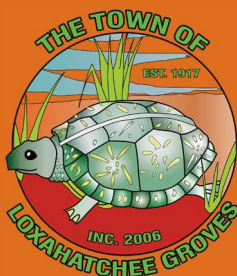




# **PALM BEACH COUNTY FIRE RESCUE**

## **TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES ANNUAL REPORT**



**OCTOBER 1, 2023 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2024**

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# MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES



## **MISSION**

We are committed to providing safe and secure communities by mitigating all hazards through excellence in public service.

## **VISION**

Excellence Today. Improving Tomorrow.

## **CORE VALUES:**

### ***INTEGRITY***



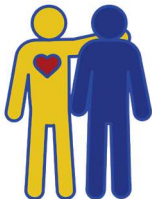
Possessing a strong moral character to be trusted to do the right thing even when no one is watching.

### ***UNITY***



Recognizing the value that inclusivity holds and how it produces effective teamwork through the coming together as one.

### ***COMPASSION***



The will and action of helping others with empathy, dignity, and understanding.

### ***ACCOUNTABILITY***



The obligation to account for your actions, accept responsibility, and operate with transparency.

### ***DEDICATION***



A continuous commitment to exceptional service to the community and each other.



# MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



Firefighters take an oath of office to put others before themselves, protect and serve, and make sacrifices along the way to save lives, sometimes risking their own. Every year, I am inspired by our firefighters' actions, their success stories, and their unconditional compassion for others. The people of Palm Beach County Fire Rescue (PBCFR) love what they do, and it shows. Their efforts continue to improve our community year after year. Fiscal year 2024 saw remarkable growth and achievements as we celebrated our 40th year of delivering excellence in emergency services to nearly one million residents!

This year, our lifesaving stories touched home in ways we never expected. Our firefighters saved one of our employees from cardiac arrest. Our crews also saved the life of one of our Chief's young daughters by delivering a whole blood transfusion on-scene before transporting her to the hospital.

None of these outcomes happen by accident. Our firefighters/paramedics spend hours training and honing their skills with the most advanced and innovative science in emergency medicine. We are proud to deliver emergency services that exceed national standards. The national survival rate for patients who suffer a cardiac arrest is 9.7%, but at PBCFR, our cardiac arrest survival rate for patients is 14.4%. We are the first fire department in Palm Beach County to offer whole blood transfusions on-scene. This life-saving initiative has proven invaluable for more than one hundred local patients as we lead the way for others. Our firefighters continue to raise the bar for every benchmark, answering more than 157,000 calls in our service areas while earning a 99% patient satisfaction rate. Our 911 Communications Center dispatches for 13 other municipalities beyond our areas, totaling over 236,000 calls this year.

This past year, we finalized the training and implementation of our PBCFR Swiftwater Rescue Team. The team embarked on its maiden mission to assist on the west coast of Florida after Hurricane Helene's flooding. The PBCFR Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team was also staffed and trained this past year. They are ready to be deployed here at home and in other areas. Numerous employees traveled to North Carolina to assist after the historic floods. Rest assured, we have some of the best people and resources trained in disaster mitigation and management right here in our Department.

Your safety is our number one priority. I am proud to say 2024 was an outstanding year, and I am forever grateful for the support we have received from the community.

Patrick J. Kennedy

*Fire Chief*

## MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT CHIEF



**AMANDA VOMERO**

*Battalion 2*

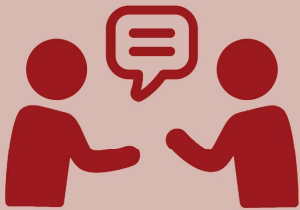
Dear Loxahatchee Groves Community,

As Palm Beach County Fire Rescue's District Chief for Battalion 2, I am happy to serve the residents of Wellington, Royal Palm Beach, Westlake, Loxahatchee Groves, and Indian Trails Improvement District. I started my career at PBCFR 24 years ago because I have always been passionate about helping others, and believed the high energy level of working in the fire service would be an excellent fit for me. The communities we serve are our top priority! If you have any questions or concerns regarding PBCFR, please email me at [AVomero@pbc.gov](mailto:AVomero@pbc.gov).

# PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

PBCFR is determined to provide the best patient care to the communities served. Therefore, PBCFR collaborated with Baldrige Group, a performance excellence consulting firm, to launch a customer service initiative. In FY 2024, PBCFR asked their patients several questions about the care provided by PBCFR. The results are below:

## LOXAHATCHEE GROVES SURVEY RESULTS OCTOBER 2023 - SEPTEMBER 2024



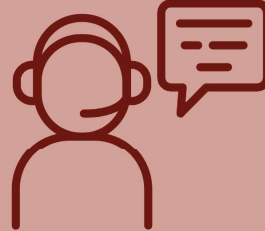
Patients said they would tell friends and family about the positive experience they had with PBCFR.

**85.7 %**



Patients said they were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the 911 Center's ability to confirm their location and nature of their problem.

**85.7 %**



Patients were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the Dispatcher's instructions regarding their emergency.

**85.7 %**



Patients told us they were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the prompt arrival of PBCFR firefighters and paramedics.

**85.7 %**



The professionalism of PBCFR firefighters and paramedics left patients feeling 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the care they received.

**85.7 %**



Patients felt 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the level of compassion shown to them and their families by PBCFR firefighters and paramedics.

**85.7 %**



Patients said they were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the paramedics' explanation of any procedures they performed.

**85.7 %**



Patients reported they were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with the paramedics' attempts to treat their condition.

**85.7 %**

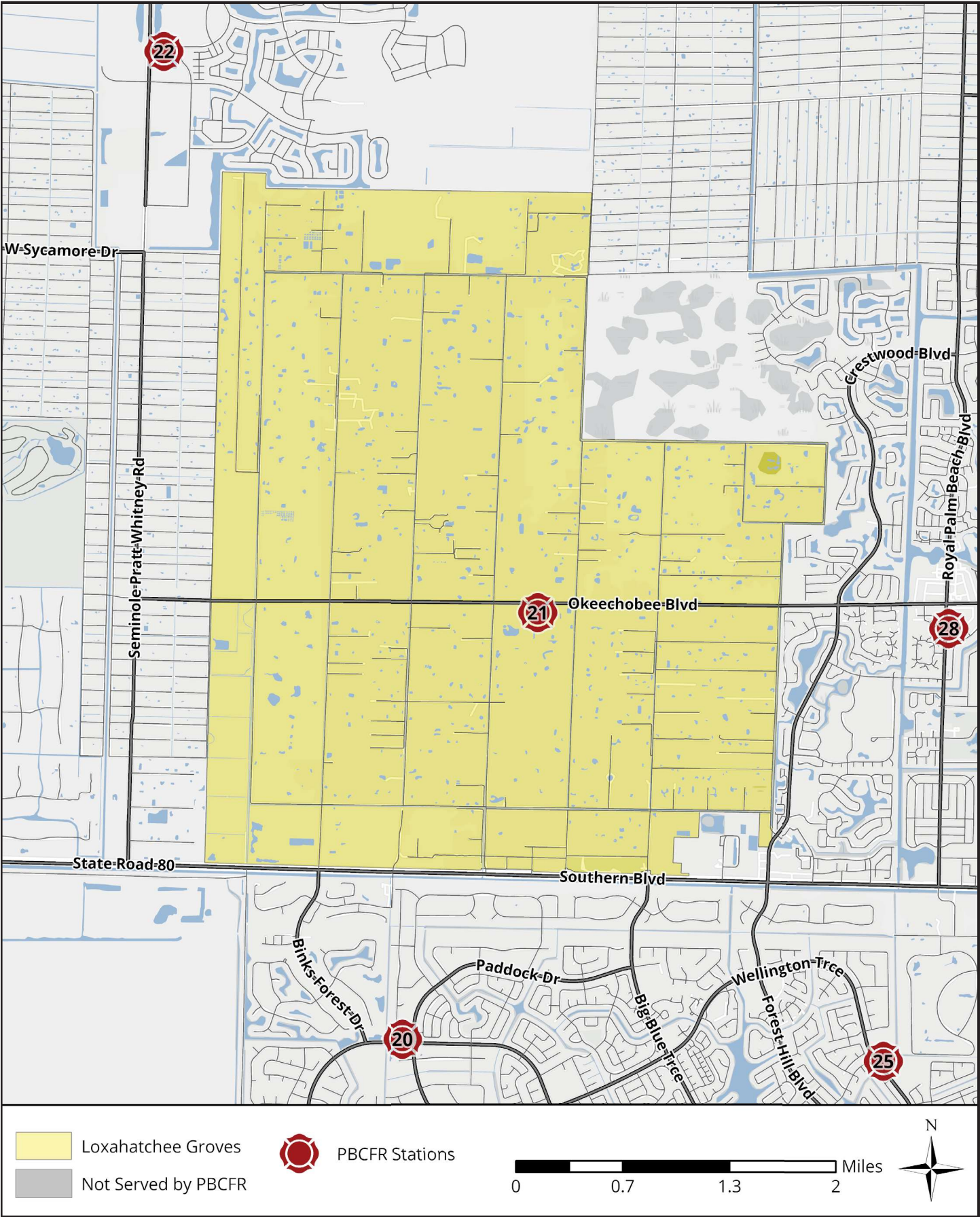
Percentages are calculated from seven respondents.

This survey continues to affirm the excellent level of service that the men and women of PBCFR provide daily to the citizens and visitors of PBC.

