



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Park Ridge Fire Department

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CONTENTS

CHIEF'S MESSAGE _____	3
2020 KEY INITIATIVES _____	4
2020 RESPONSES _____	6
ADMINISTRATION _____	10
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES _____	12
BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS _____	14
APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT _____	15
TRAINING _____	16
FIRE INVESTIGATIONS _____	18
SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA) _____	19
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT _____	20
FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU _____	21
TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM _____	22
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TEAM _____	23
DIVE TEAM _____	24

CHIEF'S MESSAGE

CHIEF JEFF SORENSEN

2020 was a great year for the Fire Department, made difficult by the challenges of the pandemic. From an organizational perspective, a highlight of the year was the reinstatement of the Deputy Fire Chief position. John Hanson was promoted to the position of Deputy Fire Chief on August 11, 2020. That same day we had the promotion of Derek Decker to Battalion Chief and added Sean Wagner, Firefighter/Paramedic to our staff. We are fortunate to have such talented individuals on our staff, as we continue to “build our bench strength”.

The Deputy Chief position is in control of all operational aspects of the fire department. Our key strategic goal of this position is to better analyze and then improve on our Operations, including our response, and to standardize our methods across all three of the Operational Shifts (known as Black, Red and Gold).

From an equipment standpoint, we ordered our new Tower Ladder to be delivered in February 2021. Along with this vehicle, we will continue to staff Rescue 36 and Ambulance 37 as able, in addition to our two frontline Ambulances and Engine 35. In 2020, we also took delivery of our new extrication equipment, allowing us to better serve the community through faster and safer extrication methods.

In 2021, our focus will continue to be on pandemic management that to date has included: frequent conference calls, status updates, changes to guidelines and requirements and all methods of teleconferencing. Additionally, we will begin to address our building assessment of our two facilities built in 1969 and 1970, and we will be updating our SOG's (Standard Operational Guidelines) to improve the safety of our personnel - our main goal every day!

I look forward to feedback, comments, or questions that may be directed to my e-mail.

Respectfully,

Jeff Sorensen
Fire Chief
City of Park Ridge
jsorensen@parkridgefd.org

2020 KEY INITIATIVES

DEPUTY CHIEF JOHN HANSON

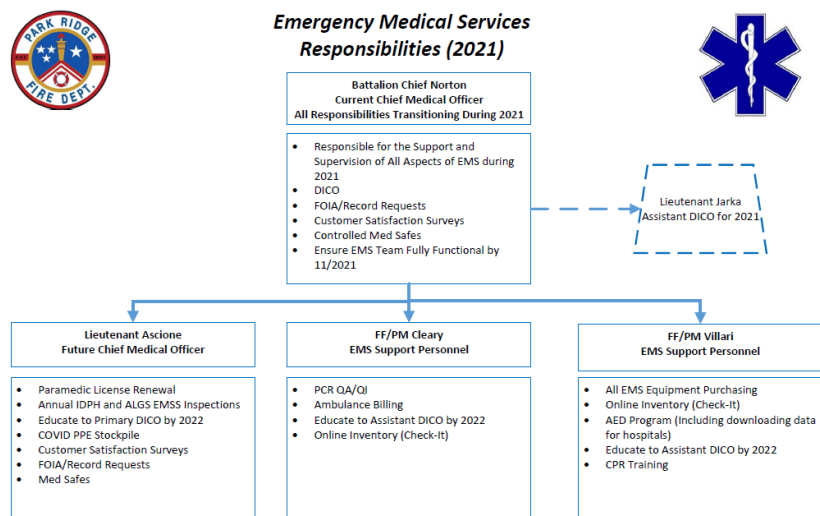
In the third quarter of 2020, the Park Ridge Fire Department reinstated the Department's Deputy Chief Position after a five-year vacancy. The Deputy Chief is responsible for all aspects of our incident response and the day-to-day operations of the three shifts. During the last two quarters, several key initiatives were implemented by the Deputy Chief and Battalion Chiefs (Operations Staff) to improve our safety, response, and daily operations.

Building the Bench

Eight areas of responsibility were identified by the Operations Staff, critical to the Department's successful operation. Our goal was to split up these duties into manageable components and have a backup (or bench) for each one. The result was an extensive reorganization of the

Department's responsibilities while allowing our promotional candidates the opportunity to obtain valuable experience prior to their promotion to a higher rank. At the end of 2020, we were completing the transition of duties to the new personnel and

scheduling the training that they would require in order to succeed in their new positions.



Standard Operating Guidelines

As we built our bench, we were able to take the opportunity to update our Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's). In the fourth quarter of 2020, we began to outline how the SOGs would be reviewed, updated, and implemented over the next 18 months. This process will be comprehensive and involve personnel's input on multiple levels. Battalion Chief Decker will lead this initiative and will be rolling out the first updated SOGs in early 2021.

