

# Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

## October 2023



(Fire Prevention Sparky Program at Riverview Elementary)

## Fire Chief Report by Chief Robert Barteck

October brings the final stages of our budget requests to the Finance Committee with Supplemental Budget Requests. With the boundaries of cost-to-continue budget restrictions, we made three supplemental requests for new projects.

- *Part-time Administrative Assistant* position shared with the Wausau Police Department. Both departments need more administrative help. We requested a full-time position to be split between .6 PD and .4 FD. The Fire Department Administrative Analyst has had growing job duties for many years and lacks redundancy. A .4 position would be an asset to the department to relieve some of the overburdened workload, provide redundancy, and continuation of work when the current admin is off. If granted this person would have a desk at the police department and do both PD and FD work from there. When the FD Administrative Analyst is off the person would work from the desk at the FD.
- *Firefighter Cancer Screening*. We requested funds to begin a cancer screening program for firefighters. Currently, the leading killer of firefighters in the nation is cancer with rates of prevalence much higher than the general population. Early detection is the key. The plan will begin by testing 20% of firefighters each year starting with the senior most firefighters. Every five years each firefighter would receive an in-depth screening.
- *EMT-Basic to Paramedic Training Program*. With current openings and several expected retirements, the department anticipates needing to hire six to eight new firefighters over the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024. Recruitment efforts for firefighter/paramedic have not yet filled all the positions available. To fill the positions, the department may need to hire EMT-Basics and train them as paramedics in collaboration with Northcentral Technical College. The Paramedic class the department hosted in 2023 was successful in recruiting and training high-quality Wausau Paramedics. If our current recruitment is successful in hiring enough qualified Firefighter/Paramedics we will not need these funds.

**Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin WALTs Conference.** Deputy Chief Kopp, and I were invited by Firefighters Local 415 to the annual PFFW WALTs conference in Milwaukee. Firefighters and Chief level officers came together from around Wisconsin to enjoy a day of shared training and networking. The event was well-organized and educational. Topics covered were firefighter mental health, media relations, fireground tactics and strategies, and annual awards.

**811 and 815 Grand Ave land acquisition.** Progress continued with the offer to purchase 811 and 815 Grand Ave. The property assessment came in at \$870,000, which is well above the negotiated price of \$805,000. The property is undergoing environmental testing and will be brought to Council for approval in November. The anticipated closing date is November 15, 2023.

**Fire Chief Transition.** The transition of leadership from me to future Fire Chief Jeremy Kopp is going extremely well. He has a strong grasp of the department projects and is taking leadership roles on new and emerging problems. In November we will work on getting our open FEMA and State grants switched to Chief Kopp for continued management. Chief Kopp is currently working with the Human Resources department to seek and hire the next Deputy Fire Chief. The posting yielded seven applicants, two internal and five external candidates. The top three will be invited to participate in an interview process in November. Chief Kopp is also working with the HR Department to seek the next entry-level candidates. He adjusted the qualifications to allow current Paramedic students enrolled in a Wisconsin Technical College program to apply for positions. In our fall 2022 posting we had several candidates that were current students apply and we hired five. This allowed us to hire highly qualified candidates before they met the eligibility requirements of competing departments.

**EMS and Falls in Wisconsin:** We have attached the Wisconsin DHS 2022 Falls Report shows that falls are a leading cause of injury and death in Wisconsin and in 2022, emergency medical services (EMS) in Wisconsin responded to over 130,000 falls. EMS data offers a unique insight into falls, and EMS offers an opportunity to address falls in the community. According to the CDC, Wisconsin has the highest fall death rate among older

adults in the United States. Falls do not just cause fatal injuries but also can cause long-term health conditions stemming from injuries or a loss of confidence in one's own physical fitness. This is true in Wausau. The Wausau Fire Department's number one reason for dispatch is falls. To help combat this problem our department has partnered with the ADRC to help refer patients who need education and resources on falls prevention.

I hope you find this monthly report informative. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or want additional information added to this report.

Robert Barteck – Fire Chief

## Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp

### Significant calls:

It is incredible to report that Wausau Fire did not respond to any significant calls in the month of October! While it is our goal to meet this mark every month in our community, it is even better that we hit this goal during fire prevention month. As you will be able to see from the rest of our monthly report, we were still very busy. Line crews assisted the inspections division with school programs throughout the month. They continued with daily training while responding to medical calls and alarms.

### Recruitment and Retention:

Hunter passed the interview with the Police and Fire Commission and is now waiting for the psychological test and physical test before we can determine a start date. The EMT-Paramedic/ firefighter process that opened in October and closed October 31<sup>st</sup> produced 7 candidates that will be interviewed for employment the second week in November. The application process for the next Deputy Chief also ended on October 25<sup>th</sup> and produced three candidates to be interviewed November 8<sup>th</sup>. We are hopeful to produce enough candidates to not run the EMT basic class cohort with NTC, but we will figure that out after the conclusion of all these interviews. On an opposite note, we had a resignation of a firefighter/paramedic with the last day being November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Chris has been an outstanding member of our department and was essential to the EMT basic program we ran this past year as a mentor/ teacher. Chris is going on to a new trade and stated this was the hardest decision he has ever had to make. We wish him luck and support him with his new journey.

**Fleet:** All three of the inspector lease vehicles have arrived and are in service. E-2 has returned from Rennert's Fire Equipment where it received a new pump. E-3 needs to go to Custom Fire this month to get water tank leak fixed under warranty. E-1 will be going to Cummins as soon as possible for a small oil leak under warranty as well.

### Buildings and Grounds:

The woman's bathroom and entire second floor has now been completed and restored from the fire. As of October 30<sup>th</sup>, we have moved out of station 3 while Norcon replaces the floor drains and repairs the apparatus bay floor, hopefully be back in the station operating as normal by November 6<sup>th</sup>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or stop by my office. 715-261-7901.

