

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



## *Fire Department*

Compassion  
Dedication  
Trust  
Accountability  
Integrity



# MISSION VISION VALUES

In early 2025, we teamed up with Partner 2 Learn to review and renew Watertown Fire Department's mission, vision, and values. This was a true department-wide effort, with input from all staff on who we are, how we serve, and what we expect of one another. A representative committee reviewed feedback from the membership, developed a draft, and shared it back with the department for a period of real-world review and use. Starting 2025 with this work gave us a strong, shared foundation as we prepared for the move into our new station and continued to grow together.

## Mission

WE ARE DEVOTED TO SERVING OUR COMMUNITY WITH UNWAVERING DEDICATION BY PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES TO PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY THROUGH A CULTURE OF TRUST, TRAINING AND TEAMWORK

## Vision

WE SERVE, GROW, AND ADAPT TO OUR COMMUNITY BY ELEVATING EXCELLENCE AND DRIVING PROGRESS

## Values

COMPASSION  
DEDICATION  
INTEGRITY  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
TRUST





# A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



## Welcome to the City of Watertown Fire Department's 2025 Annual Report

2025 was a milestone year for the City of Watertown Fire Department. On May 14, we moved into our new fire station, a project years in the making and made possible through the support of our Common Council, mayor, and the trust of our community. This facility strengthens firefighter health and safety, improves workflow, and gives us the training space needed to meet today's demands.

This was also our busiest year on record, with 3,205 calls for service, up 30% from 10 years ago. Simultaneous calls increased to 28.5

percent, meaning crews were more often handling multiple incidents at once.

Even with the staffing increase approved in 2018, the workload per authorized firefighter in 2025 is roughly 20 percent higher than it was a decade ago. Demand continues to grow, and that growth affects response reliability and risk.

The Department also strengthened the tools that support daily operations, including new apparatus project oversight, expanded technology systems, and improved records management. These updates improve accountability and help us manage increasing call volume with consistency.

Looking ahead, the approval of the Deputy Chief Fire Marshal position during the 2025 budget process is an important step forward. This role will focus on inspections, fire prevention, and communication with current and future business owners. That upstream work reduces risk before an emergency occurs and supports responsible growth in our community.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. 2025 was a significant year, and we enter 2026 focused on strengthening service and staying ahead of rising demand.

*Chief Tanya Reynen*

**Compassion leads. Dedication drives.  
Integrity delivers.**



# OUR TEAM

The department's workforce reflects an average of approximately 7.9 years of service, demonstrating meaningful institutional knowledge of our most senior members and officers, while continuing to integrate newer members into the department. Compared to prior years, staff turnover was lower, supporting continuity and reinforcing the department's focus on retention. During the year, one line firefighter resigned, whose position was filled promptly, allowing the department to close out the year fully staffed for response personnel. The part-time administrative assistant left the department in fall, and that position is slated to be filled in early 2026. Reduced turnover has helped limit onboarding and initial training demands, a shift that has been positively felt across operational staff and training leadership. As the department looks ahead to anticipated retirements in 2026, this ability allows for more deliberate planning tied to future staffing needs, including expanded EMS capacity and continued leadership support to sustain service delivery.

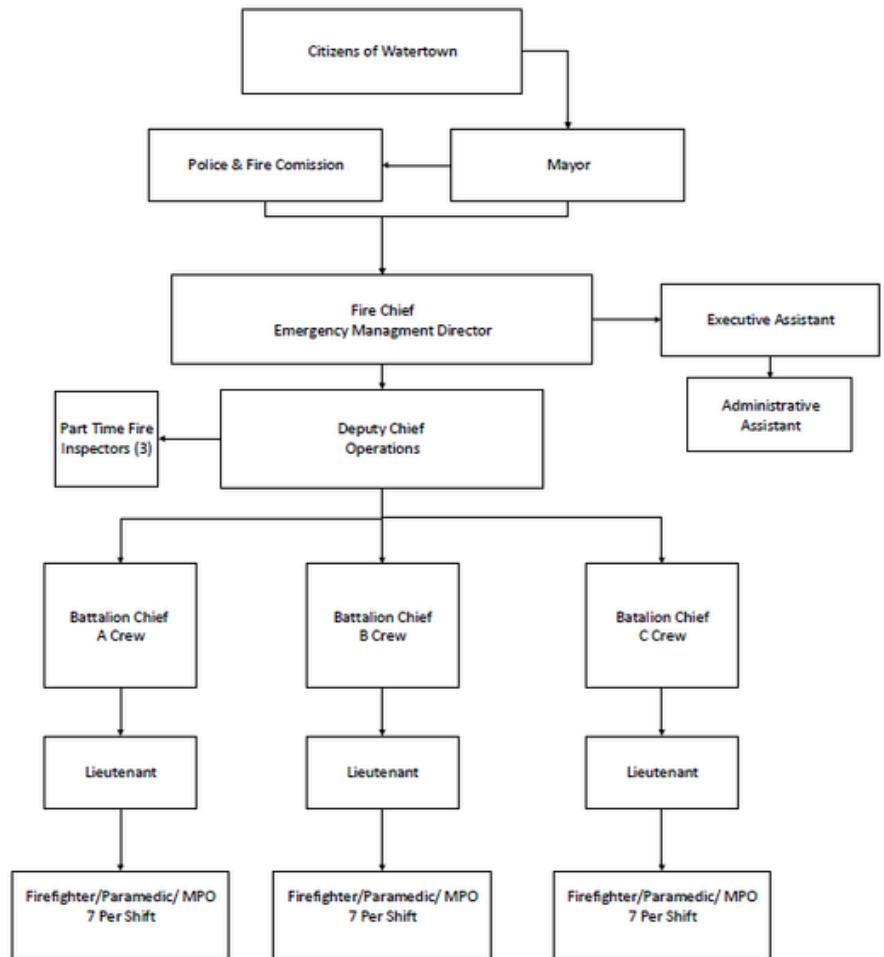
## Battalion Chief Butzine receiving the American Legion Firefighter of the year award



## New Members

- BRADY SMITH (1/25)
- TYLER BROMBEREK (3/25)
- HUNTER DOUGLAS (6/25)
- JACK WOHLERS (10/25)

## Organizational Chart





# ONBOARDING

## New Hire Academy

Every new hire at the Watertown Fire Department goes through a focused onboarding academy to ensure they are ready to serve from day one. Over eight days, new members completed numerous tasks to gain hands-on experience of core fire and EMS operations, learning our response areas, working with our equipment, and spending time with the Watertown Dispatch center. This investment is critical because once assigned to a shift, the new hire will be expected to perform on fire calls and critical EMS calls. After the academy, the new hire will be an extra on the ambulance for their first month, gaining valuable time working alongside skilled paramedics, completing EMS skills, and getting prepared to be on their own.

