

City of South Milwaukee
Fire Department
Annual Report - 2015



Serving the Community with
Commitment ♦ Concern ♦ Compassion



City of . . .

South Milwaukee Fire Department

929 Marshall Court, South Milwaukee, WI 53172

Honorable Mayor Erik Brooks
Members of the Common Council
Police and Fire Commissioners
Citizens of South Milwaukee

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the dedicated members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department, it is with great pleasure that I present our 2015 Annual Report. Once again, this report provides only a brief snapshot of the hard work put forth by the members of your fire department who continue to demonstrate their commitment to providing an exceptional level of service and standard of coverage to meet the increasing needs of our community.

Our overall call volume increased during 2015 with a notable increase in the number of EMS calls. Conversely, the number of total fire incidents dropped slightly as did the dollar loss associated with structure fires.

One area of improvement that I am once again proud to highlight is the increase in the number of community members impacted by our fire prevention/community outreach efforts. As you will see on Page 12, we interacted with a significant number of K-4/5, 1st grade and 5th grade students who participated in our fire safety education programs and visited a number of businesses and industries instructing community members on the safe and proper use of fire extinguishers. Although it is nearly impossible to predict how many fires or injuries these initiatives prevent, our dedication to maintaining a presence in the community and delivering fire and life safety messages can only become more effective as we interact with more community members.

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,

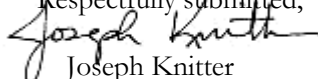

Joseph Knitter
Fire Chief

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Dedicated to Excellence in Public Service

During a 10-day period in October, SMFD responded to four working structure fires in which ladder truck operations were necessary.



Cudahy Apartment Fire - 10/15/2015



SM Apartment Fire - 10/17/2015



Oak Creek Condo Fire - 10/17/2015



Cudahy Condo Fire - 10/24/2015

Why Did Firehouses Have Spiral Staircases?

In last year's Annual Report, we answered the question about firehouse poles. That question led to another question regarding "older" firehouses and the presence of spiral or very narrow standard staircases. Up until the late 19th century, firehouses traditionally had a spiral or a very narrow standard staircase. These staircases actually served two purposes.

During the 19th century, firefighters used hand-powered water pumps to put out fires. Then, during the industrial revolution, the steam engine came into play. In 1853, the steam engine was introduced in Cincinnati. This new equipment was too heavy to push by hand, so firehouses began keeping horses to pull the steam engines.

Most stations built around this time were basically large sheds that, because land was at a premium were built as several floors so as to save precious real estate. This made keeping the horses close to the steam engines easy and was an acceptable arrangement until the horses learned how to climb the stairs in search of the delicious smelling food being prepared by the firefighters upstairs. The problem with that is, horses cannot walk down stairs as easily as they can walk up them.

To keep the horses on the lower levels of the stations--for the safety of the horses and the firefighters--these stations began installing spiral or very narrow staircases, making it impossible for the horses to walk upstairs. These staircases, however, slowed down the firefighters when they all tried to head to the truck at once.



In the late 1870's, a Chicago firefighter, in a hurry to get to the truck, slid down a pole that was nearby. His captain, David Kenyon, liked the speed at which the firefighter responded and installed a proper pole in the Engine 21 firehouse. This company was able to respond quicker to any scene than any other company in Chicago and the "firehouse pole" was born.

Today, both the staircases and the fire poles are kept as a reminder of days gone by. As America spread from coast to coast, land was not so scarce. Instead of building higher and making a fire station two or three stories tall, they made them bigger and all on one story, eliminating the need for the stairs or pole. You will, however, still find newly constructed firehouses with fire poles or spiral slides.

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 known as a “Working Still” to the surrounding communities of Cudahy, Oak Creek and Saint Francis, and the 128th Air Refueling Base at Mitchell International, for all structure fires. In return, these communities respond to our city when requested as part of this reciprocal agreement.

SMFD Organized – 1893



City Officials

Elected Officials

Mayor Erik Brooks

Craig Maass
District 1 Alderperson

Frank Van Dusen
District 1 Alderperson

Ray Navarro
District 2 Alderperson

R. Patrick Stoner
District 2 Alderperson

James Shelenske
City Clerk

Joe Murphy
City Attorney

Lisa Pieper
District 3 Alderperson

Joseph Bukowski
District 3 Alderperson

David Bartoshevich
District 4 Alderperson

Peggy Clark
District 4 Alderperson

Karen Skowronski
City Treasurer

Bill Fenger
Municipal Judge

Police and Fire Commission

Darrell Francis, DDS

Mark Milinovich¹

Jeff Plale

Rick Borowski²

Heather Page

Elizabeth Blackwood

¹Resigned – September, 2015

²Appointed – October, 2016

“Like” us on Facebook . . .