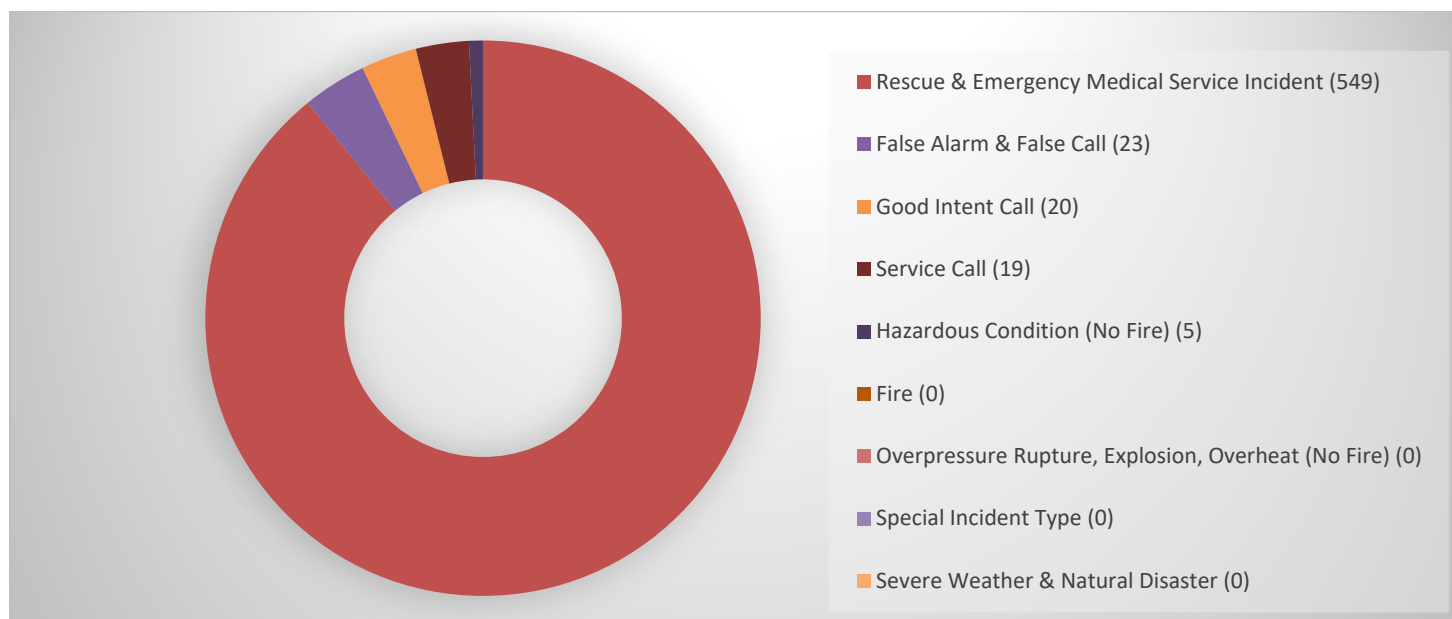
## Significant Fire Events:

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
None				

## Monthly NFIRS Incident Comparison:

	2023	2022	2021	% Of Change from 2022 to 2023
January	579	591	502	-2.03%

February	506	507	456	-0.20%
March	551	540	497	2.04%
April	527	498	503	5.82%
May	574	574	556	0.00%
June	553	590	583	-6.27%
July	679	531	587	27.87%
August	571	600	577	-4.83%
September	548	524	525	4.58%
October	616	545	552	13.03%
November		574	562	
December		612	590	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6686</b>	<b>6490</b>	



### Responses by Municipality (All NFIRS Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs - YTD
City of Abbotsford	0	0.00%	3
City of Antigo	0	0.00%	1
City of Colby	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	1	0.16%	3
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	0	0.00%	1
City Of Wausau	582	94.48%	5,288
Clark County	0	0.00%	1
Rosholt	0	0.00%	1
Taylor County	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Berlin	1	0.16%	29
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Cassel	0	0.00%	3
Town Of Elderon	0	0.00%	0

Town Of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Frankfort	0	0.00%	1
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Halsey	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hewitt	1	0.16%	22
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	3
Town Of Marathon	0	0.00%	2
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	2
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	5
Town Of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	2
Town of Ringle	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Stettin	0	0.00%	2
Town Of Texas	5	0.81%	42
Town Of Wausau	11	1.79%	108
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	0	0.00%	3
Village Of Athens	2	0.32%	6
Village Of Brokaw	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Edgar	0	0.00%	3
Village of Hatley	0	0.00%	1
Village Of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	2
Village Of Maine	12	1.95%	125
Village Of Marathon City	0	0.00%	8
Village Of Rib Mountain	1	0.16%	6
Village Of Rothschild	0	0.00%	2
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	0	0.00%	25
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>5,704</b>

### **Activity/Incident Hours Committed:**

Category	Time Committed
NFIRS Incidents	112:04:25 Hours
EMS Incidents	793:01:03 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	744.75 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	1,659.80 Hours

### **Aid Responses:**

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	1



Mutual Aid Given – Fire	1
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	21
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	0
Mutual Aid Received – EMS	0
Mutual Aid Received – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Received – EMS	0
Automatic Aid Received – Fire	0
Other Aid Given – EMS	0
Request for EMS from Other Agencies to the City of Wausau (not Aid)	0
Request for Fire from Other Agencies to the City of Wausau (not Aid)	0
Total Non-Aid Incidents (outside City with no other agency response)	11

## EMS Division by EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson

### Outreach

A few months ago, the United Way Retire organization contacted the EMS division looking for our recommendation for an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). In October, they donated three units to Wausau area businesses with the option to have the fire department conduct training in using them. The selected organizations in the city of Wausau were the Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Center and the Community Partner Campus. The AEDs that were donated can interact with the cardiac monitors we carry on our ambulances.



Community Partners Campus



Community Partners Campus



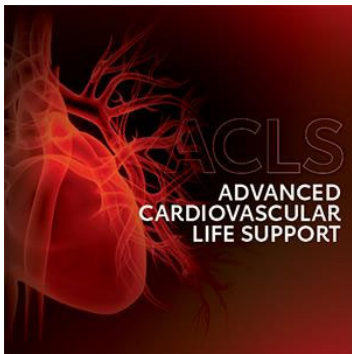
GiGi's Playhouse



### Training:

The EMS Division conducted our recertification process for our American Heart Association Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS). This is a required certification that all paramedics in Wisconsin are required to have. This training is conducted in-house by the EMS Division Chief, who is an ACLS instructor. This course focuses on advanced cardiac care incorporating pharmacological intervention. Each paramedic had to take a pre- and post-test and pass practical learning sessions. This was Chief Barteck's last ACLS class. These classes will never be

the same without his witty and corny jokes!



EMS Incidents

In October, our crews responded to some very tough calls. Several involved fatal overdoses and a deadly vehicle crash that involved teenagers. The driver did not survive that accident. One of our youngest crew members had to pronounce that teenager's death on that scene. This will be an incident that he will never forget, speaking from experience. We are so fortunate to have a chaplaincy established here at the fire department and mental health check-ups, as EMS calls pose the most mental trauma in the fire service. One impressive call our department had involved two of our most junior firefighter/paramedics, Ashely Sakis, and Nolan Bouffleur. They responded to the report of an elderly patient who was faint. They performed a 12-lead ECG and saw that the patient had a heart attack. They had an impressive 9-minute on-scene time and immediately transported the patient to Aspirus and delivered the patient directly to the cardiac team in the cath lab.