## Paramedic Course

Paramedic education is a demanding, year-long program that exceeds 1,000 total hours of combined classroom instruction, skills labs, hospital clinicals, and field time spread over a year with significant evening and weeknight commitments. Because of recent state enrollment and scheduling changes, our department plans for EMT hires to complete paramedic education within their first 24 months rather than within a single year. This allows time to navigate program availability while continuing monthly assessments for probation work. This approach allows us to focus on hiring the right people while supporting their development into highly trained paramedics through a realistic and sustainable pathway.

## Qualified for Position

While a person may be employed by the Fire Department, that doesn't automatically mean they are qualified to fill every operational position. Wisconsin state requirements under Administrative Code SPS330 and the Department's EMS Operational Plan require specific certifications for specific roles. Ambulance: requires paramedic licensure. Apparatus drivers must complete the Motor Pump Operator (MPO) course, and swing or tailboard positions that operate the Tenders or ladder also require MPO and aerial operator certifications. Officer positions require completion of state-recognized officer coursework. Because these credentials are sequential and most often completed alongside full-time shift work, it typically takes two to three years from hire for a member to become fully qualified across multiple roles. Supporting members through training is essential to safe operations, and that's why we put so much effort and focus on retention and hiring the right employee.



# FIRE STATION

## We moved!

On May 14, the Watertown Fire Department officially moved into the new station. A milestone made possible by the dedication and teamwork of the elected officials over the previous 5 years. In the weeks leading up to the move and throughout moving month, members worked long hours cleaning, organizing, and preparing both sites while continuing to meet the daily demands of emergency response. Their commitment, flexibility, and ownership were evident throughout the entire process.

We are sincerely grateful to our elected officials and the Watertown community for their continued support and trust in this investment. This new station provides space and functionality needed to support modern fire and EMS operations, including appropriate decontamination areas, healthy sleeping quarters, office spaces, and efficient workflows. The training rooms have already been put to use for numerous internal and external training sessions, reinforcing that this facility is not only a home for the Fire Department staff but also a shared community resource that will support the city into the future.





# FIRE STATION

## Work in Progress





# FIRE STATION

## Moving Week



## Owner Training



**Over 10,000 native plants were brought in and planted. Thank you to the Park and Stormwater Teams!**

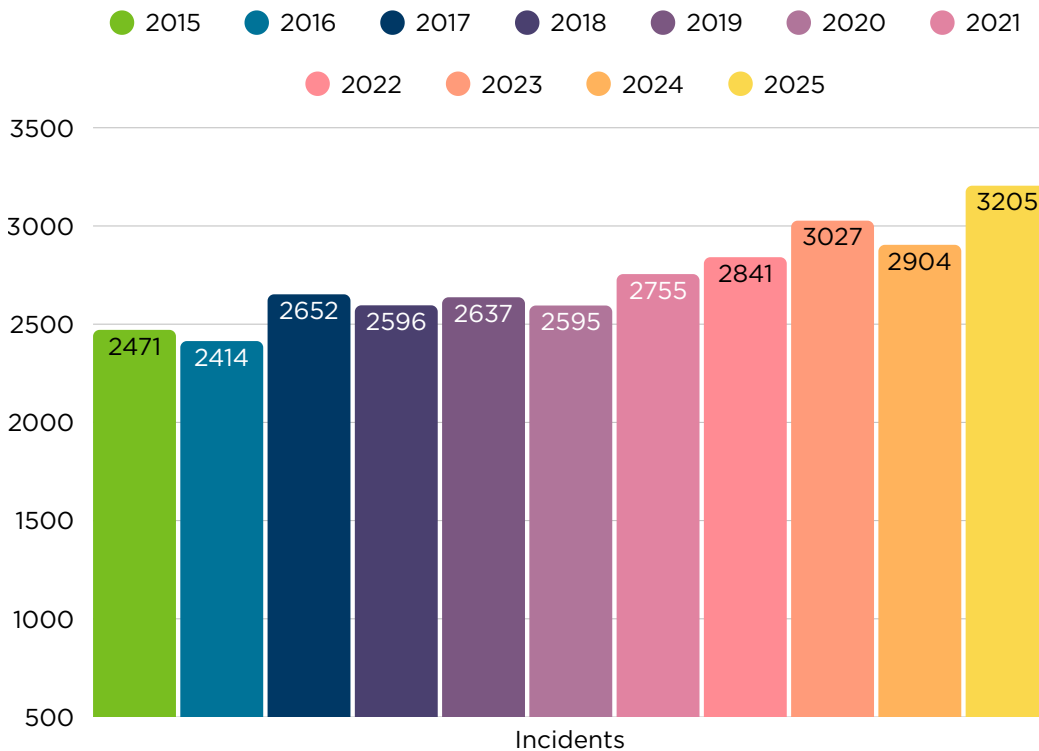
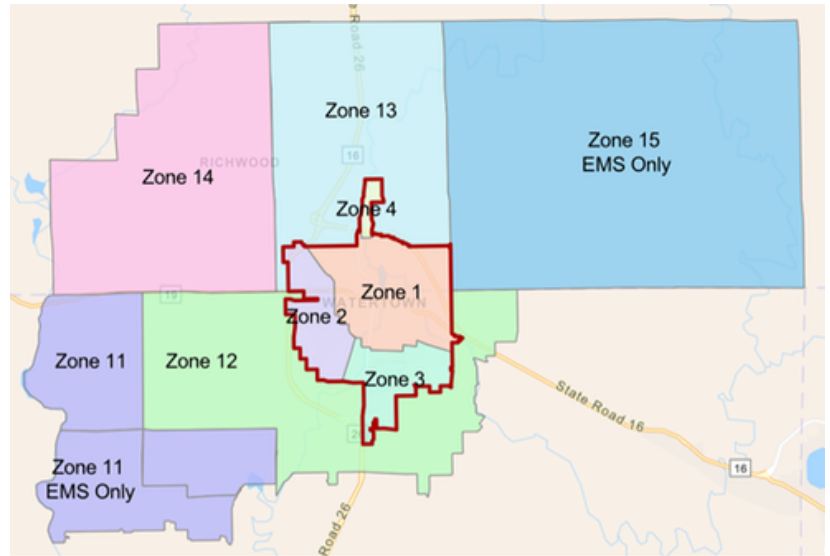


# OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

## Response Area

Watertown Fire Department provides fire and EMS services across a total service area of approximately 145 square miles, with about 45 square miles covered for EMS services only, including the Town of Lebanon and a portion of the Town of Milford. This places our department among the largest footprints in Jefferson and Dodge counties.

