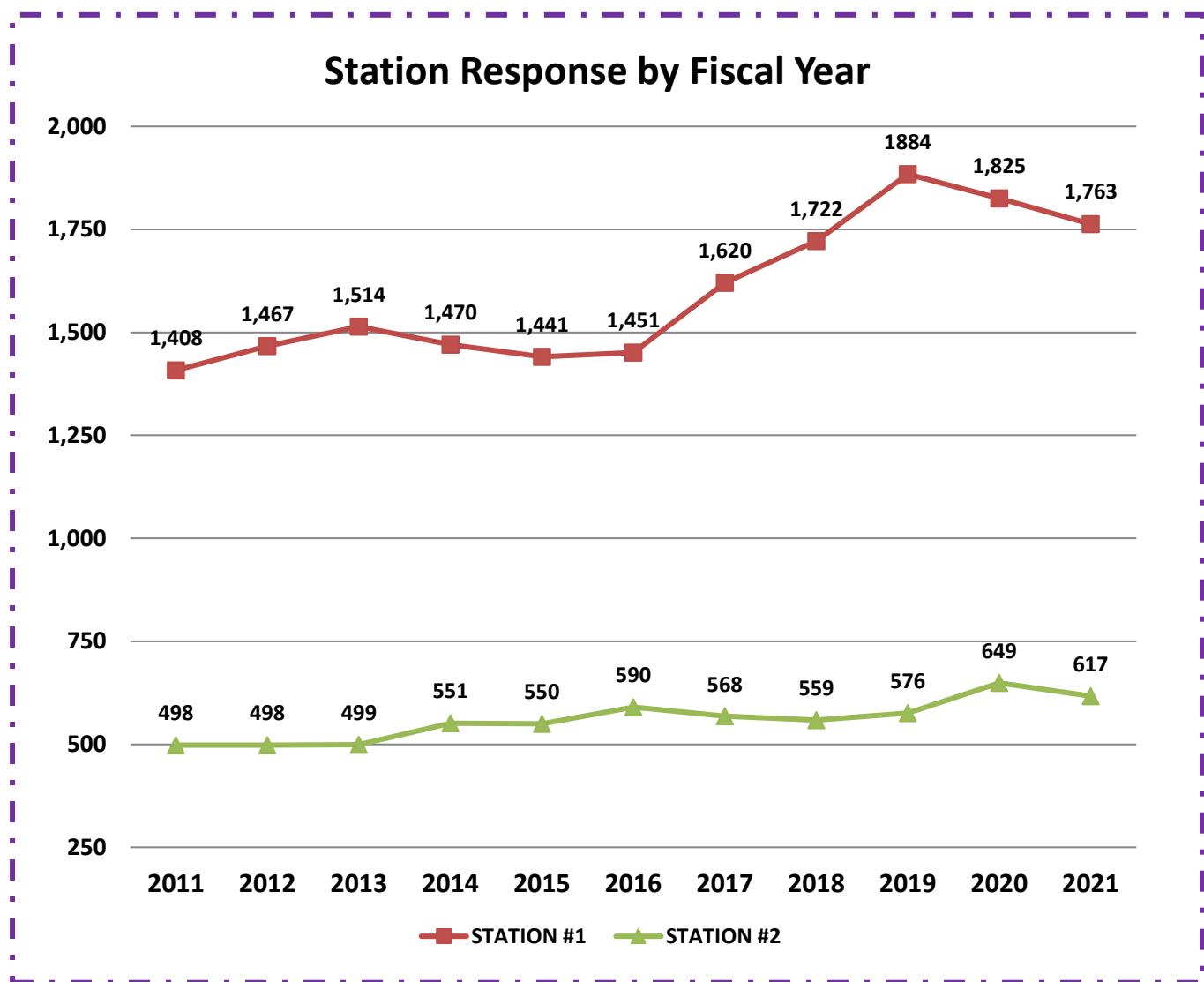
In FY 21, we had 297 occasions where we experienced simultaneous calls for emergency service (both fire stations out on one or separate emergency responses). FY 21 multiple call events were down (-30) from the previous fiscal year. In spite of the COVID pandemic, an overall upward trend in these events continues. Multiple call events necessitate the recall of off duty career and POC members to staff the fire stations and reserve equipment to meet any additional emergency call needs.

Emergency response by Fire Station location

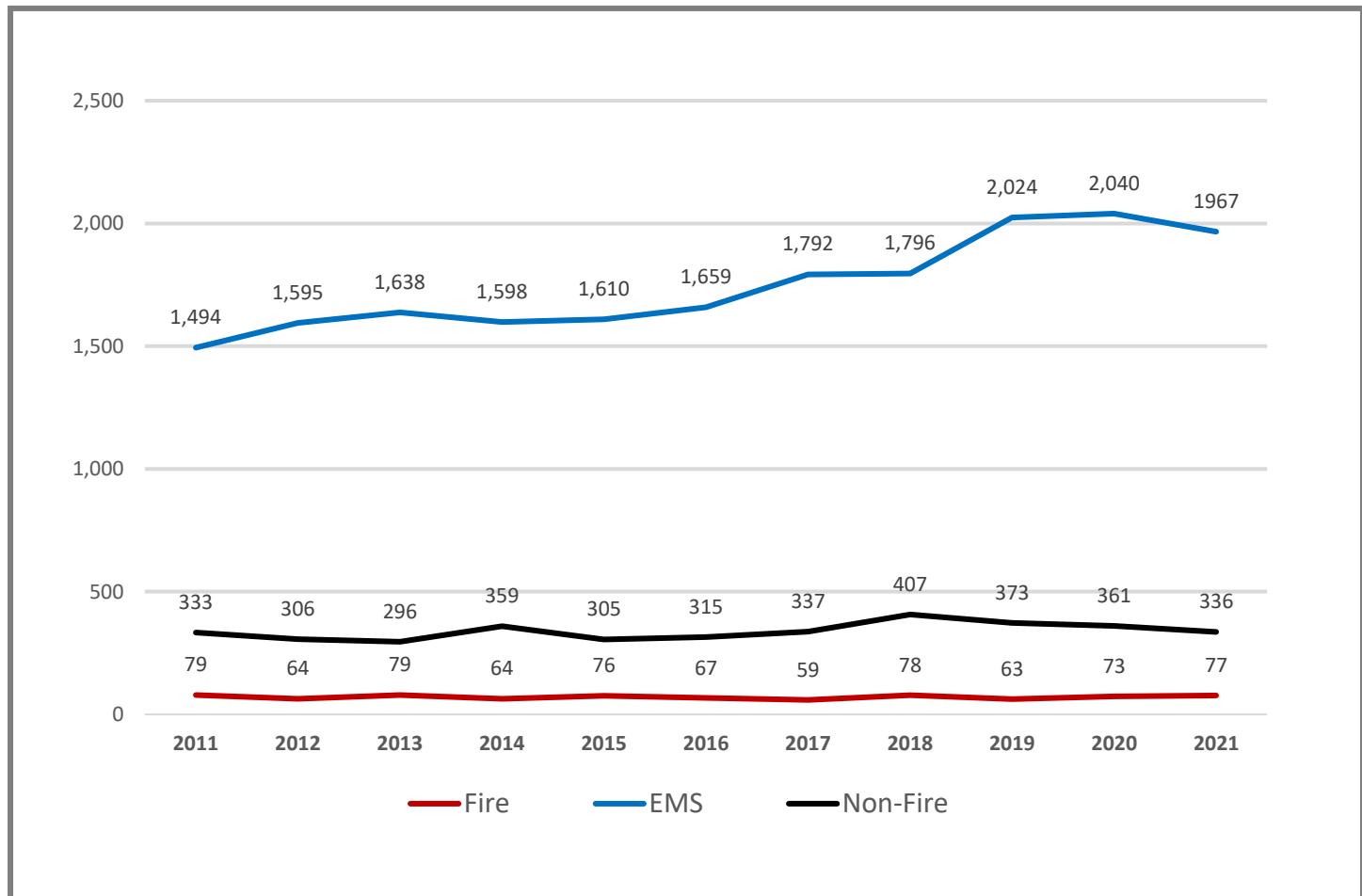
The boundary between Station #1 and #2 runs east and west. Station #2's response area is the north half of the city, while Station #1's response area is the south half. Geographically speaking, the dividing line from the west to the east - all land north of and including Route 64, including the intersection 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-four percent of our initial responses were from Station #1, with a call volume of 1,763. 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 617 calls (26%) dispatched as the initial response station.

