

Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

April 2023



(April 27th was Bring your Sons and Daughters to work day)

Fire Chief Report by Chief Robert Barteck

April was an interesting month. Hot topics for the month were Rural EMS, Wisconsin Regional Type II Hazardous Materials Response Team, and a visit from Senator Tammy Baldwin.

In March of 2023, the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health released a report highlighting a growing problem in the Wisconsin Rural EMS System (link below). Rural EMS providers struggle to find enough responders to serve their community's needs. Because Wausau Fire provides EMS coverage to five rural jurisdictions and contracts for ALS Intercepts with another eight rural EMS agencies, we feel the effects of this growing problem. As rural EMS agencies struggle to staff ambulances, they are forced to turn to neighboring jurisdictions to ask for help in response. Because Wausau Fire is the largest EMS agency in the region, we are keeping a close eye on this problem and are seeking new ways to support partner EMS agencies.

https://worh.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EMS-Reliability-Report_March2023.pdf

On April 11, we were honored to host Senator Tammy Baldwin for a tour and discussions with our staff about our operations. This was our first chance since being awarded the SAFER Grant to thank her in person for supporting our application and award in 2022. While here, Senator Baldwin participated in an EMS training scenario set up by EMS Division Chief Thompson in an ambulance. The on-duty crew walked the Senator through the station and described their jobs. The Senator strongly understands the current problems facing fire/EMS agencies across Wisconsin. Much of our conversation focused on the status of rural EMS in our region and how Wausau Fire is essential for response in the region.

The Marathon County Health Department hosted a Public Health and EMS Budget Roundtable discussion with Wisconsin DHS Secretary Kirsten Johnson. During the meeting, we discussed current budget-related issues with the DHS Secretary. Primarily the need for additional funding help in the form of EMS Flex grants and shared revenue reform with funds earmarked for public safety. I relayed the problems currently facing the Wausau Fire EMS system and our ideas for how the state can help us.

Wisconsin State Fire Chief's president, Chief Mike Stanley (from Oshkosh Fire Department), appointed me to the HazMat Advisory Committee with four other chiefs from around Wisconsin. Our purpose is to support and continue to grow the capabilities of the regionalized system. I was fortunate to serve in this role in the past and hope to protect our system from state budget cuts and continue to expand the system's capabilities.

The Common Council approved renewing the contract for our Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team with the State of Wisconsin for July 2023 to June 2025. The state biannual budget is still being hashed out, and currently, the Regional HazMat System is not included. The Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs are advocating for a \$1 million annual budget to fund the system. This would include an increase over what we currently are receiving. We have received \$84,000 annually for the last ten years to provide a Regional Type II Hazardous Materials Response Team and hope to see an increase in the next budget to cover growing costs.

The Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee held four public listening sessions. On April 12th I joined four other Fire Chiefs in Wisconsin Dells to testify to the committee about the need for funding in several key areas. I spent my 2 minutes advocating for the proposed alternative Shared Revenue plan that would earmark funds specifically for public safety. I also spoke about the need for funding the Wisconsin Regional Hazardous Materials Response System. The other Chiefs discussed the need for EMS funding and PFAS Foam disposal funding.

On April 13th I traveled to the La Crosse Fire Department to serve on an interview panel for Battalion Chief promotional process. The new La Crosse Fire Chief, Jeff Schott will have a difficult job picking between the six candidates that applied for the promotion. Wisconsin Fire Chiefs frequently help each other with these processes, and Chief Schott has traveled twice to Wausau to help us with our past processes. It was a great learning experience to see how La Crosse FD conducts its selection process.

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

EMS Division by EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson

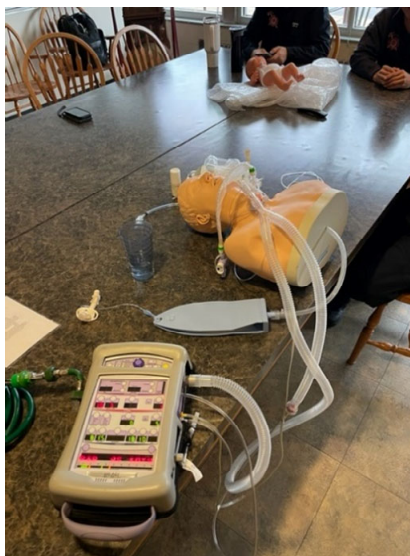
CAAS Accreditation

We have not had any further correspondence from CAAS since sending our updated application. Additional information shall be conveyed when received.