EMS Patient Experience Rep

The EMS Division would like to share our patient care experience report for October. Our overall score was **89.19%**. Our rolling 12-month score of **90.84** is a difference of **-2.54** from the national database score of **93.38**. Compared to all organizations in the EMS Survey national database, our score of **90.84** is ranked **73rd** and **13<sup>th</sup>** for comparably sized departments. This month's results are one of our lower scores. These monthly surveys provide excellent information on how our customers have viewed their interactions with our department.

Your Score

**89.19**

Your Patients in this Report

**28**

Total Patients in this Report

**5,576**

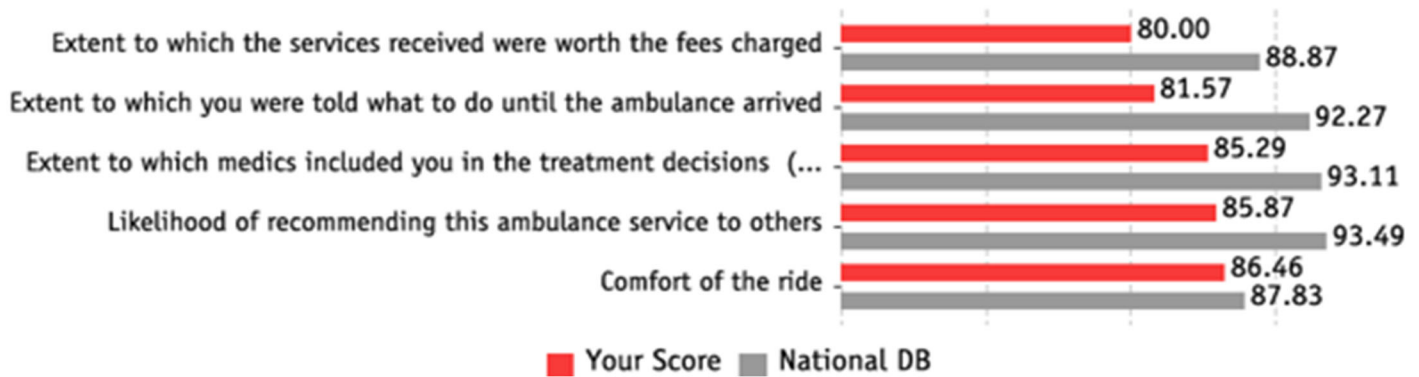
Total EMS Organizations

**227**

## 5 Highest Scores



## 5 Lowest Scores



## Responses by Municipality (EMS Patient Care Reports):

City	# of Reports	% of Reports	# of Reports – YTD
City of Abbotsford	0	0.00%	3
City of Antigo	0	0.00%	1
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	1
City of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City of Schofield	0	0.00%	1
City of Wausau	529	93.96%	4,763
Clark County	0	0.00%	1
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	1
Town of Berlin	1	0.18%	30
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Cassel	0	0.00%	3
Town of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Frankfort	0	0.00%	1
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town of Halsey	0	0.00%	1
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hewitt	1	0.18%	25



Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	3
Town of Marathon	0	0.00%	2
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	1
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	1
Town of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	5
Town of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	2
Town of Ringle	0	0.00%	1
Town of Stettin	0	0.00%	2
Town of Texas	6	1.07%	46
Town of Wausau	11	1.95%	112
Town of Wien	0	0.00%	3
Village of Athens	2	0.36%	7
Village of Edgar	0	0.00%	2
Village of Hatley	0	0.00%	1
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	1
Village of Maine	12	2.13%	128
Village of Marathon City	0	0.00%	8
Village of Rib Mountain	1	0.18%	6
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	1
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	0	0.00%	26
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>5,189</b>

## Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

October Scheduled Training:

A brief breakdown of our scheduled activities follows:

- PPE Inspections
- Apparatus Cleaning and Maintenance
- Wausau Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour
- Vertical Confined Space Entry w/Respiratory Protection
- Rescue Task Force (RTF)

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Inspections

Personal Protective Equipment inspections are not only important, but they are also required by national standards. Each year, we refresh on the proper procedure and methods of inspecting our PPE to ensure it is safe for us to wear for responding to emergencies. Every member on the department is refreshed on this practice and the deficiencies are written up. If PPE requires repair, it is sent to a certified company for the corrections.



Above: A pair of bunker pants were burned through during fire suppression)

### Apparatus Cleaning and Maintenance

Our members clean the apparatus daily; however, we do take additional measures periodically to ensure the apparatus is detailed. Below, Ladder 2 had all equipment removed before it was thoroughly cleaned inside and out and then waxed. You may not think cleaning a vehicle is a training activity, but there are many people who were never taught what it takes to be detail oriented and take pride in the equipment the community supplies us. Apparatus maintenance and cleaning is a job performance requirement (JPR) in which our apparatus operators are held to. Luckily for them, all members pitch in to make lighter work with many hands.



Above: Ladder 2 shining in the bay after a thorough detailing.

### Wausau Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour & Vertical Confined Space Entry with Respiratory Protection

All three crews spent a full day at the Wastewater Treatment Plant learning and training. The morning session consisted of a full facility tour for our firefighters to become familiar with the layout and processes on-site. This walk-through took approximately two hours due to the sheer size and scope of the facility. In the afternoon, each crew was given a scenario in which a victim was in a confined space with a Hydrogen



Sulfide ( $H_2S$ ) reading appearing on their gas monitors. Although the  $H_2S$  reading was fictitious, it is one of the higher likely atmospheres we may face. This atmosphere dictates further actions by the responders to consider ventilating the space, and donning supplied breathing air. Each crew worked through the simulation following our OSHA compliant permit and rigged for the rescue of the victim.

At the end of the day, everyone was brought together for a discussion on the lessons learned, alternative approaches, and future training opportunities. This training would not have been possible without Plant Operations Supervisor Brad Wendtland and Superintendent Ben Brooks.



Above: One of the WFD crews completing their facility tour.



Above: WFD members train on confined space entry while on-site at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

While not a new training topic for the Wausau Fire Department, we reinvigorated our efforts with the influx of new members. RTF training was conducted on all three crews, with our Paramedic cohort, and in conjunction with the Wausau Police Department. The RTF concept is based on the ability of trained police and EMS personnel to move into a “Warm Zone” following a hostile event such as a shooting, bombing, etc. to rapidly treat and evacuate injured victims to maximize their survivability.

This training was conducted through a curriculum initially developed by the Arlington, Virginia Fire Department and modified to follow the NFPA 3000 standard: Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program. Following the training, a WFD member stated, “this was the best training I have had in RTF since I started.” Considering the nature of our profession, we couldn’t ask for a better impact to prepare for events that could occur.



Above: Members follow two WPD officers protecting their front while they drag a victim out of the building. (Behind the photographer) is the “Rear Guard” who guards their backs as they exit.