Department Personnel

Joseph Knitter
Fire Chief

Gail Kaebisch
Administrative Secretary

Black Shift

Capt. John Czajkowski
Lt. Craig Boschke
FF/EMT Ron Wainio
FF/EMT Nate Fager
FF/P Michael Olson¹
FF/P Jerre Schlax
FF/P Brian Bieganski²
FF/P Ryan Wendt

Green Shift

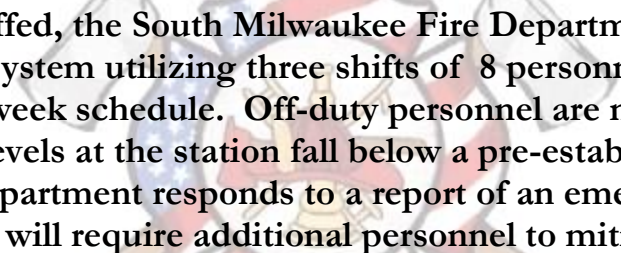
Capt. Glen McCoy
Lt. Kurt Egner
FF/EMT Ryan Kurz
FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger
FF/P Tom Reid
FF/P Scott Wallis
FF/P John Rhinesmith
FF/P Jeremy Fronczak

Red Shift

Capt. Brad Sibley
Lt. John Frost
FF/EMT Ryan Behling
FF/EMT Tyler Anders
FF/P Steven Bartlein
FF/P Michael Landgraf
FF/P Andy Mahn
FF/P Ben Olberding

¹ – Retired - 12/30

² – Resigned - 7/6



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 by pager 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. John Czajkowski	Apparatus / Facilities Maintenance Personnel Records Radios & Communication Facilities and Grounds
Capt. Glen McCoy	Training / EMS Coordination Health & Safety Reports & Policies Personnel Protective Equipment
Capt. Brad Sibley	Fire Operations Coordination Special Projects
Lt. Kurt Egner	EMS Coordination
Lt. Craig Boschke	Public Education
Lt. John Frost	Radios & Communications
FF/EMT Ryan Behling	Fire Inspection
FF/EMT Ryan Kurz	Fire Inspection
FF/P Brian Bieganski	Fire Inspection
FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger	Fire Inspection

Check out our website at . . .

www.smfdwi.org

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. A Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance is available when Paramedic staffing is unavailable. Citizens in South Milwaukee benefit from a high level of service when requesting Emergency Medical Care.

Total Calls	Transports
2414	1781 (74%)

Disposition	2414	100%
Treated, Transported by EMS (BLS)	938	38.86%
Treated, Transported by EMS (ALS)	843	34.92%
Treated and Refused Transport	245	10.15%
Patient Refused Care	150	6.21%
Treated, Transferred Care	81	3.36%
Dead at Scene	61	2.53%
No Patient Found	27	1.12%
Treated and Released	8	0.33%
Cancelled	14	0.58%
No Treatment Required	15	0.62%
Treated, Transported by EMS	3	0.12%
Treated, Transported by Private Vehicle	14	0.58%
Treated, Transported by Law Enforcement	4	0.17%
Treatment Refused, Transported	7	0.29%
Cancelled - Request Transferred to Another Provider	3	0.12%
Standby Only – No Patient Contact	1	0.04%

“Next to creating a life, the finest thing a person can do is save one.”

Abraham Lincoln



Transport Destination		
St. Luke's Medical Center – South Shore	1453	60.19%
No Transport	282	11.68%
No Destination	212	8.78%
St. Luke's Medical Center	112	4.64%
Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare - Franklin	100	4.14%
St. Francis Hospital	82	3.40%
Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital	44	1.82%
Milwaukee County Medical Examiner	39	1.62%
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin	38	1.57%
Clement J Zablocki VA Medical Center	13	0.54%
Columbia - St Mary's - Milwaukee	12	0.50%
All Saints Medical Center - St. Mary's Campus	6	0.25%
Aurora Sinai Medical Center	2	0.08%
Aurora West Allis Medical Center	2	0.08%
Funeral Home	13	0.54%
St Joseph-Wheaton Franciscan - Milwaukee	1	0.04%
Wisconsin Heart Hospital, Inc.	1	0.04%