EMS Training

Over April, the EMS Division focused on tracheostomy emergencies and the use of our ventilators. The City of Wausau is unique because the Health Care Center has a full-fledged ventilator unit. The patients that reside there often have tracheostomies and are usually ventilator dependant. This can sometimes pose challenges to our crews because they have to manage whatever medical emergency that is presented to them and manage the patient's ventilator. All ambulances carry their own ventilators, which require extensive training. Our crews focused on tracheostomy emergencies and how to manage our ventilators in those crisis situations.



Pain Emergencies

In April, our paramedics had 15 patients who were administered a narcotic for pain management. Pain is a prevalent request for an ambulance that we receive every day. Our paramedics have the ability to manage a patient's pain by use of Fentanyl or Hydromorphone. Some of the complaints ranged from shoulder to back pain to hip pain. Studies have shown that early, effective pain management can speed up the recovery from an injury. Our paramedics also exercise discretion not to over-medicate their patients or administer these narcotics to drug seekers. At the end of every month, as the EMS Division Chief, I must reconcile these medications and maintain an accurate inventory that the DEA requires.

Cardiac Care Benchmarks

The EMS Division is proud to share that we met two main cardiac benchmarks tracked monthly. I want to share the "12 Lead ECG report when a patient presents with acute coronary syndrome (ACS)" benchmark. For April, we surpassed our goal of obtaining a 12 Lead ECG within 10 minutes of patient contact 90% of the time with 99%. This means that every patient that presented with ACS received this procedure within ten minutes. We can then transmit that ECG to the emergency department for further interpretation.

Responses by Municipality (EMS Patient Care Reports):

City	# of Reports	% of Reports	# of Reports – YTD
City of Abbotsford	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	1
City of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City of Wausau	427	89.89%	1,790
Clark County	1	0.21%	1
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	1
Town of Berlin	8	1.68%	15
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%	1
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town of Hewitt	4	0.84%	10
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	1
Town of Marathon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town of Norrie	1	0.21%	1
Town of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	2
Town of Rib Mountain	0	0.00%	2
Town of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Ringle	0	0.00%	1
Town of Stettin	0	0.00%	1
Town of Texas	4	0.84%	17
Town of Wausau	15	3.16%	51
Town of Wien	0	0.00%	1
Village of Athens	0	0.00%	3
Village of Edgar	0	0.00%	1
Village of Kronenwetter	1	0.21%	1
Village of Maine	10	2.11%	49

Village of Marathon City	0	0.00%	2
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	1
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	4	0.84%	17
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
Total	475	100.00%	1,495

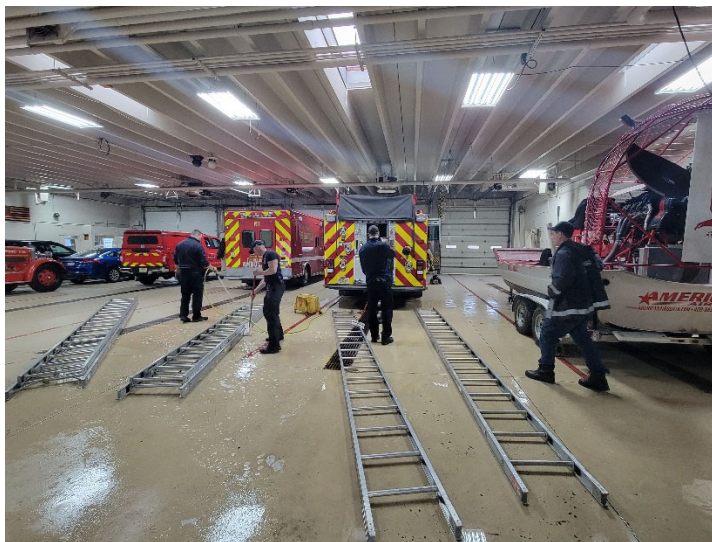
Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

April Scheduled Training:

A brief breakdown of our scheduled activities follows:

- Ground Ladders
- Airboat Operations
- Technical Rescue – Boat Operations with Rescue
- Hose Testing (Moved to May due to weather)

Ground Ladders



Above: Members scrubbing soot, dust, and debris off the ladders before painting.

