

*City of South Milwaukee  
Fire Department  
Annual Report - 2020*



*Serving the Community with  
Commitment ♦ Concern ♦ Compassion*





City of . . .

# South Milwaukee Fire Department

929 Marshall Court, South Milwaukee, WI 53172

To the citizens of South Milwaukee, the Honorable Mayor Erik Brooks, City Administrator Tami Mayzik, and members of the South Milwaukee Common Council and Police & Fire Commission:

On behalf of the dedicated members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department, it is with great pleasure that I present our 2020 Annual Report. To say that 2020 was an interesting year is the understatement of a lifetime. While the year started out as typical as always, it soon took a turn that even the most experienced of our personnel could not have predicted when the global pandemic was declared that not only changed the way we operated as a service organization, but how we lived our daily lives. Words and phrases such as “quarantine”, “isolation”, “burden rate”, “asymptomatic”, “lockdown”, “social distancing”, “contact tracing”, “flattening the curve”, and “community spread” soon became part of every evening news broadcast and our daily vocabulary.

One thing that came of the pandemic was realization that the staggering numbers associated with the virus were not just numbers . . . there were faces behind those numbers that were oftentimes overshadowed by the devastating impact the virus was having on America. While most annual reports are similarly comprised of page after page of numbers, the focus of this report will be slightly different . . . while it will still contain some of the most sought-after numbers, it will also highlight the activities of our members - the faces behind the South Milwaukee Fire Department - who continue to provide the exceptional level of service they are known for with the limited resources on hand. Like our community, the fire service continues to change and the South Milwaukee Fire Department is committed to change, as well, to meet the needs of our community.

In 2020, we experienced a slight increase in dollar loss associated with fires, but present it in a different view on Page 12 in comparison to the respective amount of property saved at those incidents. Our overall call volume increased slightly from 3345 calls for service in 2019 to 3390 in 2020, with the most significant increase in EMS calls. And, while our public education efforts were put on hold for most of 2020 because of the pandemic, our community outreach through Facebook continued to be strong. In fact, Page 15 details an event from January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, in which SMFD personnel rescued *Tuff the Bulldog* from the icy waters of Lake Michigan that drew international attention by reaching 553,840 people on social media with 110,251 engagements and 1800 shares of the original Facebook post.

In closing, the South Milwaukee Fire Department will continue to answer the call 24/7/365 and maintain its high level of service delivery as we respond to the needs of the community as an all-hazard, all-risk department. Our focus will remain on community involvement, risk reduction, fire prevention, public education, and delivering timely, professional, effective, and efficient service. The members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department and I would like to thank Mayor Erik Brooks, the members of the Common Council and Police and Fire Commission, and our citizens for all their hard work and continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joseph Knitter  
Fire Chief



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*Dedicated to Excellence in Public Service*



# The SMFD in the Community

Aside from its role as first responders, the SMFD maintains a consistent presence at various community events. While the pandemic caused the cancellation of many of the public appearances we make, we were still able to get out to several of them. In addition, we continue to maintain a strong, visible presence on social media (Facebook). Here are just a few examples of the interactions we participated in.



**Eaton Corporation Community Involvement Team  
Check Presentation**



**Tuff T-Shirt Sales  
Check Presentation**



**Peanut Butter Collection Drive for  
SM Human Concerns**



**Donation of Prayer Patches from  
SM Resident, Sue Janowski**



# Mission Statement

THE MISSION OF THE SOUTH MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS TO PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF FIRES, SUDDEN MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND EXPOSURE TO HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS. THIS COMMITMENT IS ACHIEVED BY DEVELOPING, PROMOTING, AND MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE FIRE SUPPRESSION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THESE QUALITY SERVICES THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO ALL WHO LIVE, WORK, VISIT OR INVEST HERE.

