

2024 Annual Report



Watertown Fire Department, 106 Jones Street, Watertown, WI 53094, 920-261-3610



Watertown Fire Department Annual Report 2024

Duty, Pride, Service

Mission Statement

The duty of the Watertown Fire Department is to serve the public through the preservation of life, property, and the environment with the highest level of dedication, professionalism, compassion, and pride.

Vision Statement

The Watertown Fire Department will provide the highest level of service and excellence, and have the capabilities and confidence of equipment and personnel to deal with all emergency responses.

Core Values

Dedication, Respect, Courage, Innovation, Professionalism, Accountability

The Watertown Fire Department will be releasing an updated Mission, Vision, and Value Statement in 2025!





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A Message from the Fire Chief

Reflecting on a year of growth, dedication, and service, the Watertown Fire Department proudly presents its 2024 Annual Report. This past year has been a period of significant transition for our department. I am honored to have assumed the role of Fire Chief, and we also appointed a new Deputy Chief, who brings a wealth of experience and leadership to this critical role. We both are committed to building upon the strong foundation established, and providing the highest quality of service to our community.

I am proud to recognize the promotions of Matt Pieper to the rank of Battalion Chief and Brandon Wojnowski to the rank of Lieutenant. These dedicated individuals have consistently demonstrated exceptional skills and commitment to our department, and their advancements are well-deserved. We also warmly welcome the newest members of the Watertown Fire Department. Their enthusiasm and eagerness to serve are inspiring, and I am confident that they will be valuable assets to our team. The success of our department is a direct result of the dedication and hard work of our entire staff, supporting each other so they can serve our community to the best of their ability.

To further enhance our operational capabilities, we increased minimum staffing levels on each shift from 6 to 7 personnel. This crucial increase in manpower will significantly improve on-scene command, safety, and coordination for emergency response.

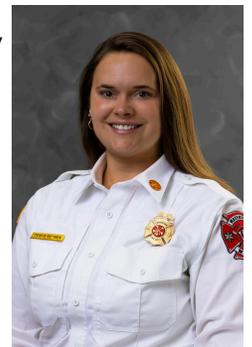
Fire prevention and community risk reduction remain paramount to our mission. The Fire Prevention Division continued to conduct thorough fire inspections throughout the city, identifying and mitigating potential hazards. We also made significant strides in improving our inspection reporting and records management systems, enhancing our ability to analyze data, monitor inspection progress, and proactively address fire safety concerns within our community.

Investing in our personnel is crucial for the long-term success of our department. Throughout the year, we prioritized personnel and leadership development, providing our members with access to specialized training programs and professional development opportunities. These investments in our staff develop their teamwork and decision-making skills, and help to leverage their talents within our department and beyond.

Throughout this year, we have been working alongside numerous partners in overseeing the construction of our new fire station. This exciting project represents a significant investment in our department's future and will provide the space for our emergency equipment and staff to have the resources necessary for success. We look forward to its representation as a pillar in our community.

We are excited for all that 2025 will bring, especially the move into our new station in spring. We are confident that the dedication and hard work of our team will continue to be a valuable asset to our city.

Chief Tanya Reynen





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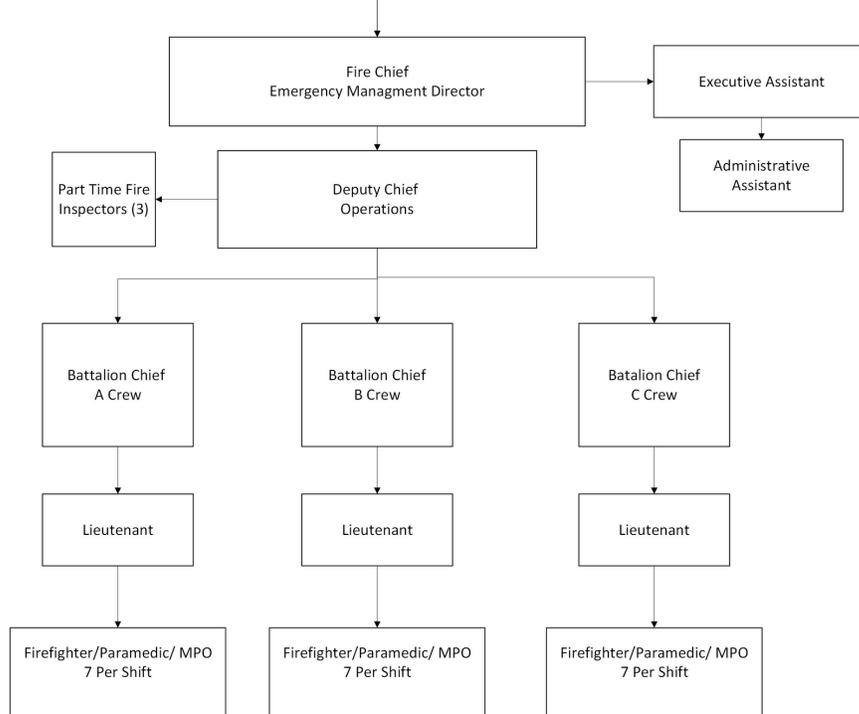
Duty, Pride, Service