Comparatively, neighboring communities such as Beaver Dam and Fort Atkinson cover just over 100 square miles each, and Jefferson, a significantly smaller area. Our service area features a mix of urban and rural communities across multiple jurisdictions, each presenting unique response and preparedness challenges. These wide-ranging challenges require careful coordination, consistent, and predictable staffing and a strong focus on training to meet these challenges with timely and effective service; regardless of location.



2025 WAS A RECORD YEAR, SURPASSING 2023'S RECORD CALLS FOR SERVICE. THERE HAS BEEN ROUGHLY A **30%** INCREASE IN CALLS OVER THE LAST DECADE.



# OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

## Simultaneous calls

Simultaneous calls for service occur when crews are already committed to an incident and a second or third emergency comes in at the same time, requiring units to be split or additional resources to be requested. The chart below reflects a clear upward trend over the past three years, showing that these overlapping calls are happening more frequently as overall call volume continues to rise. For residents this can mean

longer response times or the need to rely on mutual aid while units are already engaged elsewhere. Tracking this trend is important because it highlights growing system strain and reinforces the need for thoughtful staffing, deployment, and long-term planning to maintain a reliable, resilient service.

### SIMULTANEOUS CALL AVERAGE

2023 - 21.9%  
 2024 - 22.4%  
 2025 - 28.5%

#### BUSIEST DAYS

JULY 17: 22 CALLS  
 JULY 21: 21 CALLS  
 MAY 6: 20 CALLS  
 SEPT 22: 20 CALLS  
 DEC 28: 18 CALLS



## Trend of Simultaneous Calls

	2023		2024		2025	
January	39	17%	52	19%	79	28%
Feb	48	20%	39	18%	63	28%
March	39	18%	52	22%	93	32%
April	37	17%	31	14%	74	28%
May	45	18%	47	20%	103	34%
June	46	17%	68	27%	78	27%

	2023		2024		2025	
July	63	22%	57	24%	87	30%
August	50	19%	50	22%	60	24%
Sept	47	18%	66	25%	89	33%
Oct	47	19%	57	22%	70	25%
Nov	51	21%	64	28%	57	24%
Dec	74	27%	58	28%	80	29%



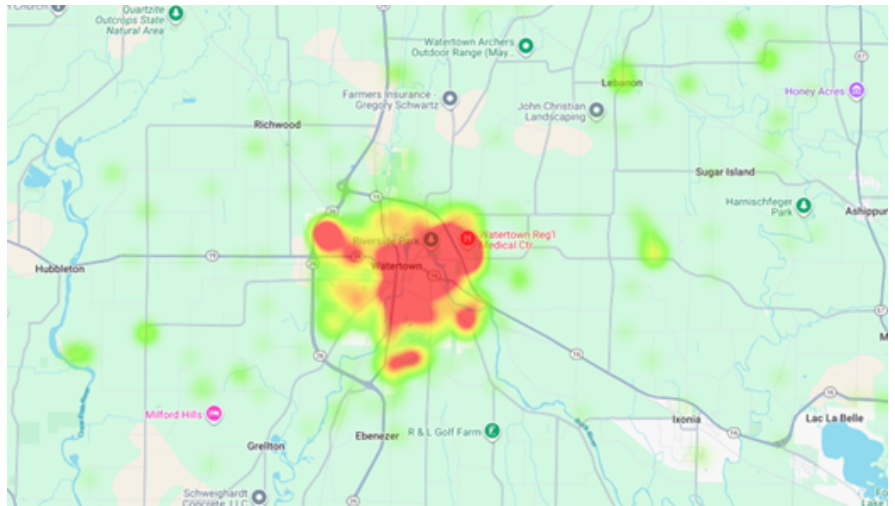
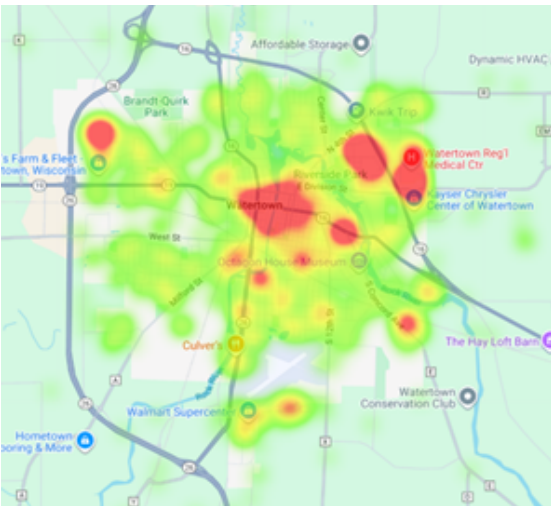
# OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

## Heat map - call locations

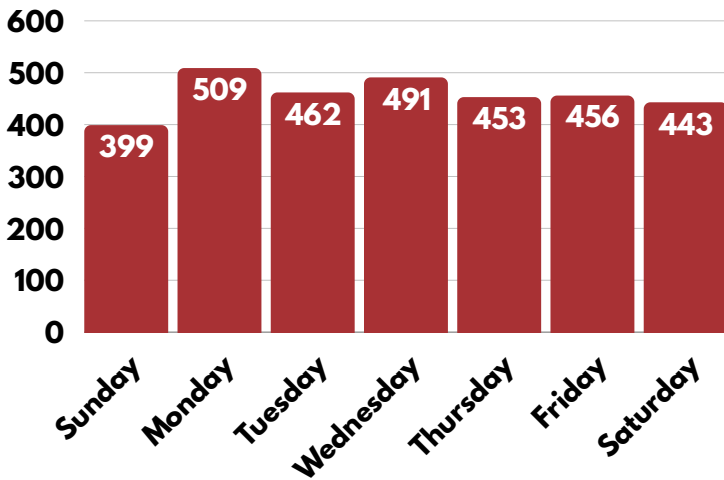
The heat maps show call volume by location, with one view focused on the City of Watertown and a second, zoomed-out view showing the broader response area, including the Town of Lebanon. On the regional map, Lebanon appears lighter due to the larger scale, but it generated **93** calls this year, underscoring the importance of viewing both maps together to understand the call distribution across the service area.