## Department Information

The South Milwaukee Fire Department is an all-risk, all-hazard department that provides fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical services to an estimated 21,424 residents who reside within an area of 4.78 sq. miles. In addition, we respond on a mutual aid basis to any community as part of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) and on a reciprocal agreement program to the surrounding communities. In return, these communities respond to our city when requested as part of this reciprocal agreement.

***SMFD Organized – 1893***





# City Officials

## Mayor Erik Brooks

**Craig Maass**  
District 1 Alderperson

**Brett Briesemeister**  
District 1 Alderperson

**Ray Navarro**  
District 2 Alderperson

**R. Patrick Stoner**  
District 2 Alderperson

**Tami Mayzik**  
City Administrator

**Karen Kastensen**  
City Clerk

**Christopher Smith**  
City Attorney

**Lisa Pieper**  
District 3 Alderperson

**Joseph Bukowski**  
District 3 Alderperson

**David Bartoshevich**  
District 4 Alderperson

**Peggy Clark**  
District 4 Alderperson

**Patrick Brever**  
Ass't City Administrator

**Karen Skowronski**  
City Treasurer

**William Fenger**  
Municipal Judge

## Police and Fire Commission

Under Wisconsin law, cities with a population of 4,000 or more must create police and fire commissions. Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and serve a 5 year term. Appointees filling vacancies created by the resignation, removal or death of a commissioner serve out the term of their predecessor.

The Police & Fire Commission meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

**Heather Frederick**  
(4/30/2020)

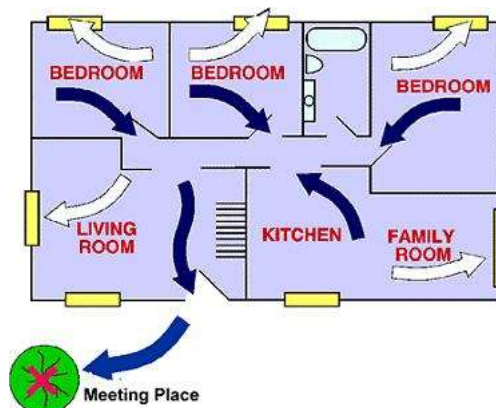
**Carla Uphill**  
(4/30/2024)

**Don O'Kray**  
(4/30/2023)

**Tobie Weberg**  
(4/30/2022)

**Joseph Bukowski**  
(4/30/2021)

Have an  
escape plan



# Department Personnel

Joseph Knitter  
Fire Chief

Shannon Hrdlicka  
Administrative Assistant

## Black Shift

Capt. Craig Boschke  
Lt. Nate Fager  
FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger  
FF/EMT Mark Witt  
FF/EMT - *Vacant*  
FF/P Mike Landgraf  
FF/P Ryan Porter  
FF/P Mike Schuerman

## Green Shift

Capt. John Frost  
Lt. Andy Mahn  
FF/EMT Jared Rentmeester  
FF/EMT Kevin Schneider  
FF/EMT Matt Boss  
FF/P Scott Wallis  
FF/P Ryan Kurz  
FF/P John Rhinesmith

## Red Shift

Capt. Kurt Egner  
Lt. Ryan Wendt  
FF/EMT Ryan Behling  
FF/EMT Nathan Christensen  
FF/EMT - *Vacant*  
FF/P Jeremy Fronczak  
FF/P Ryan Miksa  
FF/P Matthew Sweitlik<sup>1</sup>

Capt. Brad Sibley  
FF/EMT Ron Wainio  
FF/P Phillip Bishop

Retired – 9/11  
Retired – 6/1  
Resigned – 9/7

<sup>1</sup>Hired – 10/12

When fully staffed, the South Milwaukee Fire Department maintains a three-platoon system utilizing three shifts of 8 personnel each on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week schedule. Off-duty personnel are notified when staffing levels at the station fall below a pre-established minimum or when the department responds to a report of an emergency incident that will require additional personnel to mitigate.