Our Team

The Watertown Fire Department operates with four daily administration staff: a Fire Chief, a Deputy Fire Chief, an Executive Assistant, and an Administrative Assistant. There are twenty-seven shift firefighter/EMS providers and three part-time inspectors.

In 2024 we hired 12 staff members, including a new Fire Chief, Tanya Reynen, and a new Deputy Chief, Dave Johnsen. We accepted 10 resignations; among them was Brad Fox, Battalion Chief, and Tony Rauterberg, Deputy Chief. We celebrated the retirement of Brent Kurtz (22 years) and Scott Kreilkamp (32 years). Brent was a dedicated and passionate Driver Operator/EMT for our organization. Scott served the city as a Firefighter/Paramedic/Driver Operator and held a state of Wisconsin Critical Care license for many years. He was one of the first groups of paramedics in the city. The City of Watertown recognized Matt Pieper's 20 years and Steph Mazzone's five years with the department.

Organizational Chart



Remembering

This year was marked by the passing of Keith Becken. Keith worked for four years with the Greendale Fire Department and 33 years with the Watertown Fire Department. He earned his paramedic certificate in 1993 and became Assistant Chief in 1996, serving until his retirement in 2018. After his 37 years of fire service, he worked at Marquardt Senior Living as a maintenance tech until his full retirement in 2023. Keith was with the Fire Department as we transitioned to a paramedic level service and was one of the original paramedics serving the city!





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Operations Review

Over the past year, the Watertown Fire Department responded to **2,904 calls for service**, including structure fires, medical emergencies, vehicle accidents, and hazardous material incidents. This was a **4% decrease** in overall response from 2023. Our average response time from call to on scene was **5:15 minutes**, demonstrating our commitment to rapid and effective emergency services. The majority of our calls are EMS, the rest are broken down into fire calls. The Watertown Fire Department requires all calls to be documented to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). Reporting to this system is required by law and needs to be completed in order to get funding through the state for fire prevention and grants through the state and federal government. The Division of Industry Services (DIS) provides services related to fire prevention, protection, fire department safety and health, NFIRS, and the administration of the 2% fire dues. DIS helps develop and enforces safety and health standards for public sector fire department employees, based on SPS 330.

The on-duty personnel work on a 24-hour basis on three rotating shifts with seven to nine personnel. Each shift is staffed with a Battalion Chief, a Lieutenant, and five to seven firefighters/paramedics. Minimum staffing per day is seven personnel which means two firefighter/paramedics on an ambulance, four personnel on the engine, and one sworn fire officer in the command car. While on duty, they are responsible for fire and medical emergency calls, EMS and fire Training, performing fire inspections and investigations, public education, and general maintenance of the apparatus and station. Beyond emergency response, the shift commander (the BC or LT) handles a range of administrative duties, such as personnel management, performance oversight, and policy implementation, playing a vital role in maintaining departmental efficiency and continuity across shifts.

While on duty, they are responsible for fire and medical emergency calls, ensuring safe and efficient operations of apparatus and equipment, EMS and fire training, performing fire inspections and investigations, public education, and general maintenance of the apparatus and station. A critical component of our success on the fire scene is because of staffing the engine with four personnel. This allows for faster fire attack and on scene tasks.

As of **December 1, 2024 the 4110 Command Car is staffed 24/7**. This vehicle/position, serves as a mobile command post staffed by the shift commander. This shift commander is usually the Battalion Chief, but a Lieutenant may fill the position as needed. This individual holds a critical leadership role, overseeing daily staffing and resource allocation across the the department to ensure operational readiness. In emergency situations, the 4110 responds as the incident commander, coordinating tactical operations establishing command structure, and ensuring the safety and effectiveness of crews on scene.