**TOP 5 INCIDENT ADDRESSES**

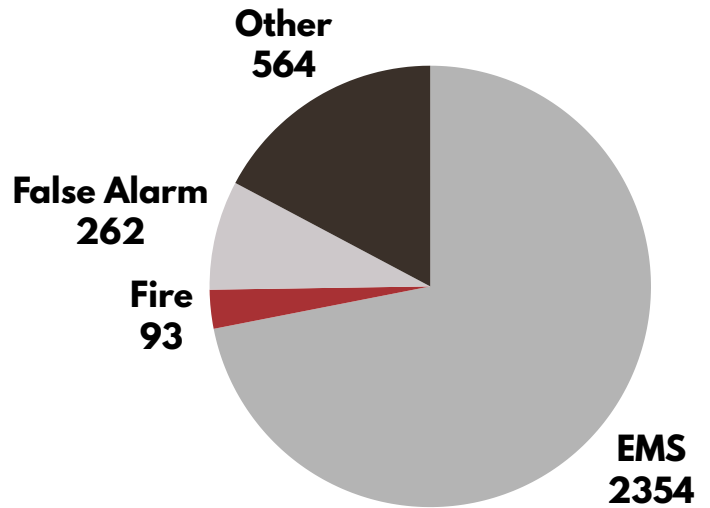
- 121 HOSPITAL: 192 CALLS
- 1020 HILL: 140 CALLS
- 700 WELSH: 97 CALLS
- 1301 E MAIN: 78 CALLS



## Incidents by Day of Week



## Incident Types



**The busiest time of day is Noon to 6 pm**

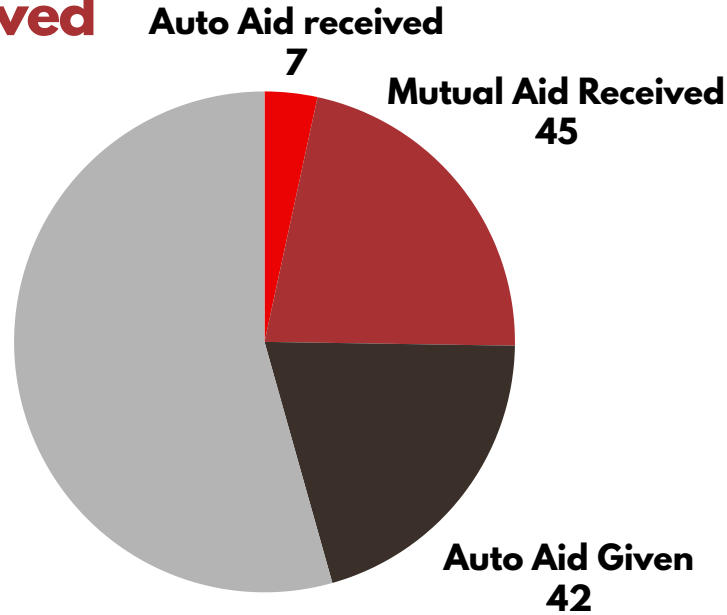


# OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

## Mutual & Auto Aid Given/Received

This report highlights when outside agencies are requested to assist or when Watertown crews respond to support neighboring communities. While mutual aid is an essential part of regional emergency response, it can significantly affect response times when additional resources are needed.

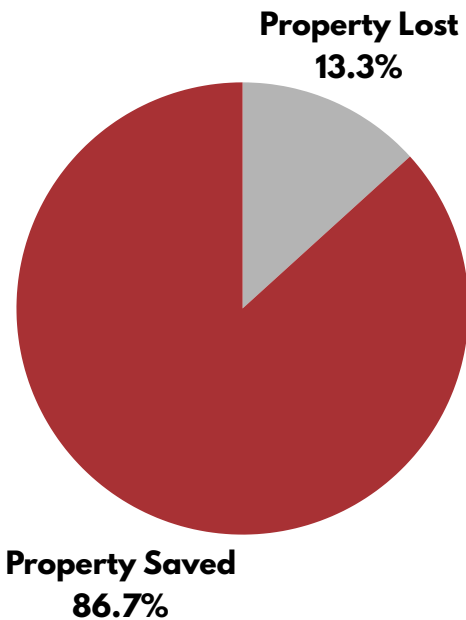
For EMS incidents, Ixonia is our most frequently requested mutual aid partner, and their response adds at least 10 minutes to incidents on the edge of the city due to travel distance alone. This does not include dispatch or call processing time. This data reinforced the importance of staffing and unit availability within our own service area to minimize delays in patient care whenever possible and maintain EMS revenue for that incident.



In 2025, more than **\$30.7 million in property value was exposed to fire conditions**. Through rapid response and coordinated suppression, an **estimated \$26.6 million in property was preserved**. One commercial structure accounted for the majority of total loss value in 2025. Residential and garage fires made up the bulk of incidents.