Response Times

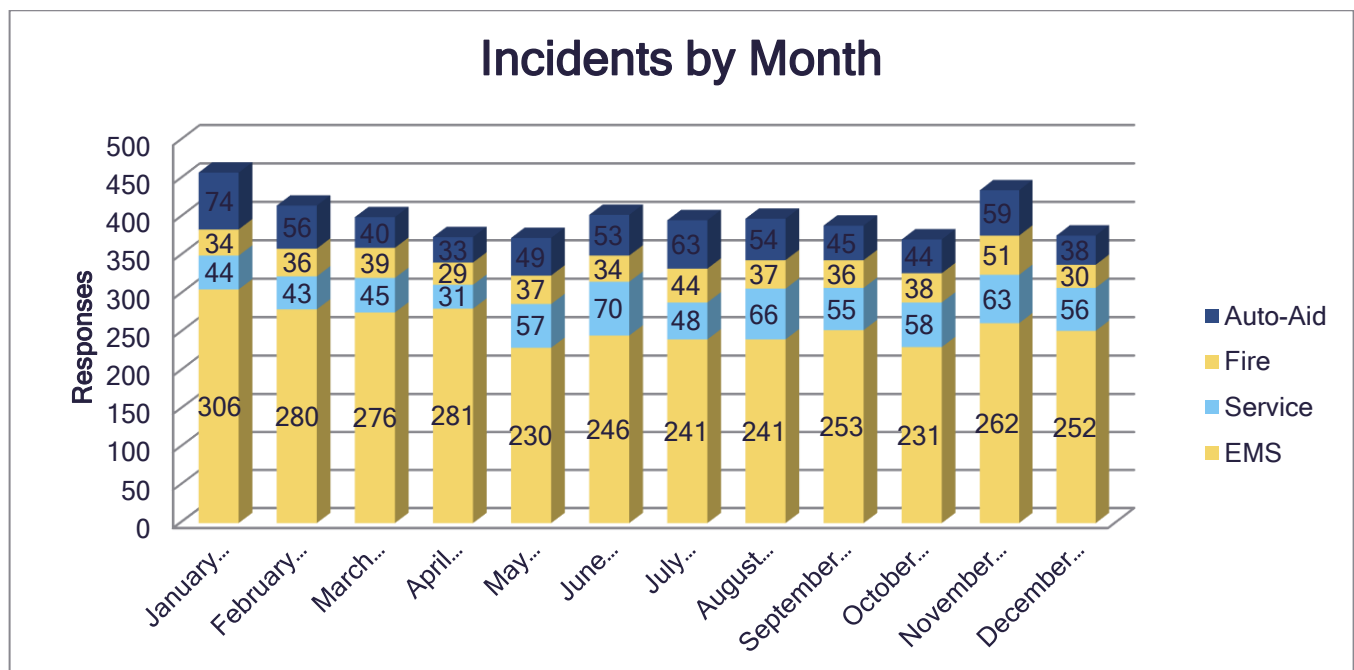
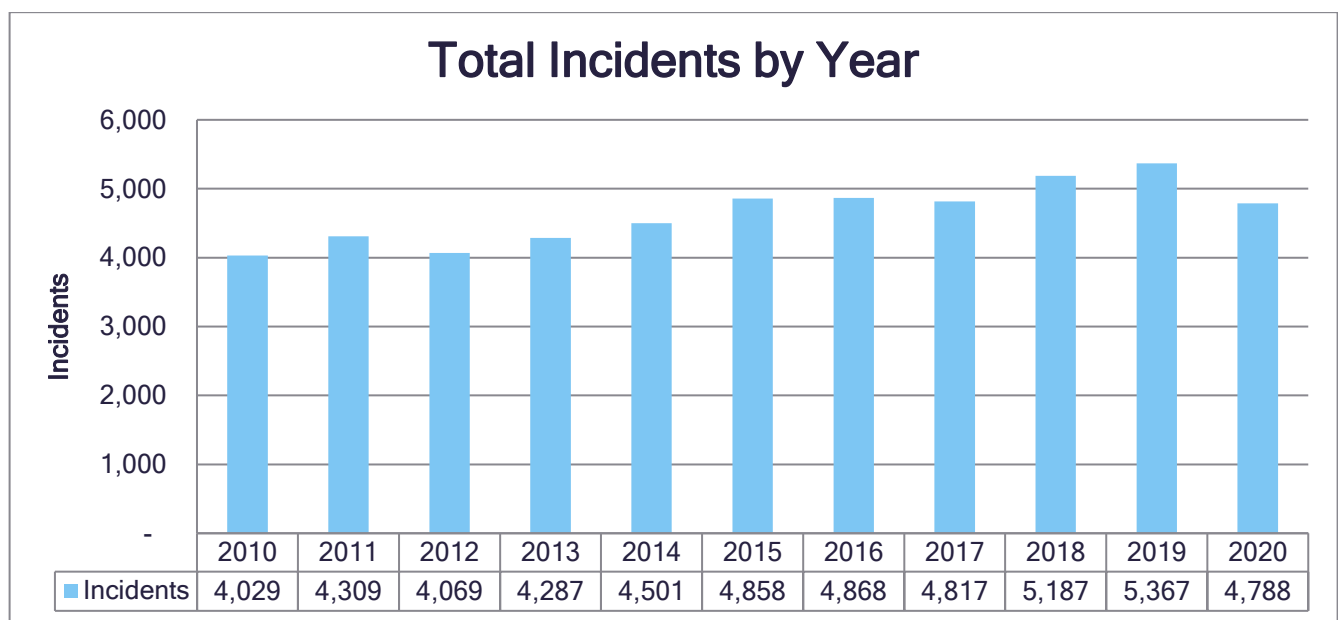
Thanks to the installation of our new station alerting equipment in 2020, we can work to further reduce our response times for each incident. Late in the fourth quarter of 2020, Operations Staff developed an updated Response Time Standard Operating Guideline. We will continue to monitor these times with the goal of reducing our response times in every area we can control.