Emergency responses by Fire Station history FY 11-21

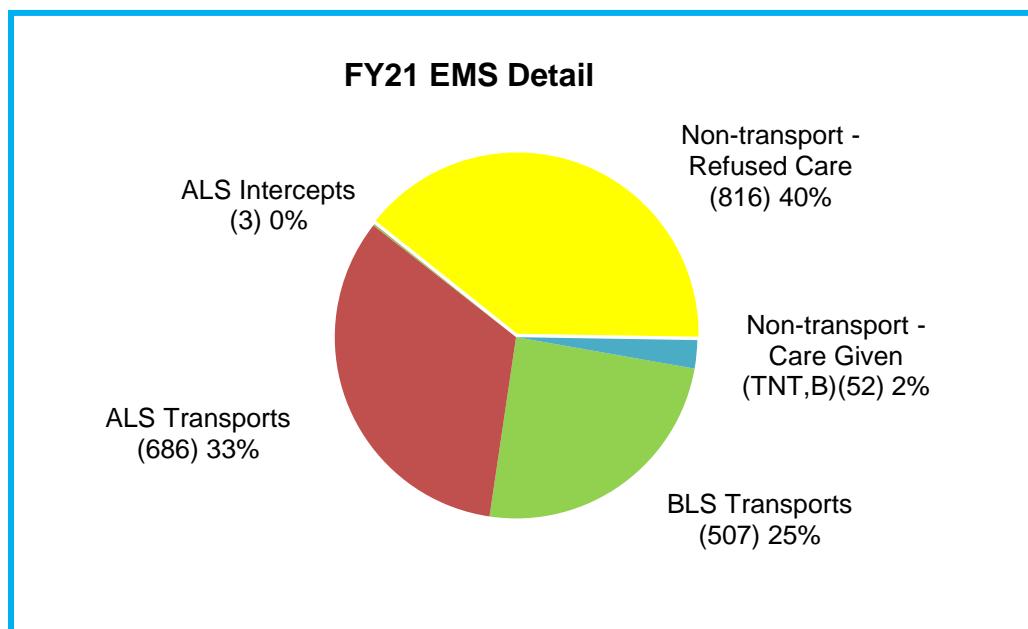


Emergency Medical/ Non-fire/Fire response history FY 11- 21



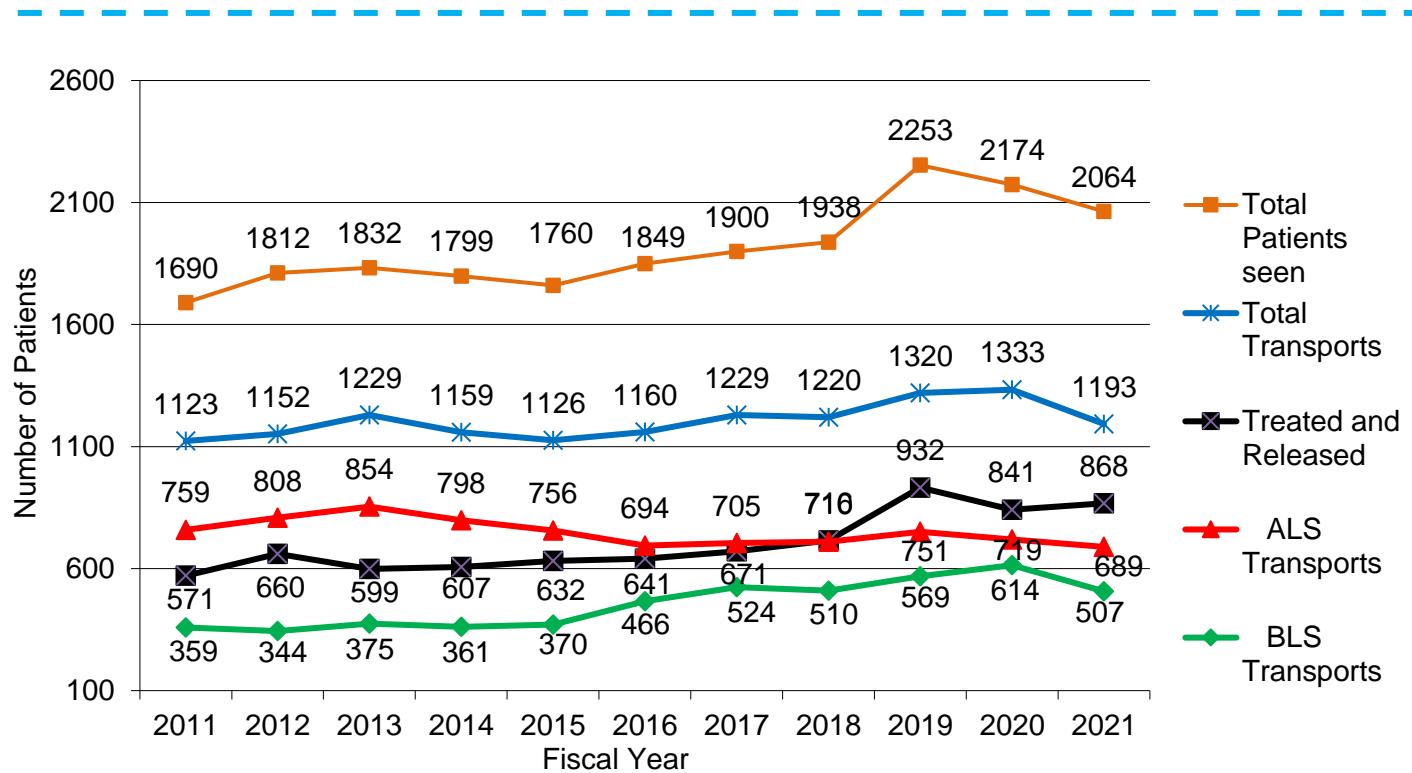
Up until this pandemic year, we have seen an average increase of over 63 incidents per year in EMS, fire, and non-fire calls.