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	Very 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	2001	Med-Tech (Ford) Type III	Poor
1681	Ambulance	2009	Med-Tech (Ford) Type I	Very Good
Med-10	Ambulance	2014	Osage (Dodge) Type I	Excellent
1692	Chief's Car	2009	Ford Escape	Very Good
1693	Gator	2003	6 x 4 Wheel Drive Utility Cart	Very Good
1694	Rescue Raft	2006	14' Mercury Inflatable 25 HP Outboard	Very Good
1695	Rescue Boat	2010	25.6' Steiger Craft Twin 150 HP Suzuki 4 stroke	Very Good
1696	SUV	2015	Ford Explorer	Excellent
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 Glen McCoy, 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 "expert" in the topic. Much of the training information is taken from the textbooks endorsed by the Wisconsin Technical College System Fire Service Training Office and published by Jones & Bartlett Publishers or based on 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.

Additional training activities take place at locations remote from the fire station utilizing outside resources. During 2015, the training listed below was conducted department-wide:

- Rescue boat operations and open water rescue training in Lake Michigan.
- Mutual aid dive rescue training with the Franklin Fire Department.
- 2½" hoseline deployment and advancement procedures.
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Confidence Course and firefighter survival training for newly received MSA G-1 SCBA's.



FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Award

The South Milwaukee Fire Department was fortunate enough to receive a substantial grant award in the amount of \$381,910 through a cooperative grant application with the Cudahy Fire Department in FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) Program to replace our Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). The primary goal of the AFG is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire-related hazards by providing direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments, nonaffiliated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) organizations, and State Fire Training Academies (SFTA) for critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operations efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience. As part of the grant requirements, both agencies had to provide a 10% funding match to the funds awarded by FEMA.



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.

Public Education / Community Outreach Report

The South Milwaukee Fire Department continues to pride itself on a very active and quite interactive public education / community outreach program.

Our philosophy is that fire safety starts early on; building strong foundations in education. Each fall, students in the local schools are visited by our firefighters. Elementary students in kindergarten and 1st grade are given fire safety programs during the annual National Fire Prevention Week. When students reach the 5th grade, they are given a more advanced Fire Safety Program that focuses on preparation for their adolescent years and the importance of home/fire safety. The 5th 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.

625

**K-4, K-5 & 1st Grade
Students who took part in
fire safety presentations**

244

**5th Graders who
participated in the 6-week
fire safety program**

139

**Fire Station Tour
Participants**

126

**Fire Extinguisher
Instruction Participants**



Sparky the Fire Dog was conceived at the 1950 Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where the association announced that the Advertising Council had approved a national fire-prevention campaign to be launched in 1951, with NFPA as sponsor. The new initiative needed a symbol, and it was a no-brainer. Inspired by the success of Smokey Bear, the symbol of the U.S. Forest Service, the NFPA decided to create a Dalmatian character, using the dog traditionally associated with the fire service. The rest, as they say, is history, as Sparky has become a national figure and a beloved advocate for fire safety.



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/EMT Ryan Behling, FF/P Brian Bieganski (prior to resignation), FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger and FF/EMT 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 mitigate 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

878

Bi-annual fire inspections conducted

157

Re-inspections conducted

1256

Violations identified



Inspection Responsibilities

FF/EMT Ryan Behling

Commercial

Residential attached to Commercial

FF/P Brian Bieganski (Jan-July)

FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger (July-Dec)

Residential

**City, County & Federally-owned
Schools**

FF/EMT Ryan Kurz

Industrial

Manufacturing

Nursing Homes

Doctor / Dental Offices

Response Statistics

	2012	2013	2014	2015
TOTAL CALLS	2931	2869	2927	3047
EMS Calls	2494	2523	2507	2638
Basic Life Support Incidents	1225	1202	1150	1087
Advanced Life Support Incidents	959	775	620	796
ALS (requests) outside of So. Milw.	(440)	546	555	626
EMS other fire / support response	310	---	182	129
Fire Incidents	85	47	90	76
Building Fire	44	23	38	31
Cooking fire	9	5	13	12
Rubbish / Trash Fire / Dumpster	10	9	14	14
Grass / Brush Fire	10	2	7	4
Other	12	8	18	15
Hazardous Conditions	73	92	92	85
Vehicle Accident Clean-up	36	52	44	39
Carbon Monoxide Invest.	7	4	7	4
Electrical Problem / Power line	13	10	11	9
Chemical Leak / Spill	7	5	6	3
Natural Gas Leak	9	16	13	10
Other	1	5	11	13
Service /Good Intent	138	152	147	170
Smoke or Odor Removal	9	11	14	10
Unauthorized Burning	32	23	27	26
Smoke detector / Other / Invest	97	118	106	134
False Alarms	74	47	86	75
System Activation – Malfunction	24	18	14	12
System Activation – Unintentional	31	16	46	4
System Activation – Malicious	3	5	1	1
Systems - Other	16	8	25	58
Other Incidents	67	8	5	3

