

# Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

## January 2023



(PFAS Foam being picked up for proper disposal)

## Fire Chief Report by Chief Robert Barteck

January's unusually above-average temperate conditions were a welcome treat for our staff. Performing fire, rescue, and EMS operations in ultra-cold temps make everything more difficult and dangerous. When temps drop below zero, operations can become brutal. Crews take extra time to don proper warm protective gear. Paramedics must protect themselves from the cold and the patients they care for. During the cold weather, they pack extra blankets and towels to bundle the patient up during the movement from the home to the ambulance. Every little detail becomes more difficult. Our seasoned staff members pass along the tradecraft of cold-weather operations to our younger members.

Here is an update on a few of the things from the Fire Chief's office in January:

### Recruitment:

Our Human Resources was busy in January, moving thirteen candidates through pre-employment physicals and psychological evaluations and getting final offer letters out. Unfortunately, we had two candidates take offers with other communities after receiving their final offer letters. Another candidate was removed from the process, which left ten that will join the department in February. Once the ten new firefighters are on-board, we will advertise for applications to hire the remaining few positions.

We are working closely with the Northcentral Technical College to provide the new firefighter's paramedic-level training. NTC is a crucial partner for us in this process and has been very helpful. We are excited to launch this new and unique training plan to help solve the department's staffing issues.

It is an exciting time, and every day we seem to have a new problem to solve regarding how we grow our department by a dozen new positions. We keep using the analogy that we are building the plane while flying it. I am happy to report that we are about to bolt on some essential pieces in February.

### Center for Domestic Preparedness:

In January, I was honored to be chosen to travel to the FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama, to attend the Health Care Leadership for Mass Casualties Incidents course. This cutting-edge training is fully funded for all accepted into the course. My class had 42 healthcare leaders from across the country. We came together for a week and learned how better to prepare our healthcare systems for mass casualty events. I look forward to incorporating lessons learned to help build more resiliency into our community's preparedness for mass casualty events.

I hope you find this monthly report informative. Please get in touch with me if you have any further questions or want additional information added to this report.

Robert Barteck – Fire Chief

## EMS Division by EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson

### Training

The EMS Division delivered the first official death notification training, addressing the hardships and stresses involved. All three crews had this training provided with the assistance of our three department chaplains. No national, state, or local EMS training curriculums address or train EMS first responders on appropriately delivering tragic news like this to families that have lost a loved one. The training focused on phrases to use and avoid, how to provide emotional support and compassion, and how to cope with the stress placed on first responders. Over the careers of many first responders, they may have to notify families of death more than one may think. Having the proper training instills confidence that in doing so, they can effectively help the families' grief. We also addressed how to answer sensitive questions the family may ask us.

### New Ambulance

In the fall of 2023, the EMS Division looks forward to the delivery of two new ambulances. In late summer, an ambulance committee was formed to begin building specifications for a new ambulance box design. The committee comprised the Deputy Chief, EMS Division Chief, three firefighter/paramedics, and DPW personnel. The ambulance committee has decided to build our ambulances with American Emergency Vehicle (AEV). They are in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. In late October, the EMS DC and one of the ambulance committee members were able to tour the AEV manufacturing plant and see their production lines.

The design is complete, and some new features help us meet the requirements for CAAS (Commission on Accreditation of Ambulances) accreditation which the current ambulances do not. The new ambulances also have safety features to filter highly contagious airborne diseases such as COVID, RSV, and Influenza. They have also been designed with airbags in the patient compartment and an oxygen cylinder lift system to prevent back injuries, options that our current ambulances do not have. The box of the ambulance has been completely reconfigured to allow the paramedics to stay seated and belted during patient transport to the emergency department.

During a 24-hour shift, our paramedics utilize our ambulances the most out of the entire department fleet. The committee selected ergonomically safe features that would allow overall patient comfort and safety. These ambulances will be versatile pieces of apparatus capable of responding to incidents on the highway system, complex or challenging EMS incidents, providing all necessary safety features.