## Structure Fires of Significance

- 1/3/2025 Warren St. Garage Fire
- 2/15/2025 Garden Rd Storage Shed Fire
- 2/21/2025 West Rd Storage Shed Fire
- 3/8/2025 Union St Kitchen Fire
- 3/15/2025 E Main St Porch Fire
- 4/26/2025 Carriage Hill Garage Fire
- 5/13/2025 Wakoka St Commercial Fire
- 5/15/2025 Sand St Garage Fire
- 6/18/2025 Cty M Residential Fire
- 7/22/2025 Sunnyfield Ct Garage Fire
- 10/8/2025 Spring St. Residential Fire
- 11/8/2025 N 4<sup>th</sup> St Garage Fire
- 12/24/2025 N 4<sup>th</sup> St Residential Fire





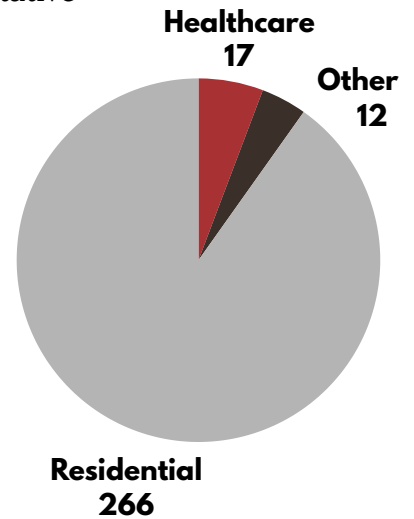
# EMS OVERVIEW

## EMS in Review

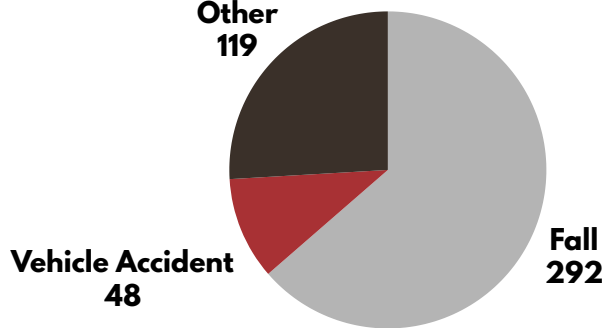
Watertown Fire Department provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedic service, and the demand for EMS continues to grow year over year. Nearly seventy percent of our total call volume is medical in nature, which means the majority of our workload is centered on patient care. The department remains actively engaged in the Jefferson County EMS workgroup to evaluate and strengthen the broader county EMS system while locally working closely with Watertown Regional Medical Center and transitioning to a new medical director, Dr. Sayre. That partnership supports stronger clinical oversight and continued advancement of paramedic training and support.

In 2025, the department secured significant Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) funding, bringing meaningful revenue back to the city to help offset the true cost of delivering paramedic-level care. At the same time, investment in preventative maintenance and service schedules has improved the reliability of critical EMS equipment, ensuring crews have what they need to respond. As call volume and medical complexity continue to increase, these efforts strengthen the department's ability to deliver dependable, high-quality care to the Watertown community.

### Lift Assists: 295 Calls



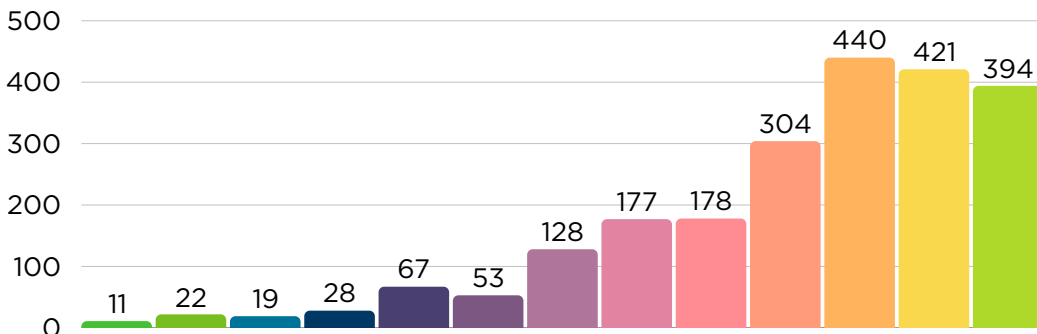
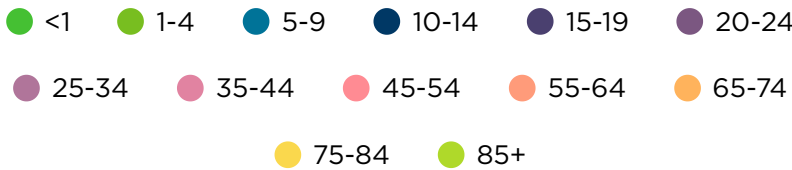
### Trauma Incidents: 459 Calls



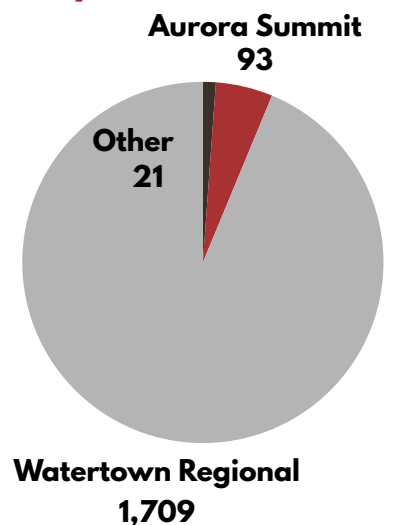
### AMBULANCE TURNOUT TIME BY CALL DEMAND (90<sup>TH</sup> PERCENTILE)

1<sup>ST</sup> OUT CALL: 2:08  
 2<sup>ND</sup> OUT CALL: 2:36  
 3<sup>RD</sup> OUT CALL: 3:08

### Number of Patients by Age



### Patients by Facility: Transported Total 1823





# TRAINING OVERVIEW

## Training Overview

Training this year focused on building strong responders and healthy leaders. Crews participated in Mercy Health's resiliency training course to support stress management and day-to-day wellness. We trained 6 personnel in NFPA 1403 live fire training. We continued leadership development through a Buffalo Leadership session with Ted Neitzke, connecting “smart thinking” concepts to the work we do on and off the job. Our medical control doctor led us on monthly EMS topics critical to current needs. Department leadership attended ISO training, legal training, and the Chiefs' education conference to support department readiness.



Each month, staff complete training in four different categories: Engine Company, Truck Company, Rescue Company, and EMS. These crew trainings focus on operational efficiency and competency, while the department-wide trainings focus on personnel development.

The department was awarded over \$75,000 in grant funding from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). These federal funds are dedicated to training staff on Incident Safety Officer, Safe Vehicle Driving Operations, and Live Fire Training. All of which support the department's goals of improving safety for staff and continued growth in our training division.