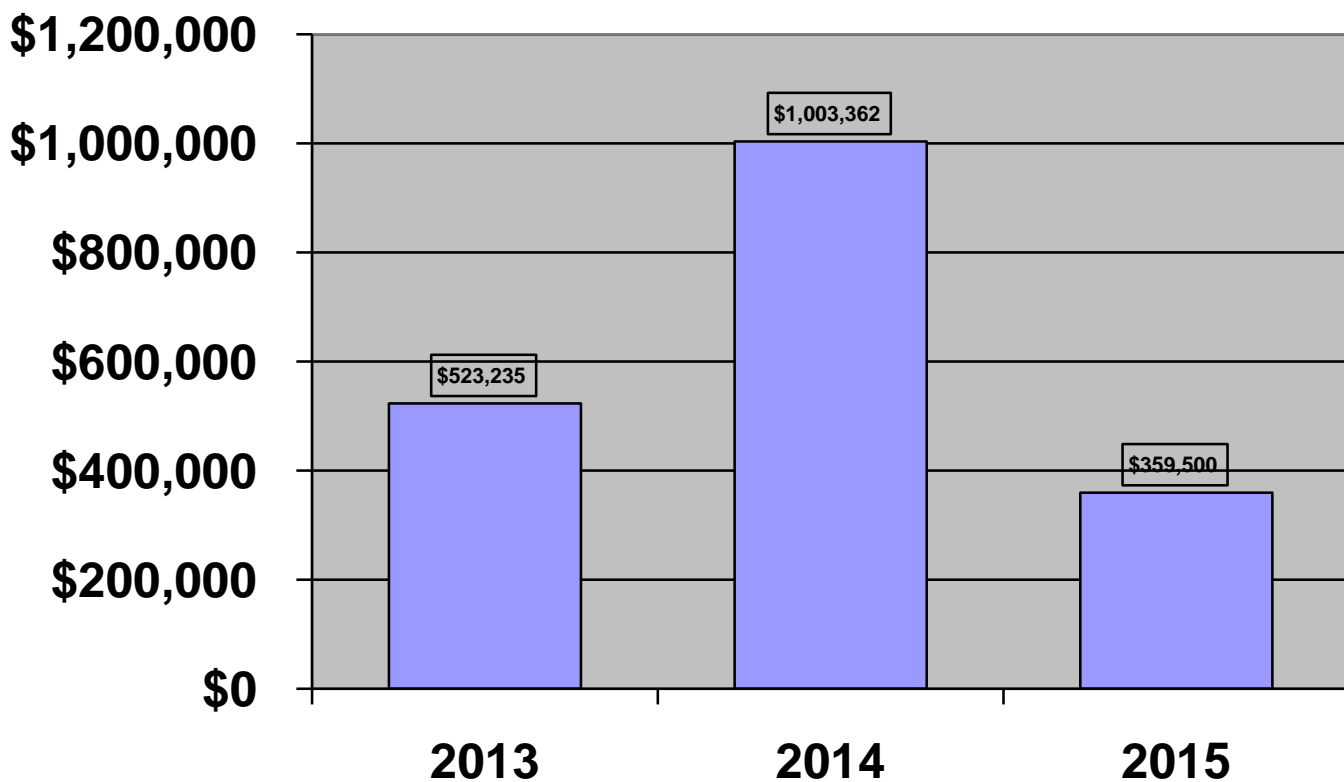
Response Trends

To properly understand the statistics 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.

Dollar Loss

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 and lodging, etc.

In the past, the justification for the existence of a fire department was based on how great this dollar loss was. Now, because of all of the ancillary responsibilities of our personnel such as fire inspecting, fire prevention activities, and training, the effectiveness of a department is based on the amount of property that was saved through aggressive fire suppression and prevention efforts. The fire service has truly shifted from a “volume-based” to “value-based” model. In 2015, the City of South Milwaukee responded to less fire incidents than in 2014 and realized a significant reduction in dollar loss from these fires, as well.



Working
Smoke Alarms
Save lives !