2020 RESPONSES

DEPUTY CHIEF JOHN HANSON

Total Incidents

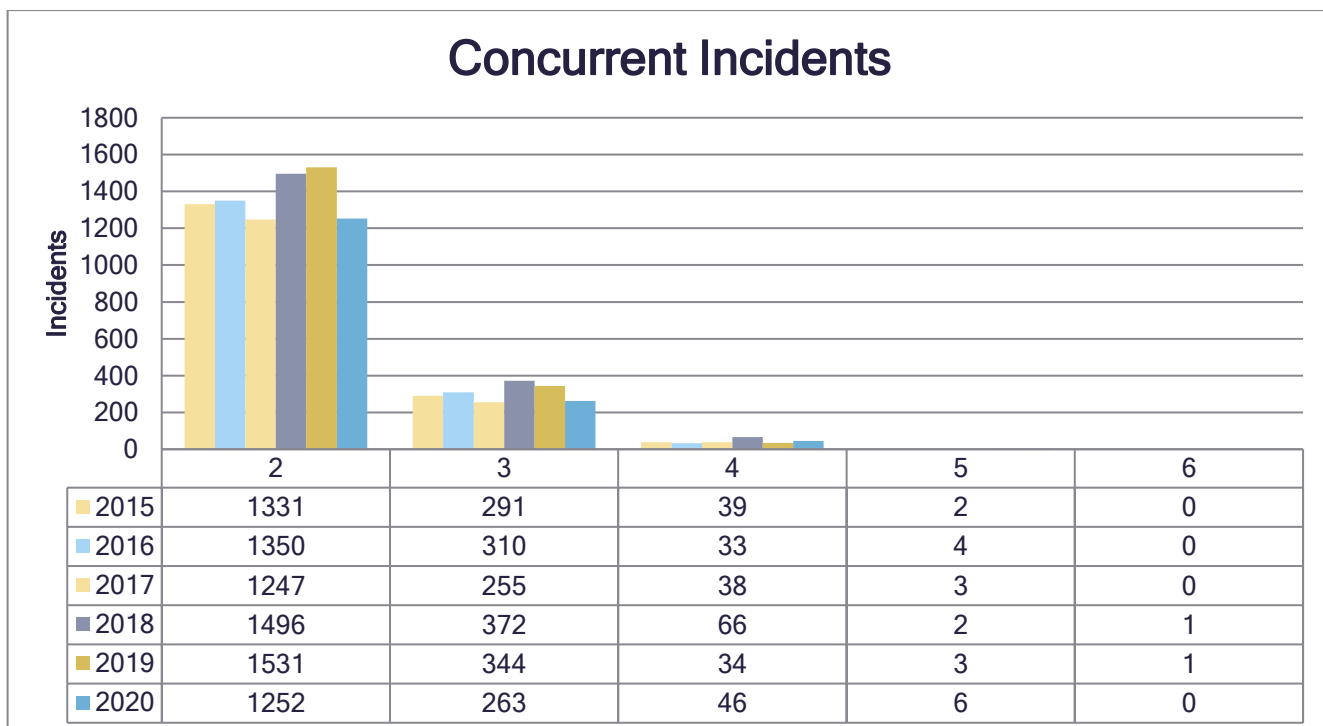
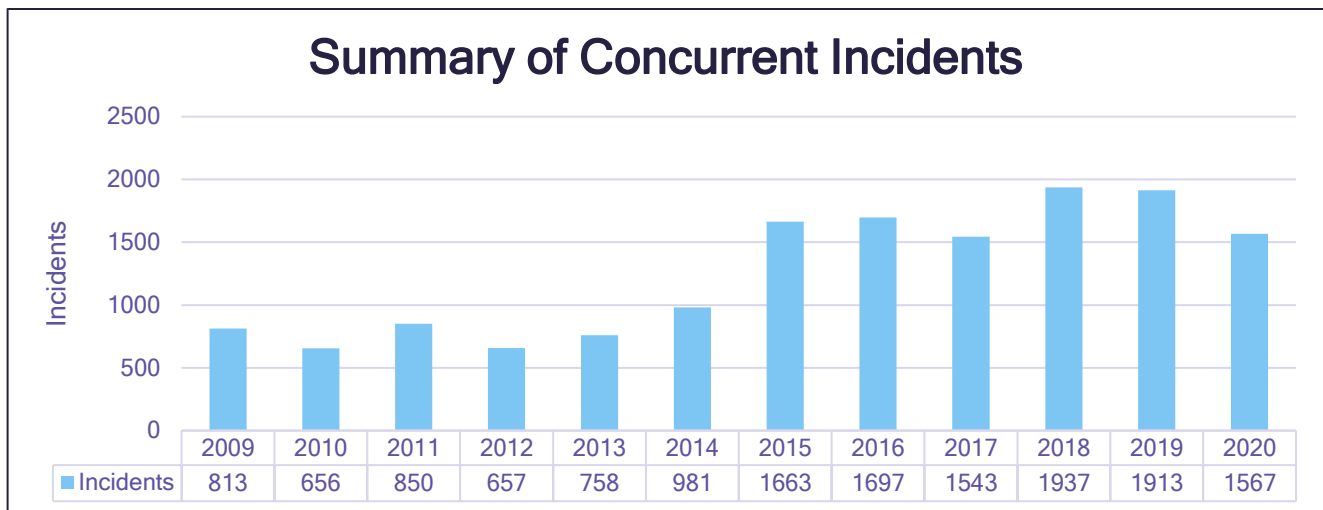
This past year, our total incidents decreased nearly 11% to 4,788 as compared to 2019. All four categories of incidents (Fire, EMS, Service, and Auto-Aid) declined compared to 2019. This trend was widespread throughout our region and is attributed mostly to the pandemic and subsequent stay at home orders. We also continue to work to reduce our call volume by addressing any issues that cause us to respond multiple times to the same location.



