

Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department



2024 Year End Report



PETERSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



P.O. Box 329/1200 Haugen Dr, Petersburg, AK 99833

907-772-3355

To: Petersburg Borough Assembly
Cc: Stephen Giesbrecht, Borough Manager
Subj: PVFD 2024 Year End report

Petersburg Assembly Members,

I am happy to present to you Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department's 2024 year end report. At the beginning of 2024, we changed some of the data collection we were gathering to get a better picture of our response statistics throughout the year. We aim to use this data to strengthen our response to the varied emergencies we get called out to face.

2024 gave us a few hurdles to overcome with the resignation of our EMS Coordinator, changes within the officer corps, new regulations and aging equipment. Thankfully, with new leadership and staff in place, new recruits, and with help from the Title 3 USFS receipts we are looking like we are in a little better shape going into 2025. Overall, we have gained in membership 4 additional Firefighters, 14 Ambulance Drivers (with 11 slated to become EMT -1's after they test) and SAR membership held about even throughout the year. Please see my notes at the end of this report.

Responses for Fire, EMS, and Search and Rescue are down from 2023, but within normal fluctuations based on previous trends. Response times remain on average with the exception of the summer months where coverage remained spotty. We hope with our new recruits to be able to fill the gaps. We also foresee future challenges in obtaining supporting grants from the State of Alaska and FEMA and appreciate the opportunity to work with the Assembly going into the future to overcome regulatory and financial challenges that affect our mission of protecting life and property in Petersburg.

Should you have questions regarding this report, please do not hesitate to reach out.

With regards,

Aaron Hankins
Emergency Services Director
ahankins@petersburgak.gov

PVFD Leadership 2025

Paid Staff

Aaron Hankins
Emergency Services Director

Ryan Welde
Fire Marshall

Coby Holder
EMS Coordinator

Volunteer Chiefs

Daniel Bird

Fire Chief

David Berg
Assistant Chief /PIO

Troy Thynes
Assistant Chief

James Stolpe
Assistant Chief

Fire Officers

Devren Bennett
Fire Captain

Bjorn Stolpe
Fire Lieutenant

Brock Martin
Fire Lieutenant

Nicolas Espeseth
Fire Lieutenant

EMS Officers

Vacant
EMS Captain

Sarah Wright
EMS Lieutenant

Vacant
EMS Lieutenant

Search and Rescue Officers

Vacant
SAR Captain

Bjorn Stolpe
SAR Lieutenant

Bret Uppencamp
SAR Lieutenant

Stations and other locations

Station 1 – Fire Hall, 1200 Haugen Drive

- Paid Staff offices located here
- 2 bedrooms for responders on call.
- Primary meeting place for meetings and drills
- Houses both Ambulances, Engines 2,4 and 8, the “Squad-1” Mini pumper, SAR truck and Admin SUV
- Fire Radio repeaters, Ham Radio, and back up Dispatch equipment and Siren controls are housed here.
- 1 100kw backup generator on-site for emergency power
- Most likely to respond from Station 1 due to proximity to town and location of responders when toned out



Station 2 – Scow Bay Fire Station, 290 Mitkof Hwy

- Located in the Scow Bay turnaround, across from DOT
- Unmanned station, currently protects the far edges of SA1 from 2 mile out and beyond SA1.
- Houses Engine 6 and the Water Tender, also the 3 antique vehicles.
- Also stores additional training props and equipment inside the station.
- Behind the station is the Burn Tower and Container Prop.
- Ideally located away from residential areas when training with live burns.
- Responders who respond here typically work or live out here, or someone drives from intown to this station.



Harbor Sheds – North, South and Middle Harbors

- Each Harbor has a fire shed with one ATV and at least one trailer with portable pumps and hoses ready to deploy for boat fires.
- Middle Harbor also stores equipment for off island response.
- Harbors also have standpipes for water supplied from responding engines.

EOC Building – 16 N 12th St.

- The Emergency Communications Trailer and shelter supplies are stored here
- Contains 105 Cots, 158 Blankets, 150 Pillows, 275 hygiene kits, FM/AM radios, First Aid Kits, Misc MRE type food (7,800 servings).



Vehicle Details

(Engines 8, 4, 6 alongside Medics 1 and 2.
Squad 1 is also on the far left.)