# Special Assignments

Capt. Craig Boschke

Training / Safety  
Records Management  
Personnel Protective Equipment  
SCBA Maintenance

Capt. John Frost

Community Relations / Public Education  
Fire Inspection / Prevention  
Radios / Communications

Capt. Brad Sibley  
(Capt. Kurt Egner)

Apparatus / Facilities Maintenance  
Buildings & Grounds  
Operations

Lt. Kurt Egner  
(Lt. Ryan Wendt)

EMS Coordination  
HIPAA Compliance  
MSDS OnLine

Lt. Nate Fager

Training – Assistant  
Bldg. & Grounds – Assistant  
Health & Fitness Coordinator

Lt. Andy Mahn

EMS Supplies / Equipment  
Training – Assistant  
SCBA Maintenance – Assistant

FF/P Jeremy Fronczak

Fire Inspection

FF/P Ryan Kurz

Fire Inspection

FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger

Fire Inspection

Check out our website at . . .

<http://www.smwi.org/180/Fire-Department>

Scan me ➤



# Emergency Medical Services Report

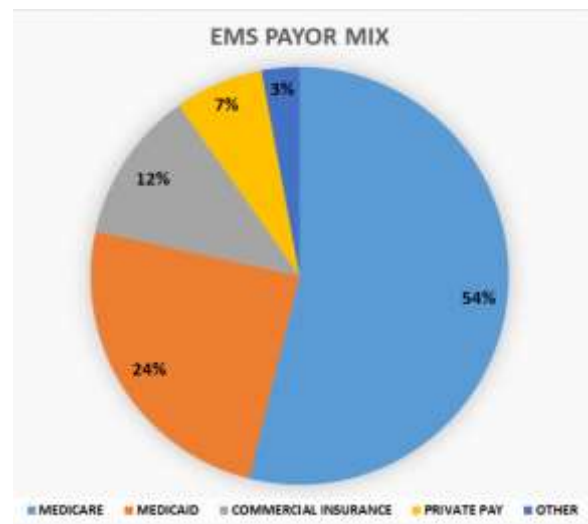
Fire department-based Emergency Medical Services (EMS) continues to be a major part of our response profile. The central location of the fire station allows for minimal response times of specialized equipment and well-trained personnel. By utilizing a flexible staffing model, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is able to provide emergency care to the Paramedic level on any given call. Citizens in South Milwaukee benefit from a high level of service when requesting emergency medical care.

EMS Calls by City		
South Milwaukee	2323	78.3%
Cudahy	577	19.4%
Saint Francis	54	1.8%
Oak Creek	12	0.4%
Milwaukee	3	0.1%

Total EMS Calls*	Transports
2969	1634

\*Includes fire / service responses where no EMS report was generated and/or cancelled prior to an EMS report being generated

Disposition of Calls	
Treated / Refused Transport	520
Treated, Transported by Another EMS Unit	212
EMS Cancelled Prior to Arrival	204
EMS Cancelled On or After Arrival	141
No Treatment / Transport Refused	62
Dead at Scene – Resuscitation Attempted	45
Patient Refused Evaluation, Care, & Transport	34
Dead at Scene – No Resuscitation	28
No Patient Found	25
Treated and Released (per protocol)	21
Treated, Transported by EMS (Other)	11
Treated, Referred to Law Enforcement	6
Treated, Transported by Private Vehicle	5
Other	21



Transport Destination	2969	100%
Aurora St. Luke's – South Shore	1257	42.3%
Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center - Milwaukee	192	6.5%
Ascension - Franklin	115	3.9%
Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital	47	1.6%
Milwaukee County Medical Examiner	43	1.4%
Ascension – St. Francis Hospital	34	1.1%
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin	28	1.0%
Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center	14	0.5%
Columbia - St Mary's - Milwaukee	11	0.4%
Aurora West Allis Medical Center	8	0.3%
Aurora Sinai Medical Center	4	0.1%
Ascension – St. Joseph's Hospital	2	0.07%
Milwaukee County Behavioral Health	1	0.03%
Other*	1213	40.8%

\*Another unanticipated result of the global pandemic was the number of patients that decided they did not need nor want to be transported to a hospital for evaluation and treatment. For several months at the onset of the pandemic, Milwaukee County EMS providers responded to certain low acuity calls with an Alternative Response Vehicle staffed by an EMT and a Paramedic that carefully evaluated these patients and provided guidance as to the need for transport to a hospital. In many cases, the decision was made to not overburden the emergency rooms with these low acuity patients. No patients, however, were ever refused transport nor convinced to not seek medical attention.