**85.7%**  
**OVERALL  
SATISFACTION**

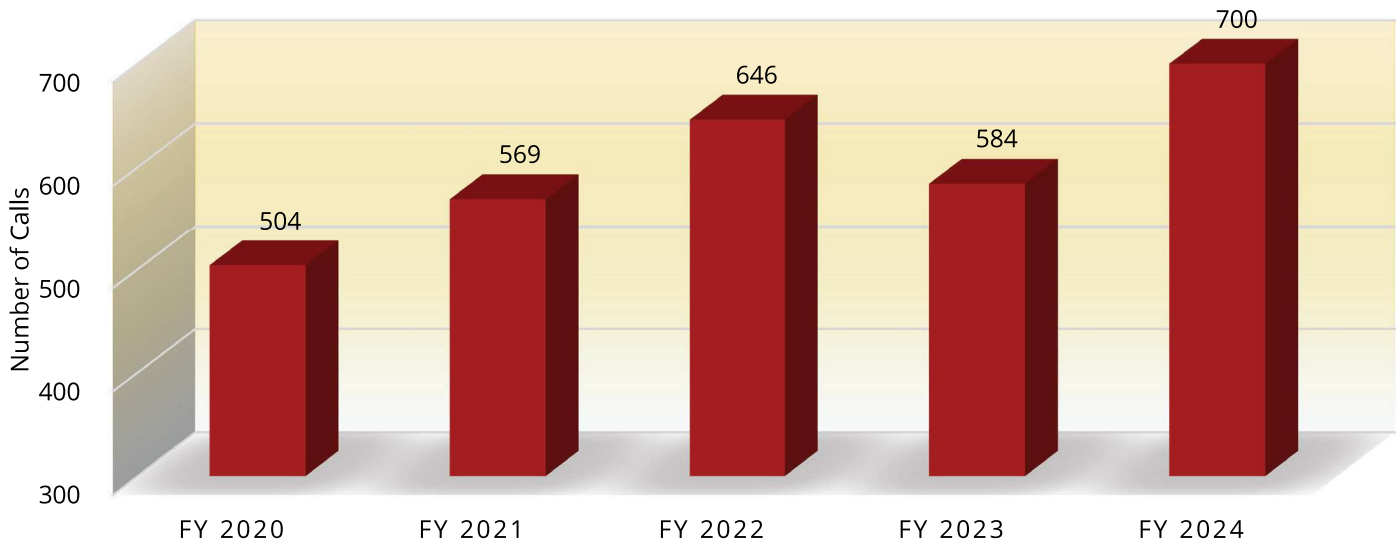


# LOXAHATCHEE GROVES SERVICE AREA

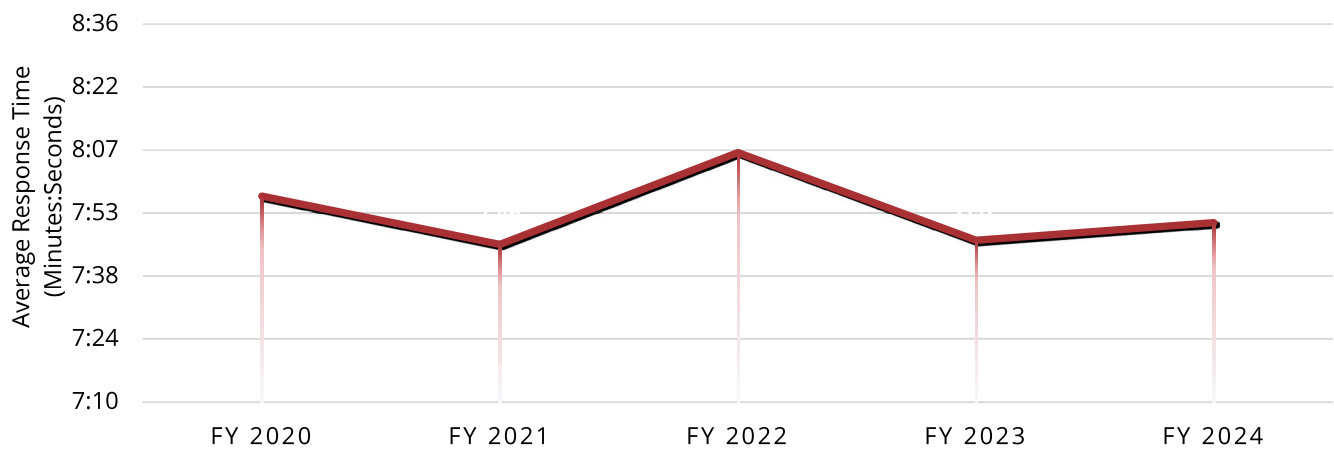


# LOXAHATCHEE GROVES FY 2024 CALL ACTIVITY

## TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS

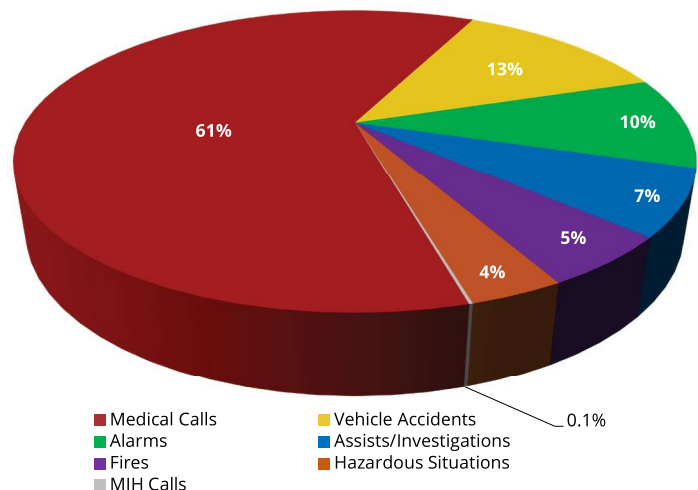


## AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME



## CALLS BY SITUATION DISPATCHED

SITUATION DISPATCHED	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS
Medical Calls	430
Vehicle Accidents	89
Alarms	69
Assists/Investigations	49
Fires	37
Hazardous Situations	25
MIH Calls	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>700</b>



# STATIONS • APPARATUS • STAFFING

The Town of Loxahatchee Groves is primarily served by Station 21. The service area is part of a regional system and is immediately backed up by surrounding stations with resources and equipment.

## PRIMARY RESOURCES ASSIGNED TO THE TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES

STATION	APPARATUS	STAFFING (number of personnel)
<b>Station 21</b> 14200 Okeechobee Blvd. West Palm Beach, FL 33470	ALS Rescue (1)	3
	ALS Engine (1)	3
	4WD Brush Truck (1)	(cross-staffed with ALS Engine)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN THE SURROUNDING AREA

STATION	APPARATUS	STAFFING (number of personnel)
<b>Station 20</b> 1000 Greenview Shores Blvd. Wellington, FL 33414	ALS Rescue (1)	3
	ALS Engine (1)	3
	4WD Brush Truck (1)	(cross-staffed with ALS Engine)
<b>Station 22</b> 16650 Town Center Parkway S. Westlake, FL 33470	ALS Rescue (1)	3
	ALS Engine (1)	3
	Tender (1)	1
	4WD Brush Truck (1)	(cross-staffed with ALS Engine)
	High Water Vehicle (1)	(cross-staffed with ALS Engine)
<b>Station 28</b> 1040 Royal Palm Beach Blvd. Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411	ALS Rescue (1)	3
	ALS Engine (1)	3
	EMS Captain Command (1)	1
	Battalion Chief Command (1)	1
	District Chief Command (1)	1
	4WD Brush Truck (1)	(cross-staffed with ALS Engine)



# STATION & APPARATUS

## STATION 21



Rescue 21



Engine 21



Brush 21





# WHOLE BLOOD TRANSFUSION PROGRAM

The Whole Blood Transfusion Program was implemented to improve the survival rate of bleeding patients. PBCFR is one of the few agencies nationwide that is capable of delivering this advanced level of service. Research shows two critical actions can improve the survival odds of a bleeding trauma patient. First, stop the bleeding and second, replace lost blood. Based on the latest medical research, PBCFR includes Tranexamic Acid and calcium chloride in the protocol which helps decrease the mortality rate of a traumatic incident. The Medical Services team has shared whole blood transfusion best practices all around the United States.

## Training at Elmendorf Air Force Base



Over the summer, PBCFR participated in a two-day Selective Prehospital Advanced Resuscitative Care (SPARC) course at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. This course focused on the latest evidence-based practices in prehospital trauma care. PBCFR highlighted its whole blood program, sharing clinical best methods and case studies.

## Training at Nellis Air Force Base



On September 11, 2024, PBCFR was honored to provide training and education at Nellis Air Force Base located in Nevada, sharing expertise and lessons learned with base hospital staff, firefighters, and contracted personnel. Topics included field administration of whole blood, the use of ultrasound by first responders, and Pit Crew CPR. The opportunity to collaborate with those dedicated to our nation's safety was deeply meaningful, and the training was both well-received and appreciated by all in attendance. PBCFR stands proudly by our Armed Forces.