ARV can have the ambulances built and delivered by October 2023.

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

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs – YTD
City of Abbotsford	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	0
City of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City of Wausau	487	92.23%	487
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Berlin	4	0.76%	4
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Cassel	0	0.00%	0
Town of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0

Town of Halsey	0	0.00%	0
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hewitt	1	0.19%	1
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	0
Town of Marathon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	0
Town of Rib Mountain	0	0.00%	0
Town of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town of Texas	2	0.38%	2
Town of Wausau	15	2.84%	15
Town of Wien	1	0.19%	1
Village of Athens	0	0.00%	0
Village of Edgar	1	0.19%	1
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village of Maine	13	2.46%	13
Village of Marathon City	1	0.19%	1
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	0
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	3	0.57%	3
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>528</b>

## Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

January Scheduled Training:

- Respiratory Protection Fit Testing
- Ropes, Knots, and Hoisting
- Haz-Mat Field Survey Instruments
- The Art of Reading Smoke

A brief breakdown of our scheduled activities follows:

### Respiratory Protection Fit Testing

Every year, our members are refreshed on state and federally mandated respiratory protection requirements and proper application and fit of various types of masks. Scheduled each January, every member in the organization who could be required to wear an N95 mask or a Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) must undergo quantitative fit testing to ensure proper mask seal and function. Part of this training and assessment includes a review of the SCBA unit itself and cleaning of all equipment.

### Ropes, Knots, and Hoisting

A foundational knowledge of ropes, knots, and how to hoist tools is essential to safe fireground operations. In January, all members refreshed on skills that brand new firefighters are taught in their basic training. However, Wausau FD also performs multiple technical rescue disciplines that highly utilize ropes and knots. This drill intended to review and refresh on a foundational skill that is used by the newest members, to our most highly trained.

### Haz-Mat Field Survey Instruments

Hazardous Materials monitoring and metering is an essential aspect of our nearly daily responsibilities. Even in the absence of a large-scale spill or leak, we are often called to a “smell of gas” or a carbon monoxide meter

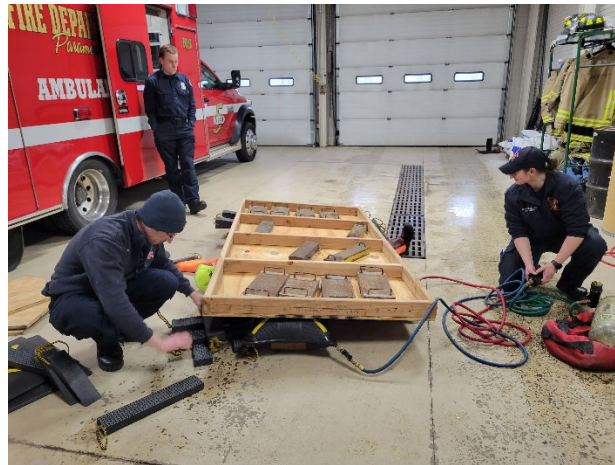
alarming in a residence. Learning how to properly meter, and what the meter readings indicate allows us to respond to the most basic calls for “smells and bells” to the most complex hazardous materials responses in the state. While not required in any specific training interval, we frequently review this knowledge and these skills to ensure proficiency when called to respond to atmospheric hazards and alarms.

### The Art of Reading Smoke

In the fire service, we equate smoke to fuel. This is a true assessment in that smoke contains unburnt particles, chemicals, and some level of air that simply needs the right mixture to light off. We frequently take time to review the facts about smoke and how to size it up in relation to a building’s construction and how they influence a fire attack. “Reading Smoke” is a term used to visibly assess a fire’s location, size, intensity, direction or travel, and interaction with a building. Each of these clues provides us with the means to form an educated assessment of where the fire is, and how it will develop if unchecked. This drill included a brief introductory video for review and followed with scenario-based learning for every member to perform a smoke size-up and provide their initial actions to mitigate the incident.