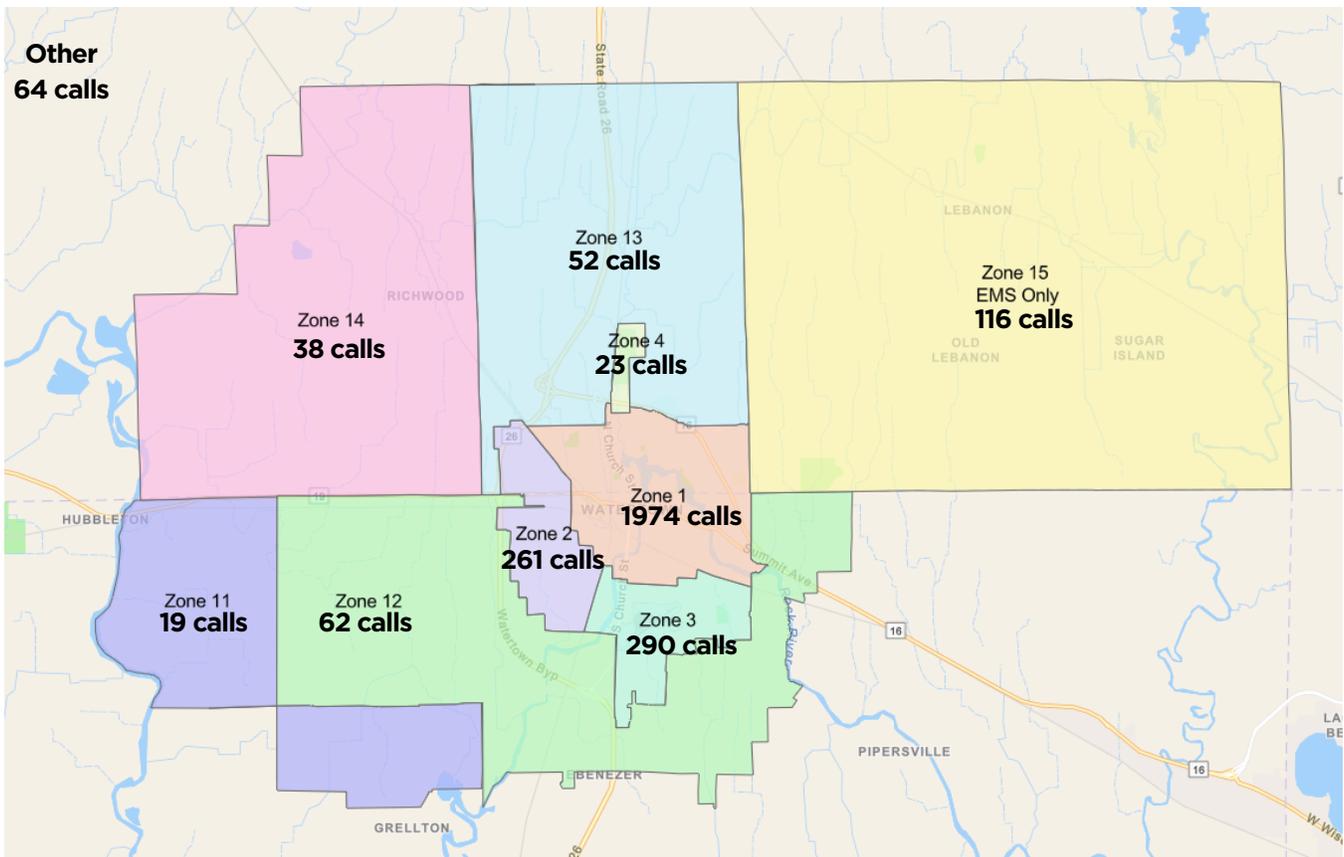


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Fire Response

The Watertown Fire Department covers a response area of **136 square miles** including the city and townships of Watertown, Milford, Emmet, Shields, and Lebanon. **88 miles** of this is fire and EMS coverage, and **48 miles** is EMS only coverage. We responded to **823 fire calls** this past year. These calls include responses to fires, explosions, hazardous materials, fire alarms, good intent, and service calls. 31 of the fire calls were actual structure fires. When extra help is needed, we reach out to neighboring departments through mutual and automatic aid. Fires from 2024 that we responded to included 26 buildings, five other structures, three vehicle, two cooking, five trash, one chimney, seven brush or grass, and three other fires. Other fire responses included two over pressure ruptures, 90 hazardous (gas, oil spills, electrical, power lines, carbon monoxide, etc.), 390 service calls, 92 good intent calls, 186 false alarms, and 11 special incidents calls.