## Whole Blood Saved Her Life

Izzy's surgical wounds began bleeding after being home for six days following a routine tonsillectomy. Her father, PBCFR's District Chief Neal Niemczyk, stopped the bleeding the previous night using cotton balls but overnight the bleeding returned. By morning, Izzy had lost more blood than her body could tolerate and almost collapsed. While the Chief held his daughter, he saw her slip into unconsciousness as her heart rate increased and her blood pressure dropped. They called 911 and told the dispatcher that Izzy was bleeding out. Chief Niemczyk's heart sank as he realized his six-year old daughter might be going into cardiac arrest. Thankfully, that was not the case and he knew his daughter needed whole blood, which is carried in PBCFR's EMS vehicles.

Once the familiar faces of PBCFR's crew arrived at the Chief's house, he handed Izzy over to them for her care. Two EMS Captains administered whole blood, and within 30 seconds, Izzy opened her eyes and looked at her mom. Chief Niemczyk later said, "You never suspect that we train for our own family and our own loved ones. To know that my team, my fire department, saved my daughter's life, how do you get any better than that?" PBCFR's Whole Blood Program had a significant impact on Izzy's recovery almost immediately. Receiving whole blood before arriving at the hospital allowed her to avoid more invasive procedures later on.

Izzy's story caught the attention of producers at NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. They aired a special report on the life-saving value of whole blood in the prehospital setting and included this touching story of a Fire Rescue Chief whose little girl has now made history.



Scan the QR Code to  
view this Story





# EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION & AWARDS

## 911 for Kids Heroes Awards



Congratulations to Communicators' Kayla Schubart, Nicole Mckessy (pictured), and Dawn Collura for being recognized at the 2024 National 911 for Kids Heroes Awards Ceremony for their heroic efforts handling 911 emergency calls involving "kid" callers.

## Golden Palm Award Recipients



The Golden Palm Award is County Administrator Verdenia Baker's highest level of recognition for accomplishment, where County employees are recognized for going above and beyond. This award was presented to PBCFR's Administrative Assistant III Wendi Mason, Senior Planner Nancy Burdett, EMS Captain Troy Dichard, Captain Karen Derogatis, and Lieutenant Sebastian Garay for their efforts with launching and managing the PBCFR Whole Blood Transfusion Program to improve the survivability of patients suffering from a traumatic injury.

## PBCFR Investigators Receive Honors

PBCFR Fire Investigators have been recognized by the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) for meeting the highest forensic standards for fire, arson, and explosion investigations.



PBCFR closes and convicts more arson investigations than state or national averages. PBCFR's arson lab is one of only 16 based in Florida recognized by OSAC. PBCFR is the only Fire Department in the Nation that meets OSAC Implementer Standards.

## EMS Providers Award



Congratulations to two exceptional PBCFR Firefighter-Paramedics: Lieutenants Andrew Lombardo and Brian Uzzo. Lombardo was named "Paramedic of the Year," and Uzzo was given the "Exceptional Service Award" by the EMS Providers of Palm Beach County.

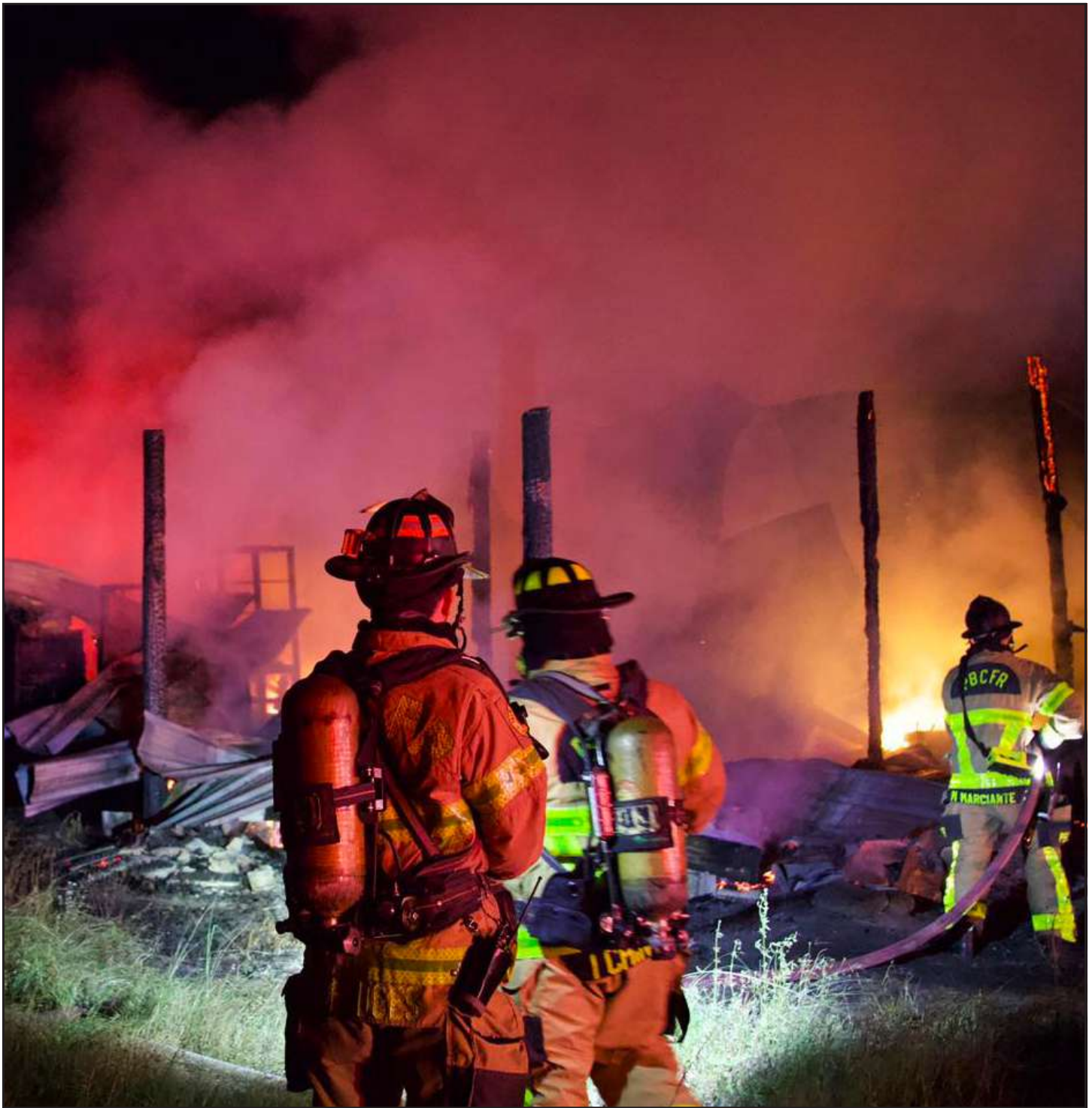
## MIH Provider Hero Award



Heroes from behind the scenes were honored at this year's Heroes in Medicine Luncheon. PBCFR's Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) Team was awarded the Healthcare Provider Hero Award from the PBC Medical Society.



## LOCAL INCIDENT



### **Pole Barn Fire - 10/25/2023**

Firefighters from four stations in Battalion 2 received an early morning call for a fully involved large pole-barn structure fire in Loxahatchee Groves. A total of 13 units went on scene. Since the nearest hydrant was eight blocks away, one of PBCFR's 3,000 gallon tenders, drafted water from a canal behind the structure to supply water for this incident. A small amount of heavy brush that was on fire next to the barn was also contained before it spread.



# OPERATIONS

The Operations Division is responsible for providing emergency services to the community. Operations is the largest division of PBCFR and divided geographically into eight Battalions. PBCFR operates 51 fire stations throughout the County, with minimum daily staffing of 347 personnel on duty at all times. PBCFR is an “all-hazards” department capable of responding to everything from a minor medical call to a regional natural disaster. All personnel are cross-trained in firefighting and EMS, ensuring efficient fire suppression delivery, technical rescue, vehicle extrication, and emergency medical care.

## Personal Rescue Watercraft

Four Personal Rescue Watercrafts (PRWC) are available to assist land-based crews during incidents such as drownings and other open water emergencies. These units are strategically stationed at inlets in PBC; two PRWCs are assigned to Station 18 (near Jupiter Inlet) and two at Station 37 in Lantana (near Boynton Beach Inlet). PBCFR prepares personnel to be proficient PRWC operators and skilled rescue swimmers during intense training taught in and on the water.

## Trauma Hawk – Air Rescue

In partnership with the Palm Beach County Health Care District, PBCFR paramedics and flight nurses rapidly transport ill and injured patients from the scene of an incident or transport critical patients from one facility to another to reduce travel time and increase survival rates. Critical patients may be transported by one of two Trauma Hawk helicopters. PBC is home to two Level 1 Trauma Centers. A Level 1 Trauma Center is capable of providing total care for every aspect of injury - from prevention through rehabilitation.

## Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting

PBCFR provides Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) and EMS services for Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) from Station 81. During the past fiscal year, PBI's number of passengers was over 8.2 million. The crews at Station 81 are trained for emergencies in the airport terminals, airfield, and both commercial and general aviation aircraft. This station is equipped with four specialized vehicles, also known as “Crash Trucks” or “Dragons,” capable of delivering high volumes of water and foam in an emergency landing of an aircraft.





# SPECIAL OPERATIONS

PBCFR maintains two strategically located Special Operations teams, currently assigned to Stations 19 and 34, that respond to emergencies throughout Palm Beach County. Special Operations technicians receive continual training to maintain readiness in several specialized disciplines.