Emergency Medical Services activity FY 21



In FY 21, emergency medical requests decreased (-73) from the previous fiscal year. We responded to 1,967 emergency medical service requests, encountered 2,064 patients, and transported 1,193 patients to the hospital.

Emergency Medical Services activity FY 11-21



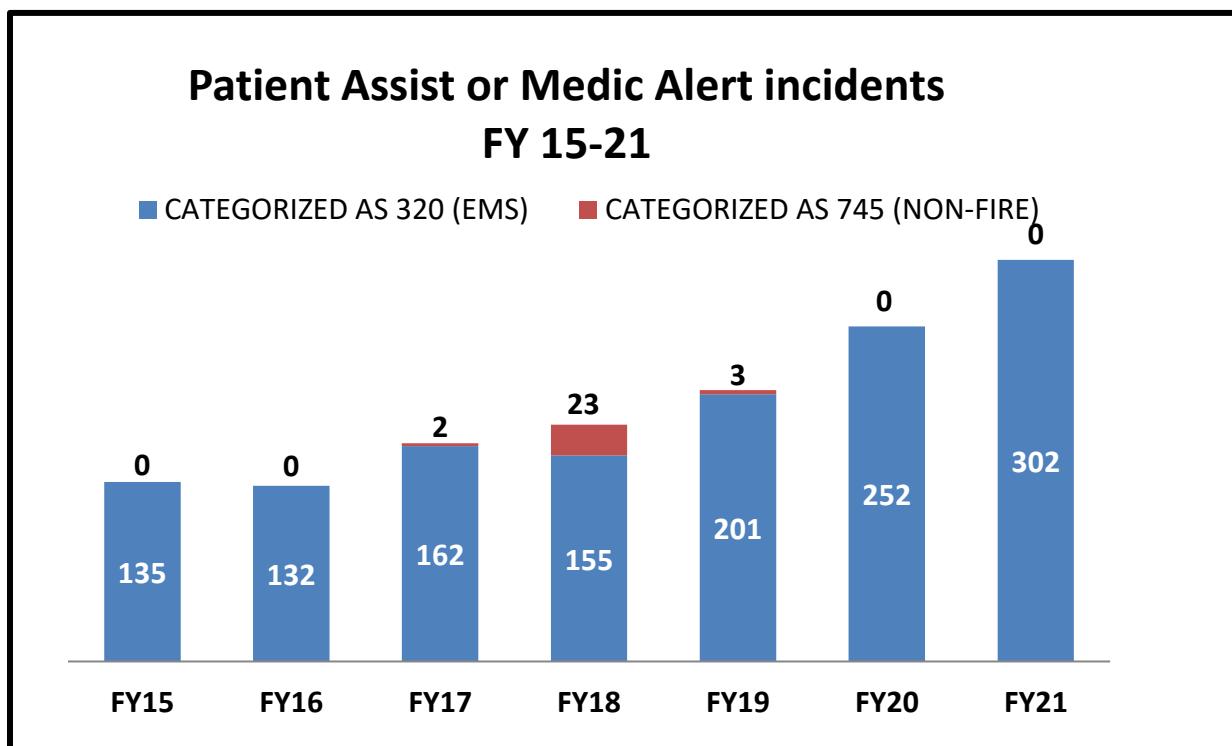
Until this pandemic year, overall emergency medical activity continued on an upward trend. In FY 21, the Fire Department experienced a decrease in emergency medical responses (-73), with fewer patients seen (-110) and we transported 140 fewer patients to the hospital from the previous year.

Emergency Medical Services – lift assists/medical alarms

We began to notice the need for this category of service approximately eleven years ago and it has been growing incrementally ever since. This expanding category of non-emergency service request has the potential to negatively impact our ability to deliver emergency services. What we began to see approximately eleven years ago as an infrequent request to assist a citizen back into a chair or bed because the spouse or family member could not physically help has evolved into frequent lift assist requests to medical alarm activations and more recently, citizen medical assist requests (a request to assist a citizen to/from an automobile into/out of the home for a medical visit/procedure).

