

City of South Milwaukee Fire Department Annual Report - 2018

125th Anniversary 1893-2018



*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 2018 Annual Report. This report provides only a brief snapshot of the efforts put forth by the hard working members of your fire department who continue to provide the exceptional level of service they are known for with the limited resources on hand. The changing face of our community and the increasing demand for our services keeps us continuously challenging ourselves to find new and creative ways to serve the public. While we may not face the challenges of larger cities, most evening news broadcasts lead with stories that could easily call upon the services of our department and I am confident in saying that we are well-prepared to respond.

Of significance in 2018 is the celebration of our 125th Anniversary. Our department was formally organized in 1893 and is the oldest city department. To recognize this milestone, the department played host to a luncheon, tour, and short presentation on the history of the department for the South Milwaukee Historical Society. In addition, the department accepted a plaque from the Milwaukee County Historical Society recognizing this accomplishment.

Our overall call volume increased from 3188 calls for service in 2017 to 3481 calls for service in 2018, with the increase focused on Emergency Medical Service (EMS) responses, which account for nearly 87% of our call volume. We continue to see a shift in our demographics for EMS patients to an aging population with slightly over 56% of our patients being age 60 or above. This is in stark contrast to a statistic provided by a 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimate that lists our population of residents over age 65 as 16.2%. Obviously, the “senior” apartment complexes (age 55 & over) and the nursing home and supervised / assisted living centers and the health concerns of their residents create a challenging demand on our system.

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

History of the South Milwaukee Fire Department

2018 marked the 125th Anniversary of the South Milwaukee Fire Department, which was originally founded in 1893 after an early morning fire that occurred on Thursday, March 2nd, at the Lakeview Club House, which was located in the 1200 blk. of Milwaukee Avenue. The fire was reported by workers at the Schultz Brothers Furniture Factory, which was located several blocks away, and reportedly burned the building to the ground as a result of inadequate resources and water supply (the Water Utility had yet to be established and, therefore, there were no water mains or fire hydrants).

On March 8th, a temporary Board of Trustees asked the question, “Wouldn’t it be advisable to have some kind of organized fire department in case of another fire?”. Four days later, the Board heard a resolution asking that the Commission on Fire, Water, and Health be instructed to make inquiries regarding the cost of a chemical fire engine. Then, on March 21st, the Village Clerk was authorized to advertise for bids for a “double-cylinder Champion Chemical Engine” at a price not to exceed \$2,200.

Before the fire department was formally organized and prior to the chemical engine being ordered, the village’s second large fire occurred at the Admant Paint Company, located along 10th Avenue on property that would eventually be occupied by the Bucyrus-Erie Company. Once again, the building was a total loss.

It wasn’t until June 8, 1893, that a committee was named to formally organize a fire department. Fred Mansfield, the temporary President of the Village, donated a lot near the intersection of 11th & Madison Avenue’s to house the new chemical fire engine. Then, on June 20, 1893, the newly organized volunteer fire department committee met to adopt the constitution and by-laws. Later that year on October 6th, a hose company was authorized to form and Mr. T.A. Murphy was chosen as the Chief of the Department.

In December of 1893, the fire department moved its apparatus from the temporary location on 11th & Madison Avenues to the first floor of the newly constructed Village Hall, located a few blocks away just north of the intersection of 10th & Milwaukee Avenues. The fire department would stay in that location until it moved to its current location on Marshall Court in February, 1981.

Additional information on the history of our department, including a copy of the presentation delivered to the South Milwaukee Historical Society can be found at <http://smfdwi.org/history/>.



1893-1929

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 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

Mayor Erik Brooks

Craig Maass
District 1 Alderperson

Brett Briesemeister
District 1 Alderperson

Ray Navarro
District 2 Alderperson

R. Patrick Stoner
District 2 Alderperson

James Shelenske
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

Karen Skowronski
City Treasurer

William Fenger
Municipal Judge

Police and Fire Commission

Darrell Francis, DDS

Heather Page

Rick Borowski

Elizabeth Blackwood

Don O’Kray

Kate Bernovich (Resigned)

“Like” us on Facebook . . .