# Apparatus Report

One of the most frequent compliments paid to members of our department is the extremely clean and well-kept appearance of both our apparatus and fire station. Visitors are often impressed at the condition of our apparatus and are shocked to learn their vintage and high level of use. Members of our department take great pride in the care and maintenance of both the apparatus and fire station. We proudly care for the equipment and building that the citizens of South Milwaukee have entrusted us with.

Below is a list of our current apparatus and their relative condition:

ID	Type of Apparatus	Year	Make / Model	Condition
1663	Engine	2003	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	Good
1665	Engine	2007	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1671	Aerial Ladder	1995	Pierce Lance 105' Heavy Duty Ladder – 1500 GPM Pump, 300 Gal. Water Tank	Good
1680	Ambulance	2016	Osage (Dodge) Type I	Very Good
1681	Ambulance	2009	Med-Tech (Ford) Type I	Good
Med-10	Ambulance	2014	Osage (Dodge) Type I	Good
1692	Chief's Car	2009	Ford Escape	Good
1693	Gator	2003	6 x 4 Wheel Drive Utility Cart	Good
1694	Rescue Raft	2006	14' Mercury Inflatable 25 HP Outboard	Good
1695	Rescue Boat	2010	25.6' Steiger Craft Twin 150 HP Suzuki 4 stroke	Very Good
1696	SUV	2015	Ford Explorer	Very Good
1697	Pick-up Truck	1995	GMC ¾ Ton Utility Truck	Fair
1698	Mini-pumper	2008	Pierce (Ford) – F550 150 GPM Pump, 250 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1699	Rescue Trailer	1993	14' Pace American	Good





# Training Report

The Training Bureau is managed by the Department Training Officer, Captain Craig Boschke, whose primary responsibility is to organize, develop and schedule training for all department members in compliance with requirements and industry standards. The training goal is to provide all employees with quality training that is specific to their job description and needs, providing them with the knowledge, skills and abilities to fulfill the mission of the department. Funding for training is provided by a budget line item that not only reflects the City's commitment to maintaining well trained employees, but the department's dedication to providing the best trained "customer-service" delivery force available.



Training is provided to all shifts on a Monday through Saturday basis by their respective Captain, Lieutenant or another carefully chosen "Subject Matter Expert" on the topic. Much of the training information is taken from the textbooks endorsed by the Wisconsin Technical College System Fire Service Training Office or based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and locally or nationally recognized best practices. Because of the unique cross-staffing format utilized by the department, members are cross trained in all aspects of every position.

Training is also provided for our "new hires" in a 4 week, 10-hour day format concentrating on accomplishing the Job Performance Requirements (JPR) established by the NFPA before transitioning to their assigned shift where they continue to participate in daily training for the rest of their career. These JPR's are provided in a checklist format and the recruit firefighter progresses through the exhaustive list maintaining a formal record of those that are accomplished. In addition, they receive extensive training in our emergency medical services and policies and procedures and are assigned as the third member of the EMS team until their Shift Officers feel they have accomplished the EMS competencies and are ready to respond as part of a two-person team.



# Public Education / Community Outreach Report

Even though the pandemic caused us to pause much of our public education and community outreach activities due to cancellations and capacity restrictions, the South Milwaukee Fire Department continues to pride itself on a very active and quite interactive presence in the community.