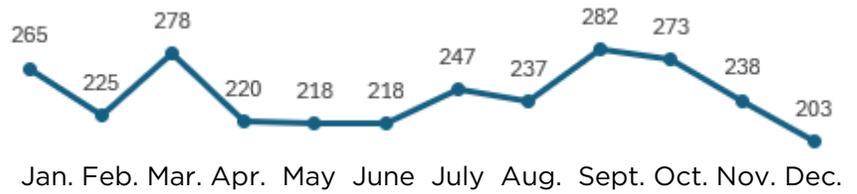
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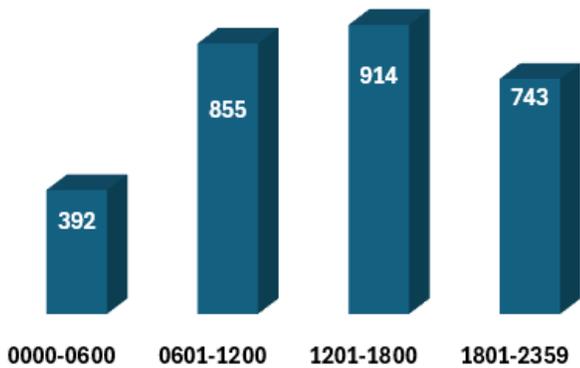
Calls By Day of the Week



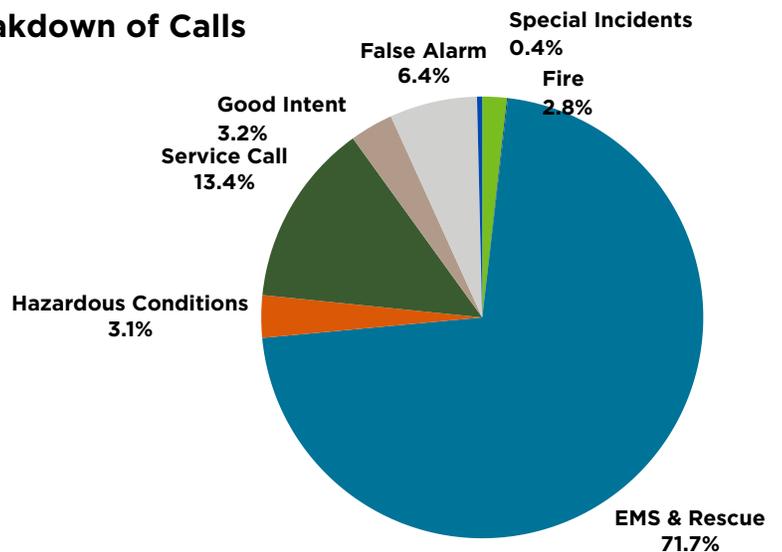
Calls By Month



Calls By Time of Day



Breakdown of Calls



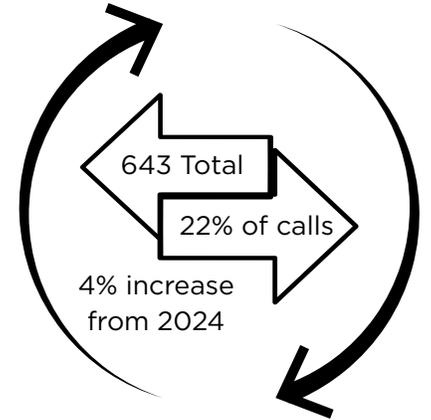


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Simultaneous Calls

While our call volume was down about 4%, we saw an increase in simultaneous calls. This is when the crew is out on more than one call at the same time. In 2024 we responded to **643** simultaneous calls or **22%** of our total call volume. We have had up to five calls going at a time sometimes. In these cases we reach out for mutual aid to help cover them. We saw an **increase of 4%** simultaneous calls between 2023 and 2024.



Mutual Aid

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) is a mutual aid measure that may be used for deploying fire, rescue, and emergency medical services personnel in a multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency response. Participation is voluntary. There is no charge between municipalities for this service. MABAS is broken into divisions throughout the state.