Rapid Intervention



Vehicle Extrication



Roof Ventilation





# COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

## Safe Haven Baby Box

In July, the Safe Haven Baby Box, installed as part of the new station project, was blessed and placed into service. The box is monitored 24/7, tested weekly by department staff, and fully integrated into our emergency response procedures to ensure immediate care if it is ever activated. Members are trained on Wisconsin's Safe Haven law and the responsibilities that accompany this resource. The Safe Haven Baby Box reflects the department's commitment to safety and providing support during moments of crisis. The Strehlow family donated funds towards the bassinet and infant care supply kit in memory of retired firefighter Paul Strehlow.



## LIV Safe Submissions

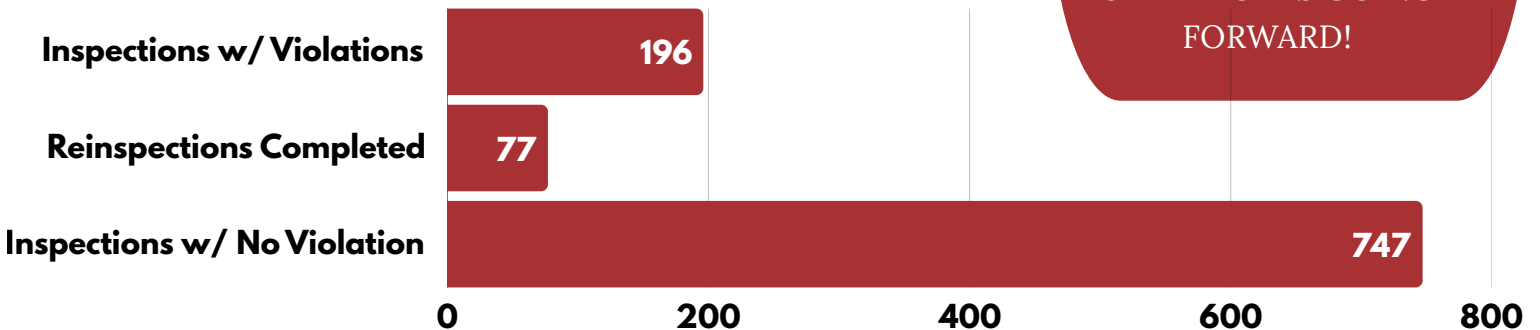


This year the department fully implemented the LIV Safe Inspection submission platform. This system improves how fire inspections and compliance are tracked and managed. To date, the system has **processed 173** submissions and identified **63** deficiencies, allowing issues to be documented clearly and addressed more efficiently. The platform provides faster notification to the fire department and supports timely follow-up with businesses to ensure fire suppression system compliance. Overall, LIV has strengthened the inspection program by improving accountability and recordkeeping, which allows for a safer city overall.

## Fire Inspections

The Fire Department is responsible for 1,319 known inspectable occupancies. In 2025, 71% were inspected. In 2026, the department will validate and update the occupancy inventory, target a 100% annual inspection rate, and improve reinspection compliance to ensure identified deficiencies are corrected in a timely manner. The addition of a designated deputy chief to oversee fire prevention and inspections will provide focused leadership, accountability, and performance tracking to strengthen the program and reduce preventable risk across the community.

**THE DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL POSITION WAS APPROVED DURING THE 2025 BUDGET PROCESS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO IMPROVED CRR EFFORTS GOING FORWARD!**





# APPARATUS

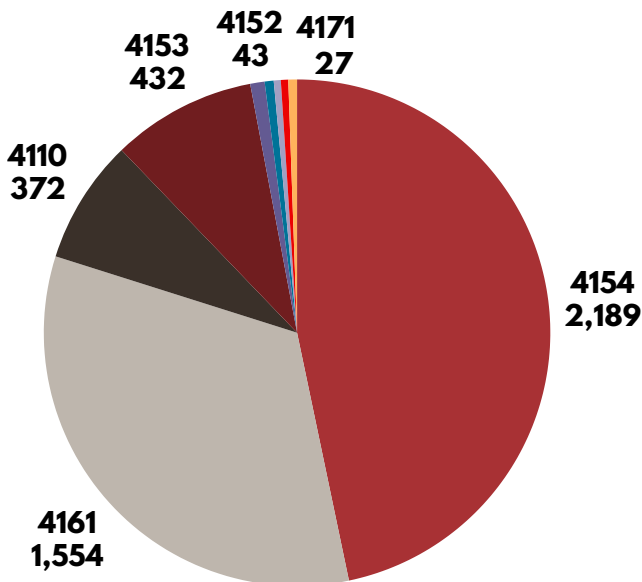
## Apparatus Update

The Fire Department provided full oversight on several major apparatus projects this year. Staff finalized production of the Townships' tender, including enhanced project management and a final inspection at the manufacturer prior to delivery to ensure the vehicle met all agreed specifications. We also completed the final inspection and accepted delivery of our new ambulance after closely managing the build process from start to finish. In addition, significant committee-level work was completed to evaluate vendors and move forward with ordering the city's next ladder truck and future engine.

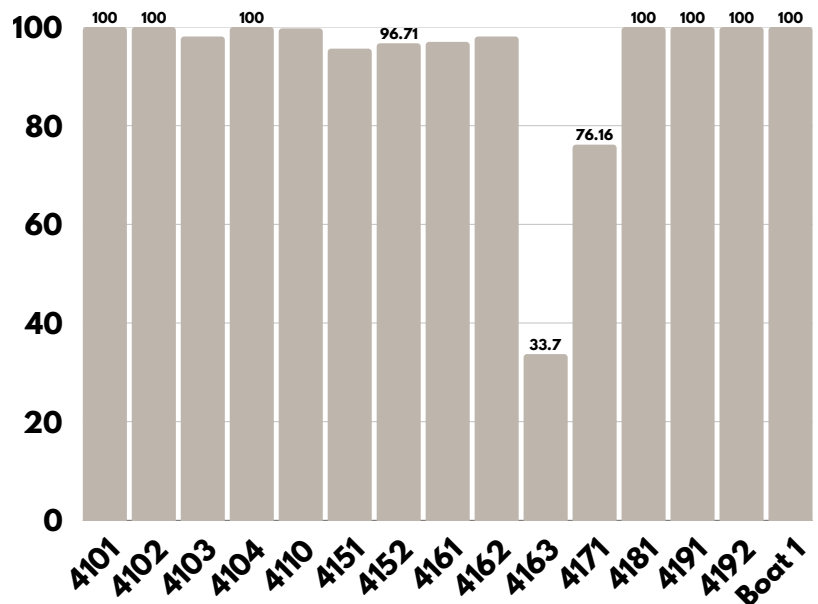
With apparatus costs having risen substantially in the last 5-10 years, these purchases represent long-term capital investments for our community. Department personnel have remained deliberate and detail-oriented throughout each project, ensuring specifications are operationally sound, maintenance considerations are built in, and the equipment is designed to meet today's demands while positioning the city for future service needs.