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	396.8	56.60%	5,850.20
Driver/Operator Training	95	13.55%	815.75
Facilities Training	0	0.00%	39
Hazardous Materials Training	103	14.69%	456
Misc Training	0	0.00%	55.25
Officer Training	12	1.71%	365.45
Specialty Training	94.25	13.44%	1,189.25
Total	701.05	100.00%	8,770.90

*Training Categories:*

*Company Training – General firefighting training*

*Officer Training – Included leadership, management, supervision, and tactical considerations*

*Driver/Operator Training – Operation of fire apparatus*

*Hazardous Materials Training – How to mitigate the leak or spill of hazardous substances*

*Specialty Training – Rope, confined space, trench, collapse, ice, water, and other special rescues.*

*Facilities Training – Training at a live-burn facility (may include off-duty time)*

*Misc Training – Any other training category such as software, administrative, etc.*

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Admin Training	0	0.00%	109.5
EMS Training	877.75	91.55%	3,504.75
Fire Instructor Training	53	5.53%	492
Fire Prevention Training	28	2.92%	28
Investigation Training	0	0.00%	112.5
Total	958.75	100.00%	4,246.75

## Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

**Inspections:** Within the City of Wausau for the month of October, we performed 263 total inspections. We had 22 properties that had Fire Code Violations with 30.0% being commercial vent hood systems being overdue for their scheduled cleaning, and 30.0% being coded as “other”. These properties will require follow-up inspections to confirm compliance. We conducted 5 consultation inspections for the month. These entailed consulting for two Fire Alarm Systems, Fire Suppression/Protection Systems, new construction, and one Knox Box. We also received and reviewed 90 reports through the Compliance Engine for services rendered for fire protection systems at varying businesses.

**Investigations:** The Prevention Division received no requests for fires that would need an investigation during the month of October.

**Public Outreach:** Throughout October we had several outreach opportunities. We witnessed and advised on one fire drill for Trinity Lutheran School. We attended an Emergency Response meeting for Waterfall Health Facility located at 1010 E Wausau Ave. This meeting was to interact with staff and management while providing insight and recommendations on response priorities throughout the process of handling large-scale emergencies, natural or otherwise. New smoke alarms and a CO detector were also installed in three separate private residences with a total of ten detectors placed.

October is generally one of our busier months. This year after a long Covid pause, we finally made it back into the school district to perform our Fire Safety classes. The last time this happened was October of 2019. In 2020, the classes were initially scheduled, but we did not participate due to a mutual understanding with the district. We offer classes for pre-k and kindergarten, first grade, third grade, and fifth grade. The Marathon County Sheriff's Office Dispatchers provide a class for fourth grade students dealing with 911 etiquette.

These classes range from a half hour for the pre-k and kindergarten, and up to an hour for the others. We had one Youth Firesetter Prevention and Intervention program intake. We were contacted by the Marathon County Department of Social Services on the possibility of Wausau Fire Department's willingness to provide this service for a child that does not reside within the city limits. The surrounding Fire Departments do not have the resources or training to provide this type of intervention. We discussed this with the Chief and Deputy Chief and it was agreed that we could and would help.

The intake was for a 13-year-old that has a history of playing with fire. The actions of this child finally resulted in a house fire at their residence. We have completed the first meeting with the child and his mother. This could require more than three sessions depending on how the process goes. Our goals are education, understanding, potential consequences, and zero recidivism.

**Education:** During the month of October, the Prevention Division attended the State Fire Inspector's (WSFIA) conference. This was a four-day conference held in the Wisconsin Dells dealing with common inspection processes. It also addressed new trends dealing with Community Risk Reduction (CRR) and High hazard Occupancies.





### Prevention Division Activities:

Inspections Completed	Monthly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	233	2,526
Re-inspections	25	271
All other Inspections (Consults/burn complaints,etc)	5	44
<b>Total Inspections</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>2,841</b>
Fire Investigations	0	17
<b>Inspection Department Activities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Public Engagement Activities	68	153





# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## EMS and Falls in Wisconsin, 2022 Report

**Falls are a leading cause of injury and death in Wisconsin and in 2022, emergency medical services (EMS) in Wisconsin responded to over 130,000 falls.** EMS data offers a unique insight into falls, and EMS offers an opportunity to address falls in the community.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [\*\*Wisconsin has the highest fall death rate among older adults in the United States\*\*](#). Falls do not just cause fatal injuries, but also can cause long-term health conditions stemming from injuries or a loss of confidence in one's own physical fitness.

Despite all of this, falls can be prevented. **There are a variety of steps that people can take to reduce their chance of falling. Some of these include**

- Improving lighting
- Reducing clutter
- Making commonly used items easily accessible

People should consider working with an occupational or physical therapist, their local [Aging and Disability Resource Center](#), or other specialists.

Many people lack access to the community or health care resources needed to prevent falls, or the factors causing their falls are out of their control.

[Community organizations and volunteers should consider partnering with EMS agencies](#) to better understand falls in their community and to provide interventions.



## Key takeaways

- Wisconsin has a high rate of falls among older adults and has the highest fall death rate in the country.
- EMS responses to falls are increasing at an accelerated pace.
- EMS most often responds to falls at home.

## Resources

You can find more resources on preventing falls on [CDC's Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries website](#), on [Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging's website](#), on the [Stepping On program's website](#), and in the [Partnering with Fire and Emergency Medical Services to Prevent Falls article from National Council on Aging](#).

Data in this report are from both the Wisconsin Ambulance Run Data System (WARDS) as well as the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