There are certain fundamental skills every firefighter must master. One of those is the ability to deploy ground ladders and roof ladders when the scene dictates. Deployment was performed at the three stations around the city on different ground conditions, roof heights, flat and peaked roofs, and varying weather conditions. This month, the crews not only trained on the deployment of the ladders, but they chose to perform a complete maintenance on them. Maintenance included cleaning, painting the balance points, and painting the tips for improved visibility. Our ladders are manufactured in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and tested annually by another Wisconsin company.

Airboat Operations & Technical Rescue – Boat Operations with Rescue

These drills are different, but very linked. Every boat operator in the department is required to perform a “driving” course annually and perform multiple maneuvers to display proficiency. Along with their operational skills, our members must perform victim rescues from the watercraft and either pull victims into the boat without entering the water or enter the water to facilitate the rescue. These skills are very specific and easily performed incorrectly. Training throughout the year as different water and ice conditions are present helps to ensure we are well-prepared for any type of water rescue.

Fire Department Instructor's Conference (FDIC)



Training Division Chief Briggs and Deputy Chief Kopp both attended the world's largest fire instructor conference, FDIC. TDC Briggs attended two pre-conference sessions as part of the FDIC "HOT" sessions. These pre-conference days include Hands On Training in any number of different topics.

On Monday, April 24th, TDC Briggs attended "Operating in The Flow-Path by Flowing and Going." This session rotated participants through live fire scenarios on the fire floor, above the fire, flowing water while advancing hoselines, and search and rescue techniques with victim removal. Of this 11.5 hour day, numerous insights were gained from instructors from LA County Fire and Cobb County Georgia Fire Department. A major aspect of this conference is the ability to learn perspectives and techniques that differ in perspective than what is taught regionally. On TDC Briggs' first day back to work following FDIC, he already began to show the crews improved tactics while performing drills.

On Tuesday, April 25th, TDC Briggs attended "Elevator Emergency Management." This program was taught by some of the nation's leading experts on elevator emergencies that are trained elevator technicians and skilled firefighters, some with 40 years on FDNY Rescue 1. The session lead by Dragon Rescue Management and their cadre began with elevator familiarization, lock-out/tag-out procedures, unlatching elevator hoist way doors, accessing the elevator car, assisting victims out, removal of victims from the elevator's ceiling hatch, securing elevators from lowering or raising, and manually lowering hydraulic elevators. While we have very good elevator policies and procedures here in Wausau, lessons were learned, and we will make some adjustments to improve our response capabilities.

On Wednesday, DC Kopp joined TDC Briggs at FDIC and attended multiple breakout sessions on leadership, strategies and tactics, training program management, and other concepts. Some time on Thursday and Friday was spent split between classes and one of the largest trade shows in the industry. While trade shows may not sound educational, they provide us with personal interaction with our vendors and on new equipment and technology to keep our members safe while performing their duty to serve the community.



Above: Crews performed Vent-Enter-Search techniques to locate fire victims and remove them to safety.



Above: Members of the Wisconsin Rapids Fire Department happened to be in the same class as TDC Briggs. They joined to form a “fire company” during the evolutions such as this one on fire growth and behavior.

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	418.75	56.45	1,972.90
Driver/Operator Training	22.75	3.07%	556.05
Facilities Training	35	4.72%	39
Hazardous Materials Training	47	6.34%	140.75
Misc Training	0.25	0.03%	52.25
Officer Training	44	5.93%	221.45
Specialty Training	174	23.46%	697.25
Total	741.75	100.00%	3,679.65

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	3.5	1.02%	44.5
EMS Training	236.5	69.15%	868.5
Fire Instructor Training	54	15.79%	199
Fire Prevention Training	0	0.00%	0
Investigation Training	48	14.04%	58
Total	342	100.00%	1,170

Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

Inspections: Within the City of Wausau for the month of April, we performed 157 total inspections. We had 31 properties that had Fire Code Violations with 45.2% being Fire Extinguisher Annual Maintenance. These properties will require follow up inspections to confirm compliance. We conducted 4 consultation inspections for the month. Two for Fire Suppression systems, one new construction Site review, and one Fire Alarm system.