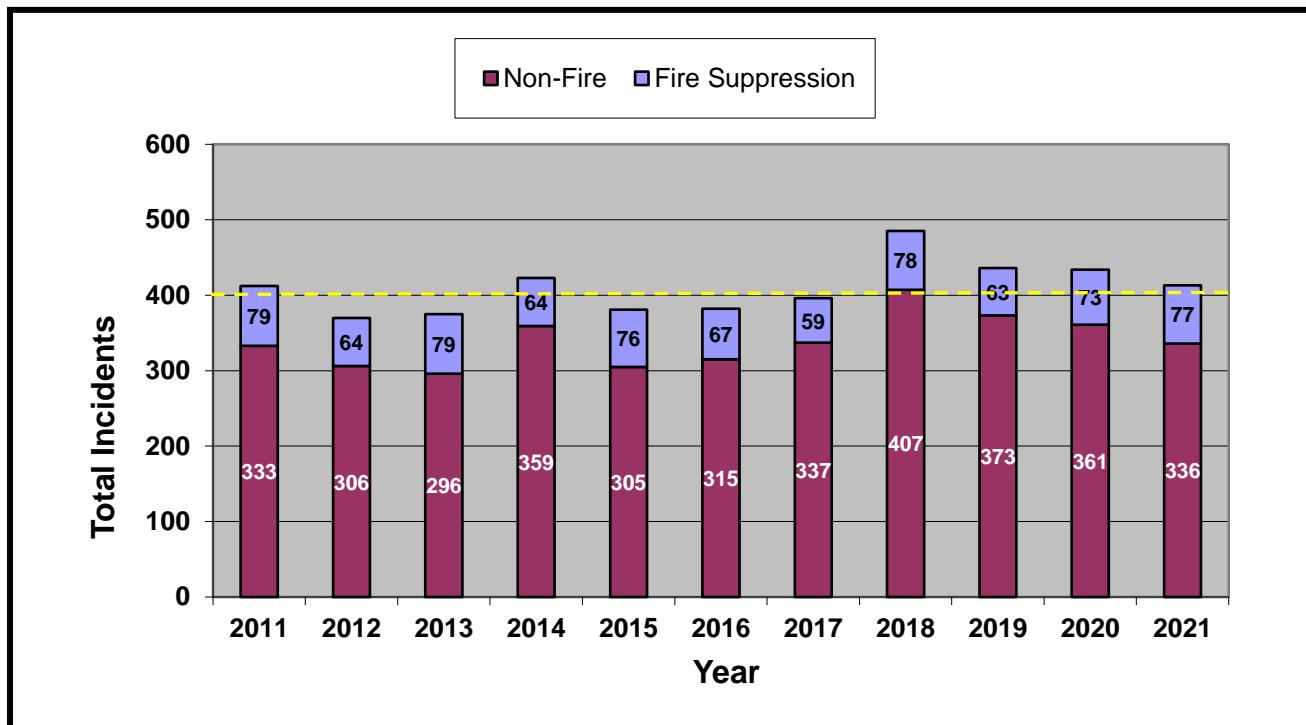
We began tracking this category of requests for service over the past seven fiscal years and have seen a steady increase in this relatively new area of citizen assist responses (patient lift assist, medical alarm activations, and citizen medical assist requests). In FY 21, we had 302 responses for patient assist, patient lift assist, or medical alarms. This is an increase of almost 20% (+50 responses) from the previous fiscal year. We continue to watch this growing trend very closely as we believe that it is tied to our senior population (specifically baby boomer generation) who are both living longer (some with some continuing health issues) and living at home much longer than in the past. Many members of this targeted population group do not have a support system of family, friends, or neighbors and thus have come to rely upon the Fire Department for this assistance.

Without significant changes to the healthcare delivery system, we anticipate that these types of alarms may continue to increase based upon the size and age of the resident population continuing to live at home with a limited support system. We continue to monitor the demand for this type of service and are looking for efficient ways to meet this demand.



Over the last six-years, the average growth is just under 15% per year. We are responding to almost one lift assist per day.

Fire and Non-fire Incidents FY11-21



Fire responses increased slightly (+4) and non-fire activity decreased (-25) from FY20. Generally, fire/non-fire responses have remained relatively stable (averaging about 405 incidents) over the past eleven fiscal years.

Fire and Non-fire Incidents FY 21

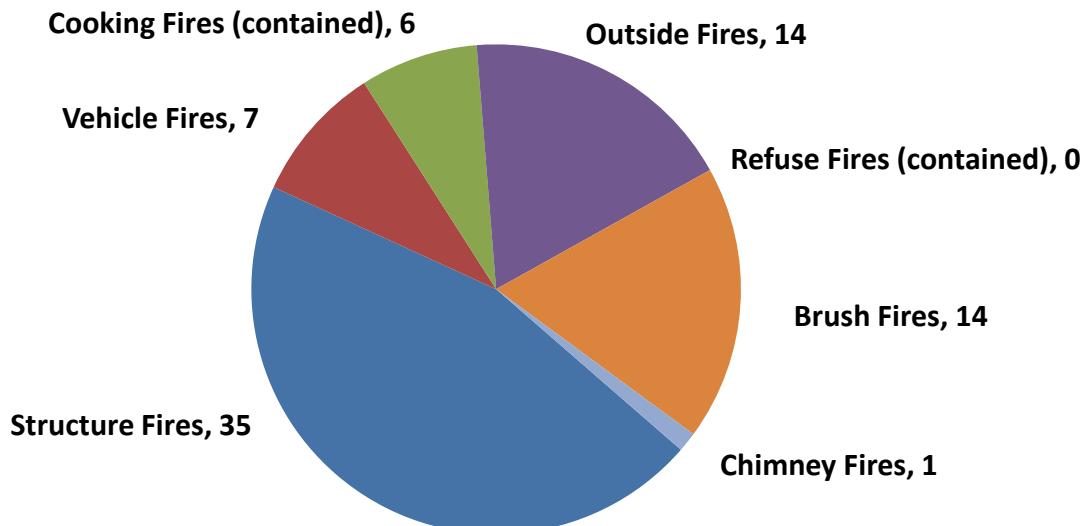
Fire Suppression Responses 77

Structure Fire	35
Vehicle / Motor home	7
Cooking (confined to container)	6
Outside (rubbish & equipment)	14
Refuse (dumpster, trash contained)	0
Brush Fire	14
Chimney	1

Non-fire Responses 336

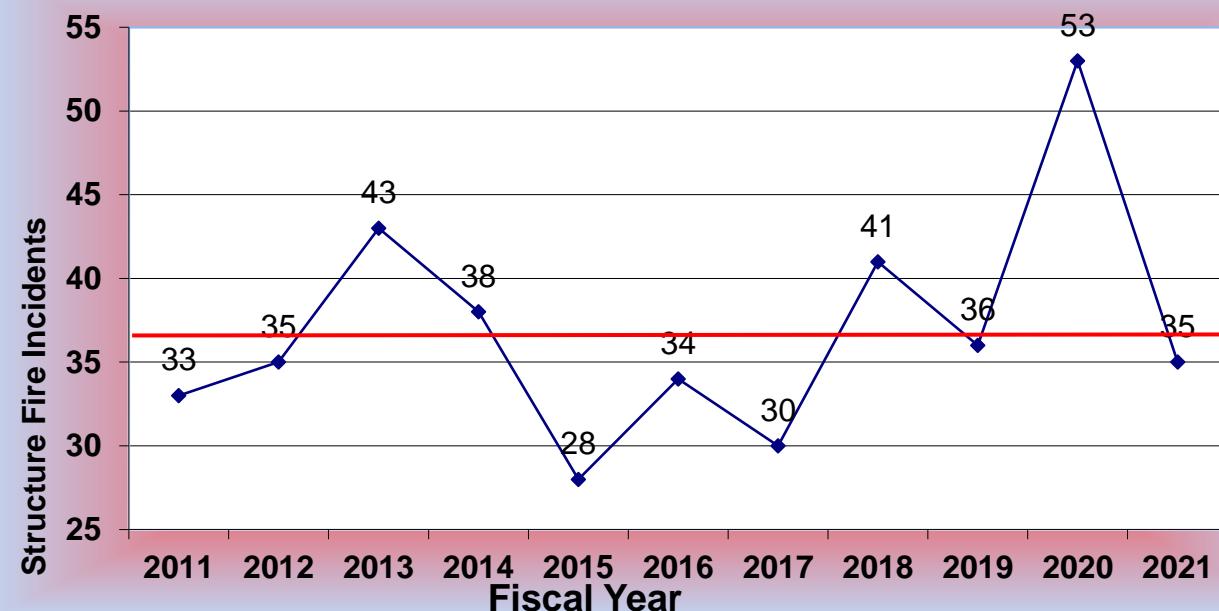
False / Malicious Alarms	155
Good Intent	81
Burning Complaints	1
Hazardous Conditions	69
Service Calls	30