Fire Engines

- In General:
 - Each Engine is rated to pump a minimum of 1250 gallons of water at 150 PSI
 - Carries 750 gallons of water onboard
 - Carries 650 ft of 5" large Diameter hose
 - Has at least 2 1 3/4 inch preconnected hoses for quick deployment
 - Has both deck gun or "Master Stream" and a deployable ground monitor for defensive and quick attack operations
 - Carries enough SCBA packs for the officer and 4 firefighters and one set of additional air tanks
- Engine 2 - 2023 Pierce Saber Pumper – 4,723 mi / 179 hrs
 - Carries one engineer, officer, and 4 firefighters
 - First Due for structure fires, carries saws, fans and tools for searching.
- Engine 4 - 2007 Pierce Saber Pumper – 9,137 mi / 856 hrs
 - Carries one engineer, officer, and 4 firefighters
 - First Due for vehicle fires and MVA's, carries extrication equipment.
- Engine 8 - 2001 Pierce Saber Pumper - 12,678 mi / 1,252 hrs
 - Carries one engineer, officer, and 4 firefighters
 - Second due for all fire calls, carries additional sets of tools for different types of response.
- Engine 6 - 1994 Pierce Saber Pumper 15,178 mi / 1,391 hrs
 - Carries one engineer, officer, and 3 firefighters
 - First Due for the Scow Bay area and out past the hydrant system. Alternatively, if a team is unable to assemble at Scow Bay, Engine 6 will stand in for an engine that travels out the road.
 - Currently up for replacement but has been deferred to 2028 to allow for more savings to build up.

Ambulances

- Medic 1 – 2018 Ford F450 XLT Brawn NW Ambulance – 6,521 Miles
 - Custom built ambulance box to fit underneath PMC ER overhang.
 - Seats 2 upfront, 6 passengers in the back
 - Outfitted with one power load cot and lift assist system
 - Primary ambulance since 2018
- Medic 2 – 2005 Ford F450 XLT Brawn NW Ambulance – 9,824 Miles
 - Custom built ambulance box to fit underneath PMC ER overhang.
 - Seats 2 upfront, 6 passengers in the back
 - Outfitted with one power load cot and lift assist system
 - Purchased with “Code Blue” funding in 2005.
 - Previously known as “Medic 1” until 2018.

Support Vehicles

- Squad 1 – 2003 Ford F550 Mini Pumper – 4,360 miles / 54 hrs (on pump)
 - Carries an auxiliary driven water pump, 4,000w genset and a hydraulic power pack for extrication tools and bumper mounted winch
 - Primarily used as a “rescue” truck assisting E-4 with MVA and vehicle fire responses
 - Useful for areas where the larger engines cannot travel due to weight restrictions or narrow roads.
 - Seats 2, and carries additional SCBA Packs and bottles
- Water Tender – 2004 International 7400 – 1,768 Mi / 272 hrs
 - Cab and chassis with a mounted 4,000-gallon tank.
 - Carries deployable, open topped water tank (porta-tank) for drafting water to engines.
 - Also carries 3in Honda trash pump for remote fill if needed.
 - Deployed to off hydrant areas and the airport to supply water where needed
- Admin SUV – 2015 Ford Expedition – 36,179 mi
 - Used by Paid staff for daily operations
 - Also used to transport personnel and additional equipment during emergencies
- Search and Rescue Truck – 2004 Ford F250 – 34,709 mi
 - Primarily used by Search and Rescue to deploy around Mitkof Island
 - Obtained through a Homeland Security grant in 2008
 - Sometimes used by paid staff to transfer equipment and plow snow and by responders during emergencies
 - Also used to move the Emergency Communications Trailer