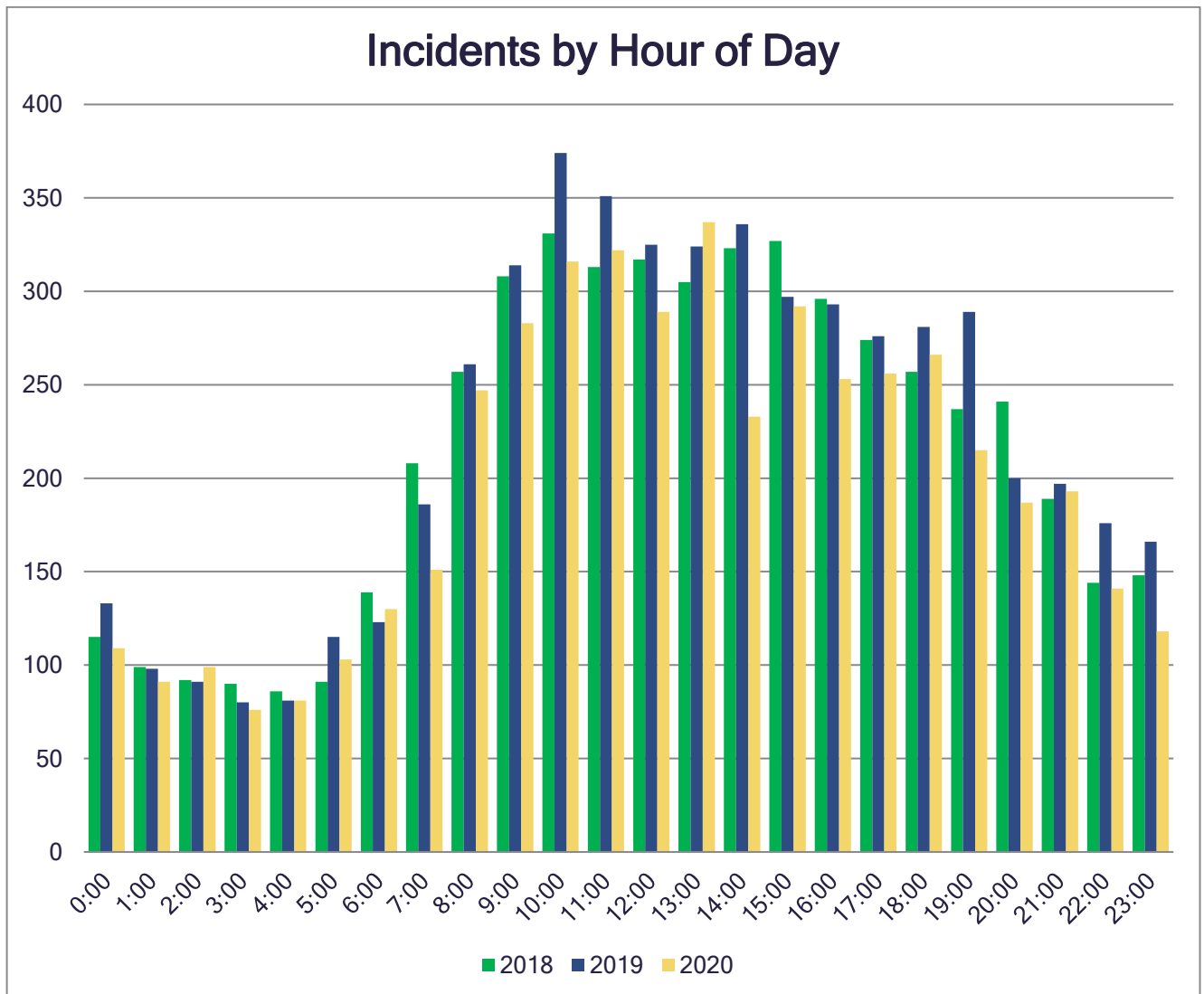
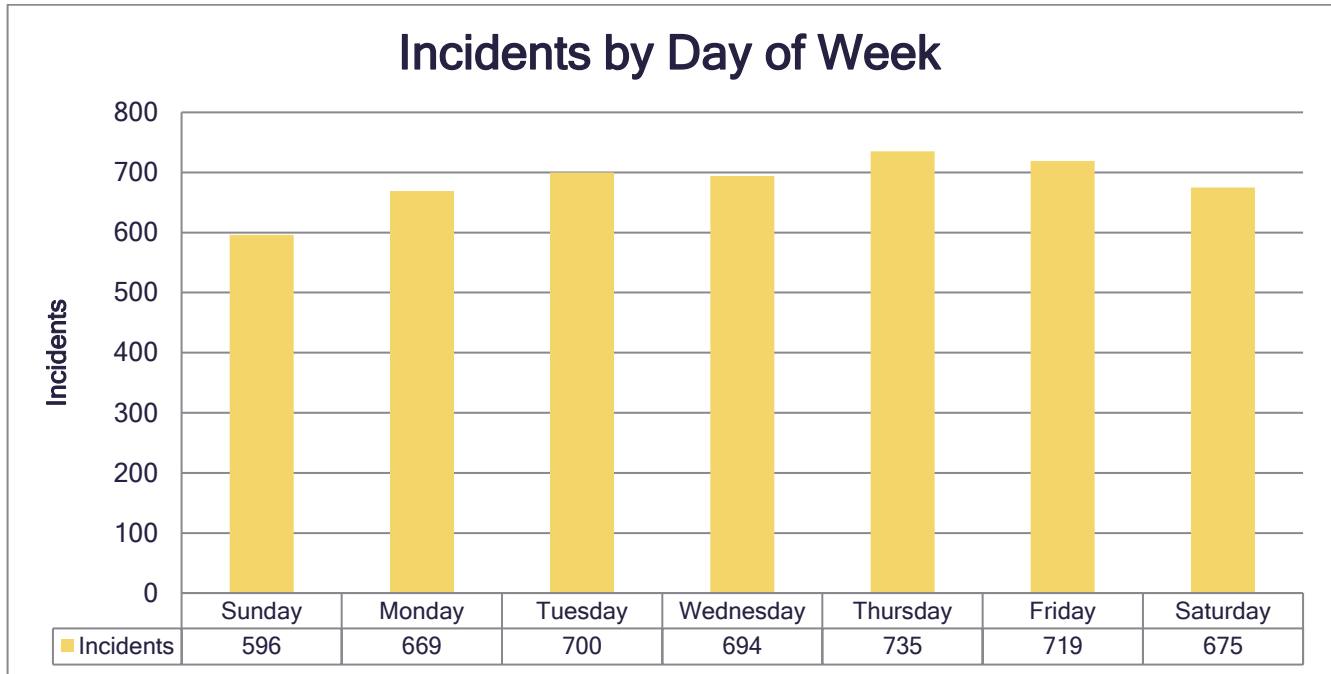
Concurrent Incidents

During 2020, 33% of our incidents occurred while our personnel were responding to at least one other emergency. We refer to these as concurrent or simultaneous incidents.

Concurrent incidents declined compared to 2019 figures, which correlates with the decrease in overall incidents we saw in 2020. When the number of concurrent incidents exceeds our ability to respond to incidents in the City, we must rely on surrounding communities to assist our citizens. In 2020, there were eight incidents where no Park Ridge equipment was available to respond, and our neighbors handled the entire call without any PRFD personnel. When staffing allows, we put our Rescue as well as our third Ambulance in service, which helps to reduce response times and our dependence on surrounding communities when multiple calls are occurring.