	Received	Given
Ixonia	15	12
Johnson Creek	11	17
Western Lakes	10	5
Clyman Lowell Reeseville	9	9
Jefferson	8	10
Lebanon	7	11
Hustisford	5	4
Waterloo	5	10
Juneau	4	2
Lake Mills	4	4
Ashippum	2	0
Sullivan	2	0
Lake Country	1	0
Beaver Dam	0	10
Fort Atkinson	0	1
Palmyra	0	1
Rome	0	1
TOTAL	83	97

Property Saved and Lost

The department tracks the fire loss to structures. In 2024 the total assessed value of structures on fire was \$1,550,500 and the total damage resulting from fires was \$136,750. The department **saved \$1,414,750** or **91%** of total property values. This amount **increased from 64%** in 2023.





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Emergency Medical Services

The Department staffs primarily with paramedic firefighters. Emergency medical technicians and paramedics provide vital lifesaving services to the citizens to increase survival rates in patients and reducing disability from out-of-hospital emergencies in the area that they protect by providing the highest quality patient care in the pre-hospital setting. The Department requires all new staff to be a firefighter/paramedic within 24 months of hire. There are many levels of emergency service providers in Wisconsin. The highest is a critical care paramedic and the second is paramedic.

The Watertown Fire Department's medical control is under the Medical Director, Dr. Nestor Rodriguez, at Watertown Regional Medical Center. (WRMC) Communication between the WRMC Director and the WFD is critical. This communication promotes ways to improve patient care by training, staying current on medical policies and procedures, and utilizing up-to-date equipment and medical supplies.

Medical calls accounted for **71%** of our department's response in 2024. **90%** of all calls were advanced life support services (ALS) and the remaining were basic life support services. (BLS) BLS medical calls include minor trauma and stable medical problems and response for motor vehicle crashes. This past year the department worked with (various) outside educators to provide EMS continuing education for the paramedics. In person training was held monthly both inhouse and at WRMC for improved engagement and hands on training.

PAYOR MIX

WFD Payor Mix

Primary Payor	% of Trips
Medicare	30%
Medicare Advantage	31%
Insurance	12%
Medicaid	6%
Medicaid MCO	8%
Patient	10%
Facility	1%
Other Govt. Payers	1%
TPL	0%

In Southeastern Wisconsin, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) reimbursement varies significantly based on the payer mix, which includes Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, and self-pay patients. Nationally, the American Ambulance Association reports the following distribution: 44% of EMS transports are covered by Medicare, 14% by Medicaid, 21% by commercial insurance, 14% are self-pay, and 7% fall under other categories.

Financial Impact

Primary Payor	CPT
Medicare	\$490.26
Medicare Advantage	\$457.87
Insurance	\$648.17
Medicaid	\$407.32
Medicaid MCO	\$419.93
Patient	\$144.75
Facility	\$283.65
Other Govt. Payers	\$702.80
TPL	\$1,090.59

Reimbursement rates differ notably among these payers. For instance, a study of Wabasha Ambulance Service, located near Southeastern Wisconsin, found that for every dollar billed, Medicare paid approximately \$0.31, Medicaid \$0.31, commercial insurance \$0.58, and private pay/uninsured patients contributed minimal amounts, often resulting in significant uncompensated care.

Given the variability in reimbursement rates and payer mixes across different regions and service providers, it's essential for the city to recognize that the funds received annually do not match what is billed for EMS Care.

This past year, our billing company Lifequest was bought out by EMS MC. This offers a patient portal for billing questions, more transparency and tracking, and updated call processing.



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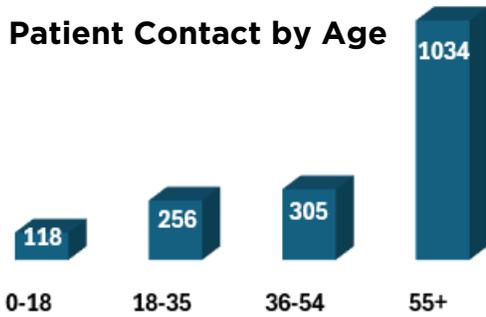