- Harbor 4-Wheelers and Trailers – 3 ATV’s and 6 trailers
 - Located in fire sheds in each harbor
 - Trailers are preloaded with portable pumps and hose loads to protect the harbor
 - ATV’s can also be loaded onto Harbor Security Boat for response to Kupreanof. City of Kupreanof partially funded one ATV purchase.
 - ATV’s have also been used by SAR for missions off Mitkof Island where there are roads.
- Harbor Security Boat – 2006 32’ Drop Bow Skiff – 800.9 hrs (pt ob) / 800.2 (stb ob)
 - Located in the Middle Harbor
 - Twin 2012 200hp Yamaha outboards
 - Jointly owned/used by PPD, Harbor, and PVFD
 - Paid for mostly by grants in 2005(?) with contributions from the City of Kupreanof
 - Used for Fire Response in harbors and off island coastlines, Off-island EMS calls and Search and rescue missions.
- Communications Trailer – 2005 Wells Cargo Tandem Axle Trailer
 - Located in EOC building across from MVM-AL
 - Carries one radio repeater, repeater antenna, 4 VHF radios, one CB radio, 3,000w inverter and Onan 5kw generator.
 - Previously shared between PPD and PVFD. PPD released interest in 2023.
 - Paid for mostly by grants in 2008 that also paid for the SAR Truck
 - Used to extend communications in areas where radio reception is poor
 - Also used as a command post for SAR missions on island.
 - Repeater marginally repaired in 2024
 - 3,000w inverter replaced in 2023 with grant funding.
- 4 - 5,500 w Honda Generators
 - 2 located at MVM and 2 located at schools
 - Director’s note, I don’t have a lot of history on these other than that they exist. I am still working to run down the intended purpose as I have time. I theorize they would be used for emergency power during a prolonged power outage.



Response and Training Data

○ Fire Branch – 34 Calls/ 35 Drills

- Alarms - 16
- EMS Assists – 1 (skewed as FF's are counted as EMS crew in run reports, actual is higher)
- Vehicle Fires - 1
- Moter Vehicle Accidents - 2
- Structure Fires - 3
- Power Pole Fires - 1
- Report of Smoke/Odor - 6
- Chimney Fires - 1
- Boat Fires - 1
- Boat Accidents - 1
- Burn Violation – 1

2 of these calls fell outside SA-1

In Total, Fire Branch had 290 Response hrs, 919 Normal Drill hrs, 95 extra training/event hrs, and 467 hours from an intro FF class. **The total donated hours from Fire Branch to the borough was 1,771 hours.**

Fire Branch ended 2024 with **34 Volunteers and 3 paid staff.**

○ EMS Branch – 244 Calls / 24 Drills

- Medical - 95
- Trauma - 11
- Fire Standby – 3
- Event Standby – 2
- Falls - 41
- Transports - 4

- Code Blue calls – 3**
- Cancelled - 2
- Stroke Alerts - 8
- Mass Casualty Incidents - 0
- Medivacs - 67
- Motor Vehicle accidents – 4***
- Drug Overdoses - 4

10 Calls occurred outside SA-1 **Code Blue refers to patients with immediate threats to life
 *** MVA numbers here refer to the number of PT's encountered due to MVA's

In Total, EMS Branch had 683 response hrs, 308 drill hrs, 52 extra training/event hrs, 1,540 hrs from an EMT initial class. **The total donated hours from EMS branch to the borough were 1,900 hours.**

EMS ended 2024 with **5 ETTs, 3 EMT-1s, 9 EMT-2s and 18 Ambulance Drivers** (11 of which will be EMT-1s soon). **EMS has a total of 34 Volunteers and 3 paid staff.**

- Search and Rescue Branch – 7 Calls/ 24 Drills
 - 4 search calls
 - 3 EMS assists

In Total, SAR Branch had 56 response hrs, 18 assist hrs, 50 extra training/event hrs, and 386 training hrs. **The total donated hours from SAR Branch to the borough was 492 hours.**