## Hazardous Materials Response



PBCFR's two HazMat Teams are skilled in the detection and mitigation of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive (CBRNE) emergencies and accidental releases. The HazMat Teams acquire expertise and complete training that exceeds the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), FEMA, and the State Specialized Emergency Response Program's standards. PBCFR maintains high levels of safety on HazMat incidents by utilizing up-to-date equipment and training.

## Dark Water Dive Rescue



PBCFR maintains four dive teams skilled in underwater rescue, capable of responding during extreme conditions such as zero visibility and night dives. Dive teams are equipped with dry suits and advanced communication systems to facilitate quick and safe rescues. PBCFR divers are trained to the highest nationally recognized levels and capable of deploying quickly underwater within minutes.

## Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)

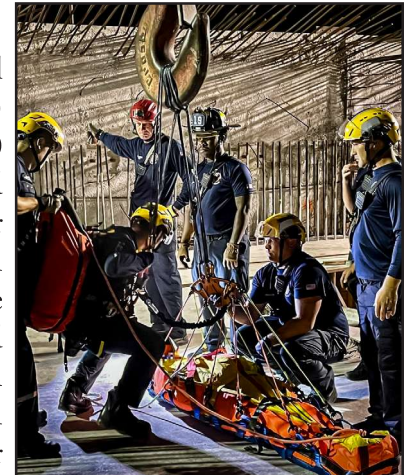
PBCFR works closely with the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office (PBSO) EOD (Bomb Squad) to mitigate potentially explosive or unknown package emergencies. Several of PBCFR's Special Operations teams deploy along with EOD to provide EMS, detection and research of unknown substances. A Rapid Intervention team is also deployed to rescue Bomb Squad technicians if necessary.

## Large Animal Rescue

PBCFR's Special Operations teams are capable of rescuing animals of any size, including horses, large dogs, and farm animals. With the proper equipment and training, PBCFR's Special Operations teams can rescue animals from water bodies, mud, or other situations. They can also initiate necessary medical treatment until a veterinarian arrives.

## Technical Rescue

PBCFR's two Technical Rescue Teams (TRT) are comprised of 80 members, highly-skilled in response to major vehicle accidents, high angle rescue with rope equipment, confined space rescue, structural collapse, and trench rescue. Each member has achieved the designation of "Rescue Specialist" by completing rigorous training required by Florida's State Fire Marshal's Office. Additionally, PBCFR's TRT has completed necessary training and equipment acquisition to meet the standards to qualify as a State Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) team. US&R Teams can be deployed throughout the state of Florida to assist in mitigation of all types of disasters, such as building collapses and hurricanes.



## Urban Search and Rescue

In December 2023, PBCFR launched the first Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team in the County, equipped with specialized swiftwater boats to enhance emergency response in high-risk situations requiring technical expertise.



# MEDICAL SERVICES

The Medical Services Division oversees all medical care, emergency medical training, and MIH services for PBCFR. The Division ensures personnel are trained and prepared to provide exceptional prehospital care and treatment. PBCFR responds to all emergency incidents, ranging from medical calls to traumatic injuries. The Division collaborates with healthcare experts at the local, state, and national levels to develop innovative, evidence-based medical protocols. Continuous research and evaluation of new medical equipment allow the Division to implement protocols and procedures that enhance patient care.

## Medical Directors

To ensure the highest level of care for our citizens, PBCFR has a team of nine Medical Directors who actively participate in training, continuing education, and the advancement of PBCFR's Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). These experienced professionals work alongside paramedics and EMTs, responding to emergency calls in the field on a weekly basis. By incorporating evidence-based practices, their vast knowledge and expertise contribute to maintaining exceptional standards in prehospital patient care.

## Training and Education

The ongoing development of PBCFR personnel remains a priority of the organization, enabling the achievement and maintenance of the highest levels of patient care. In FY 2024, the Medical Services Division provided EMS training for 95 recruits and hosted three paramedic development courses, transforming 68 state or nationally-certified paramedics into highly trained PBCFR paramedics.



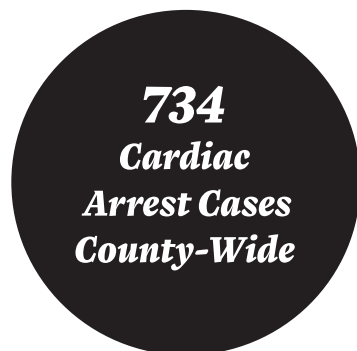
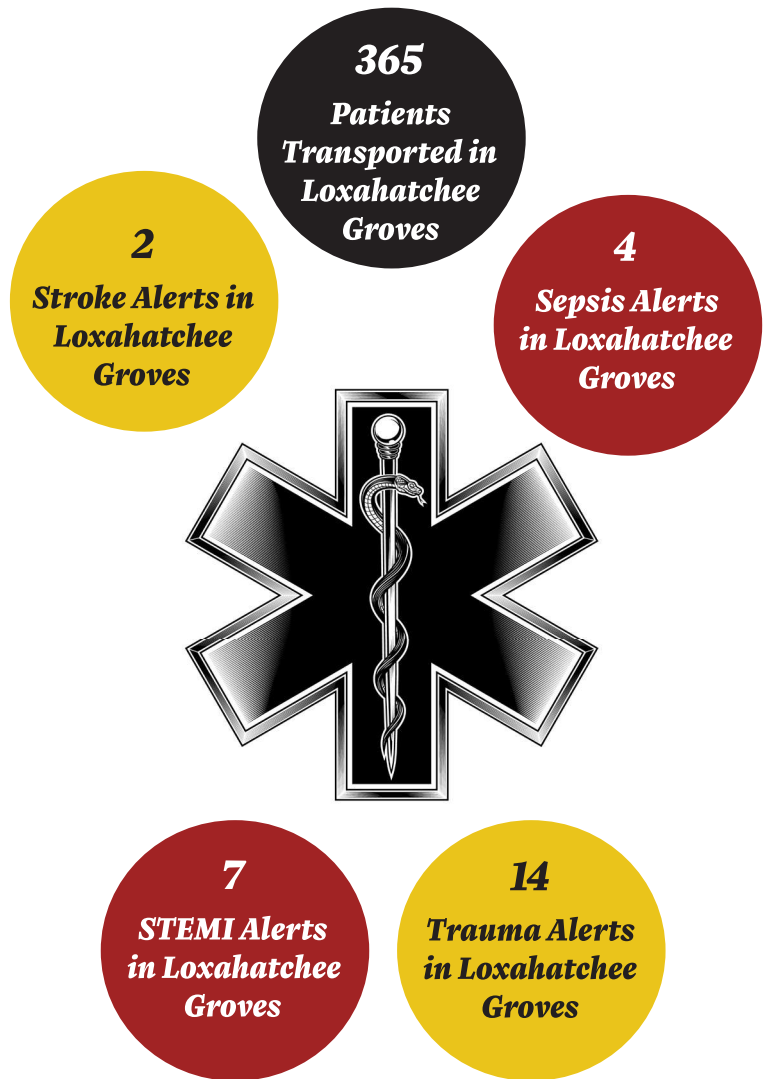
PBCFR has received the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline® EMS Gold level achievement award for its commitment to offering rapid and research-based care to people experiencing the most severe form of heart attacks and strokes.



# EMS CALL STATISTICS FOR FY 2024

Specific incidences involving strokes, heart attacks, septic shock, or trauma are categorized as an “Alert.” Unique criterion defines and classifies different alert types. When a patient meets alert criteria, trained personnel rapidly treat and expedite transport. While in transit, the receiving emergency care facility is notified of an alert via radio; this allows emergency care providers to prepare for receiving a critical patient.

- **Trauma Alert** - Rapid recognition and notification of severe, potentially life-threatening traumatic injury.
- **STEMI Alert** - Specific criteria indicate a patient suffering from a heart attack or STEMI (ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction).
- **Sepsis Alert** - Signs and symptoms identified consistent with septic shock, a life-threatening condition caused by a severe infection.
- **Stroke Alert** - Rapid onset of signs and symptoms associated with hemorrhagic strokes (brain-bleeds) and ischemic strokes (vessel occlusion in the brain) identified.



**26.0%**  
of cardiac arrest cases  
County-wide regained a  
heartbeat

\*Florida State average:  
24.1%

\*Florida Department of Health

**14.4%**  
of cardiac arrest cases  
County-wide were discharged  
from the hospital alive  
(106 patients)

\*The Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance  
Survival (CARES) average is 9.7%

# MEDICAL SUPPLIES & PROCEDURES

The Medical Services Division prioritizes innovation through continuous research and evaluation of cutting-edge medical equipment, medications, and procedures. This approach empowers the Division to implement protocols and procedures that enhance patient care. Utilizing specialized equipment ensures the delivery of life-saving interventions, particularly for cardiac patients.

## Lucas 3

The LUCAS 3 is a mechanical chest compression device that assists in delivering high quality, guideline-consistent chest compressions to sudden cardiac arrest patients. The device was designed for use in the field, en route, and in a hospital. PBCFR has prioritized equipping all engines and rescues with a LUCAS 3 device.



## Ultrasound

The ultrasound device is a solution that supports high-resolution imaging of the abdomen, cardiac function, lungs, OB/GYN function, and focused assessment with sonography in trauma. All PBCFR EMS Captain vehicles carry an ultrasound device, which is compatible with smart mobile devices.