Department Personnel

Joseph Knitter
Fire Chief

Shannon Hrdlicka
Administrative Secretary

Black Shift

Capt. Craig Boschke
Lt. Kurt Egner
FF/EMT Ron Wainio
FF/EMT Ryan Behling
FF/EMT Shardae Lavigne³
FF/P Jerre Schlax
FF/P Ryan Wendt
FF/P Kenny Lamas

Green Shift

Capt. John Frost¹
Lt. Nate Fager²
FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger
FF/EMT Jared Rentmeester
FF/EMT (Vacant)
FF/P Scott Wallis
FF/P John Rhinesmith
FF/P Ryan Porter

Red Shift

Capt. Brad Sibley
Lt. Andy Mahn
FF/EMT Tyler Anders
FF/EMT Kevin Schneider
FF/P Ryan Miksa⁴
FF/P Michael Landgraf
FF/P Jeremy Fronczak
FF/P Ryan Kurz

Captain Glen McCoy
FF/P Steven Bartlein
FF/P Benjamin Olberding
FF/P Kenny Lamas
FF/EMT Shardae Lavigne

Retired - 1/20
Retired - 2/3
Resigned - 3/29
Resigned - 8/21
Resigned - 11/20

¹ – Promoted - 9/1
² – Promoted - 10/7
³ – Hired - 3/12
⁴ – Hired - 5/7

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. 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	Apparatus / Facilities Maintenance Buildings & Grounds Operations
Lt. Kurt Egner	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/EMT Ryan Behling	Fire Inspection
FF/EMT Tyler Anders	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. Dependent on staffing, a second, and sometimes a third, ambulance is available at either the Paramedic First Response (PFR - One paramedic / one EMT) or a Basic Life Support (BLS – Two EMTs) response level. Citizens in South Milwaukee benefit from a high level of service when requesting emergency medical care.

Total EMS Calls*	Transports
3017	1958

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

Disposition of Calls	
Treated, Transported by EMS (BLS)	1217
Treated, Transported by EMS (ALS)	741
Treated and Refused Transport	469
Treated, Transported by Another EMS Unit	242
Dead at Scene	61
Patient Refused Evaluation, Care, & Transport	53
No Treatment/Transport Required	42
Treated and Released (per protocol)	22
Treated, Transported by EMS (Other)	8
Treated, Transported by Private Vehicle	8
Treatment Refused, Transported	3
Treated, Referred to Law Enforcement	7
No Patient Found	1
Other	



Transport Destination	1958	100%
Aurora St. Luke's – South Shore	1465	74.82%
Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center - Milwaukee	197	10.06%
Wheaton Franciscan - Franklin	122	6.23%
Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital	48	2.45%
Wheaton Franciscan - St. Francis Hospital	37	1.88%
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin	37	1.88%
Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center	25	1.29%
Aurora West Allis Medical Center	11	0.57%
Columbia - St Mary's - Milwaukee	8	0.42%
Aurora Sinai Medical Center	4	0.20%
Waukesha Memorial	2	0.10%
Moorland Reserve Health Center	1	0.05%
Medical Examiner	1	0.05%

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	2016	Osage (Dodge) Type I	Excellent
1681	Ambulance	2009	Med-Tech (Ford) Type I	Good
Med-10	Ambulance	2014	Osage (Dodge) Type I	Very 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	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 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

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 provided with fire safety programs during the annual National Fire Prevention Week. When students reach the 5th 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 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.

In addition, 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.

546

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

196

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

269

**Fire Station Tour
Participants**



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/EMT Jason Helmlinger and FF/EMT Tyler Anders, 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

724

Bi-annual fire inspections conducted

61

Re-inspections conducted

240

Violations identified

Inspection Responsibilities

FF/EMT Ryan Behling

Commercial

Residential attached to Commercial

FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger

Residential

City, County & Federally-owned

Schools

FF/EMT Tyler Anders

Industrial

Manufacturing

Nursing Homes

Doctor / Dental Offices

The Three "E's" of Fire Prevention

Engineering

Education

Enforcement

Response Statistics / Trends

	2018	2017	2016	2015
TOTAL CALLS	3481	3188	3270	3040
EMS Calls	3017	2707	2777	2638
Basic Life Support Incidents	1527	1417	1333	1087
Advanced Life Support Incidents	879	816	814	796
ALS (requests) outside of So. Milw.	611	474	630	626
EMS other fire / support response	---	---	---	129
Fire Incidents	59	59	58	76
Building Fire	25	32	23	31
Cooking Fire	9	7	10	12
Rubbish / Trash Fire / Dumpster	7	7	12	14
Grass / Brush Fire	4	4	7	4
Other	14	9	6	15
Hazardous Conditions	69	94	72	78
Motor Vehicle Crash-General Cleanup	31	39	34	39
Carbon Monoxide Investigation	1	3	3	4
Electrical / Power Line Problem	13	14	17	9
Chemical Leak / Spill	9	12	3	3
Natural Gas Leak	14	22	8	10
Other	1	4	7	13
Service / Good Intent	189	181	263	170
Smoke or Odor Removal	10	9	11	10
Service Call - CO Detector	21	24	29	---
Unauthorized Burning	33	27	39	26
Smoke detector / Other / Investigation	125	121	184	134
False Alarms	97	86	96	75
System Activation – Malfunction	16	15	12	12
System Activation – Unintentional	2	5	2	4
System Activation – Malicious	1	3	5	1
Systems - Other	78	63	77	58
Other Incidents¹	50	61	4	3
Motor Vehicle Crash	44	52	---	---
Water Related Incident	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.