Fire suppression responses FY 21



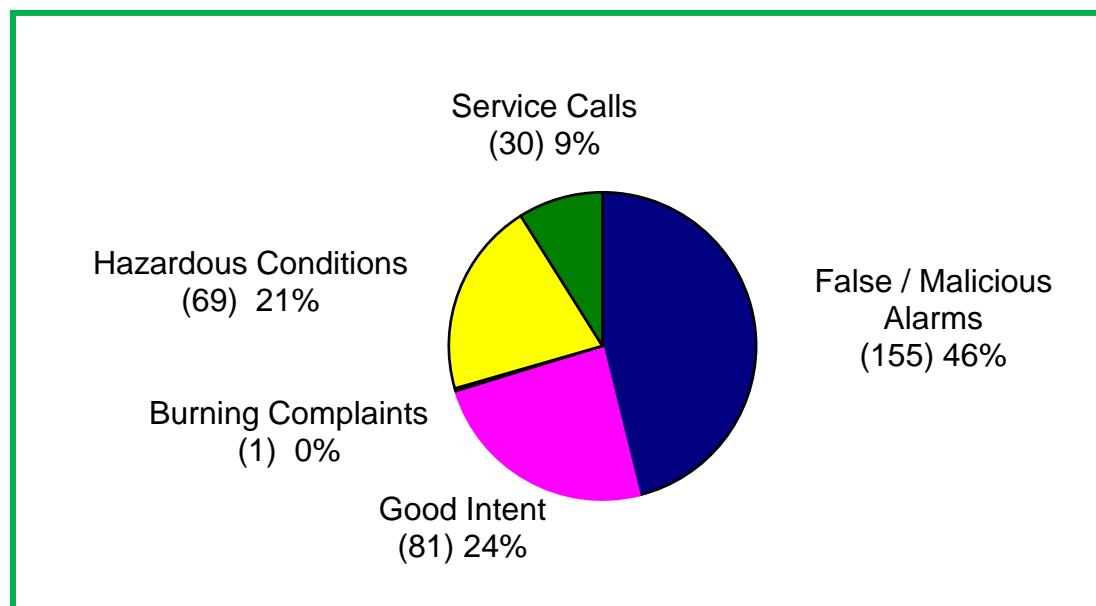
In FY 21, vehicle, cooking, outside, and brush fire responses increased (+29), while structure and refuse fires decreased (-25).

Fire suppression responses FY 11-21



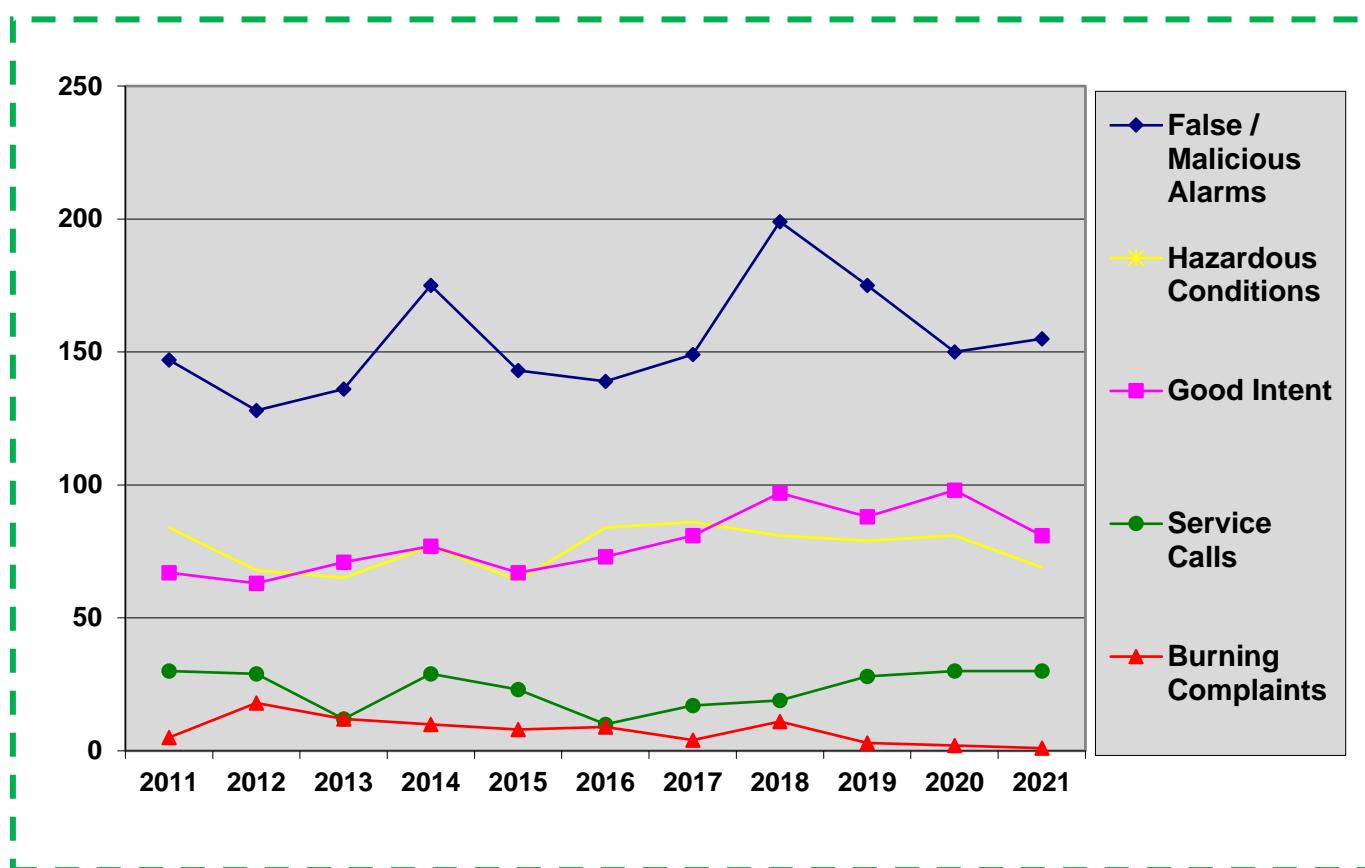
In FY 21, structure fire suppression responses decreased (-18). The solid red line indicates the average number (37) of fire suppression responses over the last 11 years.