### Crew Self-Initiated Training

Crews are frequently self-initiating training that is not on any form a schedule based entirely on what they know and acknowledge they need. In January, two groups were photographed working on different skills. One of these impromptu drills included “B” crew at the Central Station working through a drill to free an entrapped victim from a collapsed item, a vehicle, or another heavy object. “A” crew on January 31<sup>st</sup> wanted to review elevator emergencies. They reviewed a training drill on hydraulic and cable-driven elevators and then went to a local building to perform elevator rescues from basic intervention to slightly more complex.



“B” crew freeing an entrapped victim.







"A" Crew working through elevator emergencies.

## Wisconsin State Committees (WFD is represented on)

### Technical Rescue Committee

The committee met in January and is ready to meet in-person to review all content collectively before submission to national accrediting entities such as the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and Proboard. Once our review of the current three disciplines is complete, we will be able to move forward with the creation of more curriculums for state adoption.

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	582.5	69.53%	582.5
Driver/Operator Training	10.5	1.25%	10.5
Facilities Training	0	0.00%	0
Hazardous Materials Training	80.5	9.61%	80.5
Misc Training	3	0.36%	3
Officer Training	73.5	8.77%	73.5
Specialty Training	87.75	10.47%	87.75
Total	837.75	100.00%	837.75

### 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	1	0.28%	1
EMS Training	317.75	90.40%	317.75
Fire Instructor Training	22.75	6.47%	22.75
Fire Prevention Training	0	0.00%	0
Investigation Training	10	2.84%	10
Total	351.50	100.00%	351.50

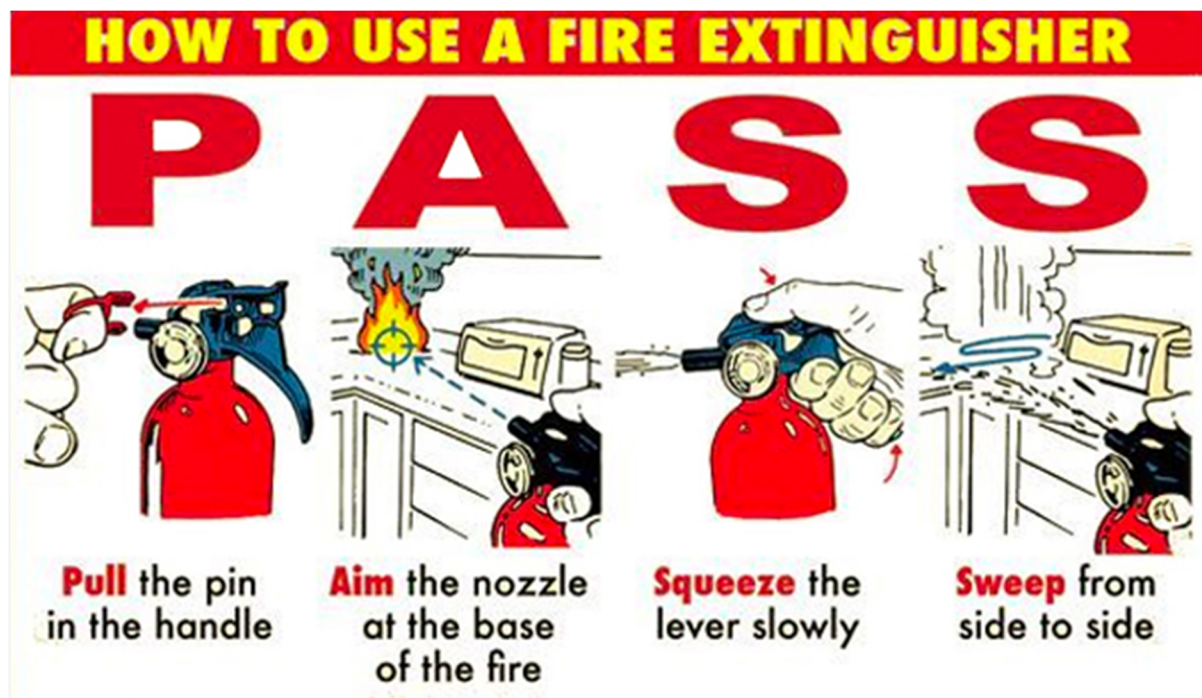
## Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

