

Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

January 2022



(Recruit training on forcible entry)

Fire Chief Report by Robert Barteck

January is always a tough month for our operations division. The frigid temperatures make firefighting extremely difficult. The difficulties of keeping water flowing and firefighters warm are exacerbated exorbitantly when temps dip below 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Heaters in the fire pumps have trouble compensating for the super cold temps, and small lines and drains frequently freeze. Any hose line deployed must be left open to allow water to flow to prevent freezing. This leads to excess water on the ground and street, creating an ice rink effect. Firefighters each have their way of adding clothing hand and foot warmers to help prevent hypothermia while they work. Once firefighters get wet from operating hose lines, a coating of ice develops on the exterior of their gear. Most will choose to stay in the cold rather than climb into a warm truck to keep the water frozen on their gear and prevent it from seeping through their clothing when thawed. The Salvation Army truck is a welcome oasis with hot coffee or cocoa and hot sandwiches. This warm food and drink elevate firefighter spirits and warms their bodies with the simple feeling of a warm cup in their freezing hands and a needed break from the chaos. In these moments, we see the very best in our firefighters. There is no complaining about the work; instead, a shared love of the trade and teamwork is celebrated as they bond over doing a tough job in the most challenging conditions.

EMS calls are as equally complicated as the dead of the Wisconsin winter. Piles of snow, slippery sidewalks, and streets impede paramedics while responding to households. The patient's movement from a warm home through the cold to the waiting ambulance is complicated by the slippery conditions and providing ample protection from the cold. Cardiac monitors, EMS bags, IV lines all can tangle into a mess if not properly arranged. Often this becomes difficult in the more acutely sick or injured patients because the paramedics must move quickly. Each call is unique, and the paramedic's problem solve and find the best way to protect the patient from the cold while quickly and compassionately attending to their needs. This is where the paramedics of our department shine. Their training and experience in these complex operations make their work seem easy even when not.

In January, most of my time outside the day-to-day administrative duties was spent on the Additional Firefighters Initiative and preparing to find the next batch of Wausau firefighter/paramedics. I discuss each topic below:

Additional Firefighters Initiative and SAFER Grant:

On January 8, we presented the Finance Committee with information regarding the costs and potential hiring operations for the additional 12 firefighter/paramedics approved by the Human Resources Committee in December of 2021. In mid-December, FEMA announced that it would open the annual Staffing for Effective Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant for applications from one month, January 3 to February 4. This is a fantastic opportunity for the community to gain federal assistance to hire additional firefighters. The SAFER Grant fully funds the firefighters for three years. This allows the city to ease the additional staff into the budget by directing revenue from closing TID districts or other areas to the Fire Department budget for long-term funding. We proposed that the Finance Committee immediately fund 3 of the additional 12 firefighters and allow the department to apply for the SAFER Grant to fund the remaining 9 firefighters. The Finance Committee sent the SAFER Grant resolution to the Council that same night, and it was passed unanimously. The funding source for the remaining 3 firefighter positions will be a topic at an upcoming Finance Committee meeting.

We had begun work on the SAFER grant in December when we learned of the announcement. Once we had permission from the council, we poured resources and time into writing the best quality grant that we could. These grants are highly competitive and complex to write. I reached out to other Chiefs that I had connections with who had experience in writing these grants, which proved to be an enormous help. The Finance Director, MaryAnne Groat, helped write the financial justification portions. We completed writing the grant on January 20. Before submitting it, we asked Local 415, President Adam Rahn, to send it to the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) to be reviewed by their expert grant writing and review team. The IAFF reviewers returned the grant on January 22, stating: "the grant is very well written, and we only had a couple of minor comments for improvement." We again worked with the Finance Director on the rewrite of the grant and

submitted it days before the due date. FEMA expects to begin making grant announcements this summer, with the last notifications done before September 30.

In the coming months, I will work with the Finance Committee to draft a contingency plan for funding these vital positions if we do not receive grant funding.

Hiring Process Announced:

Currently, the department has one vacant position and just received notification from Engineer Mark Tautges that he will be retiring on March 3. With the three additional firefighter/paramedics that are currently waiting for approval by the Finance Committee the department potentially needs to hire five firefighter/paramedics. To meet this anticipated need the Human Resources Department began a recruitment period that opened on January 14 and will close on February 20. Candidates will have two rounds of interviews on March 8 and 15. We expect to bring Candidates that are chosen for hire to the April PFC meeting for approval and have them start employment sometime in mid-May.