Investigations: The Prevention Division investigated one fire the month of April. The property involved was a two-story, single-family residence. This fire was classified as accidental.

Public Outreach: Throughout April we performed outreach seven different times. Three of these were witnessing Fire drills at schools. These drills require time management, accountability, and organizational benchmarks for our staff to advise on. We performed one Fire Safety presentation for a senior and adult living facility. We also performed three site reviews for Fire Code and City ordinance clarifications.




Education: Lt. Shahn Kariger left for the National Fire Academy on April 2nd for the Fire Investigation: Forensic Interviewing and Evidence class. This class was completed on April 7th. Shahn has passed this class in further advancement for his Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) certification. The Prevention Division inspectors completed all the EMS certification continuing education that is needed to continue our licensures. This education is obtained through the Tech college or through our department instructors.



Inside The Home

-  Test your home's smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
-  Don't use electrical appliances with frayed cords.
-  Check for water around electrical appliances.
-  Clean debris from your clothes dryer lint trap and exhaust duct.

Outside The Home

-  Remove dead leaves and other debris around foundations, decks, porches, and stairs.
-  Check grills for rust, worn parts, insects, grease, and other debris before use.
-  Grills should only be used when at least 10 feet away from your house or any building.



Prevention Division Activities:

Inspections Completed	Monthly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	347	783
Re-inspections	19	83
All other Inspections (Consults/burn complaints,etc)	11	22
Total Inspections	370	509
Fire Investigations	1	6
Inspection Department Activities	Number	YTD
Public Engagement Activities	17	47

Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp

Significant Calls:

Wausau Fire responded to five structure fires in in the month of April, two of which were mutual aid calls outside the city. Another fire call with a freight truck on fire on Highway 29 and one swift water rescue call. The victim from the water rescue call was already out of the water upon our arrival thanks to Wausau P.D.

Recruitment and Retention:

Three of our Paramedic students are finishing up Paramedic class and will be testing during the first week of May and starting a five-person academy on May 8th. Stay tuned for a huge swear in ceremony in June! C crew and I were able to attend another job fair in April at the UW-Stevens Point Wausau campus where high school students were bussed in from outside areas as far as Tomahawk and Gresham to learn more about jobs in our area.

Fleet:

Med 2 is back in service, unfortunately Med 1 and Med 4 went out of service in late April. This means we are down to three meds only while having to rely more on neighboring departments to help us when we have all three meds out on calls. We are looking forward to the delivery of the new ambulance in October! The new command truck (Battalion 1) went in service and is doing very well replacing Car 2.

Buildings and Grounds:

We are still anticipating the remodel of Station 3 apparatus bay this year. New gear lockers were ordered for Station 1 to handle the new hires gear. I am brainstorming and gathering ideas for personal vehicle parking next year at Station 1 and Station 3. When we move into our new deployment and staffing plan in January of 2024, we will not have enough parking for our employees at these two stations with the already limited parking we have.