**Inspections:** Within the City of Wausau for the month of January, we performed 70 total inspections. Of those, 34 were re-inspections from the previous year. We had 15 properties that had Fire Code Violations with 33.3% being Fire Extinguisher Annual Maintenance, 16.7% being for the cleaning of Hood Systems and 16.7% for Emergency Lighting. These properties will require follow up inspections to confirm compliance. We conducted 5 consultation inspections for the month. Of those, all were either remodel projects or new construction, including- Knox box installation, fire protection and fire alarm systems.

**Investigations:** The Prevention Division happily reports no fires needed investigating for the month of January.

**Public Outreach:** We have had no opportunities for the month of January for public outreach. January is typically a slower month in this category, unless someone calls for our Smoke/CO Detector placement program.

**Education:** Lt. Shahn Kariger left for the National Fire Academy on January 28<sup>th</sup> for the Expert Witness and Testimony class. This class will be completed by February 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Spring months are normally reserved for the continuing education required for our EMS certifications. This education is obtained through the Tech college or through our department instructors.



### Prevention Division Activities:

Inspections Completed	Monthly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	31	31
Re-inspections	34	34
All other Inspections (Consults/burn complaints,etc)	6	6
<b>Total Inspections</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>
Fire Investigations	0	0
<b>Inspection Department Activities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Public Engagement Activities	7	7

## Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp

### Significant Calls:

January was a surprising month in the fact that we only had one significant call which was a forklift engulfed in flames inside of Linetec. The fire was contained to the forklift and extinguished quickly with a handline from engine 3 with a crew of two. Extinguishers were used by employees as well as the police department, but they were unable to extinguish the fire. Ventilation efforts were utilized by the crews as well as maintenance at Linetec to remove smoke from the facility. This fire had real potential of being a major incident, key factors of 911 being called promptly and excellent work done by the F.D. members to recognize the hazards involve making a safe and quick extinguishment.

### Recruitment and Retention:

The month of January was a busy month preparing for our transitional year with the arrival of E.M.T. Basic students starting the Paramedic course in February. Retention ideas have started with the Peer Focus Group as well as help from the union. Local 415 has implemented paying for and hosting a celebration party for members who complete their first year of probation inviting all members to come and congratulate them on a successful year. We continue to celebrate achievements such as promotions, awards, and milestones for all our members on social media and with their crews.

### Fleet:

Med 4 and med 5 are due for replacement and the first steps in the approval process of this venture begun with the approval from the finance committee to order the first replacement ambulance and to meet again in the coming months to find money to order the second ambulance. The cost of ambulances has been on the rise significantly the past couple years and cost twice as much as what was budgeted for. Thank you to everyone who was involved in helping us find the right manufacturer and ambulance that fit our needs. Battalion 1 should be coming back in February from Belco and the upfitting to get in ready to be placed in service. This will replace the command vehicle for the Battalion Chiefs.

### Buildings and Grounds:

All PFAS foam has been collected from Wausau Fire Department collection site by the DNR in January for the entire county. The was such an important task with huge benefits for the environment and firefighter safety.