2036 Total Patients

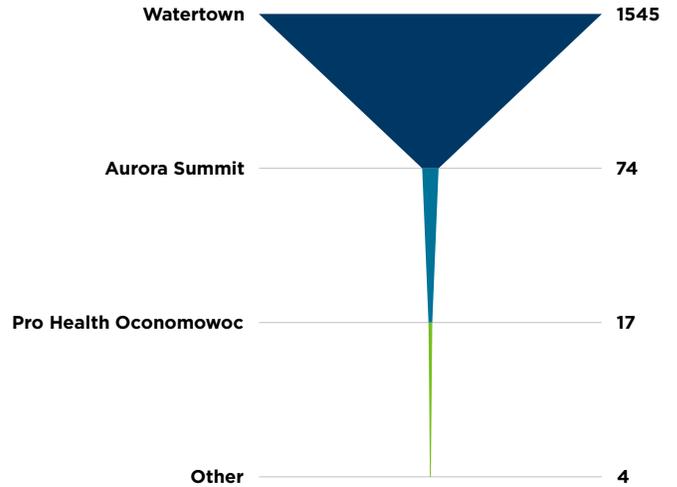
ALS/BLS



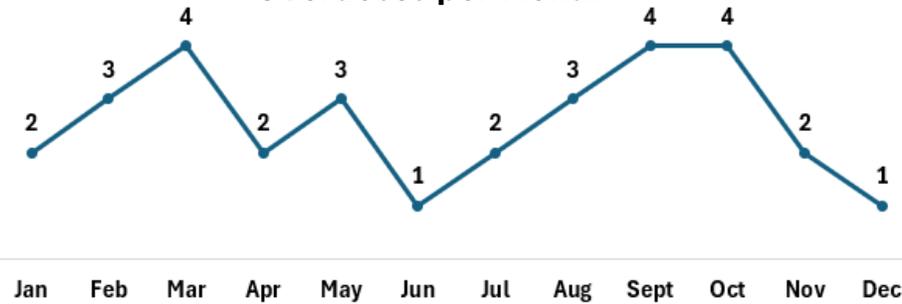
Patient Contact by Age



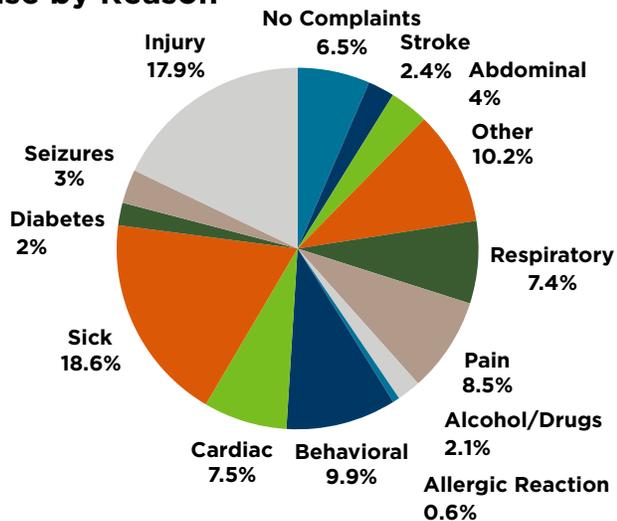
Transports



Overdoses per Month



Response by Reason





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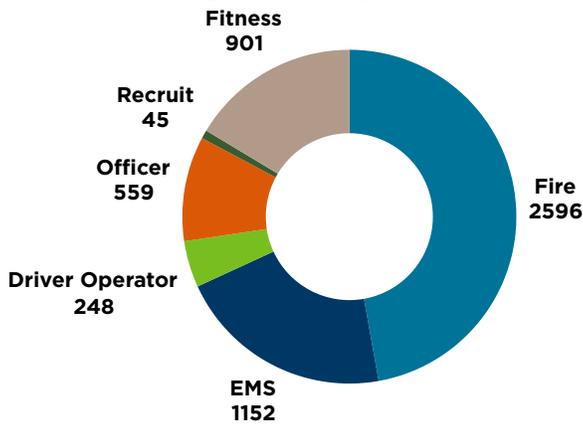
Department Training

The crews train continuously in EMS and fire to maintain their skills and promote community safety. Training also enables them to learn new tactics and make changes to operations if necessary. Our team participated in over **11,110 hours** of training last year. Some of the annual training topics include rescue, fire attack, ventilation, apparatus operations, hose deployments and testing, tools and equipment, SCBA, weather emergencies, EMS protocols, and medications. The crews held community partner special trainings such as canine handling for fire investigations, vehicle extrication, and electrical emergency safety.

Along with required annual and daily training, the crews attend a monthly EMS refresher on State and Nationally required topics, such as cardiac, respiratory and pediatric emergencies. This past year the officers held a special training in leadership by Conway and a Clifton Strengths assessment. In February, the fire department participated in a controlled structure live burn training on a local property. This helps the crew prepare for real structure fires.