Non - fire responses FY 21



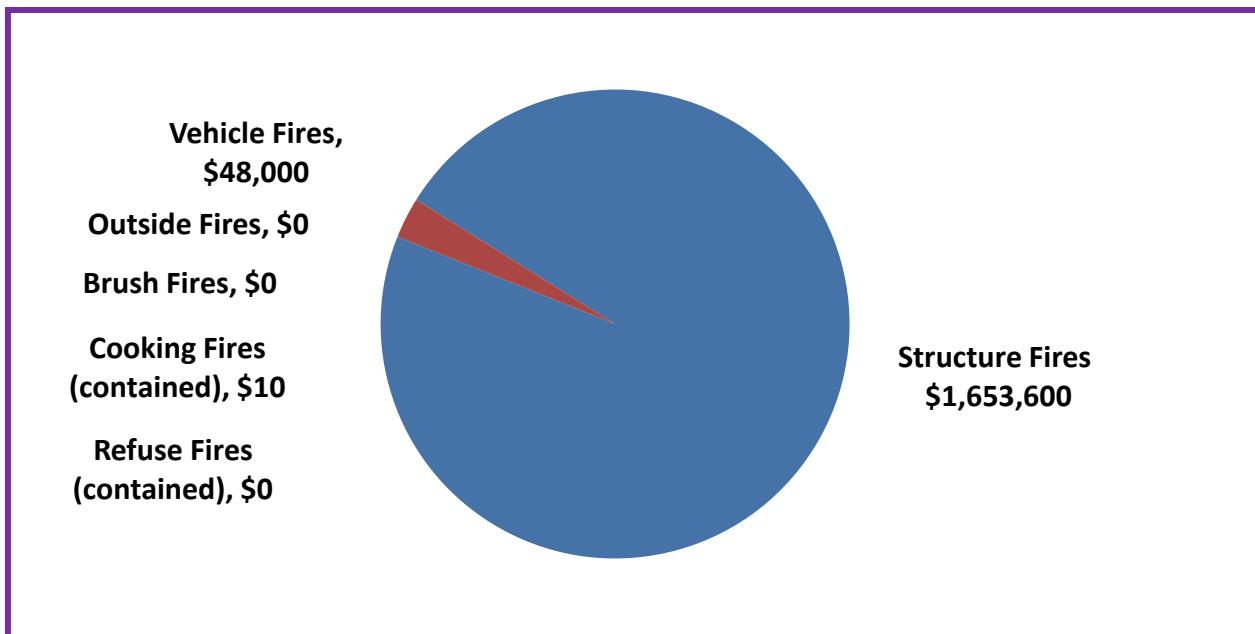
In FY 21, false/malicious alarms increased slightly (+5) while burning complaints, good intent, and hazardous conditions decreased (-30) in frequency.

Non - fire responses FY 11-21



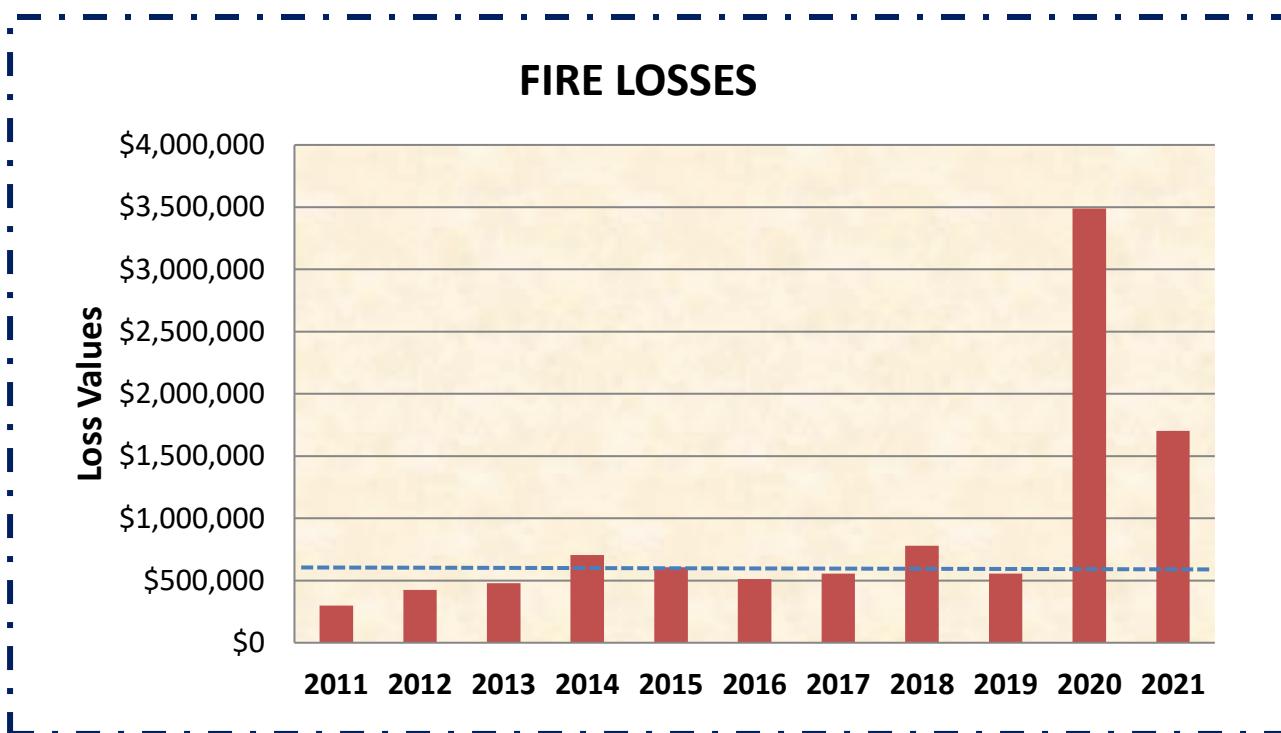
The pandemic had an impact on non-fire responses. In FY 21, three of five non-fire categories decreased from the previous fiscal year. Overall, the various non-fire response category activity level continues to generally trend in a flat (hazardous conditions, service calls, burning complaints) to slightly upward (false alarms, good intent) manner.