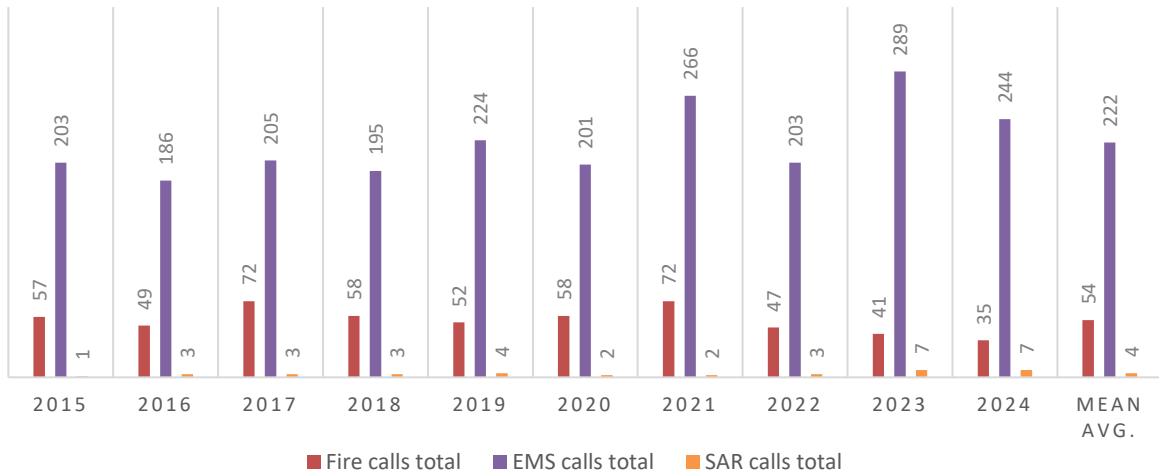
SAR Branch ended 2024 with **34 Volunteers and 1 paid staff.**

17 SAR Members are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

Total Donated Hours – 4,163 hours.

Year to Year Comparisons

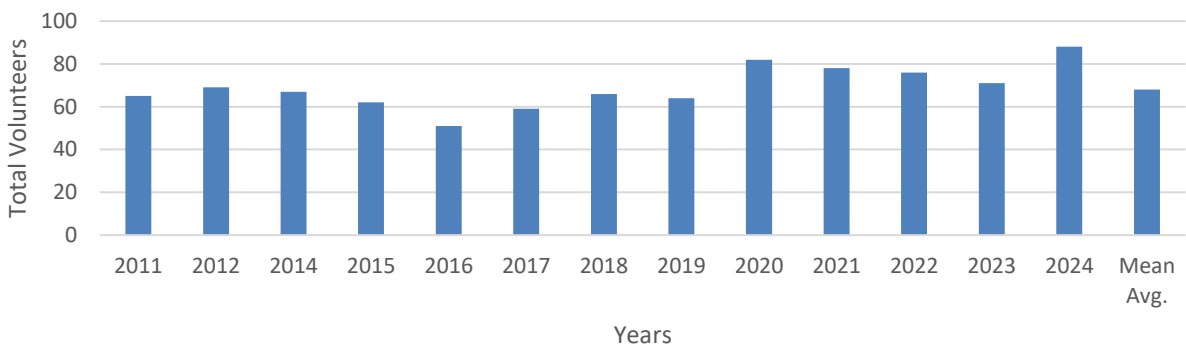
CALL VOLUME BY BRANCH



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean Avg.
Fire calls total	57	49	72	58	52	58	72	47	41	35	54
EMS calls total	203	186	205	195	224	201	266	203	289	244	222
SAR calls total	1	3	3	3	4	2	2	3	7	7	4