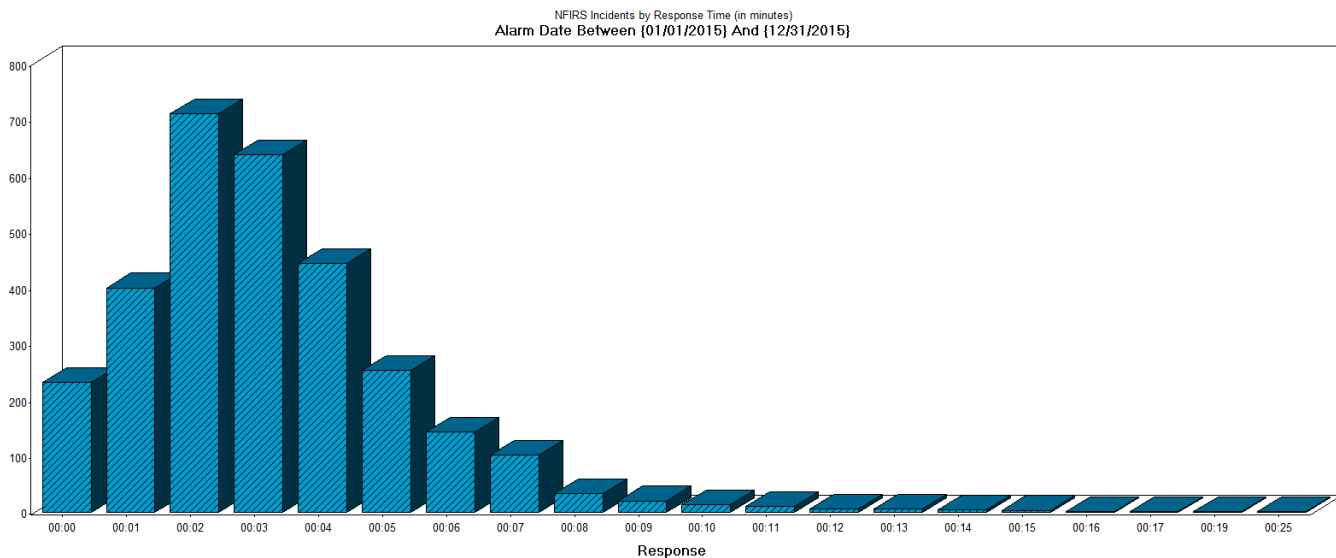


SMFD out in the community . . .



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 is shown by the following graph, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is well within compliance with this nationally-accepted performance standard. In 2015, the response time average was **3.07 minutes** for the first responding apparatus to arrive on scene.



*It is important to note that this graph reflects *ALL* responses, both emergency and non-emergency, and provides no means to account for the errant inputting of data or calls delayed because of absolute low priority. Additionally, with our mutual aid system, South Milwaukee resources can be requested to areas as far away as North Shore and beyond, thus reflecting some of the extended response times.



Cancer Awareness



During 2015, the SMFD increased their focus on reducing the exposure of their members to the dangers of cancer by creating a formal program based on past-practices that were already in place and adopting new practices proven effective by other fire departments. Cancer is the most dangerous and unrecognized threat to the health and safety of our firefighters. Multiple studies have repeatedly demonstrated credible evidence and biologic creditability for statistically higher rates of multiple types of cancers in firefighters compared to the general American population including:

- Testicular cancer (2.02 times greater risk)
- Multiple myeloma (1.53 times greater risk)
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (1.51 times greater risk)
- Skin cancer (1.39 times greater risk)
- Prostate cancer (1.28 times greater risk)
- Malignant melanoma (1.31 times great risk)
- Brain cancer (1.31 times greater risk)
- Colon cancer (1.21 times great risk)
- Leukemia (1.14 times greater risk)
- Breast cancer in women (preliminary study results from the San Francisco Fire Department)

While the American Fire Service is just beginning to understand the magnitude of the problem, the lack of our education about the subject, the challenges involved and the changes required in education, training, operations, medical screenings and personal accountability to effectively address cancer in the fire service, the South Milwaukee Fire Department has taken many proactive steps towards reducing the threat.

The purpose of the Firefighters Addressing Cancer Exposure (FACE) Program is to provide educational awareness about occupational cancer exposure to members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department through education and the implementation and promotion of policies, practices, and procedures to reduce or eliminate potential exposure to carcinogens. Individually, each department member carries the ultimate responsibility for reducing or eliminating their own personal exposure to cancer-causing environments and behaviors. Collectively, the department as a whole shoulders the responsibility to look out for one another in the spirit that . . . *"Everyone Goes Home"*, not only at the end of their shift, but at the end of a long and healthy career.



*Don't Breath Carcinogens. Period.
Don't Wear Carcinogens. Period.
Personal Health and Fitness Matters.
Stay Healthy – Stay Fit.*