Recruitment Film:

On January 28th we released our long-awaited recruitment film. This four-minute film was the culmination of six months of work by our city videographer Ethan Bares. His talent behind the camera and in the editing, the room is unmatched the quality of his work is astonishing. The recruitment film is the best that anyone has ever seen in the Fire Service. Ethan seamlessly stitched together the testimonies of five of our firefighter/paramedics about what it is like to serve as a Wausau firefighter/paramedic. These conversations are weaved into stunning moving images of our member's training and responding to calls. I was incredibly moved when I saw it for the first time. I have probably watched it two dozen times since. He somehow captured the essence of our culture and the community as it really is. The film is compelling and will surely speak to interested candidates who are interested in joining our ranks. If you have not seen the recruitment film here is the link. While you are on our new YouTube page hit that subscribe button to see all our latest content.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/WausauFireDepartment>

Thank you for your continued support.

EMS Division by EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson

During the month of January, the EMS Division was able to place in service one of our last new pieces of equipment to help aid in the movement of patients out of their homes to our ambulances. This piece of equipment is called the Ferno EXL Scoop Stretcher. Each of our four front line ambulances were able to replace their old bulky scoop stretcher with this very ergonomically light weight device. With the scoop stretcher, paramedics are able to separate the stretcher into two pieces allowing them to "scoop" up a patient that may be injured without having to roll them and aggravate for example any back, hip, pelvis, or lower extremity injuries. These scoop stretchers were purchased for a supplements request. All four scoop stretchers with straps came to a total of \$3,868.80.



Did you know that the City of Wausau has one of the highest percentage of patients that are transport to the hospital that either receive benefits from Medicare or Medicaid? Both total just under 80% of our patient transports. Medicare and Medicaid have the most stringent reimbursement requirements verses private insurances which only account for 8% of our patient transports, well under that state average of 17%. Because of continual documentation and compliance training, the City of Wausau was able to collect all but 3% of claims that our billing company submitted on our behalf to Medicare and Medicaid. We have improved from 2018, where our billing company was able to all but 10% of claims submitted to our 3% for 2021.

To end this month's report, our crews from Station 1 on 1/28 responded to a shooting that took place in the area of Emter and Myron Street. The crew was able to stabilize and control the hemorrhaging critical patient who was shot and rapidly transport him to the Trauma Center at Aspirus Wausau Hospital where he received further treatment from the Emergency Room Trauma Team.

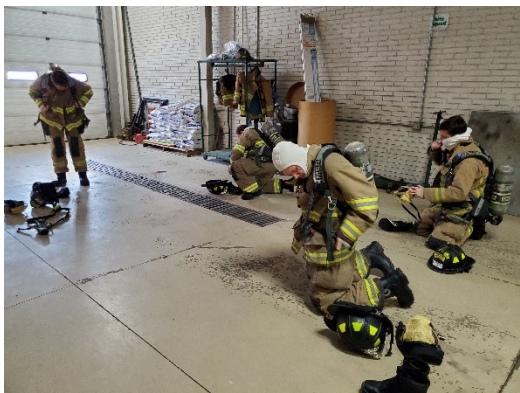
Responses by Municipality (EMS Patient Care Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs – YTD
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	0
City of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City of Wausau	509	93.74%	509
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Berlin	2	0.37%	2
Town of Cassel	0	0.00%	0
Town of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hewitt	2	0.37%	2
Town of Marathon	1	0.18%	1
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town of Rib Falls	1	0.18%	1
Town of Rib Mountain	3	0.55%	3
Town of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town of Texas	9	1.66%	9
Town of Wausau	12	2.21%	12
Town of Wien	0	0.00%	0
Village of Athens	0	0.00%	0
Village of Edgar	0	0.00%	0
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village of Maine	3	0.55%	3
Village of Marathon City	0	0.00%	0
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	0
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	1	0.18%	1
Total	543	100.00%	543

Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

Welcome to the new year! Our January crew training was heavily based on completing firefighter health and safety topics as well as focusing on air management. The month started out with Mask Fit Testing followed by a Line-Of-Duty-Death (LODD) case study in which Breathing-Air Management could have saved the life of a fire officer. We have found that providing the context behind a concept helps to retain the lesson or skill's intent. The rest of the month included Vehicle Operations, and an officer drill labeled "Why Are We Here."