While our belief is that fire safety deserves year-round emphasis, our philosophy remains that it needs to start early on; building strong foundations in education. Each fall, students in the local schools are visited by our firefighters. Elementary students in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are provided with fire safety programs during the annual National Fire Prevention Week in October. When students reach the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they are provided with a more advanced Fire Safety Program that focuses on preparation for their adolescent years and the importance of home/fire safety. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders are assigned take home projects, where family involvement is encouraged. The students are also taught general home safety, such as general first aid and burn care, as many of the children are reaching babysitting age. Obviously with classes being cancelled and any limited time in the classroom concentrating on focused subjects, our efforts had to take a pause and we certainly look forward to the future and a return to visiting the classrooms.



In addition, the SMFD provides timely fire prevention / public education “posts” to our Facebook page to spread the word far beyond our face-to-face audiences and city of South Milwaukee residents. Please visit us on Facebook and see what is going on with the SMFD !!!





# Fire Inspection Report

Fire inspection duties are completed by shift members assigned to each of the three shifts and are conducted during the course of their regular duty day. This arrangement often presents a formidable scheduling challenge due to an increased call volume, ever-increasing training requirements, and other obligations to our community.

FF/P Jeremy Fronczak, FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger and FF/P Ryan Kurz, who are State of Wisconsin Certified Fire Inspectors, each conduct fire safety code inspections in accordance with Chapter 27 - *Fire Prevention, Protection, and Control* of the City's Municipal Code and the State of Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter SPS314, which adopts NFPA 1 as the "official" fire prevention code of the State. Ultimately, these efforts are overseen by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. The Inspection Bureau also works in close cooperation with the City's Building Inspection and Health Departments to address other health and safety code violation matters that impact the quality of life for the residents of and visitors to the City of South Milwaukee.

## Inspection Activities

**847**

Bi-annual fire inspections conducted

**1616**

Violations identified

## Inspection Responsibilities

**FF/P Jeremy Fronczak**

Commercial

Residential attached to Commercial

**FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger**

Residential

City, County & Federally-owned  
Schools

**FF/P Ryan Kurz**

Industrial

Manufacturing

Nursing Homes

Doctor / Dental Offices

### COMMON VIOLATIONS



**BROKEN EXIT  
LIGHT**



**MISSING ELECTRICAL  
PLATE**



**EXPIRED FIRE  
EXTINGUISHER**

## Response Statistics / Trends

	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>TOTAL CALLS</b>	<b>3390</b>	<b>3345</b>	<b>3481</b>	<b>3188</b>
<b>EMS Calls</b> (Includes Calls For Service, not EMS patients encountered)	<b>2933</b>	<b>2814</b>	<b>3017</b>	<b>2707</b>
Basic Life Support Incidents	1380	1467	1527	1417
Advanced Life Support Incidents	888	842	879	816
ALS (requests) outside of So. Milw.	665	505	611	474
<b>Fire Incidents</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>
Building Fire	26	27	25	32
Cooking Fire	7	8	9	7
Rubbish / Trash Fire / Dumpster	9	8	7	7
Grass / Brush Fire	2	1	4	4
Other	6	9	14	9
<b>Hazardous Conditions</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>94</b>
Motor Vehicle Crash-General Cleanup	29	44	31	39
Carbon Monoxide Investigation	3	7	1	3
Electrical / Power Line Problem	14	12	13	14
Chemical Leak / Spill	5	2	9	12
Natural Gas Leak	8	17	14	22
Other	1	6	1	4
<b>Service / Good Intent</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>181</b>
Smoke or Odor Removal	4	12	10	9
Service Call - CO Detector	29	34	21	24
Unauthorized Burning	39	32	33	27
Smoke Detector / Other / Investigation	135	178	125	121
<b>False Alarms</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>86</b>
System Activation – Malfunction	18	12	16	15
System Activation – Unintentional	2	1	2	5
System Activation – Malicious	1	7	1	3
Systems - Other	76	66	78	63
<b>Other Incidents<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>43</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>61</b>
Motor Vehicle Crash	35	44	44	52
Water Related Incident	8	4	6	9

### Response Trends

To properly understand the numbers provided on this page, one must understand that the categorizing of incident responses is subject to both the efforts of the person writing the report and the methods used to identify the appropriate code assigned to an incident. Greater emphasis has been placed on more accurately identifying an exact category rather than using a generic “Other”, thus providing a more accurate *snapshot* of our response trends. In addition, while a single incident may fit into several categories (Cooking Fire & Smoke Removal, for example) only the primary Incident Type is counted.