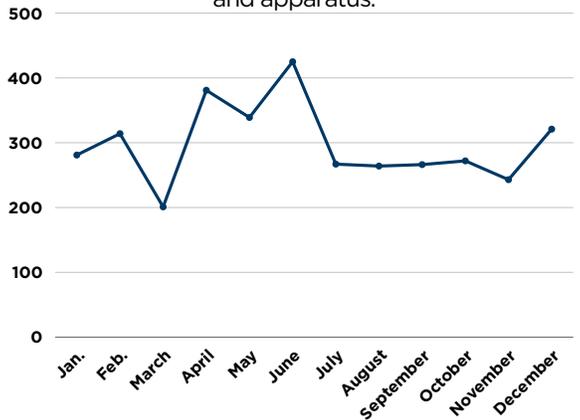
In 2024, staff focused on updating our monthly training plans, records management of training and updated our Probationary and Driver Operator task books. These task books are paramount in the development of new employees and driver operators as it sets a high standard that is fair and equitable for all.

Training Hours by Topic



Station/Work Maintenance Hours:

This is any type of work done to keep up the station and apparatus.





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Community Risk Reduction

Fire prevention and community outreach is done through fire inspections, pre-plan reviews, code enforcement, public education, station tours, and community events. **In 2024 addressing the Fire Inspection program was the number one goal.** Updating records and developing processes for tracking and managing quality fire inspections has taken months of dedication and attention to detail from every inspector and our Deputy Chief. We are proud to say that we have made strides in establishing a solid foundation for our program!

Fire Prevention and Inspections

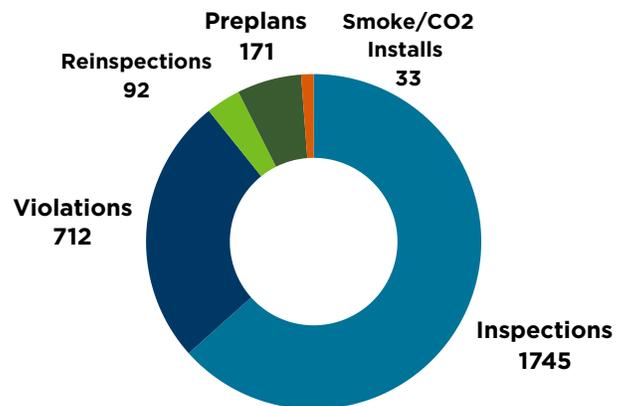
Under Wisconsin Administrative Code SPS 314.01 (a) 1 all public building and places employment are required to have a fire inspection. We do annual and semi-annual inspections and re-inspections for corrected violations. Fire inspections are performed by part-time fire inspectors and on-duty personnel. In 2024, WFD performed **1745 fire inspections** in the City of Watertown and the towns of Shields, Emmet, Milford, and Watertown. **712 safety violations** were identified.

The department worked with city officials to implement an ordinance that requires online web reporting of fire and life safety reports pertaining to inspection, testing, and maintenance of fire suppression systems in commercial buildings. This improves the inspectors' effectiveness in code enforcement and data compilation. The reporting system also aids in ensuring the most up to date and accurate information is recorded.

Creating a safe environment for people to live and work in is a goal of every fire department. Education is one way of improving safety. Annual fire inspections provide an opportunity to promote education about the fire department's role with business owners and employees and builds the partnership in promoting a fire safe community.

Juvenile Fire Prevention Program

The Watertown Fire Department is proud to offer a Juvenile Fire Prevention Program. This program follows the US Fire Administration model for Youth Fire Setting prevention. Children are curious about fire and sometimes experiment with fire in unsafe ways. The goal of this program is to identify and educate these children and their families on fire safety. We provide one-on-one classes with the child and support the family with a comprehensive fire prevention plan for their home. In 2024, we served two families with children involved in unsafe fire setting incidents.





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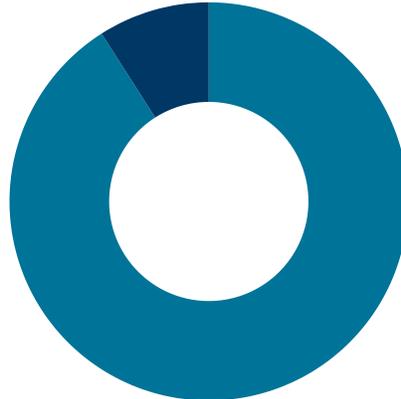
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Public Relations

The Fire Department is very involved with the community through trainings, fire safety talks, events, station tours, and public and student riders. Some of the events we participated in were parades, career fairs, family nights at the library, field trips, first aid talks, Lights 'n Sirens, football games, Riverfest, Trunk or Treat, ringing the bells and an open house. The department strengthened its ties with the community by offering educational programs, school visits, and fire prevention outreach. This year crews were encouraged to find their own way to connect with the community. Line staff chose to engage with the public at the farmers market, a pop-up splash pad, handing out stickers and fire prevention information while at the park, helping Madison Area Technical College with a fire and EMS camp, and many others. Engaging with the community in this way brought smiles and a genuine connection.