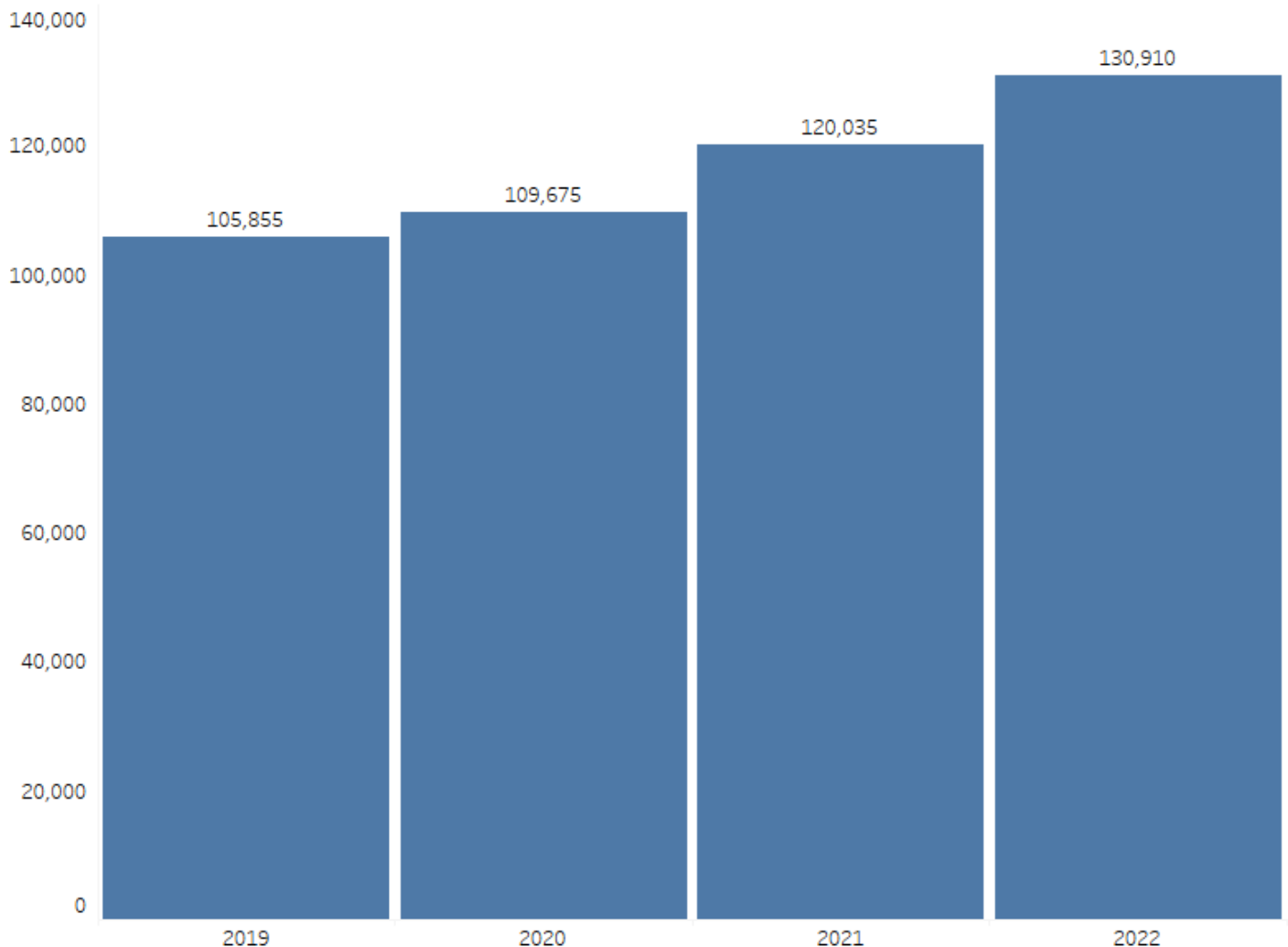


**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT**  
*of* **HEALTH SERVICES**



# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## Falls That EMS Responded to in WARDS by Year



There were 25,055 more falls that EMS responded to in 2022 than in 2019. **The number of falls that EMS responds to are increasing by nearly 10,000 a year statewide**, with an average increase of 7.4% a year since 2019.

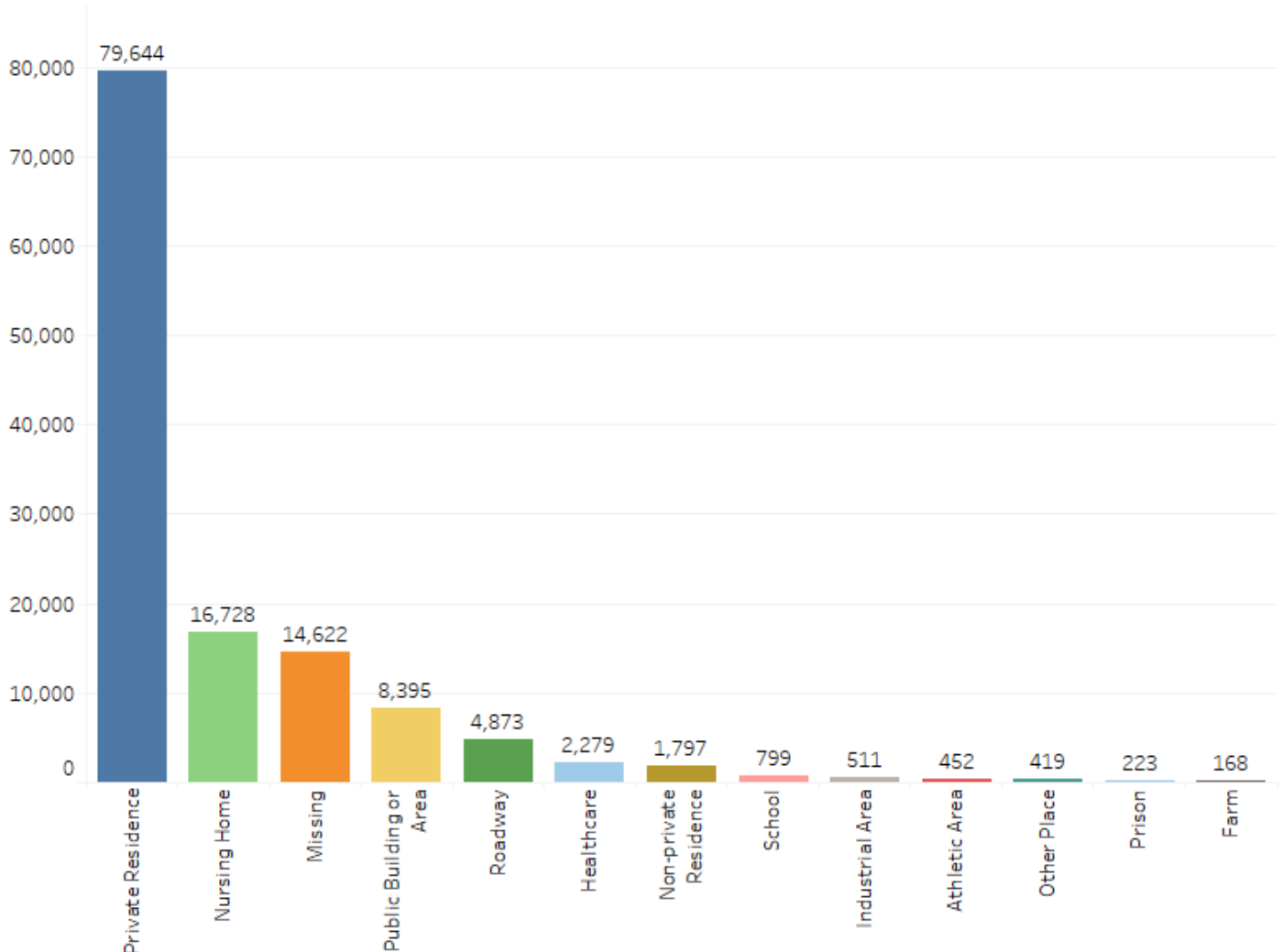
**Falls made up 18% of 911-related ambulance runs in 2022** and according to the CDC, Wisconsin has the highest fall death rate among older adults in the nation. As the number of falls and fatal falls continue to increase, more efforts to address and prevent falls will be needed.