## Procedures:

- Finger Thoracostomy - used in an emergency setting to decompress a suspected tension pneumothorax or hemothorax
- Double Sequential Defibrillation - used to treat refractory ventricular heart rhythms not responding to traditional electrical therapy
- Delayed Sequence Intubation - designed to slow down the traditional intubation process to prioritize oxygenation and blood pressure stabilization ensuring a safe and secure airway
- Distal Femur Intraosseous Access Site - primarily used to administer medications to pediatric patients in cardiac arrest

## Medications:

- Esmolol - used to treat refractory ventricular heart rhythms when a patient is in cardiac arrest
- Rocuronium - paralytic used to facilitate intubation in a critically ill patient
- Cyanokit - used to treat suspected cyanide poisoning secondary to fires in enclosed spaces
- Nitroglycerin Infusion - used to treat acute heart failure with hypertension
- Antibiotics - used to treat sepsis and open fractures on-scene to increase patient survivability
- Whole blood - used to improve the survival rate of bleeding patients



## Sensory Kits

All PBCFR rescue units carry “Comfort Kits,” designed to lessen anxiety and fear in children experiencing sensory overload during a medical emergency. Each kit includes a clear backpack for easy visualization, noise-canceling headphones to reduce auditory stimulation, fidget spinners to keep busy fingers occupied, and squeezable objects to provide comforting distractions.





# MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE

PBCFR's MIH program enhances the EMS approach by assisting patients with social services and medical needs after their 911 call. The MIH Team consists of paramedics and medical social workers who support patients and families by empowering them with the proper means to improve their health and wellness. MIH programs include:

## High Frequency Utilizer & Chronic Disease Management

Ensures patients receive the care and resources needed to reduce reliance on EMS and enhance their safety, wellness, and quality of life. It provides patients who live with a chronic disease the provision of care coordination, health education, and disease management strategies while supporting the patient adjusting to their health issues.

## Addiction

Patients who have recently experienced an addiction-related 911 call and are living with an alcohol or substance use disorder are offered education and connections to either harm-reduction or recovery programs.

## Pregnancy Outreach

Connects pregnant teens and women to prenatal care, pregnancy, and childbirth resources.

## Cardiac Arrest Survivor Outreach

Provides cardiac arrest survivors and family with emotional support and other resources. Patients are also provided an opportunity to reunite with the EMS crew who cared for them.

## Pediatric and Adult Grief Support

Connects families to grief support and other resources after a loss.

## Fall Intervention Program

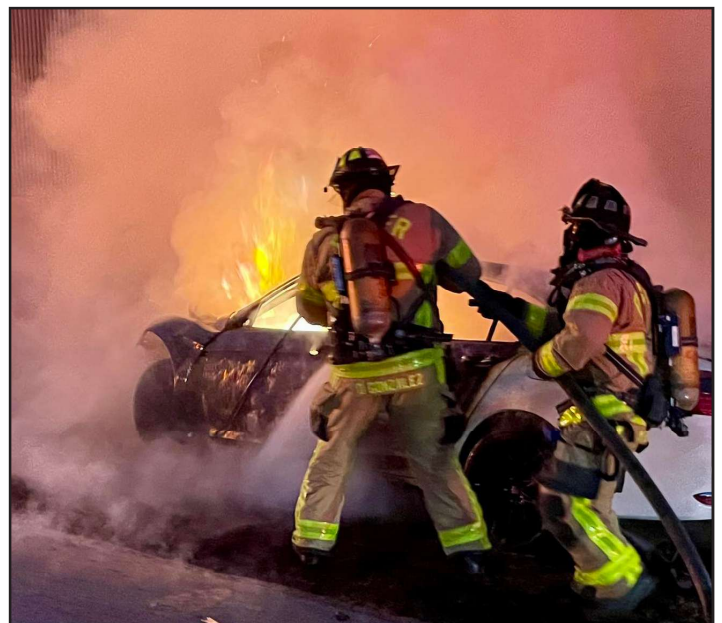
This program allows patients who are already experiencing falls to increase their independence and safety by reducing the risk of future falls and traumatic injury or death. MIH members reach out to patients within 24 hours of a fall to provide immediate fall intervention support, and can facilitate a home visit if needed. The MIH team provides numerous resources and education on fall prevention, and patients seen in their home receive a fall prevention kit which includes grip socks, to help promote safety. The fall intervention program is active in PBCFR service areas experiencing the highest number of fall calls.





# VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

PBCFR responded to 89 vehicle accidents within the Town of Loxahatchee Groves during FY 2024, 13% of the total calls dispatched. Accidents that occur on interstates and highways are often more severe than those that occur on roads with lower speed limits and require additional units to respond. They require an additional engine to protect first responders by blocking traffic and many require extrication equipment. Vehicle extrication is the process of removing a vehicle from around a person who has been involved in a motor vehicle collision when conventional means of exit are impossible or inadvisable. Extrication must be approached delicately to minimize injury to the victim. PBCFR equips every engine and aerial truck with the hydraulic rescue tools required to safely extricate patients. Several unique hydraulic rescue tools are often collectively referred to as the “Jaws of Life.” Each tool is designed to complete a specific function such as spreading, cutting, pushing, pulling, lifting, or stabilizing. Hydraulic rescue tools use pressurized fluid for high-power operation, force that enables them to manipulate the durable engineered metal alloys vehicles are built with. Stabilization equipment keeps heavy vehicles from moving and rolling. PBCFR’s pneumatic stabilizing struts can support over 20,000 pounds each and lift up to 10 tons.





# FIRES

During FY 2024, PBCFR dispatched crews to 37 fires in the Town of Loxahatchee Groves. This includes structure fires, vehicle or boat fires, brush fires, and trash fires. Structure fires are located inside a building and can be categorized as high-rise, commercial, apartment, or residential. These types of fires have the most potential to threaten life safety and can result in significant property loss. PBCFR is prepared to respond to each type of structure fire call with adequate personnel and equipment to mitigate damage as quickly as possible. Therefore, a working structure fire receives a minimum of ten units and 25 personnel.

PBCFR enforces strict adherence to the NFPA 1 and 101 fire prevention code and use of smoke detectors, minimizing human casualties and property loss. PBCFR also administers an outreach program that offers smoke detector installation in homes of those who are unable due to physical or monetary needs.

PBCFR WORKING STRUCTURE FIRE RESPONSE	
UNITS DISPATCHED	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL
3 ALS Engines	9
3 ALS Rescues	9
1 ALS Aerial	4
1 EMS Captain	1
1 Battalion Chief	1
1 District Chief	1
<b>10 Total Units</b>	<b>25</b>





# TRAINING & SAFETY

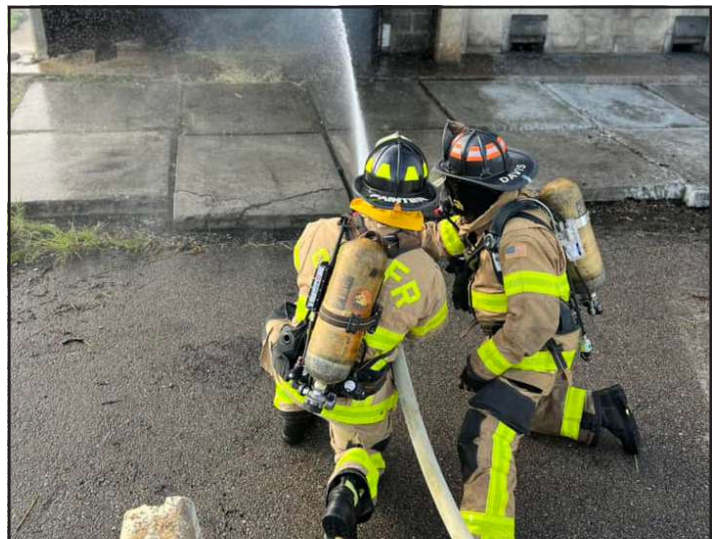


## Training Classes Offered

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1/101 Update
- Incident Command Systems for Expanding Incidents
- All-Hazards Incident Management Team
- Special Operations Candidate School
- Statewide Emergency Response Plan
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support and CPR
- Pediatric Advanced Life Support
- Tactical Emergency Casualty Care
- Florida Urban Search & Rescue classes
  - Structural Collapse
  - Confined Space
  - Trench
  - Rope Rescue
  - Vehicle Machinery Rescue (VMR)
- Florida Fire Inspector Series I
- Live Fire Training Instructor
- Florida Fire Officer Series I
- Florida Fire Officer Series II
- FEMA Strike Team Leader
- Search Culture
- LP Gas Emergencies
- Tesla Electric Vehicle Training
- Elevator Emergencies
- Driver Candidate School
  - Refresher Driver School
  - Emergency Vehicle
- Division of Forestry
- Aerial Operations
  - 100' aerial program
- Dive Rescue
  - Open Water Dive
  - Advanced Water Dive
  - Emergency Response Diver

The Training & Safety Division provides instructional opportunities throughout the year to meet the needs of PBCFR operational personnel. This includes training for newly hired employees in the Recruit Academy, state and national training requirements, and other ongoing or specialized training. Operational employees maintain their required technical certifications through the Training & Safety Division. A variety of classes are given at fire stations, or Department Headquarters, located at the Chief Herman W. Brice Fire Rescue Complex. Safety alerts and online training modules are distributed to ensure PBCFR personnel receive essential information promptly.

Requests are processed from operational personnel who wish to pursue higher education at local colleges and state universities. Each year, Officer Development Academies for the ranks of Battalion Chief, EMS Captain, Captain, and Lieutenant are provided.