Station Tours
17



Community Events
171





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Apparatus

The Fire Department operates with a fleet of 17 vehicles which require in-and-out of station maintenance. The vehicles include three engines, one ladder, two tenders, four ambulances, one brush truck, one boat, three command cars, an inspector car, and the Jefferson County MCI truck. We acquired a new command car this past year.

The Fire Department upgraded the Deputy Chief command car, replacing a 2013 Ford Taurus with a 2024 Chevy Tahoe. The Taurus was repurposed as a fire inspector vehicle to be used in a non-emergency setting due to it's age. The department oversaw the build of a new Tender, expected to be delivered in 2025. Tenders are essential to our rural fire operations as there are no hydrants outside of the city limits. The new Tender will allow for the current 37-year-old Tender to be retired.

City of Watertown Fire Department Fleet Assessment											
Vehicle	Age	Miles/Hours	Type of Service	Reliability	M & R Costs	Condition	Total	Notes	Miles	Hours	Hours/Miles
E-61	8	5.7	5	3	2	2	25.7		43,462	5,753	316,415
E-62	20	7.4	5	3	2	3	40.4	Placed in 2nd out 2017, due to repalce 2029	68,031	7,419	408,045
E-63	28	7.3	3	1	2	5	46.3	Placed in reserve 2017, due to be replace 2022	63,922	7,369	405,295
TK-71	18	2.9	5	3	3	3	34.9	Ladder ordered with delivery early 2028	13,657	2,836	155,980
BR-81	11	2.6	3	1	1	2	20.6		3,419	553	30,415
T-91	19	1.2	5	2	1	3	31.2	Moving to 2nd out in 2025	9,260	1,208	66,440
T-92	38	2.1	5	3	3	5	56.1	Being repalced with new Tender in 2025	24,792	2,101	115,555
MED 51	19	6.5	3	2	2	3	35.5	Will be removed from fleet May 2025 after new Ambo arrives	65,720	5,384	296,120
MED 52	19	7	3	3	2	3	37	Will be removed from fleet May 2025 after new Ambo arrives	70,313	5,743	315,865
MED 53	9	11.7	4	3	2	3	32.7	Moved to 2nd out December 2020	117,976	8,810	484,550
MED 54	4.25	6.8	4	1	1	1	18.05		67,999	5,426	298,430
C-83	12	5.8	1	1	1	2	22.8	Replaced C-2 and reassigned to inspection division 2024	5,826	2,759	151,745
C-84	12	7.1	1	1	1	3	25.1	Replaced C-1 and reassigned to station car 2025	71,910	2,631	144,705
C-1	1	0	1	1	1	1	5	New in 2025	2,700	N/A	N/A
C-2	1	0	1	1	1	1	5	New in 2024	8,094	2,455	N/A
4110	3	0	3	1	1	1	9		6,376	483	N/A

Points

- 1 point for every year of age
- 1 point for each 10,000 miles or 1,000 engine hours of use
- 1, 3, or 5 points based on the severity of service exposure
- 1, 3, or 5 points based on frequency in shop
- 1-5 point based on the total life M&R costs
- 1-5 points based on condition (5 is poor)

<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

Hours/Miles

Converting hours to miles to show a reflection of true wear.

Emergency Management

The Watertown Fire Department is responsible for city emergency management. **A siren was replaced at the Boughton Street location.** The city also conducted two table top exercises, a warming and cooling shelter exercise and and a Family Assistance Center exercise. This brought leadership from across the city together to discuss functional exercises for the city. Emergency support functions were updated this past year working together with other city leaders. The city utilizes fourteen emergency support functions to organize and coordinate resources and responsibilities during and after an emergency in a clear, efficient way.



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New Fire Station

Work continued on the building of the new fire station located at 621 Bernard St., Watertown, WI. The new station will open in May 2025. Thank you to everyone for their dedication, support, and countless hours overseeing this project. This project would not have been possible without all of the teamwork that went into it.