As Wisconsin's population ages, without changes to how we work to prevent or treat fall injuries, injury and death will continue to increase further straining EMS and our health care system.



# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## Locations of Falls that EMS Responded to in 2022



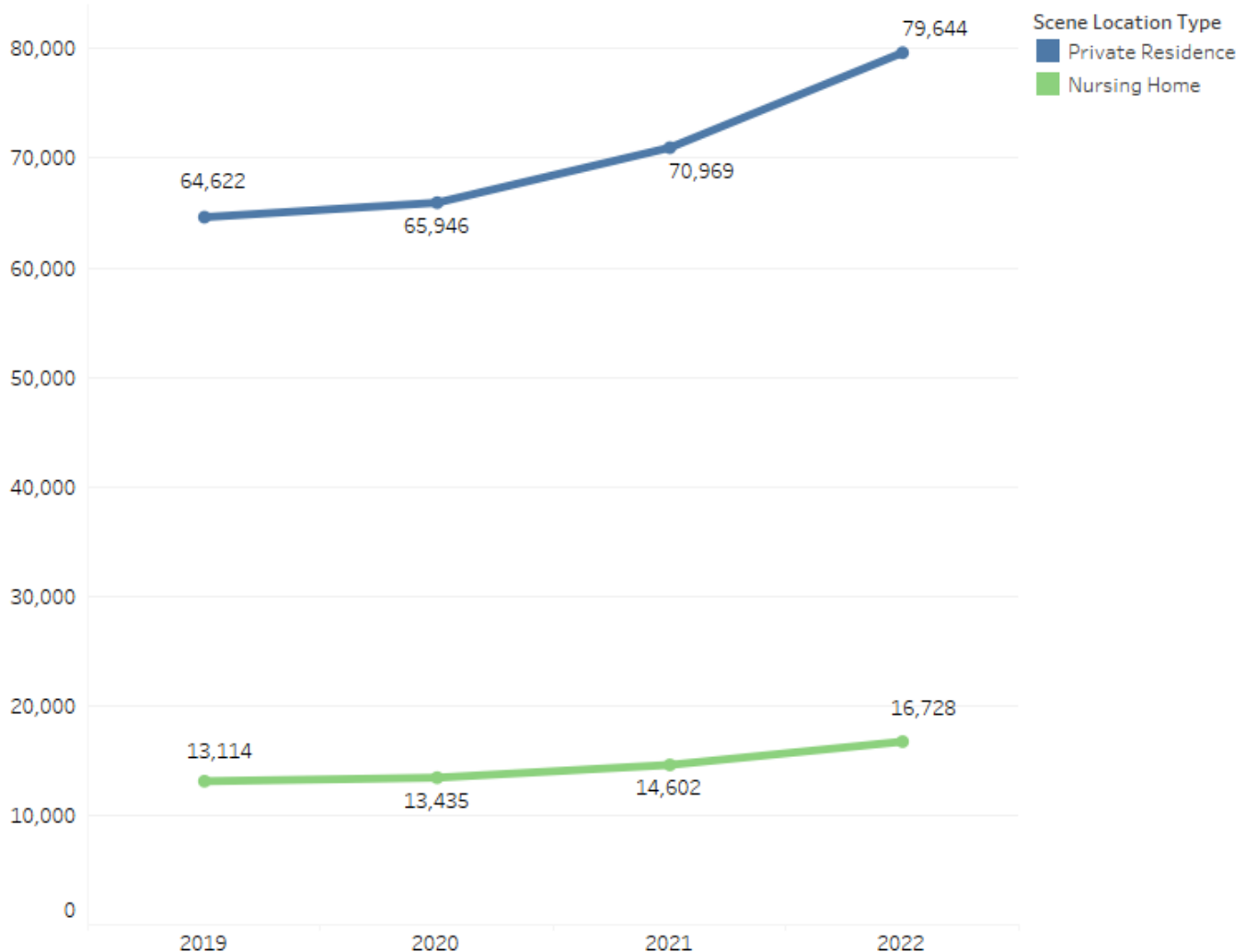
**Private residences are the most common place that EMS responds to falls or fall-related injuries** while nursing homes are also common locations. Public areas, such as stores, make up some of the total fall runs as do falls on roadways or sidewalks, but these are generally less common locations. Efforts to prevent falls at home could have the largest impact on reducing the number of fall injuries and the number of ambulance runs for falls.

While training around falls and prevention efforts in nursing homes and assisted living facilities may help reduce the number of falls occurring in these locations, nursing home policies may impact the number of EMS responses for falls. Some facilities may require a medical examination to be conducted by EMS after every fall, or they may have implemented “no lift” policies, and require EMS to assist their patient back to their feet, chair, or bed.



# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## Private Residence and Nursing Home Falls



Over four years, **falls in private residences increased by about 5,000 falls a year**, an average increase of 7.3% each year. **Nursing home falls increased by about 1,200 a year** over the four year period with an average increase of 8.6% per year. Fall ambulance runs at both private residences and at nursing homes are increasing at a higher rate than all other non-transporting ambulance runs.