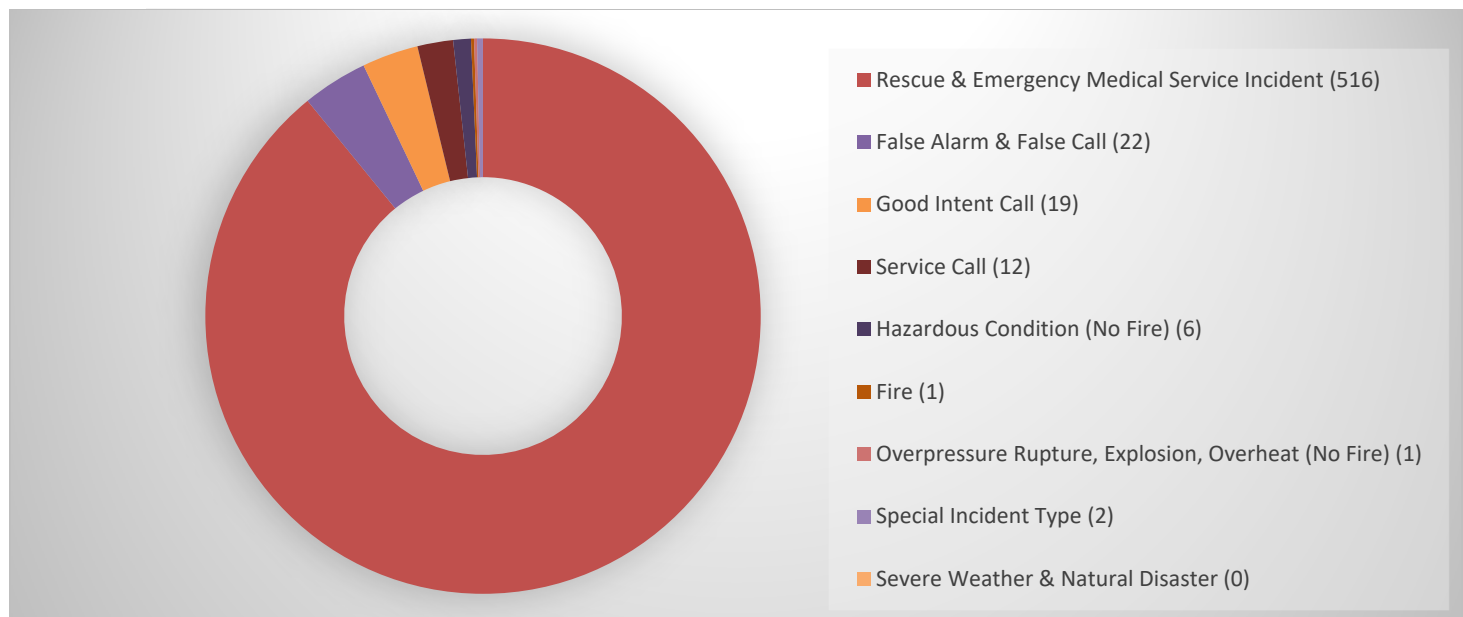
### Significant Fire Events:

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
1/13/2023	7500 Stewart Avenue	City of Wausau	F23000072	Off-road vehicle or heavy equipment fire



## Monthly NFIRS Incident Comparison:

	2023	2022	2021	% Of Change from 2022 to 2023
January	579	591	502	-2.00%
February		507	456	
March		540	497	
April		498	503	
May		574	556	
June		590	583	
July		531	587	
August		600	577	
September		524	525	
October		545	552	
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%	0
City of Colby	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	0
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City Of Wausau	538	92.92%	538
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Taylor County	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Berlin	4	0.69%	4
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Cassel	0	0.00%	0

Town Of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Franzen	0	0.00%	0
Town of Halsey	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hewitt	1	0.17%	1
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Marathon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Rib Mountain	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Texas	2	0.35%	2
Town Of Wausau	15	2.59%	15
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	1	0.17%	1
Village Of Athens	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Brokaw	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Edgar	1	0.17%	1
Village Of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Maine	13	2.25%	13
Village Of Marathon City	1	0.17%	1
Village Of Rothschild	0	0.00%	0
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	3	0.52%	3
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>579</b>

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

<b>Category</b>	<b>Time Committed</b>
NFIRS Incidents	94:00:07 Hours
EMS Incidents	838:36:58 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	1,082.75 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	1,189.25 Hours

## **Aid Responses:**

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	4
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	0
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	0
Mutual Aid Received – EMS	23
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)	3
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)	14