## Incidents Responded to by apparatus



## % Time Apparatus In Service





# APPARATUS

## Apparatus Update

The city's current ladder truck has experienced extended out-of-service periods as aging components continue to fail and replacement parts become increasingly difficult, sometimes impossible, to source. In several cases, maintenance staff have had to fabricate parts to keep the apparatus operational. As heavy apparatus approaches or exceeds the 20-year mark, wear increases and manufacturer support declines, directly impacting reliability and response readiness. Maintaining a consistent, council-supported replacement schedule is essential to ensuring frontline equipment remains dependable and available when the community needs it most.

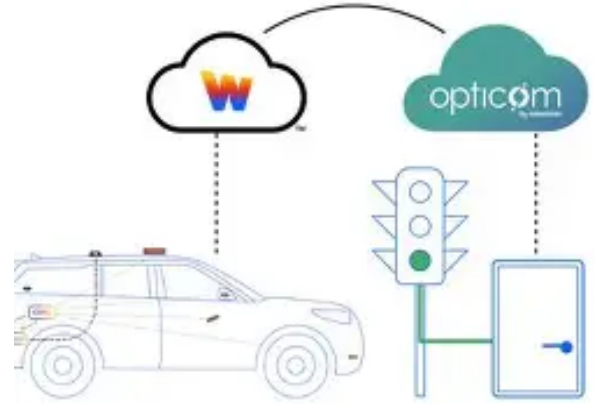
Vehicle	Age	Miles/Hours	Type of Service	Reliability	M & R Costs	Condition	Total	Notes
	1 point for every year of chronological age, based on in-service date.	1 point for each 10,000 miles or 1,000 engine hours of use.	Points (1, 3, or 5) are assigned based on the unit's service level. Severe-duty apparatus, such as fire pumpers, receive 5 points, while administrative vehicles receive 1 point.	Points (1, 3, or 5) are assigned based on repair frequency. A score of 5 reflects vehicles averaging two or more shop visits per month, while a 1 reflects vehicles requiring repairs once every three months or less.	Points (1-5) are assigned based on total life maintenance and repair costs, excluding accident damage. A score of 5 reflects costs equal to or exceeding the vehicle's original purchase price, while a 1 reflects costs at or below 20% of the original purchase price.	This category evaluates overall physical condition, including body integrity, rust, interior condition, accident history, and anticipated repairs. Units are scored on a 1-5 scale, with 5 indicating poor condition.	<p>&lt; 18 pts - Condition I - Excellent 18-22 pts-Condition II- Good 23-27 pts- Condition III- Qualifies for replacement 28 + pts -Condition IV-Needs immediate consideration</p>	
E-61	9	6.7	5	3	3	3	29.7	Due to be 2nd out in 2027
E-62	22	7.5	5	3	2	3	42.5	Placed in 2nd out 2017, due to be moved to Reserve 2029
E-63	29	7.3	3	1	2	5	47.3	Placed in reserve 2017, due to be replace 2022
TK-71	19	3	5	4	3	3	37	Ladder ordered with delivery early 2028
BR-81	12	2.6	3	1	1	2	21.6	
T-91	20	1.3	5	2	1	3	32.3	Moving to 2nd out in Spring 2026
T-92	39	2.1	5	3	3	5	57.1	Townships selling in 2026
MED 51	20	6.5	3	2	2	3	36.5	Removed from Fleet December 2025
MED 53	11	12.1	4	3	2	3	35.1	Moving to Reserve January 2026
MED 54	5.25	8.5	4	1	1	1	20.75	Moving to 2nd out January 2026
4103	13	7.5	1	1	1	2	25.5	Replaced C-2 and reassigned to inspection division 2024
4104	13	5.9	1	1	1	3	24.9	Replaced C-1 and reassigned to station car 2025
C-1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	New in 2025
C-2	2	1.5	1	1	1	1	7.5	New in 2024
4110	4	1	3	1	1	1	11	



# TECHNOLOGIES

## Technology Advances

The department implemented the Miovision Opticom Emergency Vehicle Preemption (EVP) system throughout the city. This allows the responding apparatus to communicate directly with equipped traffic signals and request a green light when approaching intersections on emergency calls. This technology works to reduce the risk of intersection crashes, improve response times, and move crews and the public through intersections more safely. This was a significant coordination effort with Public Works and traffic signal partners, and it is now operational in the field.



The department also placed Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) in every apparatus to strengthen communication with dispatch and improve call tracking, mapping, and documentation. Knox Secure systems were upgraded within vehicles to follow best practice for controlled key management and municipal facility security. GIS overlays were expanded in operational software to improve mapping accuracy and planning.



The department expanded and refined the use of EPR Fireworks to strengthen daily operations and long-term accountability. Enhancements included property and inspection management, apparatus inventory and maintenance tracking, integrated map views for preplans and hydrants, patient care reporting, and accurate NFIRS/NERIS reporting. StaffWorks was implemented, positioning the department to eliminate multiple paper forms in the coming year and transition to a more streamlined, fully integrated records and reporting system.



# PUBLIC RELATIONS

## Community In Action - Connecting with Watertown

From Firehouse Freeze Pop Station Tours and firefighter spray-downs on hot summer days to welcoming families through our Open House, it's been a season full of connection. Crews also spent time visiting schools and the library, sharing fire safety and a few laughs, and supporting community traditions like ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. These moments matter—they're a reminder that being present in our community goes well beyond responding to calls.





# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The City of Watertown maintains a comprehensive set of emergency plans and procedures to guide coordinated response and continuity of operations. In 2025, these documents were reviewed and updated in collaboration with city leadership to ensure accuracy and alignment with current operations and community needs. The revised policies were presented to the Public Safety & Welfare Committee and advanced to the Common Council for final approval. This ongoing process, led by the city's emergency manager in coordination with administrative staff, ensures our plans remain current, practical, and ready to support effective response when called upon.

## TORNADO SIRENS

SIRENS ARE INSPECTED AND MAINTAINED ANNUALLY. IN 2026, THE FINAL LEGACY SIREN, INSTALLED IN 1998 AND NOW 28 YEARS OLD, WAS APPROVED FOR REPLACEMENT, BRINGING ALL CITY SIRENS WITHIN EXPECTED SERVICE LIFE AND INTO ALIGNMENT WITH CURRENT STANDARDS.

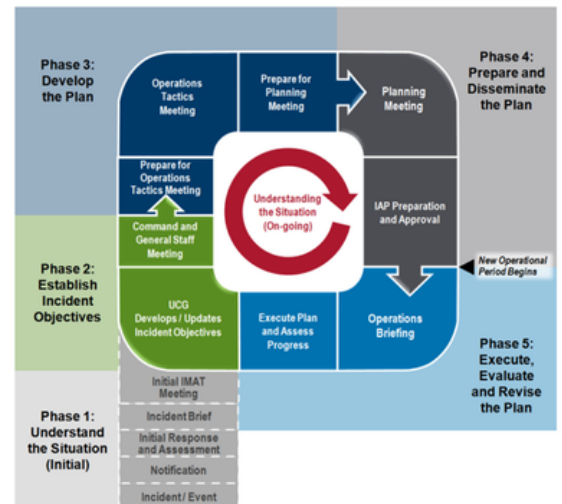
## Warming & Cooling Shelter



The city's warming and cooling shelter operations are coordinated through the emergency manager in partnership with City Dispatch and Public Health, who continuously monitor weather conditions and receive regular updates from the National Weather Service regarding watches and warnings. In June, an extreme heat warning was compounded by a power outage impacting portions of the community, which prompted **activation of the city's cooling shelter with extended hours for 1 day**. The shelter operated during this event to provide relief and a safe environment for residents, serving 1 individual. Through December 31 the warming shelter was not activated, as thresholds to open were not met.

## Emergency Operations Center Exercise

City leadership and administrative staff participated in emergency operations training and an orientation to the City's upgraded Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Through a large-incident scenario, teams reviewed roles, unified command, and coordinated response and recovery efforts, ensuring alignment across departments. The session resulted in a citywide action plan that is now being implemented to strengthen preparedness, improve coordination, and enhance the city's overall resilience during major events.

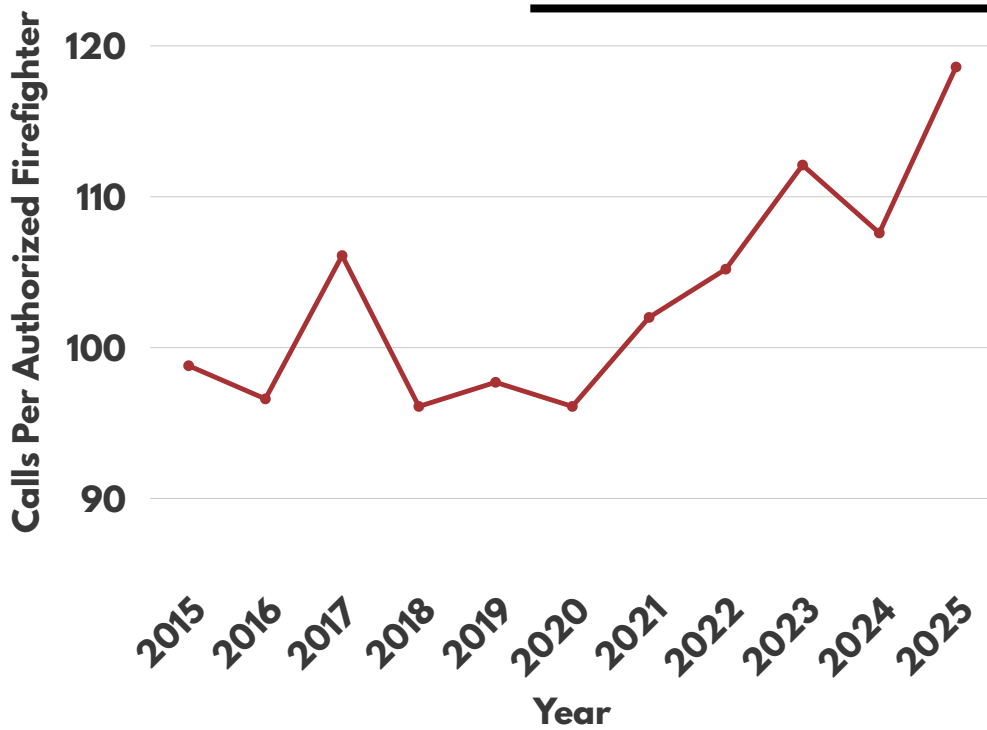




# SERVICE CAPACITY

## Workload Impact

Over the past decade, the Fire Department has experienced sustained growth in calls for service, increasing the operational workload placed on each authorized firefighter. While the City increased authorized sworn staffing in 2018 to help address this demand, continued call volume growth and workforce turnover delayed the full benefit of that investment. Recent staffing stabilization has allowed the department to improve minimum daily staffing levels; however, the number of calls supported per firefighter continues to rise. These trends highlight that current cost pressures are driven primarily by service demand rather than discretionary spending and that strategic staffing investments are focused on maintaining reliable, consistent emergency response as community needs evolve.



EVEN WITH THE STAFFING INCREASE APPROVED IN 2018, THE WORKLOAD PER AUTHORIZED FIREFIGHTER POSITION IN 2025 IS ROUGHLY 20 PERCENT HIGHER THAN IT WAS A DECADE AGO.





# GET IN TOUCH WITH US



920-261-3610



@WatertownFireDepartment



[www.watertownwi.gov/page/fire-department](http://www.watertownwi.gov/page/fire-department)



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Watertown Wi 53094