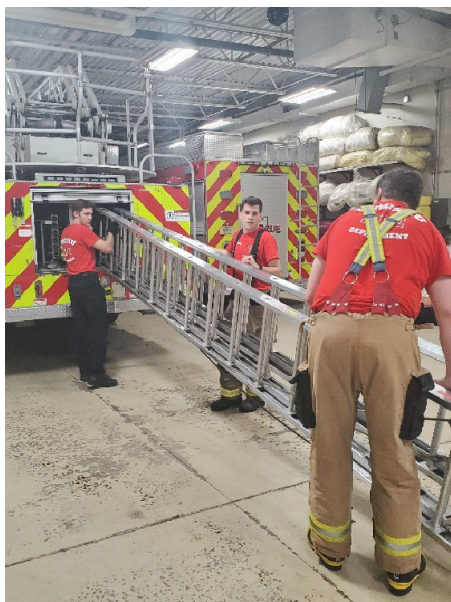
January also included recruit training with five new hires! When new firefighters begin their career with Wausau FD, we try to give them a powerful start with our four-week recruit academy to hone the skills learned in their initial certifications. During this time, we cover basic topics such as Personal Protective Equipment, to more complex situations such as critical decision making while under duress. As these four weeks are coming to an end, the recruits are transitioning to fourteen days per recruit with a field training officer. These are exciting times to see the growth and development of our members and organization.



(Timed Dressouts)



(Hydrant Operations)



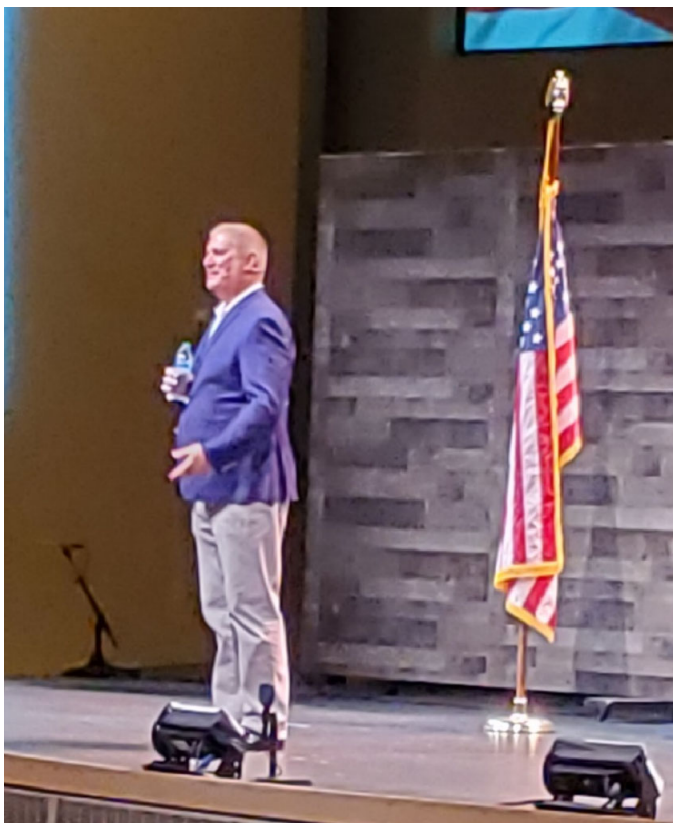
(Ladder Carries and Raises)



(Search and Rescue)

Leadership Training

On January 27th, Deputy Chief Kopp, Division Chief Briggs, Lieutenant Bauknecht, and Firefighter Sass traveled to Appleton to view a leadership presentation by Ret. Captain D. Michael Abrashoff. This presentation focused on transformational leadership styles that embrace management techniques but focus on serving people. This style exemplifies the essence of leadership and servanthood. Captain Abrashoff took the Navy's worst performing ship and transformed it into an award winning vessel with one of the highest re-enlistment rates. His story is worth learning from in his book *It's Your Ship*. Although our organization is far from being a navy ship, the methodology used is highly relational to our mission and people.



Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	839	75.16%	839
Officer Training	86.25	7.73%	86.25
Driver/Operator Training	36	3.22%	36
Hazardous Materials Training	13.25	1.19%	13.25
Specialty Training	99.5	8.91%	99.5
Facilities Training	6	0.54%	6
Misc Training	36.33	3.25%	36.33
Total	1116.33	100.00%	1116.33

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.