Incident Occurrences



ADMINISTRATION

EXECUTIVE OFFICER PAUL LISOWSKI

- Fire Department staff, led by Battalion Chief Decker, performed background investigations, interviewed, and subsequently hired two new firefighter/paramedics - Mitch Stratelak and Sean Wagner.
- Fire Department staff went to bid for two major capital projects - hydraulic extrication equipment and SCBA (air packs). These are significant upgrades to our equipment and provide an increase in safety, reliability, and performance. The preparation of bid documents and evaluation of equipment was led by Deputy Chief Hanson, Lt. Bruchsaler, and FF/PM Piltaver.
- Chief Sorensen, Deputy Chief Hanson, and Executive Officer Lisowski worked extensively with the City Attorney to prepare for and testify in the City's "Spiller Pays" claim against the owner of the vacant gas station located at 969 N. Northwest Highway.
- Fire Department staff, led by Battalion Chief Sankey and Lieutenant Wolff, began a comprehensive analysis of our two fire station facilities. Staff spent numerous hours meeting with and discussing the station studies done by an outside engineering firm. This study will give the City a long term plan on how to manage the aging infrastructure in both fire stations.
- Executive Officer Lisowski participated in a new MABAS Division 3 Cancer Prevention subcommittee. Our Division is looking at ways to reduce the ever growing occupational cancer risk faced by our personnel.
- Chief Sorensen, Deputy Chief Hanson, and Executive Officer Lisowski managed the biennial process of testing for new hire candidates, lieutenants, and battalion chiefs. This is required to be completed every two years by the Board of Fire and Police Commission and results in the posting of hiring and promotional lists that are valid for two years.
- Fire Department Administration staff worked to acquire and maintain adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the duration of the pandemic.
- Fire Department Administration staff oversaw the testing of all fire hydrants across the City, performed by part-time summer helpers. This testing is not only beneficial for maintenance of the hydrants, but also is required for our ISO rating. We continued to include weekly flow testing as a way to maintain our improved ISO score and accurately measure the hydrant pressure in different areas of the City.
- Chief Sorensen and Executive Officer Lisowski attended multiple MABAS Division 3 meetings each month. Chief Sorensen continued his role as the Vice-President of our MABAS Division. Throughout the pandemic, these meetings occurred more often and were vital to how we were able to respond to the Covid surge safely and effectively. The sharing of resources and information were key to the success in handling this pandemic in our region.
- Chief Sorensen, Executive Officer Lisowski, and Fire Marshal Plach attended and virtually attended, when necessary, regular Emergency Preparedness Committee

meetings at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital as well as Safety Committee meetings at Maine East and Maine South High Schools.

- Chief Sorensen and Executive Officer Lisowski virtually attended monthly RED Center meetings. During the height of the pandemic, these meetings occurred on a weekly basis to ensure the dispatchers were doing everything possible to pre-screen callers to increase the safety of our Fire Department personnel.
- Executive Officer Lisowski did some limited fire prevention outreach to the schools and community before the pandemic forced us to shut down these programs.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

BATTALION CHIEF TIM NORTON

Park Ridge Fire Department emergency medical personnel responded to 3,248 EMS incidents in 2020, 149 of which were incidents in surrounding towns. These incidents included ambulance requests for cardiac and other medical issues, trauma, mutual aid, and a myriad of other potentially life-threatening emergencies.

EMS incidents in 2020 represented 68% of the Park Ridge Fire Department's total responses. Advanced Life Support (ALS) calls accounted for 57.0% of the EMS incidents for 1,851 incidents. We provided care to 2,951 patients and ultimately transported 2,361 patients, meaning 80% of our patient contacts were transported to area hospitals.

Out of these ALS responses, some of the most critical are the STEMI cases. A STEMI is a full-blown heart attack caused by the complete blockage of a coronary artery. STEMI stands for ST-elevation myocardial infarction. "ST-elevation" refers to a particular pattern on an EKG heart tracing, and "myocardial infarction" is the medical term for a heart attack. On average, we responded to one STEMI run every month.

As with all other aspects of life in 2020, the Park Ridge Fire Department had an intimate look at life amid COVID-19. Due to the pandemic, our personnel were required to wear upgraded Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) consisting of, at a minimum, an N95 mask, gloves, and eye protection before close contact with any patient they encountered. Additionally, when necessary, they would don a disposable gown to provide added protection for their uniforms. These guidelines and requirements were ever-changing in 2020.

We were fortunate enough to be able to stay on top of our supply of critical PPE. We were able to acquire the vast majority of the necessary PPE from the Cook County supply and then supplement this with the purchase of additional supplies on our own, which was extremely challenging to procure at times.



The Park Ridge Fire Department was also able to increase our disinfecting/sterilization capabilities for our ambulance patient compartments and equipment with the installation of a ceiling-mounted UV-C sterilizing system. The City Garage mechanics were instrumental in installing this system in all three ambulances.



Previously, disinfecting all hard surfaces and equipment meant utilizing a disinfecting wipe or spray and ensuring the surface remained wet with the disinfectant for the proper amount of contact time. Now, the paramedics can close the doors to the ambulance's patient compartment, select the amount of time for the UV-C lights to run, and push a button to disinfect the entire patient compartment of our ambulances which is a much more efficient process.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

BATTALION CHIEF SCOTT SANKEY

The Park Ridge Fire Department contracted with BKV Group to perform a Comprehensive Facilities Conditions Assessment and Space Needs Analysis.

The purpose was to document both Fire Stations' conditions and provide staff with the necessary data to make informed decisions regarding how to best address any repairs, upgrades, or facility replacements.

There were two components to the assessment.

An on-site Physical Condition Assessment of both buildings to determine maintenance issues, safety and code concerns, building systems and finishes that have exceeded their useful life, and to review how current conditions affect building system operations and energy costs.

A Functional Assessment through visual observations and discussions with building and grounds stakeholders. This assessment determined how existing building conditions are affecting staff operations and the ability to serve the community. The Functional Assessment also examined how current operations and workflows compare to current recommended best practices in the industry.

These assessments indicate the capital maintenance requirements, potential code and required regulatory upgrades, and other building conditions that should be considered part of the facility's general upkeep and part of any building project.

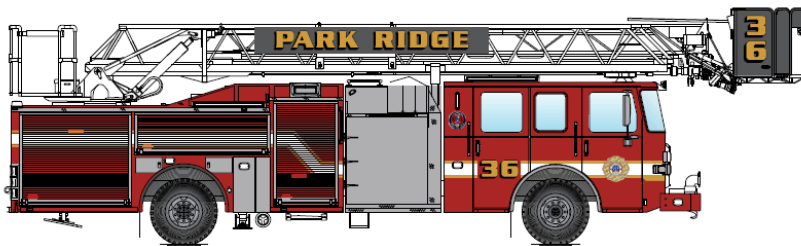
The study is in its final stages and will be complete in early 2021. It will be brought to a future Public Safety Committee of the Whole meeting in 2021.

APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT

LIEUTENANT JOHN BRUCHSALER

This year, two of the most significant purchases for the Park Ridge Fire Department were a new tower ladder truck and a replacement of our vehicle extrication equipment.

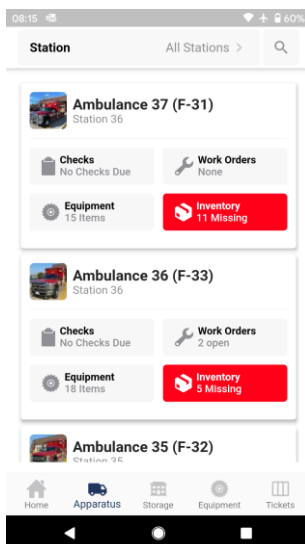
Our new tower ladder, slated to arrive in mid-February, will be replacing our current 2001 tower ladder. The Apparatus and Equipment Division worked with the City Garage to design



an apparatus that will meet the City's current and future firefighting needs. Features of the new tower ladder include increased reach (additional 15

feet), improved water capacity (additional 200 gallons), and a single axle design, which will allow the vehicle to better traverse the City's streets.

Our last purchase of vehicle extrication equipment occurred in 1998 and this equipment reached the end of its useful service life. The Apparatus and Equipment Division worked closely with Finance to put out an RFP for the replacement of this extrication equipment. The result was a combination of battery and gas-powered equipment that will provide the Fire Department with multiple options and capabilities during extrication incidents.



During the fall of 2020, we implemented an online apparatus check and equipment inventory program to replace an antiquated paper system. The system allows immediate notification of responsible parties when a deficiency occurs, which includes both Fire and City Garage staff. Now, when there is an apparatus deficiency, the City Garage is made aware of it immediately and often gets the issue resolved on the same day, saving time and getting our apparatus back on the street quickly.