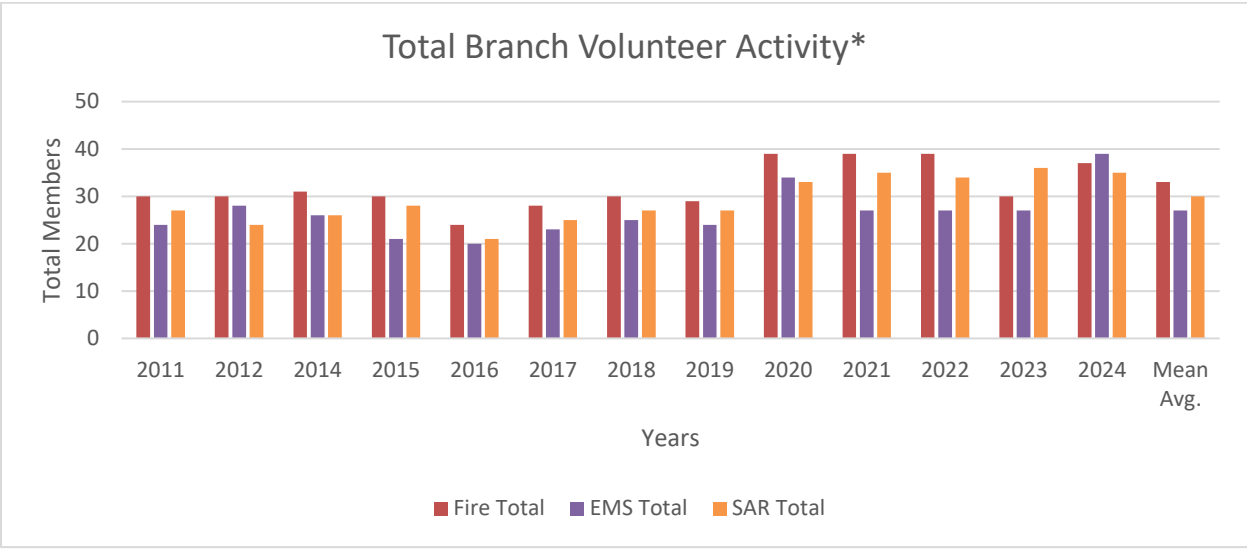
Membership Statistics

Total Members by Year, 2011-2024*



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean Avg.
Total Members	65	69	-	67	62	51	59	66	64	82	78	76	71	88	68

This Chart outlines total roster count by end of calendar year. 2016 was the lowest at 51 members, 2024 was the highest at 88 due to a high volume of recruits at the end of the year. This graph does not account for losses or gains throughout the year. 2013 did not have a reliable data set to include.



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean Avg.
Fire Total	30	30	-	31	30	24	28	30	29	39	39	39	30	37	33
EMS Total	24	28	-	26	21	20	23	25	24	34	27	27	27	39	27
SAR Total	27	24	-	26	28	21	25	27	27	33	35	34	36	35	30

*No reliable data found for 2013 membership

This chart breaks down total involvement by branch. While mostly stable, EMS shows a large increase in

Discipline	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean Avg.
Fire	19	17	-	17	15	11	13	16	14	20	22	21	17	20	17
EMS	13	18	-	13	6	6	9	11	11	18	12	11	12	20	12
SAR	20	20	-	23	23	20	21	25	24	23	24	23	25	18	23
Fire/EMS	6	10	-	11	11	13	12	12	12	11	9	10	6	9	11
Fire/SAR	2	1	-	1	1	0	2	0	2	5	5	5	2	5	3
EMS/SAR	2	1	-	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	3	4	8	2
Fire/EMS/SAR	3	2	-	2	3	0	1	2	1	3	3	3	5	4	3
Total Members	65	69	-	67	62	51	59	66	64	82	78	76	71	88	70

*No reliable data found for 2013 membership

numbers due to our revamped ambulance driver program.

This chart breaks down individual member involvement in the 3 branches of the fire department. Very few can offer to do more than one branch due to the time commitment of training and response.

Regardless of how many branches a volunteer is involved in, I remain grateful for their efforts.

Notes on membership:

While roster numbers are up, the majority (**63%**) of the department is made up of members who have been in the department 5 years or less (56 members, 27 of these are new this year). Another 11

members **(12.5%)** have been in 10 years or less. The First Responder services in general continue to exhibit a high attrition rate. Petersburg is no exception. Though I am excited for our recent new members, the likelihood is less than half will still be involved within a few years. PVFD officers and staff remain committed to try and bolster our retention rate and will be calling on the Borough to aid in those efforts through a request for volunteer stipends, continued support in acquiring needed equipment and letters of support when applying for grants, writing to the state and feds to support rural fire departments and attracting younger members to the community to be able to recruit.

Additional details and considerations:

It is worth noting that there are 8,760 hours in a single calendar year. With the volunteers donated hours pooled together, it would equate to a member of the department spending 47.5% of the calendar year responding, training to respond, or participating in a community event.

In 2022's report, I outlined that PVFD would need 12 paid staff to cover the majority of the incidents the current members respond to. In that report, I used \$25/ hr as yard stick to estimate how much the borough would need to pay in order to field that many staff (Using Info from the National Volunteer Fire council), The total number including the cost of benefits was **\$94,900/employee or \$1,138,800 for 12 employees**. For large events, the 12 staff would still need to be supported by volunteers.

To put a direct value to PVFD's contributions, aside from the value of the paid staff they replace and revenue from ambulance fees, **if the volunteers had been paid \$25/hr, their combined time would be worth a donated cost of \$104,075.**

With extreme gratitude for our volunteers, I submit this 2024 report detailing their efforts.

Aaron Hankins, Emergency Services Director.