Fire loss FY 21



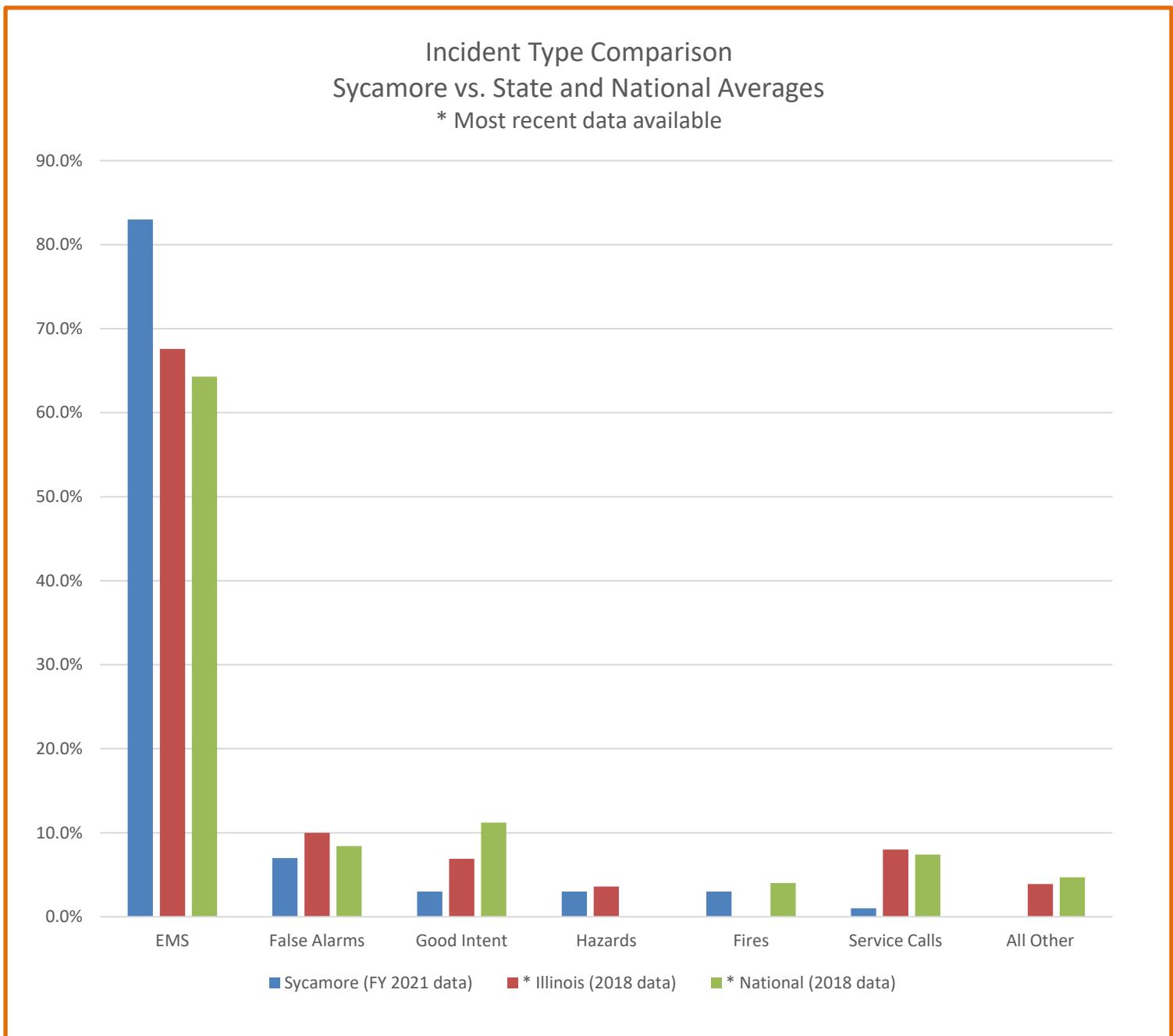
In FY 21, we reflected dollar loss of \$1,701,610, resulting from 14 of the 77 reported fire suppression responses.

Fire loss history FY11 – FY 21

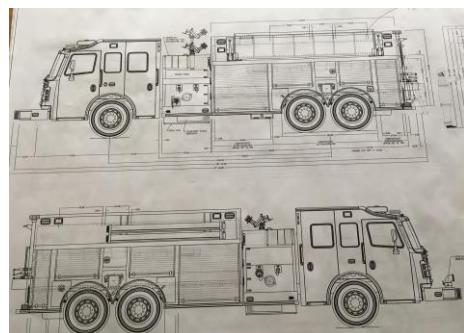
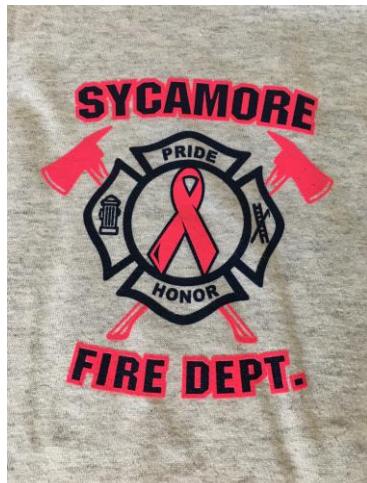


In FY 21, the annual reported fire loss was \$1,701,610. While we had fewer structure fires in this fiscal year, we had many more costly fires when they did occur. The average fire loss for the past 11 years is \$918,794. If one removed the FY20 fire loss (\$3,488,260), the average would be \$661,875. Regardless of the measure used, FY21's dollar loss of \$1,701,610 was significantly higher than the average.

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



Special activities/events



Special activities/events

For much of FY 21, the COVID – 19 pandemic significantly impacted most non-emergency activities. In some cases, the events were cancelled outright. In other cases, the activity was altered to be held remotely via various communication platforms (ex. Zoom or Teams)

September 11 Memorial Service

This past year marked the nineteenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. On September 11, 2020, the weather and COVID precautions forced the Fire Department to hold a short program at the Fire Station #2 apparatus bay where the gathering could spread out to social distance. 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 21, 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 21:

- Continued to fund the cost of a subscription service for text, voice and app emergency dispatch notification system (eDispatches/I am Responding) for all employees
- Funded firefighting equipment purchase for individual firefighters
- Funded work out equipment for both fire stations (treadmill and squat bars)

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 Shaun Penn
- Lieutenant Jim Ward
- Lieutenant Adam Honiotes
- Firefighter/Paramedic Scott Flatter
- 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 was established in 2001 for the purpose of preserving the history of the Sycamore Fire Department. The Preservation Company's initial focus was to procure and preserve a retired Sycamore Fire Department 1923 Stutz fire engine. Since that milestone was met, the group has moved forward with efforts to find a permanent home for the fire engine and other fire department memorabilia. In FY 21, the committee efforts focused on:

- Working with the DeKalb County History Center for the designation of a building on N. Main Street property for the future development of a fire museum
- The development of building renovation plans on creating a fire museum to store the "Stutz" Fire Engine
- Started a "buy a brick" program to aid in funds for museum construction
- For fund raising purposes, joined the Dekalb County Non for Profit (DCNP)
- Hosted a drive thru BBQ fund raiser at Fire Station #2

Community activities – Local #3046 College Scholarships awarded

In 2020, Sycamore Firefighters Local #3046 awarded five Sycamore High School student graduates with \$500 each 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). Due to the pandemic, fund raising was performed in a virtual environment. In spite of the limitations of social interaction, Sycamore Firefighter's Local 3046 members collected almost \$2,500 for MDA.