TRAINING

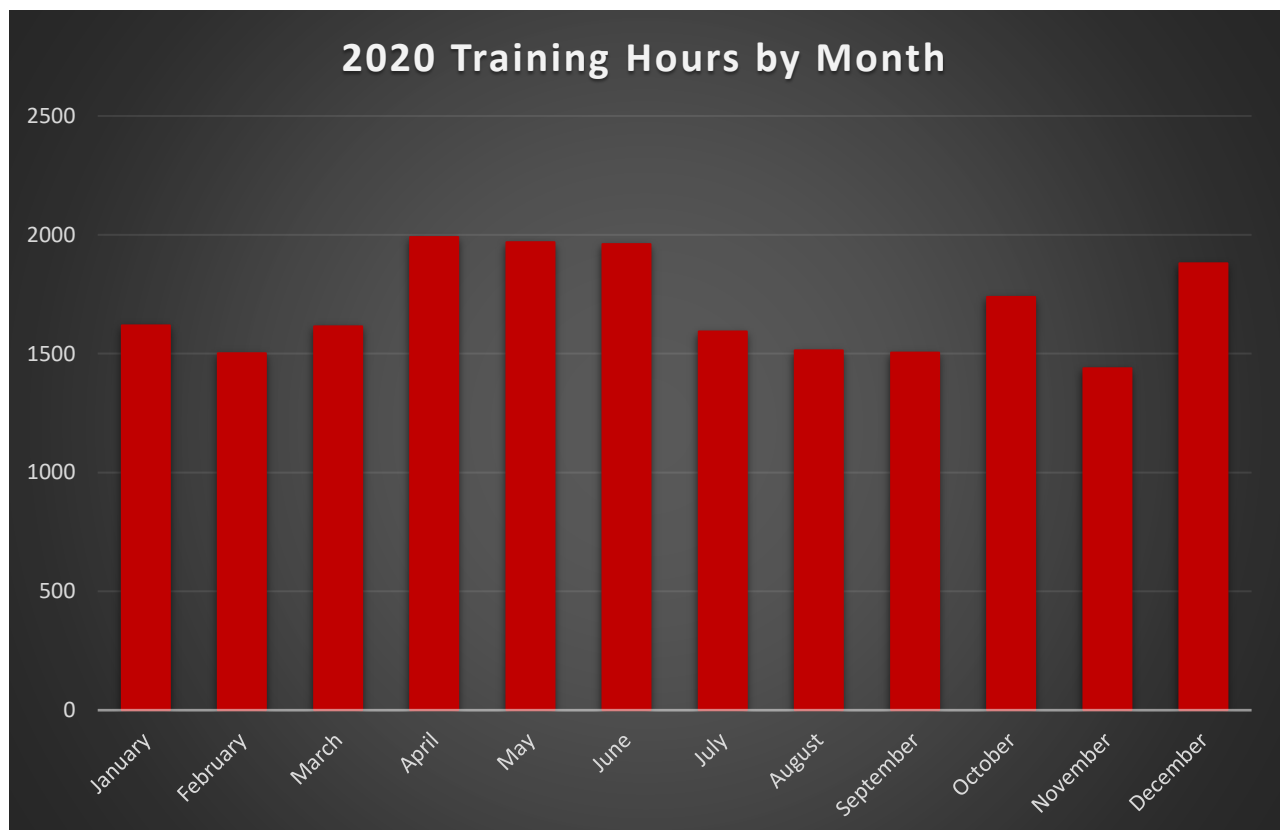
BATTALION CHIEF DEREK DECKER

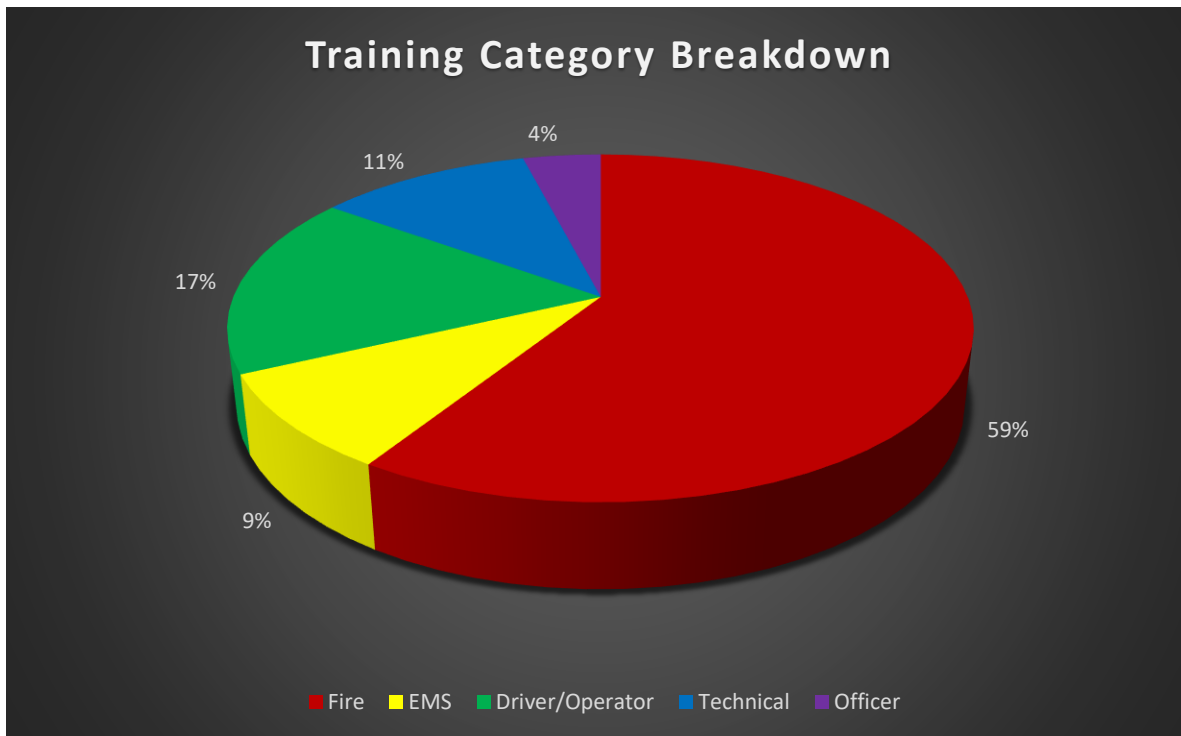
Training the Fire Department's personnel is an active, ever-changing function of the Department. Training is scheduled daily, covering varying topics using several methods of instruction.

The Training Division's general mission is to provide all Fire Department personnel opportunities to learn new skills and enhance existing skills through repetition and advanced drill design. Training through 2020 focused on the following general disciplines: City Familiarization, Core Competencies, Driver/Operator, Emergency Medical Services, Officer Development, and Safety and Technical Competencies.

Training in 2020 faced many challenges trying to achieve its mission due to the pandemic. Even with the difficulties resulting from the pandemic and having multiple members off on long-term injury, training in 2020 totaled 21,427 hours, only 8% lower than 2019's total.

The charts provide a breakdown of 2020's training by month and category.





Notable accomplishments during 2020 are listed below:

Fire Academy Graduation

FF/PM Dempsey, FF/PM Stratelak

New Certification

LT/PM Ascione (Incident Safety Officer, ICS 400 & Advanced Department Infection Control Officer)

FF/PM Ciske (Fire Apparatus Operator)

FF/PM Colella (Fire Apparatus Operator)

FF/PM Holwell (Advanced Technician Firefighter)

FF/PM McFarlin (Trench Technician)

FF/PM Perkins (Company Fire Officer)

FF/PM Stratelak (Basic Operations Firefighter, Hazardous Materials Operations & Fire Service Vehicle Operator)

LT/PM Wolff (Incident Safety Officer & ICS 400)

FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

LIEUTENANT JOHN ORTLUND

The Park Ridge Fire Department's Fire Investigation Team consists of six Fire Investigators and one Arson Investigator. Regular training and field experience are required to maintain certification through the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

All Park Ridge Fire Investigation Team members are members of the MABAS Division 3 Fire Investigators Task Force. The Division 3 Task Force serves as a formal mutual aid model allowing neighboring communities to assist each other for large-scale incidents and difficult cases.

There were 47 reported fire incidents in Park Ridge in 2020. Seventy-Two percent (72%) of the incidents were classified as *Accidental* causes; Three percent (3%) of the incidents were classified as *Incendiary* (intentionally set), and Twenty-Five percent (25%) were classified as *Undetermined*.

Forty percent (40%) of the 2020 fire incidents in Park Ridge occurred in residential structures. According to the National Fire Protection Association, fires in residential structures (one and two-family) account for the greatest number of fire fatalities (84%) compared to other occupancy types (Ahrens, 2013).

Fifty percent (50%) of the 2020 *Accidental* fires in Park Ridge can be considered preventable; (improper use, care/maintenance, storage, or disposal).

SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS

FF/PM JOHN PILTAVER

The Department's Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) allows personnel to enter hazardous atmospheres to facilitate victim rescue, fire suppression, and hazard elimination. It is the most often used piece of equipment on the fire apparatus, and the Department's SCBA team puts in a significant amount of effort and time to make sure they are well-maintained and operational. Our SCBA team consists of FF/PM Piltatver (Lead), FF/PM Finn, and FF Garland.

On an annual basis, the SCBA has to perform the following activities to ensure that the SCBAs are functional and meet the NFPA requirements:

- Flow testing of all SCBAs
- Flow testing five Rapid Intervention Packs
- Flow testing of all face pieces
- OSHA required fit testing for SCBA masks and N95 masks
- Inspection of SCBA cylinders and hydrostatic testing if needed

This year the SCBA team started the process of seeking out new SCBAs to replace our current units. We worked closely with the Finance Department to develop a specification for our bid package, and the winning bid came in under budget. Delivery and training on the new SCBAs will take place in 2021.