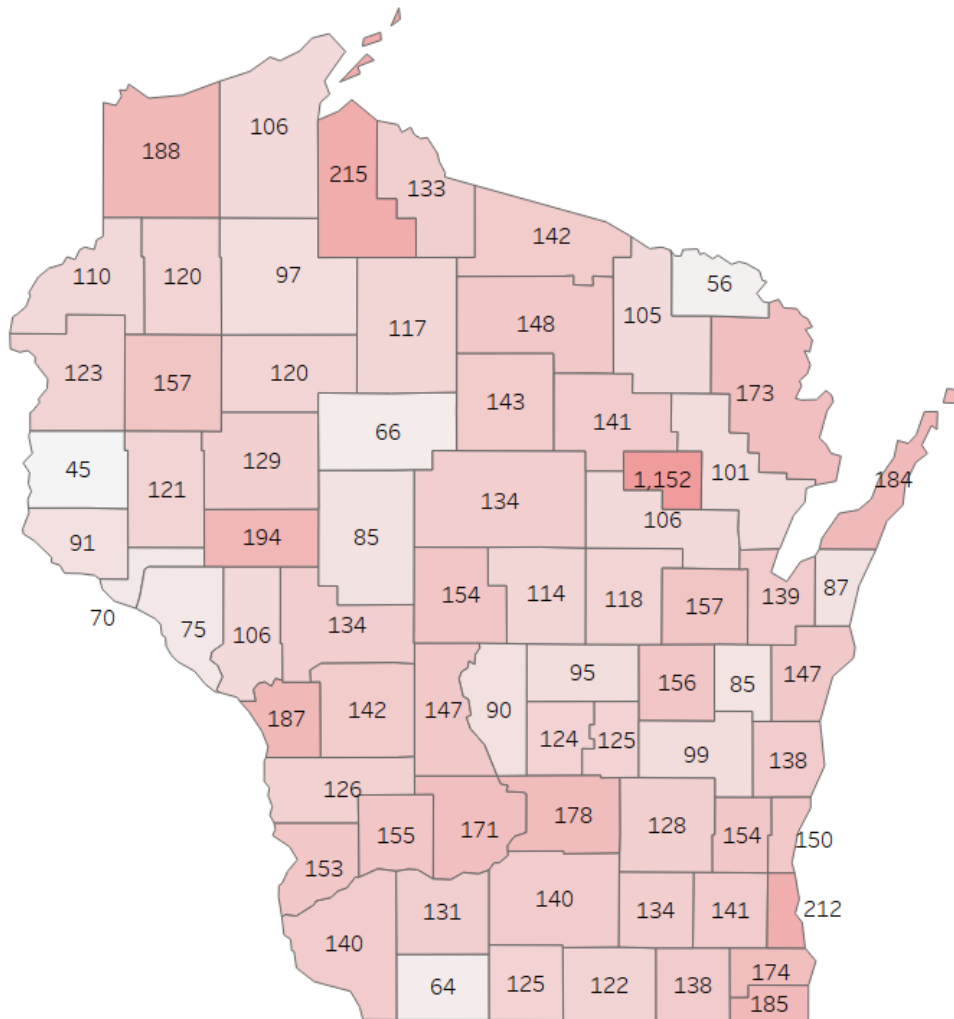
In 2018, among falls with location information, falls at private residence locations made up **67%** of falls and nursing home locations an additional **13.5%** of fall calls. In 2022, private residences were the location of **68%** of all fall calls and nursing home locations **14.4%** of all fall calls.

**The number of falls that EMS responds to continues to increase at an accelerated pace.**



# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## Age Adjusted of Falls by 10,000 County Residents in WI in 2022



*This map was created utilizing WARDS data only as NFIRS does not collect data on patients' age. This may result in an underestimation of age adjusted fall responses in some counties, especially those that are more rural.*

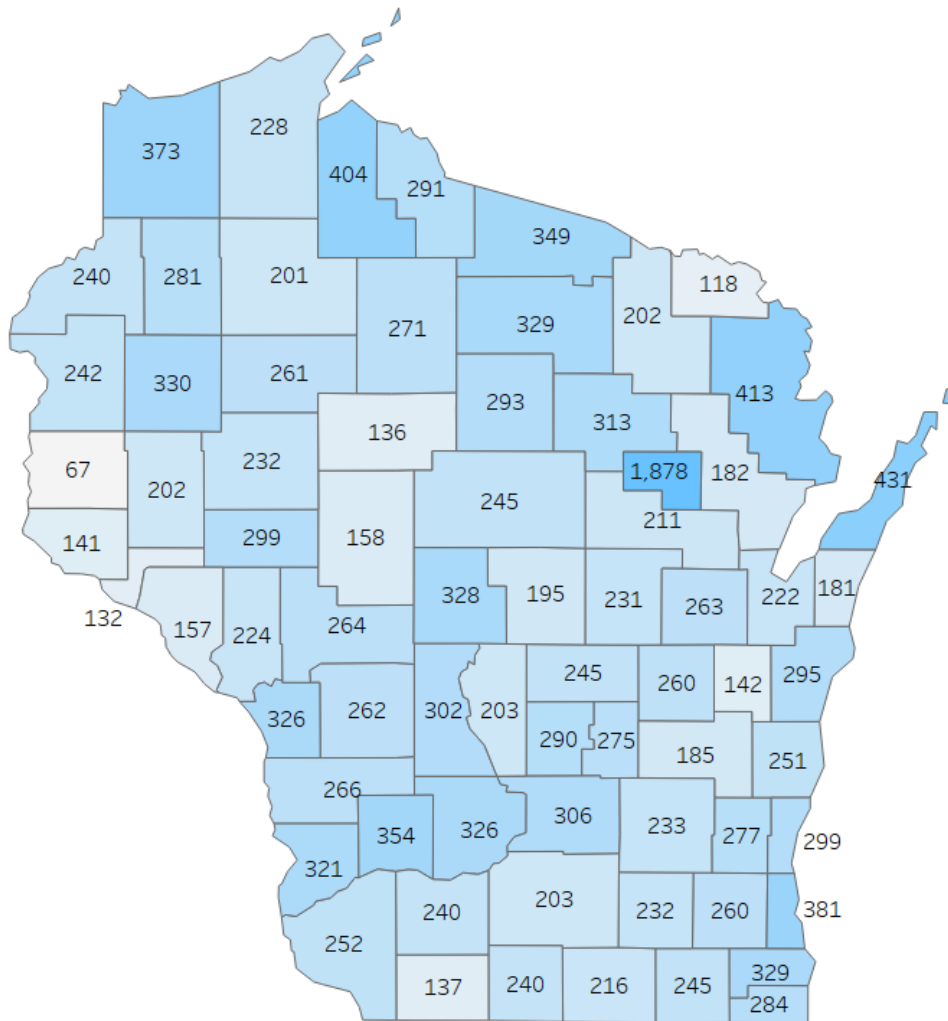
Counties with older population distributions will often have a higher number of falls than counties with younger populations. Age adjustment takes into account different age distributions and shows what rates a county would have if all counties had the same age distribution.

**Counties that have high age-adjusted falls rates compared to their neighbors may be good candidates for falls-related interventions** as they have more falls than their age distribution would indicate they should have.



# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## Crude Rate of Falls by 10,000 County Residents in WI in 2022



This map shows the rate of falls that EMS and fire departments responded to without any additional adjustments. Counties with higher crude rates of falls could likely benefit more from interventions aimed at preventing falls. Factors that impact the rate of falls at the county level include

- Age and health of the population
- Types of housing and age of housing
- Community programs and resources available and accessible
- Access to health care
- The number of visitors to the county that are injured





The map displays the percentage of the population aged 18 and over who are married across the United States. The data is as follows:

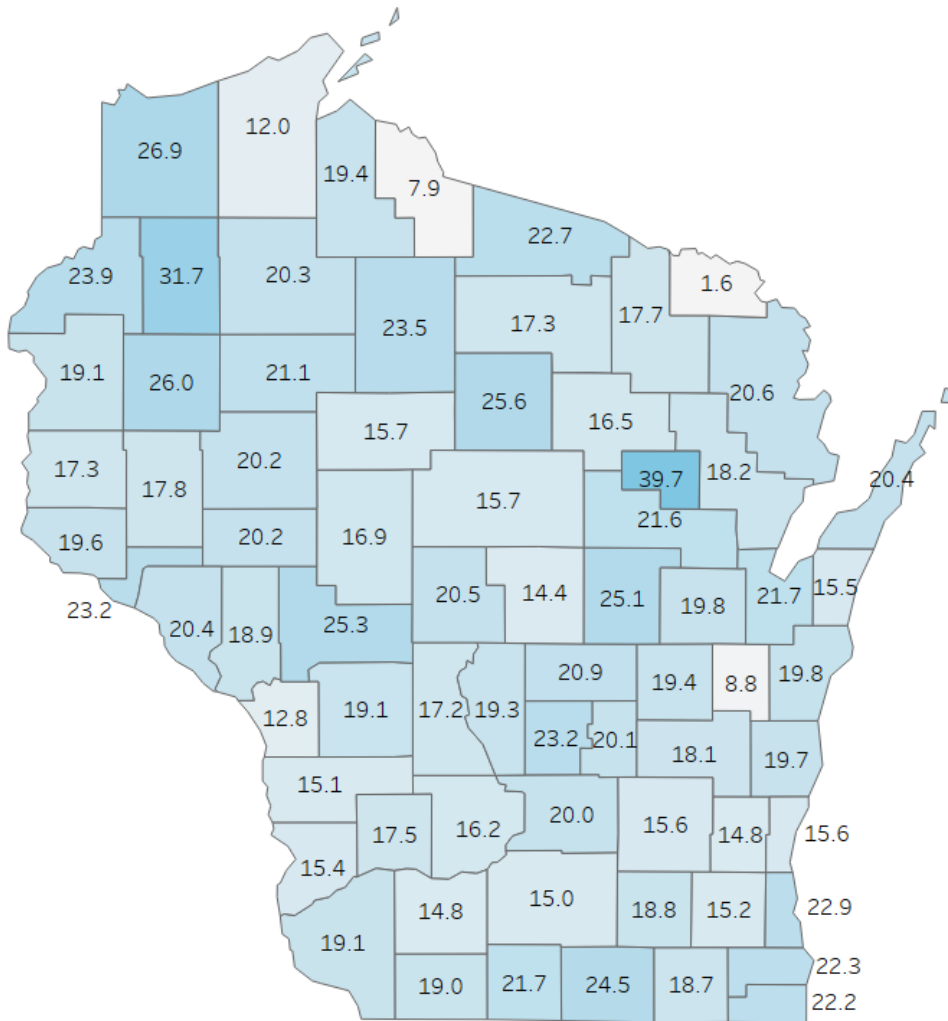
County	Percentage (%)
Alaska	7.8
Arizona	10.6
Arkansas	12.3
California	17.2
Colorado	13.2
Connecticut	27.5
Delaware	10.7
District of Columbia	92.8
Florida	14.7
Georgia	16.8
Hawaii	28.1
Idaho	12.8
Illinois	18.8
Indiana	14.2
Iowa	19.3
Kansas	13.0
Kentucky	17.6
Louisiana	19.5
Maine	20.4
Maryland	13.9
Massachusetts	22.6
Michigan	18.2
Minnesota	11.8
Mississippi	10.4
Missouri	16.3
Montana	11.2
Nebraska	14.4
Nevada	2.4
New Hampshire	24.3
New Jersey	15.9
New Mexico	10.3
New York	28.1
North Carolina	17.3
North Dakota	11.8
Ohio	14.2
Oklahoma	13.8
Oregon	30.1
Pennsylvania	19.7
Rhode Island	20.9
South Carolina	17.5
South Dakota	12.8
Tennessee	17.6
Texas	12.8
Utah	10.7
Vermont	24.3
Virginia	16.8
Washington	30.1
West Virginia	10.7
Wisconsin	19.3
Wyoming	11.2

Only private residences are included in this analysis as nursing home policies around falls may skew the estimates for repeat fall events for individuals.



# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## Age Adjusted Emergency Department Visits for Fall Injuries per 10,000 County Residents in WI in 2021



This final graphic shows age adjusted emergency department visits due to falls. Different sources of data can be used to answer different questions, such as the frequency of falls in a community in general, the severity of fall injuries, and the additional burden preventable falls create for individuals, families, and specific parts of the health care system.

The rates of EMS responses to falls and emergency department visits for falls vary because people are transported to the emergency department without calling EMS, different settings may classify causes of injury differently, and because EMS sometimes responds to falls that do not require patient transport, or the patient refuses transport.

The age adjusted emergency department visit data has been supplied by the [Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health \(WISH\) Query System](#). We recommend that those interested in more falls data examine WISH emergency department and mortality data, as well as the [2022 Yearly Trauma Report](#) which has a "Focus on Falls" section.



# Wisconsin EMS and Falls Report

## Ideas for partnering with EMS agencies

The National Council on Aging lists action steps for partnering with EMS and Fire services to prevent falls in their article [\*Partnering with Fire and Emergency Medical Services to Prevent Falls\*](#). Among some of the steps are:

- Providing community data or requesting data from them to understand falls in the community.
- Providing responders with resources to provide to patients with a focus on fall prevention activities and information on enrolling in falls prevention community programs.
- Helping EMS and Fire serve as a referral source to community services.
- Working with EMS or Fire to provide programming such as the National Fire Protection Association's [\*Remembering When A Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults\*](#).

**Another great way to partner with EMS services is to foster [\*\*Community Emergency Medical Services \(CEMS\)\*\*](#) in your community.** CEMS works collaboratively with partners within their health care system to address the unique needs of their community, including fall prevention.

## Data included in this report

Data in this report are from the Wisconsin Ambulance Run Data System (WARDS) and the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). Ambulance runs from WARDS were included if the complaint reported to dispatch or recorded by the EMS crew was a fall, if the cause of injury ICD-10 code was a fall from the same level, or if the complaint reported to dispatch was recorded as a traumatic injury and the patient care narrative indicates the injury was a fall. Ambulance runs with certain primary impressions such as stroke, cardiac issues, or self harm are excluded. NFIRS data was included if the incident type was recorded as "assist physically disabled" or "assist invalid." Fall-related ambulance runs for the same individual that occur within 16 hours of each other, or fire responses to the same address as another fire response or EMS response within one calendar day, are considered part of one episode, or one fall for the purposes of this report.

For more questions about this report or EMS in Wisconsin, please contact [dhsemssmail@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:dhsemssmail@dhs.wisconsin.gov)