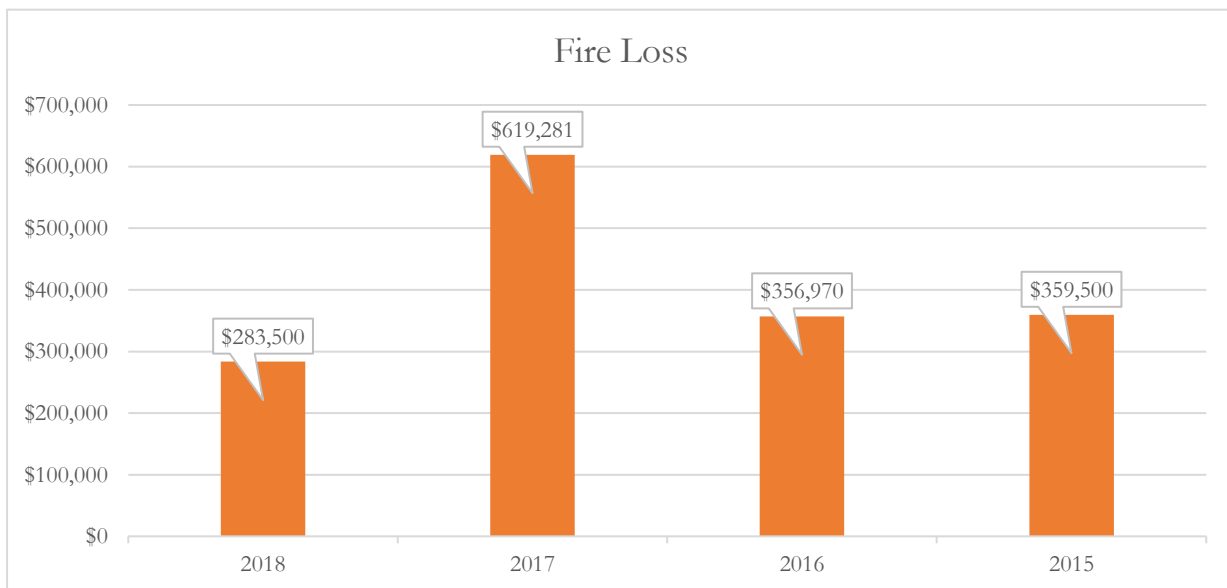
¹To better track our responses to motor vehicle crashes and water-related incidents, these responses have been separated from the “Service / Good Intent” category since 2017.

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.

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 addition, 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 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 could be expected, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is well within compliance with this nationally-accepted performance standard. In 2018, the response time average was **3.05 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.



Rescue Boat Operations

25' Steiger Craft Rescue Boat

The SMFD is the only municipal fire department between the cities of Racine and Milwaukee that maintains and operates a solid-hull rescue boat for operations on Lake Michigan. Several times each boating season, the SMFD is called upon by the US Coast Guard or neighboring fire and/or law enforcement agencies to locate and assist lost, distressed, or stricken boaters on Lake Michigan.

Typically, 3-4 personnel respond from the SMFD firehouse to the South Milwaukee Yacht Club (SMYC) to staff the boat, which is moored in a slip at the SMYC from May through October. A Shift Officer will also respond to act as the Incident Commander and coordinate operations with any outside agencies and our boat. The boat is equipped with side and bottom-scan SONAR, a Forward Looking InfraRed (FLIR) Camera, and additional navigational technologies.

This year, additional training was conducted both with the Milwaukee Fire Department and the WI Department of Natural Resources.

In addition to the solid-hull boat, a 14' inflatable raft is kept at the SMFD firehouse for deployment year-round and is available to our mutual aid partners for inland use, as well.



FBI

Citizen's Academy Alumni Association

Through a generous donation from the FBI Milwaukee Citizen's Academy Alumni Association, the SMFD is continuing on with its cancer prevention initiatives and was able to purchase particulate barrier hoods for each of its personnel. These hoods are designed with technologies that prevent suspected cancer-causing particulates from infiltrating through the fabric to very vascular and sensitive skin areas that are highly susceptible to cancer, specifically the head and neck areas. Previously, two protective hoods were issued that were not designed with this technology and members were directed to swap out soiled hoods for clean ones immediately after an incident. A second hood is still issued to swap out temporarily while the particulate hood is laundered. Initially, four brands of particulate hoods were offered and members were allowed to choose the make and model of their liking based on form, fit, and function.



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.

Developed by the National Society of Executive Fire Officers