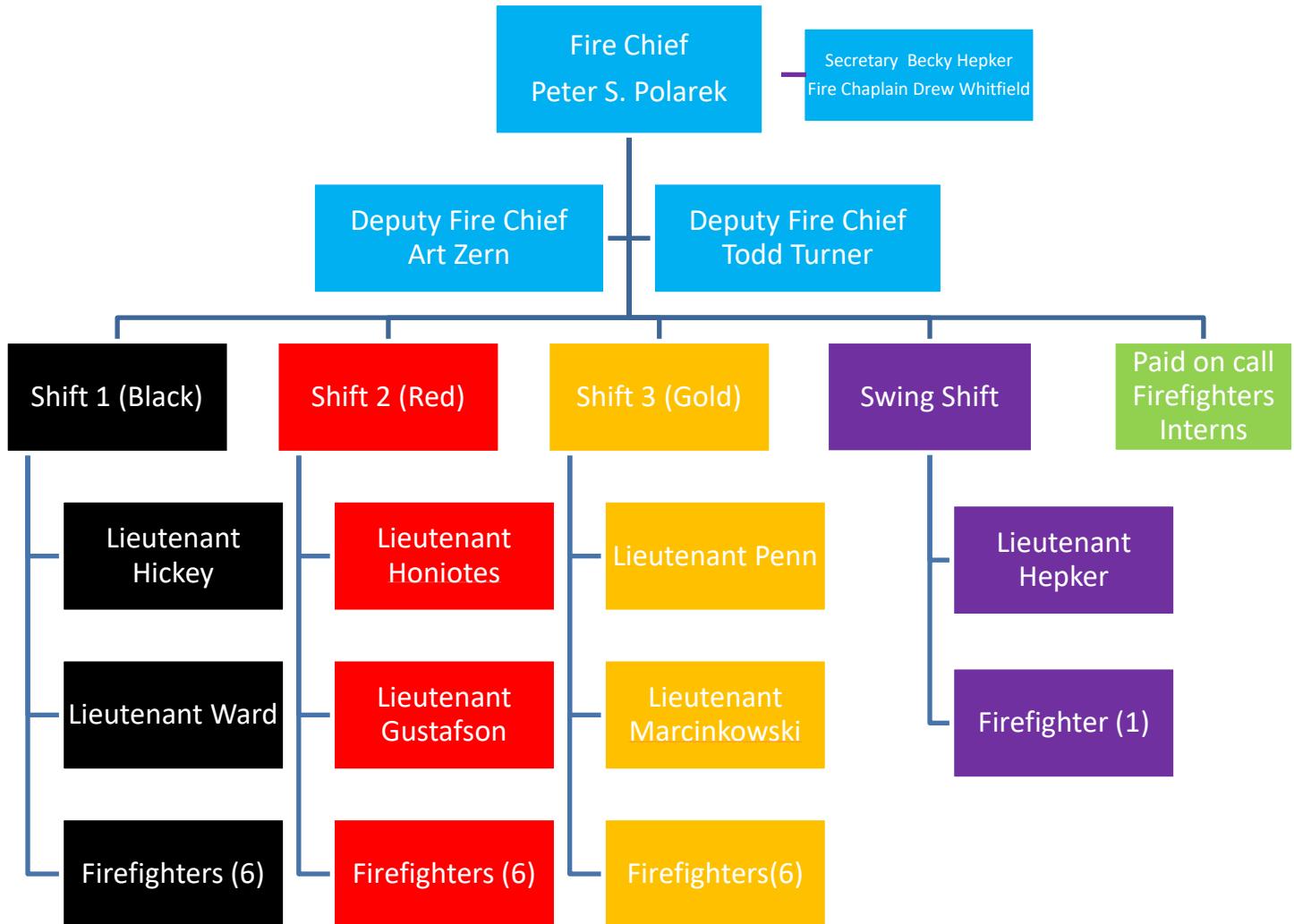
Community activities - Meals on Wheels

During the entire month of November, 2020, 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 2020, Local 3046 members donated complete turkey dinners to 30 local families.

Fire Department Organizational chart



Sycamore Fire Department personnel roster as of May 1, 2020

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
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Shift 1 (Black)

Lieutenant	B	Tal Hickey
Lieutenant	P	Jim Ward
Firefighter	P	Brad Belanger
Firefighter	P	Scott Flatter
Firefighter	P	John Pink
Firefighter	P	Eric Walker
Firefighter	P	Ian Wheeler
Firefighter	P	Nick Young
POC Firefighter	P	Jacob Turner
POC Firefighter/Intern	B	Mike Mathey
POC Firefighter trainee	B	William Becker
POC Firefighter trainee	B	James Cole

Shift 2 (Red)

Lieutenant	P	Adam Honiotes
Lieutenant	P	Ryan Gustafson
Firefighter	P	Bob Maciejewski
Firefighter	P	Bill Reynolds
Firefighter	P	Dustin Ruby
Firefighter	P	Andy Powers
Firefighter	P	Mike Hardesty
Firefighter	P	Matt Anderson
Prob. POC Firefighter	B	Carolyn Thompson
POC Firefighter trainee	B	Cole Flatter

Shift 3 (Gold)

Lieutenant	P	Dan Marcinckowski
Lieutenant	P	D. Shaun Penn
Firefighter	P	Pat Dulzo
Firefighter	P	Brian Thompson
Firefighter	P	Erik Carlson
Firefighter	P	David VanDusen
Firefighter	P	Nick Perez
Firefighter	P	Christian Conlon
POC Firefighter/Intern	B	Drew Diehl
POC Firefighter trainee	B	Alex Castritis
POC Firefighter trainee	B	Paul Meyer
Swing shift		
Lieutenant	P	Darrin Hepker
Firefighter	P	Eric Saxton