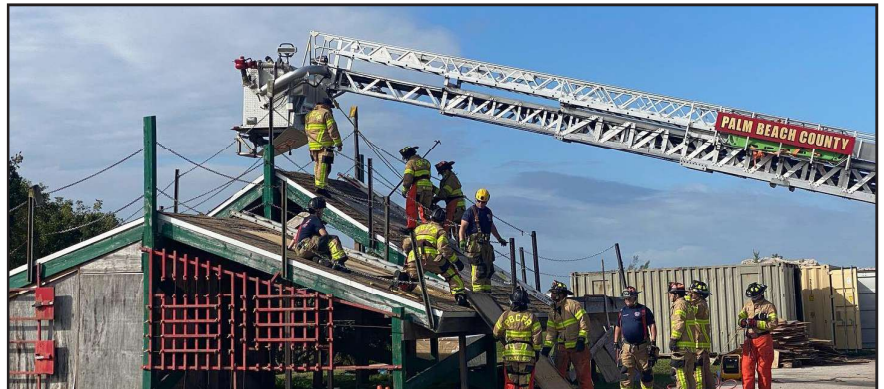


# TRAINING FACILITY



**Training Tower**

PBCFR's Training & Safety Division offers personnel education and training at fire stations and primarily at the Chief Herman W. Brice Fire Rescue Complex. Located on 56 acres of land, the Administration building in the Complex consists of offices, classrooms, and a video production studio. The training area includes a seven-story high-rise tower, burn building, fire behavior/flashover training prop, a liquid petroleum gas field, roof prop for vertical ventilation, forcible entry, impact window prop, emergency vehicle operating course, enclosed SCBA confidence course, Florida US&R training course, VMR/extrication pit, medical simulation lab, and more.



**Vertical Ventilation Prop**



**Burn Building**



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Emergency Management Division is committed to reducing vulnerability to hazards and minimizing the impact of disasters through preparation, response, and recovery. The Emergency Management Team contributes to various local, state, and federal committees, teams, and work groups in support of Homeland Security and a safer PBC. The Emergency Management Division develops and modifies response plans for the following:

- Severe Weather Events
- Civil Disturbances
- Command Team Activations
- Continuity of Operations Plans
- Incident Action Plans
- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

PBCFR's Emergency Management works closely with PBC Directors of Public Safety, Emergency Management, and the Florida Fusion Center to coordinate strategic intelligence and organization collaboration.

## Emergency Services Branch

When the PBC Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is activated during emergencies, the Emergency Management Division of PBCFR assumes leadership and oversight of critical functions at Emergency Support Function desks 4 (Firefighting) and 9 (Search and Rescue). Unit leaders are crucial in linking the County's EOC to field operations across various sectors, including schools, shelters, healthcare, EMS, and ensuring coordinated and effective responses to emergencies.

## Disaster Deployment Assistance

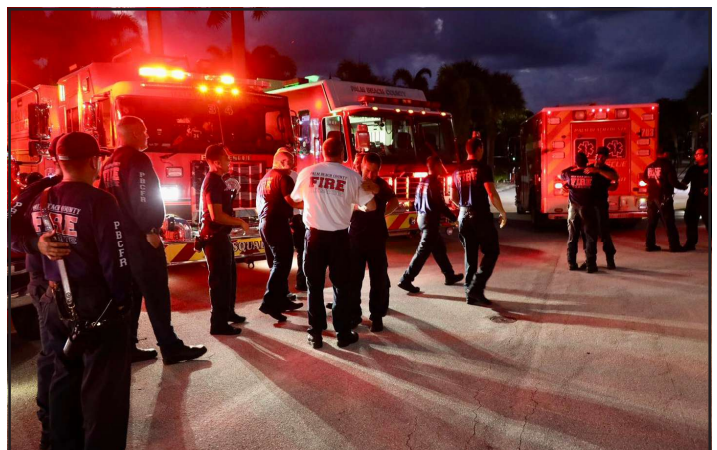
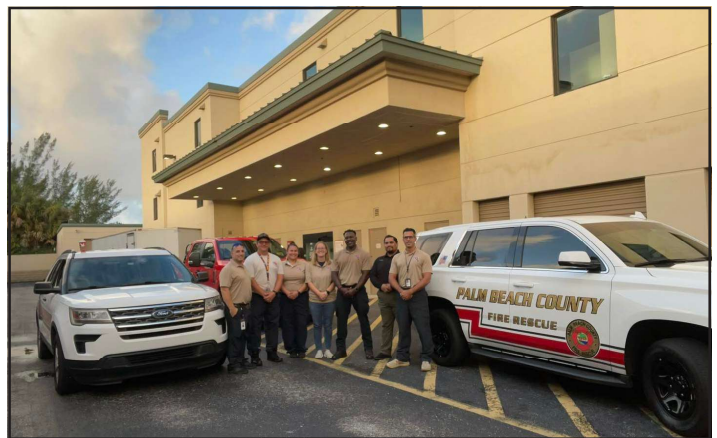
The Emergency Management Coordinator confirms that rosters for disaster deployment are accurate. This ensures that proper training is available and fire rescue personnel are ready to respond to disasters outside PBC. PBCFR is the host agency for the Southeast Florida Regional All-Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT), providing administrative, logistical, and financial support. PBCFR also serves as one of the County representatives for the 67 counties participating in the Florida Statewide Emergency Response Plan, ensuring that strike team resources are ready to be deployed in times of need as part of the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement.

## Domestic Security Preparedness

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement oversees seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces (RDSTFs), which form the backbone of Florida's domestic security. These task forces include members from: fire rescue, emergency management, public health, hospitals, and law enforcement, ensuring that our community is well-prepared and supported during emergencies. The Fire Rescue Emergency Management Division plays a crucial role in the Southeast Florida RDSTF. They conduct regular training exercises, coordinate resource distribution, and develop emergency response plans tailored to the unique needs of the community while ensuring the safety and resilience of our region.

## Training and Exercises

Emergency responses to large-scale incidents in PBC require a strong, unified command presence achieved through partnerships between law enforcement and fire rescue officials. PBCFR works with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure everyone is trained to respond to emergencies. This training includes drills conducted at the EOC, response to active shooters, and regional hazardous material incident response.



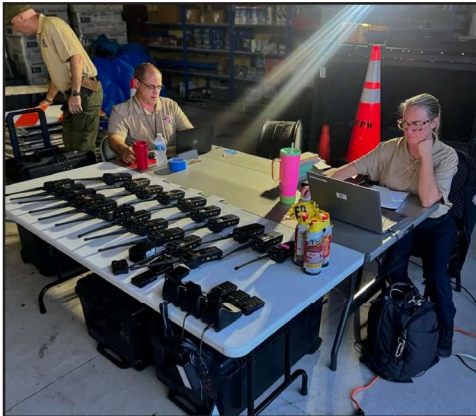


# HURRICANE HELENE DEPLOYMENTS

Hurricane Helene was one of the strongest hurricanes to hit Florida's Big Bend area north of Tampa since 1851. It made landfall near Perry late on September 26, 2024, as a Category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of 140 mph. It continued to move through Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina as a Category 2, concluding in Tennessee as a tropical storm. It caused catastrophic flooding in Asheville, NC, and destroyed parts of Interstate 40.

To assist in the most impacted areas, PBCFR deployed the following teams:

- 11 Firefighters from the Southeast Florida Regional AHIMT to Taylor County, Pinellas County, and North Carolina
- 16 firefighters from the Swift Water Rescue Team who were staged in Ocala
- A Tactical Communication Unit mobilized with two Communications Technicians and 1 US&R Specialist with Florida Task Force 2





# COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

## Plan Review and New Construction

The Plan Review and New Construction Branch reviews fire-related construction plans for compliance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code and inspects all construction phases to ensure code adherence. In addition, this branch determines the necessary water supply for firefighting operations and ensures access roads meet conditions necessary for firefighting apparatus.



## Investigations

The Investigations Branch determines the origin and cause of fires and also conducts explosion analysis. When the cause of the fire is determined as arson, the Investigations Branch conducts a criminal investigation and presents the case to the State Attorney's Office for prosecution. Each Fire Investigator is certified through the State of Florida, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the National Association of Fire Investigators, and is a sworn law enforcement deputy. Investigators may testify in both Federal and State Courts, hearings, and depositions.

*\*If you have any information related to any arson case, please contact Crime Stoppers of Palm Beach County at [www.crimestopperspbcc.com](http://www.crimestopperspbcc.com).*







## Existing Inspections

The Existing Inspections Branch conducts inspections to ensure compliance with the Florida Fire Prevention Code and any local amendments implemented by PBC.

Responsibilities:

- Conduct field inspections of new and existing occupancies
- Prepare inspection reports
- Research, apply, and enforce applicable fire codes and standards
- Investigate and resolve complaints
- Participate in legal proceedings with County Code Enforcement and municipalities' special magistrates
- Review Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans
- Conduct annual hurricane safety inspections
- Conduct life safety inspections for special events, fireworks displays, concerts, and food trucks



## Drowning Prevention Coalition

The Drowning Prevention Coalition provides complimentary services to educate the public on water safety and basic rescue techniques to reduce drowning and other water-related incidents in PBC.

Services Include:

- Land or virtual-based water safety programs tailored for daycares and Pre-K through high school aged students in private and public schools
- Adult water safety programs for businesses, non-profit organizations, senior groups, etc.
- Educational display at health and safety fairs
- Free or reduced-cost swim lessons to underprivileged and special needs children ages 2 through 12 and their immediate caregivers



## Frequently Asked Questions:

**What should you do with your old fire extinguisher?** Old or used fire extinguishers can be discarded at any Solid Waste Authority home chemical and recycling center and placed in the “compressed cylinder” area. Visit [www.swa.org](http://www.swa.org) for drop-off locations in PBC or call 866-SWA-INFO.