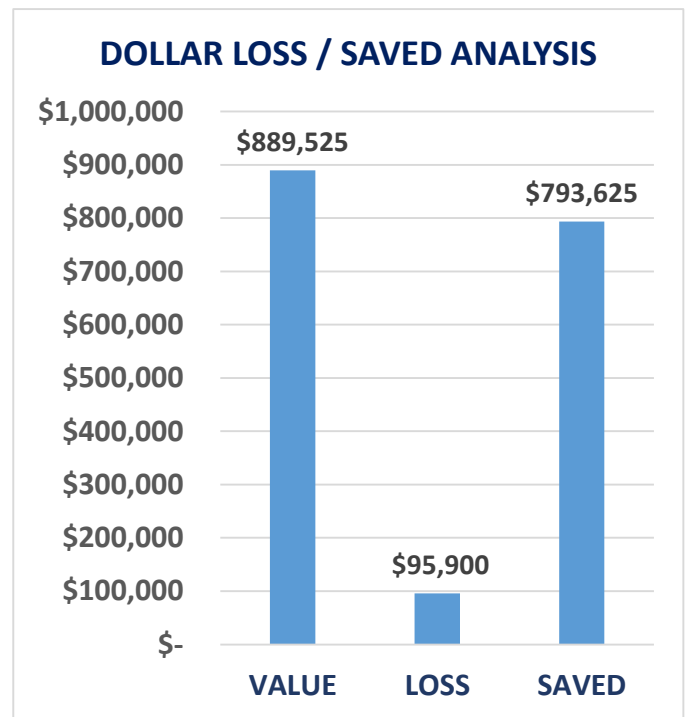
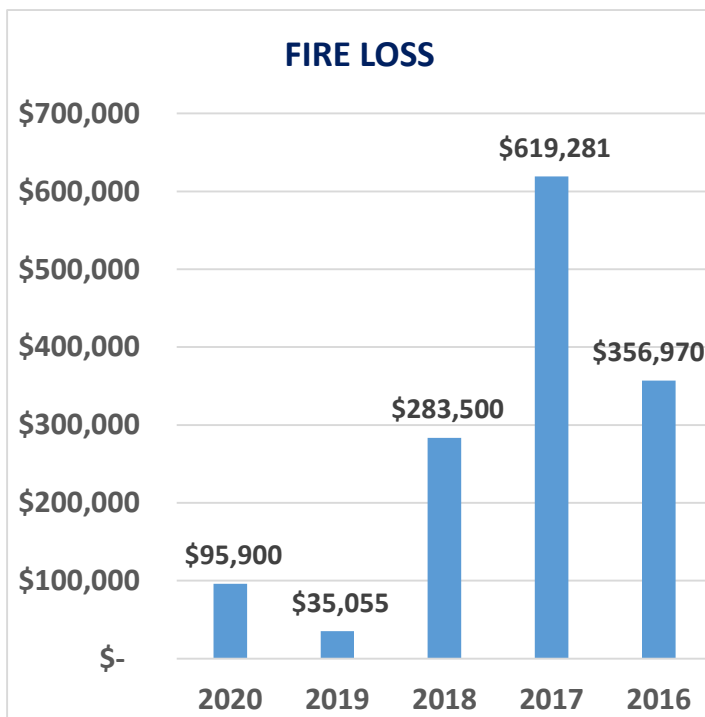
<sup>1</sup>To better track our responses to motor vehicle crashes and water-related incidents, these responses have been separated from the “Service / Good Intent” category since 2017.