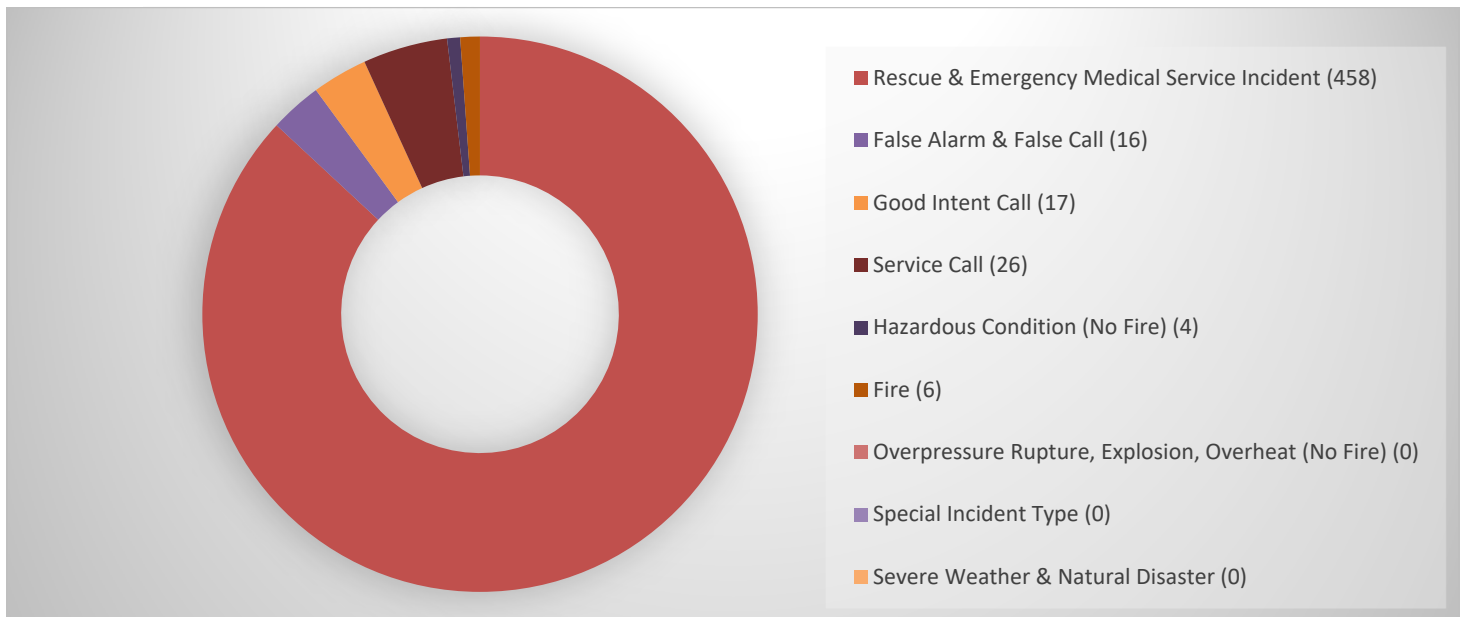
Significant Fire Events:

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
4/5/2023	2161 Meadow Brook Way	City of Wausau	F23000542	Building fire
4/12/2023	150700 Whisper Road	Rib Mountain	F23000581	Building fire
4/14/2023	7375 Whitespire Road	City of Schofield	F23000600	Building fire
4/16/2023	1219 Brown Street	City of Wausau	F23000618	Fire, other
4/19/2023	1127 North 4th Avenue	City of Wausau	F23000639	Cooking fire, confined to container
4/25/2023	4700 State Highway 29	City of Wausau	F23000681	Road freight or transport vehicle fire

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	556	
June		590	583	
July		531	587	
August		600	577	
September		524	525	
October		545	552	
November		574	562	
December		612	590	
TOTAL		6686	6490	



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%	1
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City Of Wausau	477	90.51%	1,983
Clark County	1	0.19%	1
Taylor County	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Berlin	4	0.76%	11
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%	1

Town Of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town of Harrison	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hewitt	4	0.76%	10
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Marathon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Mosinee	1	0.19%	1
Town of Norrie	1	0.19%	1
Town Of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	2
Town Of Rib Mountain	0	0.00%	2
Town Of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Ringle	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Stettin	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Texas	4	0.76%	15
Town Of Wausau	15	2.85%	51
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	0	0.00%	1
Village Of Athens	0	0.00%	3
Village Of Brokaw	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Edgar	0	0.00%	1
Village Of Kronenwetter	1	0.19%	1
Village Of Maine	10	1.90%	49
Village Of Marathon City	0	0.00%	2
Village Of Rothschild	1	0.19%	2
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	4	0.76%	17
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
Total	527	100.00%	1,636

Activity/Incident Hours Committed:

Category	Time Committed
NFIRS Incidents	150:13:58 Hours
EMS Incidents	751:51:45 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	1,134.75 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	1,083.75 Hours

Aid Responses:

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	5
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	2
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	33
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	0
Mutual Aid Received – EMS	4
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)	4
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)	6