**Does PBCFR inspect or service fire extinguishers?** PBCFR does not provide this service. Please call a local fire extinguisher service company in your area or discard it at your nearest household hazardous waste site.

**Does PBCFR offer CPR courses for certification?** PBCFR does not provide certification for CPR. Please contact a local American Red Cross Chapter or the American Heart Association for conventional CPR certification courses (infant, child, and adult).

**What is a Residential Key Lock Box?** In emergency situations, a lock box contains keys and access codes to allow emergency responders to quickly gain entry into commercial and residential properties. PBCFR uses the Knox Box key system. Residents can call 561-616-7024 for more information. Using a generic alternative to Knox Box may cause delays with gaining access. Also, the resident must call 561-616-7012 every year to keep the code active in our CAD (computer-aided dispatch) system. Lock boxes should be installed next to the front door so Fire Rescue can access if the situation permits.

**Does PBCFR offer free car seats?** A new car seat may be provided to eligible children based on availability. If we are unable to match a caregiver with a free car seat for their child, they can call 561-841-3500 to purchase one from Safe Kids Palm Beach County Coalition for a donation fee.

## Community Education

The Community Education and Outreach Branch provides intervention strategies to prevent injuries and lives lost due to fire and other hazards.

### Educational Courses Offered:

- Babysitter Safety: Hazards in the Home
- Basic First Aid
- Bleeding Control: Stop the Bleed
- CO Poisoning Prevention
- Fall Prevention
- Fire & Emergency Evacuation Training and Fire Extinguisher Training
- Fire Safety
- Fire Station Tours
- Hands-Only CPR and AED
- Hurricane Safety
- Injury Prevention
- Golf Cart Charging Safety
- Lithium Battery Safety

6

**Community  
Events in  
Loxahatchee  
Groves**



862

**Participants**





## Services and Programs

### *Smoke and CO Alarm Installation*

The program offers smoke and CO alarm installation to eligible residents. Bedside fire alarm clocks with shaker devices and smoke alarms with strobe lights are also available for individuals who have impaired hearing. For questions about eligibility and installation appointments, residents can call 561-616-7049.

### *Home Safety Survey*

The Community Education and Outreach Branch can help assess and identify fire or slip and fall hazards in the home and offer solutions for mitigation.

### *Child Passenger Safety*

PBCFR's nationally certified Child Passenger Safety Seat Technicians help caregivers properly fit and install car seats. Appointments can be scheduled using the online car seat scheduler at [www.pbcfr.org](http://www.pbcfr.org). The information is available in English, Spanish, and Creole. Scan the QR Code for more information.



### *Youth Firesetter Prevention & Intervention*

When a child is setting fires intentionally or showing signs of at-risk firesetter behavior, intervention is crucial. This program consists of an intake interview, fire safety class, and individual and family counseling free of charge with PBC Youth Services. Call 561-616-7033 for more information.

### *Yellow Dot Program*

Provides vehicle owners with a yellow sticker to put on the car window and a form to be completed with personal health information. The sticker alerts EMS and law enforcement that a Yellow Dot pamphlet is in the glove compartment to reference if a patient is unable to speak when medical attention is needed.

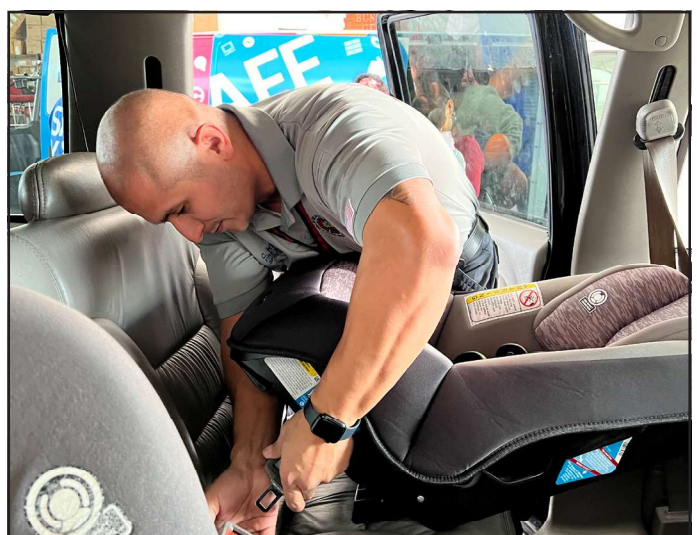


### *Vial of Life*

Encourages residents to list their essential medical information on a piece of paper attached to their refrigerator. If 911 is called and the resident is unable to speak, PBCFR can reference the Vial of Life and provide informed medical attention.

### *Pet Decals*

If residents are not home at the time of an emergency, the decal on the front door conveys to emergency responders the number of cats, dogs, and other animals inside the home.



# FY 2024 FIRE & LIFE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

## Loxahatchee Groves Inspection Activity Summary

EXISTING INSPECTION SERVICES	
ACTIVITY	COUNT
Re-inspect	39
Knox Box	29
Annual	15
Other/Misc.	6
3-Year Business/Mercantile	5
Annual Business/Mercantile	3
Complaint	1



CONSTRUCTION SERVICES	
ACTIVITY	COUNT
Plans Review	32
Fire Department Final (Complete)	20
Fire Alarm Test (Complete)	5
Fire Alarm Final	4
Fire Preliminary Site Inspection	4
Site Visit	4
Fire Framing (Complete)	3
Fire Main Underground Flush (Complete)	2
Fire Main Underground Pressure (Complete)	2
Fire Main Underground Pressure (Partial)	2
Business Tax Receipt	1
No Access	1
Fire Alarm Test (Partial)	1
Fire Department Final (Partial)	1
Fire Sprinkler Head Relocation (Complete)	1
Fire Sprinkler Pressure Test Above (Complete)	1
Fire Sprinkler Final (Complete)	1
Radio Dialer Test	1
Fire Sprinkler Pressure Test Above (Partial)	1
Hydrant Final	1



**Your Safety. Our Priority.**



## Planning & GIS

The Planning Section analyzes data collected from all areas of PBCFR to aid in decision-making and evaluation of service levels. Planning utilizes GIS to produce and maintain the CAD map. GIS and spatial analysis tools provide information to leadership toward solving complex location-oriented issues.

Specific functions of the Planning Section include:

- Plan for future fire stations
- Analyze the impact of land-use changes, development of regional impact, and annexations of fire rescue services
- Provide annual statistics reports for PBCFR and served municipalities
- Produce PBCFR annual report
- Provide the Department cartographic services and spatial analysis for routine and special projects
- Implement improvements to CAD mapping and routing system and troubleshoot reported issues
- Maintain the CAD database which includes dispatch protocols/response plans, emergency service zones (ESZ), station order files, neighborhoods, gate codes, units, special address messages, common place names, road closures, pagers and other notifications
- Analysis of all available data collected by PBCFR to support various divisions within the Department



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## Finance

The Finance Section strives for transparency and compliance with standard practices and policies while matching resources to PBCFR's rapidly changing needs and priorities.

The Finance Section is responsible for the following:

- Preparation, management, budget oversight, expenditures, and revenue collections as guided by Federal, State, and County requirements in support of the operations of the Department
- Procurement of goods and services through responsible use of Department resources while complying with the Purchasing Department's requirements and the Office of Equal Business Opportunity
- Preparing specifications for agreements and contracts for direct services, special events, vehicle maintenance, fire inspections, municipal service agreements, agenda items, and hazardous materials incidents in collaboration with the County Attorney's Office
- Analyzes and reviews every element of an activation and/or deployment to assist the Department in cost recovery



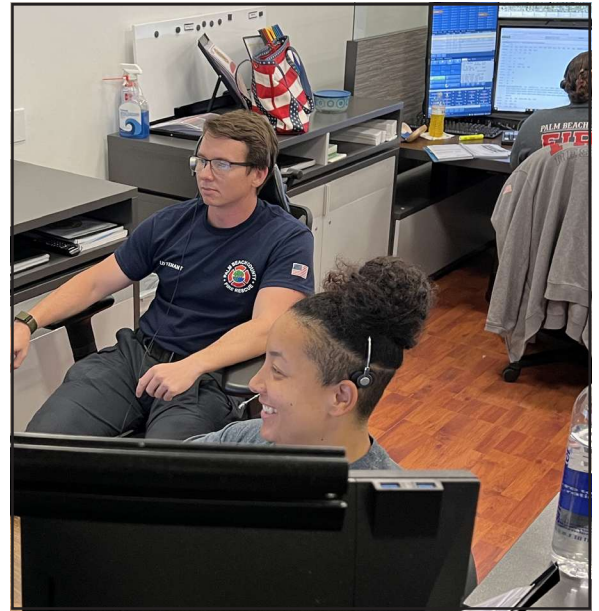


# COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

## 911 Communications Center

PBCFR's Communications Center is the largest secondary Public Safety Answering Point in PBC. The Communications Center is a multi-agency operation that handles fire and medical emergency communications for PBCFR and nine municipal Fire Rescue Departments. PBCFR is an all-hazards fire rescue department, resulting in its Communications Center processing over 400,000 phone calls annually. The Communications Center employs 63 Communicator III's under the supervision of four Communicator Supervisors. The Communications Center Leadership Team includes one Alarm Office Manager, two Quality Assurance Managers, and one Training Supervisor. The Communications Center and Leadership Team report to the Division Chief of Communication and Technology.