With the recent events of the pandemic, respiratory protection was of all-time importance as our crews are in close contact with potential COVID-19 patients. The SCBA team evaluated alternative respiratory protection systems and will continue to seek a way to keep our members safe and healthy for the foreseeable future.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

FF/PM CHRIS HERLING

In 2020 changes were made to the Park Ridge bunker gear specification to suit our requirements better. The significant changes included modifications to the outer shell and moisture barrier. We also added some rip stop protection to help reduce costs on repairs. Additionally, all personnel were issued particulate hoods, which will soon be an NFPA requirement. These hoods upgraded the protection of our personnel and play a significant role in cancer prevention.

A critical component to cancer prevention in the Fire Service is cleaning bunker gear on a strict schedule and after every fire. Both stations have special washers/extractors to remove the carcinogens out of the gear, and in 2020 FF Garland designed and built gear dryers for each station. The dryers' in-house construction saved the Department thousands of dollars and allowed our gear to be put back into service quickly after a fire.



While bunker gear is being cleaned, personnel often need an additional set for the remainder of their shift. In 2020, the foreign fire insurance board outfitted five personnel with a second set of gear. The practice of having two sets of gear per department member is becoming standard in the fire service.

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

LIEUTENANT KEVIN PLACH

2020 was a challenging year for the Fire Prevention Bureau. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were temporarily suspended from performing our annual inspections. Inspections of construction projects continued as normal. Annual fire inspections resumed in June with a concentration on businesses that were open and allowing the general public into their space. We also resumed annual inspections at the Lutheran General Hospital campus, schools and other target hazards as was practical given the concerns of COVID-19. Consequently, the number for inspections are down this year (1,314 inspections, 312 plan reviews) as we were not able to access many buildings due to workers being remote or closed due to the pandemic. Our intent is to resume a normal inspection schedule for 2021. Additionally, fire prevention responded on numerous calls for service/alarm issues. This allows shift personnel to remain available for more emergent calls. Flow testing continued throughout the City on Monday mornings during the summertime in order to track and record hydrant water supply for firefighting purposes. This information also helps maintain our new and improved ISO rating.

This year the Fire Prevention Bureau is planning to implement software for conducting annual fire inspections. This software will allow us to go to a paperless system and would benefit the building owners by sending them electronic copies of the inspection report. It would also help with tracking data related to the inspections and specific occupancies. This software has the ability to conduct annual life safety inspections and has a pre-plan component. This would ultimately save money by eliminating our current pre-plan vendor and centralizing data from annual inspections, pre-plans, third party inspections and contact information into one location accessible to inspectors as well as fire crews in an emergency.



TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM

FF/PM DAVE MALCOMSON

The Technical Rescue Team (TRT) is comprised of 5 highly trained firefighters who perform rescues in special situations.

- High Angle Rescue: Water towers, window washers, cell towers, scaffolding
- Confined Space Rescue: Sewers, chemical tanks
- Trench Rescue: Water main repairs, construction sites
- Collapse Rescue: Tornadoes, construction collapses
- Swiftwater Rescue Assistance to the Dive Team

These firefighters are also members of the MABAS Division 3 Technical Rescue Team. This collaboration and sharing of resources provides us with additional equipment and personnel in the event of any technical rescue here in Park Ridge.



HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TEAM

FF/PM CHRIS CLEARY

The Hazardous Materials Team is comprised of four department members who maintain certifications as Hazmat Technicians and Hazmat Incident Commanders. Each member is responsible for meeting or exceeding the minimum required training hours to maintain "active" status with MABAS Division 3.

Each month one department within Division 3 will host a drill related to chemical spills, meter reading/maintenance, decontamination, etc. Each quarter technicians participate in a response drill, a full-scale exercise dealing with hazard identification, mitigation, and decontamination. Team members must obtain a minimum of 80 training hours to keep their status on the Division roster.

Being part of Division 3 enables Park Ridge to utilize MABAS Division 3 Hazardous Material apparatus. "Decon 3" is used for mass decontamination as well as individual cleaning of patients and crews. "HAZMAT 3" has a full complement of equipment that will assist Hazmat technicians with any incident. Both vehicles stay at Station 35 for one month per year, as these vehicles rotate around the Division. Department members have an opportunity to become familiar with both apparatus and their functional components.

2020 highlights:

- Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, most in-person drills migrated to an online platform. Team members studied chemistry related to hazardous chemicals, product identification, and hazard mitigation. We hope to get back to in-person drills sometime in early 2021.
- Department members received annual training on mass and technical decontamination techniques as part of their Hazardous Material Operations certification.
- Department members received training on the Division 3 apparatus when they were stationed at Station 35.
- The Department purchased a BW Ultra gas detector with a pump. This gas detector is essential in detecting and monitoring gases such as oxygen, carbon monoxide, and hydrogen sulfide. This detector can be used after structure fires, hazardous material incidents, and confined spaces.

DIVE TEAM

FF/PM FRANK VILLARI

The Park Ridge Dive Team's goal is to provide the highest level trained and certified divers ready to respond to all water hazards within our Department's jurisdictions as well as to the other communities in MABAS Division 3. The team is able to reach and maintain this goal through its team members' dedication and the continual support from the Fire Department over the years.

Training and Certifications

The team is comprised of members who are trained certified public safety rescue divers, rescue boat operators, ice divers, and swift water technicians. It takes approximately two years, over one hundred training hours, and several specialized technical dives to reach this certification level. All the Park Ridge Dive Team members met or exceeded the MABAS Division 3 prescribed training and certification requirements in 2020. In order to maintain their diver status in the Division, they must participate in several training dives throughout the year.

Every month, Division 3 schedules training sessions that focus on a specific dive-related topic. In February, the Park



Ridge Fire Department hosted a MABAS Division 3 ice dive. Nine surrounding fire departments participated. This training session was held at Belleau Lake, a local body of water within the Department's response area.

Aside from training with the other teams within Division 3, the team plays a significant role in all water safety and rescue training for the Park Ridge Fire Department. The team members held training sessions that included lessons on the proper use of personal floatation devices, dive support operations, diver tending, boat operations, and surface ice rescue.

New Equipment

The team recently acquired a Rapid Deployment Craft (RDC). This smaller type of watercraft is specially designed to help rescue victims who become trapped in homes during a flood,



caught in swift water, or have fallen through thin ice. This device can be inflated in under a minute and be quickly deployed by two firefighters. It is designed so that victims can be pulled up onto its deck from either of the two openings in the craft's front or back.