# Dollar Loss from Fire

In addition to the actual number of emergency and non-emergency incidents that our personnel respond to, one of the most sought after statistics is that of the dollar loss to physical property due to damage from fire. It must be first understood that this number is a very rough estimate as actual losses paid by insurance companies may be considerably higher and involve other related expenses like replacement of furnishings, lodging, or loss of business, etc.

This year, we attempted to estimate the amount of dollar loss we experienced in comparison to an estimate of the dollar value of the object/item and the amount “saved”. For 17 incidents in which a loss of property was experienced, we estimated a total loss of **\$95,900** involving property with an estimated value of **\$889,525**, for a total estimate of “saved” property of **\$793,625**.

Finally, as we always remind our readers, the true “cost” of a fire cannot be accurately measured in dollars and cents . . . rather, it may be better measured in the impact it has emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, and historically on a person, a family or a community. Take, for example, a small fire that damages a treasured family keepsake, a bride’s wedding gown, or the photo album of a family’s first born child. While the monetary cost may be relatively small, the emotional impact can be quite large.



*Working*  
**Smoke Alarms**  
**Save lives !**



## SMFD on the Scene





# Response Time Analysis

In 2001, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) released a standard for the *Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, known as NFPA 1710. In this standard, the NFPA established a minimum response time objective of **four minutes or less** for the arrival of the first arriving engine company at a fire suppression incident or the arrival of an emergency medical unit with first responder or higher level capability at an emergency medical incident 90% of the time. As could be expected, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is well within compliance with this nationally-accepted performance standard. In 2020, the response time average was **3.17 minutes** for the first responding apparatus to arrive on scene.

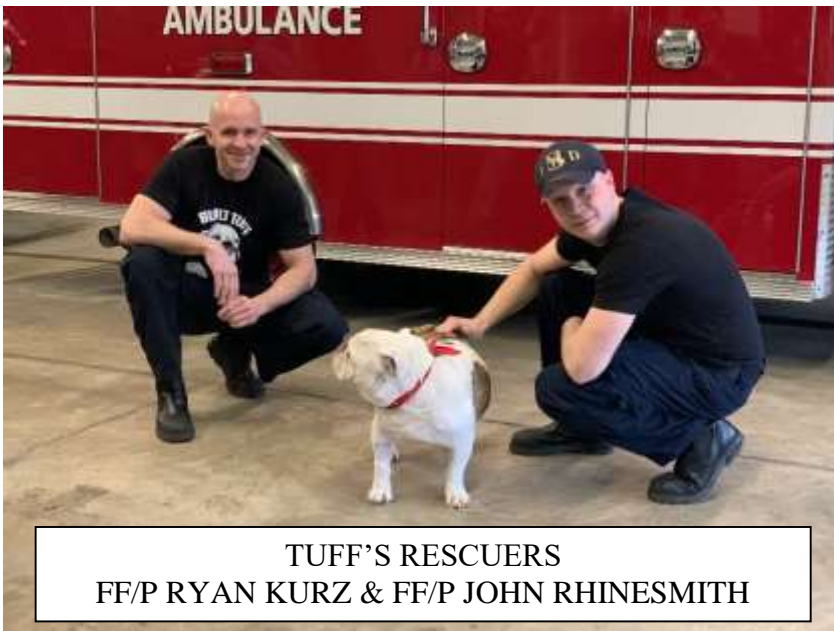
It is important to note that this number reflects *ALL* responses, both emergency and non-emergency, and provides no means to account for the location or the significance/severity of the response. Additionally, with our mutual aid system, South Milwaukee resources can be requested to areas as far away as the Town of Raymond or the North Shore communities and beyond, thus reflecting some of the extended response times. Finally, understanding that responding ***lights and sirens*** exposes both emergency responders and civilians to an increased risk of harm, an emphasis on ***non-emergent response*** has been a continued focus by many agencies throughout Milwaukee County. On duty shift officers are charged with the responsibility of determining the level of response with an emphasis on ***responding without lights and sirens*** as often as practicable.