PBCFR Communicators are certified by the State of Florida as 911 Public Safety Telecommunicators. They are also nationally certified in CPR, Emergency Medical Dispatch, and Fire Service Communications. This training allows them to locate and provide rapid service to 911 callers, provide them with life-saving instruction when needed, and assist emergency personnel in the field. PBCFR Communicators operate a complex radio system and a CAD system that allows them to dispatch, monitor, and communicate with emergency personnel from local law enforcement, fire rescue agencies, hospitals, and aeromedical teams.





## Fire Operations Officer

Fire Operations Officers (FOO) are a crucial link between the Communications Center and the Operations crews in the field. As critical information is received from the Communicators, the FOO may give recommendations to add additional units or change the call type. They monitor calls to aid the on-scene commander with getting additional resources. They communicate daily with Battalion Chiefs to ensure there is proper staffing for each PBCFR station. The FOO's also ensure emergency resources are relocated as needed.



## Information Technology Services

Information Technology Services (ITS) delivers cutting-edge technology solutions to PBCFR and its municipal partners. The ITS team oversees a spectrum of essential functions, including application development and assessment, 911 CAD operations, web administration, network security, domain administration, mobile device management, and inventory control of more than 2,000 devices utilized within PBCFR.



## Radio Shop



The Radio Shop provides 24-hour on-call support for all radio and other wireless communications equipment to 51 PBCFR stations, 29 additional stations including Palm Beach International Airport (Station 81), Special Operations, the Communications Center, Tactical and Mobile Command Units, and the Palm Beach County Healthcare District's Trauma Hawk. Technical support is provided to surrounding counties and other agencies sharing interoperable emergency communications. The Communications Coordinator and five Electronics Technicians are responsible for:

- Nearly 2,000 radios
- Over 1,000 pagers
- Ten 800 MHz repeater sites
- Eight pager repeater sites
- Two very high frequency repeater sites
- Fire station alerting systems (Locution)
- Mobile Data Computers in vehicles

## Public Information & Media Services

The Public Information and Media Services Team ensures community members are informed, engaged, and connected with PBCFR. The Public Information Office is the official line of communication with citizens and the media, delivering information about emergency incidents, public safety, fire rescue services, outreach programs, and more. The goal of the Public Information Office is to get the “right information to the right people at the right time to make the right decisions.” PBCFR’s award-winning Media section is instrumental in producing live and public events, creative media and communications, and virtual training for PBCFR personnel, to ensure firefighters and paramedics are up-to-date on the latest medical science, equipment, and department advancements.

### Public Information Office:

- Department publications
- PIO Incident response
- Media interviews
- Press conferences
- Social media content and management
- Internal and external communications
- Department traditions and ceremonies
- Employee and citizen awards program
- Hurricane and activation command team
- Public outreach campaigns



### Media Services:

- Video production for training and communications
- Public safety messages
- Social media video content
- Still photography
- Graphic design
- Publications
- Live events
- Virtual and live streaming





## Fleet Maintenance

The Fleet Maintenance team budgets, purchases, maintains and repairs over 500 emergency fire apparatus and support vehicles, ensuring compliance with NFPA standards. Additionally, Fleet oversees the maintenance and inspection of more than 750 pieces of support equipment, such as stretchers, extrication tools, and small generators. Operating from two locations, the main shop features 24 bays and is centrally located in the County; while a smaller satellite shop with two bays is situated in the southern region. The Fleet team staffs 20 certified Emergency Vehicle Technicians (EVT), two EVT II certified Foremen, one EVT III certified Superintendent, and one ASE Master certified Fleet Director. On average, Fleet processes over 7,500 work orders annually, including approximately 800 prescheduled preventive maintenance inspections. Fleet Maintenance provides 24/7 support to ensure emergency operation vehicles are ready to respond at a moment's notice, crucial to PBCFR's daily operations.



## Warehouse & Logistics

The Warehouse & Logistics section manages and provides firefighting equipment, medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, personal protective equipment, uniform apparel, respiratory safety equipment, radio communications, vehicle parts, and fixed asset inventory. Warehousing includes the procurement, taking inventory of supplies and equipment, and outbound distribution to 51 fire stations. The Warehouse and Logistics staff effectively coordinates distribution of equipment and supplies to operational personnel in need. The Fixed Asset Inventory section monitors over 15,000 items valued at approximately \$125 million.



## SCBA Shop

The Respiratory Protection Manager and two Specialists ensure that firefighters are equipped with essential gear including Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA) equipment, compressed air, portable lighting, and gas detection monitors. Annually, personnel undergo fit testing to guarantee the effectiveness and proper fit of three different types of respirators. The SCBA shop utilizes three stations dedicated to SCBA flow testing, ensuring optimal performance. This section conducts preventive maintenance, inspections, and repairs on inventory including: 665 breathing apparatus, 12 stationary and mobile air compressors, 1,800 cylinders, 1,400 masks, and over 300 gas monitors.



## Facilities

The Facilities section coordinates all new construction and remodeling management for PBCFR's Comprehensive Fire Station Capital Improvement Program. There are three main areas of construction-related responsibilities: large capital projects, small capital projects, and preventative maintenance. Large capital projects include new construction and major renovations. Small capital projects consist of existing minor renovations and major repairs. Our Facilities Technicians are tasked with preventive maintenance and perform minor repairs at all 51 fire stations, Fire Rescue Headquarters, and the Communications Center.





# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

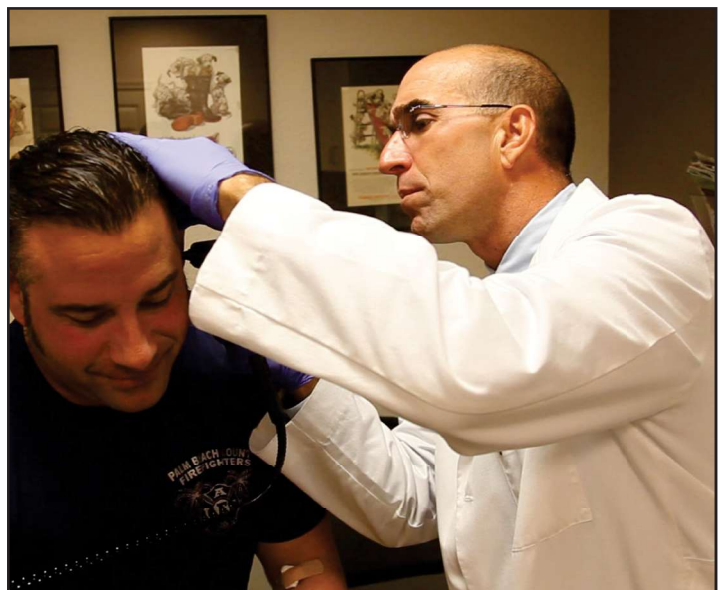
The Administrative Services Division works closely with the PBC Human Resources (HR) Department to hire new firefighters and promote current operational employees. HR plays a pivotal role in providing centralized administrative support for civilian and operational employees of PBCFR. The Administrative Services Division consists of: Internal Affairs, Records & Resources Bureau, Recruitment & Retention, Payroll, Staffing, and Wellness & Engagement.



## Wellness

PBCFR's Wellness Coordinator and Exercise Physiologist ensure the mental and physical needs of PBCFR's operational employees are met by:

- Evaluating and overseeing the annual fitness assessments of every operational employee
- Directing the daily physical fitness training for every recruit class
- Providing modern equipment and techniques to sustain healthy and capable firefighters
- Facilitating comprehensive care through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Administering workers' compensation, extended leave, and light duty programs





## Recruitment & Retention

Recruitment & Retention directs and manages the hiring, promotion, and recruitment processes for a diverse range of PBCFR personnel. This section actively engages with the public to showcase the various career opportunities available at PBCFR, particularly in the Firefighter EMT/ Paramedic roles. They also participate in various career day events across the County, engaging with individuals of all ages who are interested in pursuing a career in fire rescue.



## Records & Resources Bureau

The Records & Resources Bureau acts as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Officer. The Bureau collaborates with legal entities such as the PBC Attorney's Office and state-level authorities. It handles subpoenas, public records requests, and ensures proper management of department records are in compliance with legal requirements.



## Payroll

The Payroll Section processes bi-weekly pay for over 1,800 PBCFR personnel and ensures all promotions, accruals, and schedule changes are completed accurately and promptly. They also oversee the supplemental long-term disability program, computer and coding configuration for database compatibility, and conduct audits to maintain compliance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.



## Staffing

The Staffing Officers oversee multiple aspects of workforce management including unit bidding, scheduling adjustments, promotions, and new hires for over 1,500 Operational PBCFR employees. They ensure compliance with collective Bargaining Agreement requirements and manage all aspects of staffing, including light-duty assignments.



**EXCELLENCE TODAY**



**IMPROVING TOMORROW**

## **Palm Beach County Fire Rescue**

405 Pike Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33411

561-616-7000

[www.pbc.gov](http://www.pbc.gov)

*Follow us on:*



**@PBCFireRescue**



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### **County Administrator**

Verdenia C. Baker

### **Assistant County Administrator**

Reginald K. Duren

### **Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Administrator**

Patrick J. Kennedy

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