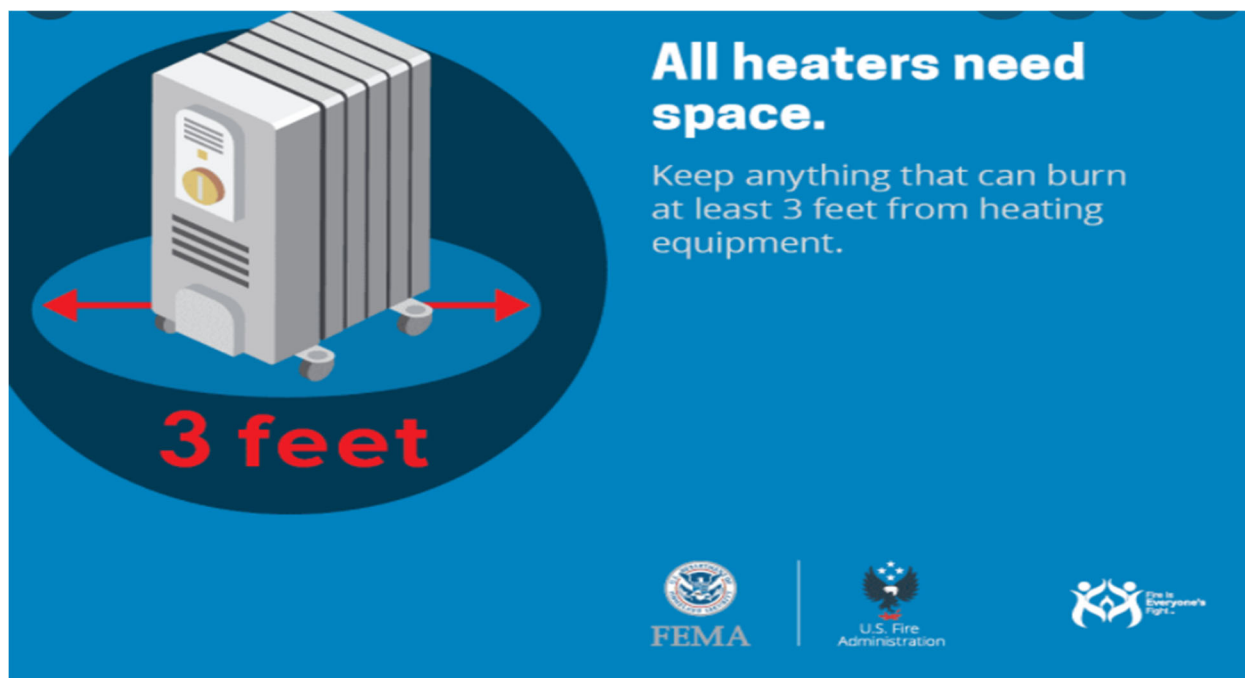
Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

Within the City of Wausau for the month of January we performed 62 total inspections. We performed 37 initial inspections and 25 re-inspections. We had 11 properties that had Fire Code Violations. These properties will require follow up inspections to confirm compliance. We also conducted one “special event” inspection for a glass blowing workshop that will take place in April/May at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Museum. We also conducted one Sprinkler System inspection for a “Hydro” test on a new construction site.

Investigations: The prevention Division conducted a total of one Fire Investigation throughout January. This was a multi-family apartment complex. The fire originated on a balcony and extended into the adjacent apartment and attic space.

Public Outreach: Our Public outreach programs for January encompass one Smoke Detector and CO detector installation only. We installed 3 smoke detectors and one CO alarm in a single-family home with one resident.

Education: Lieutenant Shahn Kariger attended and completed a 6-day class on **Fire Investigations: Electrical Systems** at the National Fire Academy. Firefighter/Inspector Brad Ludwig completed the NIMS ICS 800 class.



Prevention Division Activities:

Inspections Completed	Monthly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	37	37
Re-inspections	25	25
All other Inspections	2	2
Total Inspections	64	64
Fire Investigations	1	1
Inspection Department Activities	Number	YTD
Public Engagement Activities	3	3

Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp

January has started with many goals and changes set for the success of the Wausau Fire Department and the members of the organization.

Guardian Tracking: We purchased a new software called Guardian tracking which will be a great tool helping individuals and managers stay on target and follow up on goals and achievements throughout the year. D.C. Kopp is hopeful to have training done and roll out the use of this by the end of February. This software is capable of tracking significant exposures, injuries and accidents no matter the size. It will track thank you letters, job well done documents and award nominations as well as discipline and follow up reminders. Reviews for the year will be easier with everything tracked in one spot and transparent with reminders sent up the chain of command for action to be taken.

Fleet: We have ongoing repairs being done on the two new engines in which we are working very closely with Custom Fire, Sutphen, and DPW to get proper repairs made. We have come across more “bugs and glitches” than anticipated but are hopeful we are close to having them all taken care of in February.

Operations: The recruit academy started with the addition of five new Firefighter/Paramedics. Mark Punzenburger, John Williams, Tim Strege, Brooke Johnson, and Hunter Herold. As of January, the fire department has 9 Firefighter/Paramedics on probation with at least one retirement in the near future. It is an exciting time with all the growth and changes in the organization.