## Tuff the Bulldog

On January 31, 2020, SMPD Dispatch received a call from a concerned citizen of a bulldog that had fallen through the ice in the mouth of the Oak Creek as it flows into Lake Michigan. The caller stated they were concerned for the dog and the safety of the citizens who were attempting to rescue it. The SMFD responded and, utilizing their ice / cold water rescue training and equipment, were able to enter the water and safely and successfully rescue the English Bulldog who, by all accounts, was destined for certain death had he not be pulled from the icy waters of Lake Michigan. The dog, who we learned was named “Tuff” (for good reason, obviously), was evaluated by on scene personnel in consult with a local emergency veterinary clinic, was transported to the clinic and received further treatment. Several weeks later, Tuff and his human owner, visited the SMFD for a reunion of Tuff and his rescuers.

The story quickly gained national and even international attention as it went viral on social media and was picked up by news media outlets far and wide. A t-shirt was designed with Tuff’s likeness to raise funds for additional water rescue equipment. In the end, a total of \$2,400 was raised from the effort.



TUFF’S RESCUERS  
FF/P RYAN KURZ & FF/P JOHN RHINESMITH





# The COVID-19 Global Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Simply put, a pandemic is a global spread of a new disease. The COVID-19 virus was first identified in December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern regarding COVID-19 on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services announced the first case of COVID-19 in Wisconsin on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and, on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. As of April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, more than 149 million cases have been confirmed, with more than 3.14 million deaths attributed to COVID-19, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in history.

Locally, pretty much the way we did anything and everything was affected. From shopping for groceries, to living both inside and outside of the firehouse, and especially, providing service to our community, was impacted. Advanced levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) became the norm along with the use of hand sanitizer, extensive disinfecting procedures, and a total lockdown of the firehouse to the public.



ELECTROSTATIC SPRAYER DISINFECTING



TV INTERVIEW WITH CAPTAIN BOSCHKE WHILE WEARING A FACEMASK AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING



ULTRAVIOLET DISINFECTING





# Firefighter Code of Ethics

I understand that I have the responsibility to conduct myself in a manner that reflects proper ethical behavior and integrity. In so doing, I will help foster a continuing positive public perception of the fire service. Therefore, I pledge the following . . .

- Always conduct myself, on and off duty, in a manner that reflects positively on myself, my department and the fire service in general.
- Accept responsibility for my actions and for the consequences of my actions.
- Support the concept of fairness and the value of diverse thoughts and opinions.
- Avoid situations that would adversely affect the credibility or public perception of the fire service profession.
- Be truthful and honest at all times and report instances of cheating or other dishonest acts that compromise the integrity of the fire service.
- Conduct my personal affairs in a manner that does not improperly influence the performance of my duties, or bring discredit to my organization.
- Be respectful and conscious of each member's safety and welfare.
- Recognize that I serve in a position of public trust that requires stewardship in the honest and efficient use of publicly owned resources, including uniforms, facilities, vehicles and equipment and that these are protected from misuse and theft.
- Exercise professionalism, competence, respect and loyalty in the performance of my duties and use information, confidential or otherwise, gained by virtue of my position, only to benefit those I am entrusted to serve.
- Avoid financial investments, outside employment, outside business interests or activities that conflict with or are enhanced by my official position or have the potential to create the perception of impropriety.
- Never propose or accept personal rewards, special privileges, benefits, advancement, honors or gifts that may create a conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof.
- Never engage in activities involving alcohol or other substance use or abuse that can impair my mental state or the performance of my duties and compromise safety.
- Never discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual preference, medical condition or handicap.
- Never harass, intimidate or threaten fellow members of the service or the public and stop or report the actions of other firefighters who engage in such behaviors.
- Responsibly use social networking, electronic communications, or other media technology opportunities in a manner that does not discredit, dishonor or embarrass my organization, the fire service and the public. I also understand that failure to resolve or report inappropriate use of this media equates to condoning this behavior.