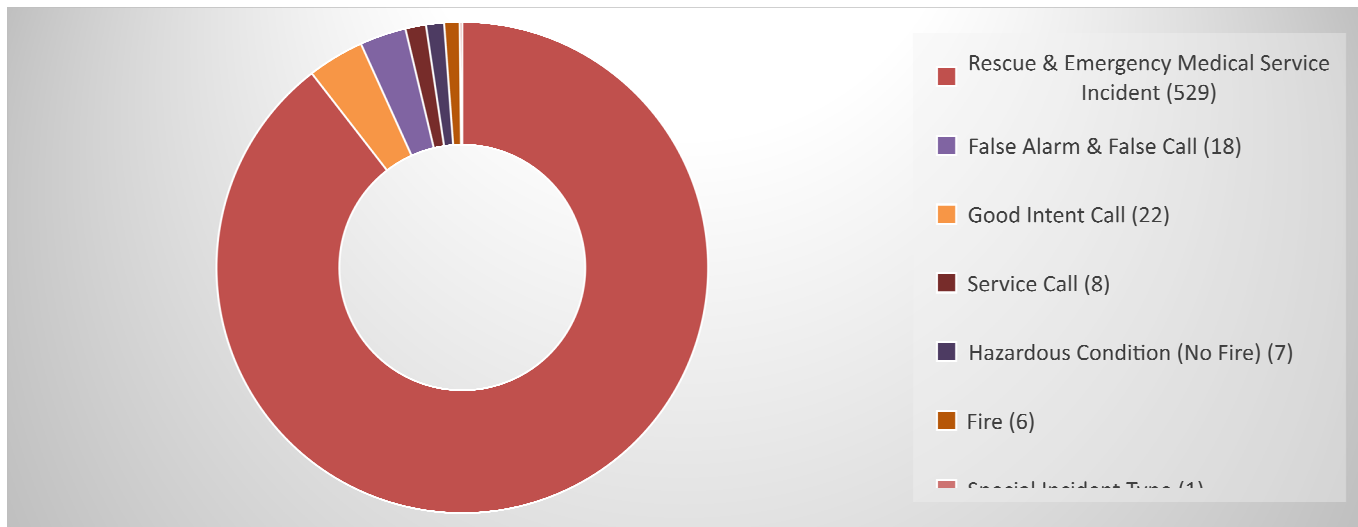
The state Haz Mat coordinators meeting was held on January 6th attended by both B.C. Kruzan and Lt. Ambrosius.

Significant calls: January had many significant calls including a 16-unit apartment complex fire in which we called a Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) alarm to get help from multiple other departments. The on-duty Battalion Chief asked for an alarm to the first level on the MABAS card and asked for off duty personnel to respond if available. The Chief, Deputy Chief and two off duty Battalion Chiefs were able to respond and help with logistics of this complicated incident in frigid temperatures.

Charitable foundation: Held an end of the year meeting to plan all fundraisers and events for next year.

Significant Fire Events:

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
1/8/2022	1030 Grand Avenue	City of Schofield	F22000052	Building fire
1/11/2022	2335 Grand Avenue	City of Wausau	F22000067	Building fire
1/11/2022	2901 North 7Th Street	City of Wausau	F22000069	Building fire
1/25/2022	400 North 72Nd Avenue	City of Wausau	F22000162	Building fire
1/25/2022	3424 Horseshoe Spring Road	City of Wausau	F22000165	Building fire
1/30/2022	1601 East Wausau Avenue	City of Wausau	F22000191	Passenger vehicle fire



Responses by Municipality (All NFIRS Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs - YTD
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	0
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	1	0.17%	1
City Of Wausau	556	94.08%	556
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Taylor County	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Berlin	2	0.34%	2
Town Of Cassel	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hewitt	2	0.34%	2
Town Of Marathon	1	0.17%	1
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Rib Falls	1	0.17%	1
Town Of Rib Mountain	3	0.51%	3
Town Of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Texas	9	1.52%	9
Town Of Wausau	12	2.03%	12
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Athens	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Brokaw	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Edgar	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Maine	3	0.51%	3
Village Of Marathon City	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Rothschild	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	1	0.17%	1
Total	591	100.00%	591

Activity/Incident Hours Committed

Category	Time Committed
NFIRS Incidents	160:07:51 Hours
EMS Incidents	789:13:48 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	850 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	1,494.38 Hours

Aid Responses:

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	0
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	1
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	22
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	0
Mutual Aid Received – EMS	1
Mutual Aid Received – Fire	1
Automatic Aid Received – EMS	0
Automatic Aid Received – Fire	0
Other Aid Given – EMS	1
Request for EMS from Other Agencies (not Aid)	4
Total Non-Aid Incidents (outside City with no other agency response)	9