

Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

August 2023



(Wausau Fire receives CAAS Accreditation)

Fire Chief Report by Chief Robert Barteck

In August, operational tempo remained high, with several high-acuity calls occurring within the average everyday call volume. August was another memorable month in the Wausau Fire Department's history, with the achievement of the first-ever CAAS Accreditation and the naming of the next Fire Chief. In addition, we experienced a fire on the second floor of Station One, Deputy Chief Kopp discusses the fire in his report.

Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS):

CAAS is a non-profit organization established to encourage and promote quality patient care in EMS Systems in the U.S. High-quality patient care is the Commission's primary focus. This is accomplished by establishing national standard benchmarks that address the entire EMS organization from administration, policies & procedures, and patient care. Services that apply for CAAS accreditation must meet at or above 400 benchmarks for quality. CAAS accreditation far exceeds the minimum requirements by the State of Wisconsin. In the Fall of 2021, the Wausau Fire Department set on a course to achieve CAAS Accreditation. Meeting the 400-plus benchmarks that CAAS uses to evaluate forced us to closely examine many policies and operational idiosyncrasies and make changes to meet or exceed CAAS benchmarks. For example, our EMS Division had never asked our customers about their experience when treated and transported by one of our ambulance crews. To that end, we selected a vendor to assist with surveys and, for the first time, received direct feedback about the quality of care the customer experienced under our care. The feedback has been helpful for us to measure our quality of care.

Once we were confident we were ready for a site visit, we submitted an extensive application showing our compliance with the CAAS metrics. In July, we welcomed two CAAS evaluators for a three-day site visit. During that visit, we had to demonstrate our compliance. The evaluators interviewed paramedics who visited our dispatch center, Human Resources, the Mayor, and other critical elements. At the conclusion, we received a PERFECT SCORE! Yes, our first-ever CAAS accreditation, and we nailed it! This is due to our excellent staff and the hard work of EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson. Our accreditation status became final when the CAAS Board unanimously voted to approve our agency for accreditation at their August meeting.

Fire Chief Appointment:

When I announced my intention to retire on December 15 at the June Police and Fire Commission meeting, they immediately went to work to select the best possible candidate to replace me at the end of the year. The PFC and Human Resources Director quickly developed a plan and sent a nationwide advertisement out to recruit the best candidates to apply.

After a lengthy process, the PFC whittled the applicants down to the final four and invited them to participate in an intensive process to be evaluated for the position. After completing the final interviews, the Commission selected Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp to succeed me. On August 31 the Commission officially appointed Chief Kopp as the next Fire Chief of our organization. He will be the 13th Fire Chief in our organization's 154-year history.

I am thrilled with their selection and have already begun passing the baton of leadership to Chief Kopp. Chief Kopp is a Wausau native who has climbed the internal ladder within our organization. He is highly experienced and educated. He is concluding his master's degree from Purdue University Global in October. I am excited to see the department continue to thrive under the leadership of Fire Chief Jeremy Kopp.

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

The City of Wausau Fire Department is officially accredited by CAAS! This whole process has indeed been educational and humbling. We have never invited an agency from the outside to come into our department and comb through everything we do EMS. This accreditation put the City of Wausau Fire Department on the national map when it comes to excellence! With this CAAS Accreditation, the Wausau Fire Department will be 1 of the 182 accredited agencies in the United States and the fourth in Wisconsin.



Outreach

On August 23, the EMS Division assisted Aspirus Wausau Hospital in presenting "STOP THE BLEED" class to over 100 Newman High School teachers. This class, which was developed by the American Collage of Surgeons', is a formal presentation followed by hands-on practice of applying direct pressure, packing a wound, and using a tourniquet to stop bleeding.

Training:

August stated our recertification process for our Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) certifications. This class is recognized worldwide as the leading continuing education program for prehospital emergency trauma care. The mission of PHTLS *is to promote excellence in trauma patient management by all providers involved in the delivery of prehospital care*. PHTLS is developed by NAEMT in cooperation with the American College of Surgeons' Committee on Trauma. The course emphasizes the application of trauma education through case studies, skills practice, and patient simulations. PHTLS is the global gold standard in prehospital trauma education and is taught in over 80 countries.



EMS Patient Experience Rep

The EMS Division is excited to share our patient care experience report for May. Our overall score was 96.48%. I want to highlight our five highest scores from this report. As you will see, we scored above the national database in all categories. In this area, you will notice that under the "Likelihood of recommending this ambulance service to others" category, we scored 98.91%. Even though our patients cannot technically choose the ambulance service when dialing 911, we can gather that our patients would speak highly of our service.

5 Highest Scores



Responses by Municipality (EMS Patient Care Reports):

City	# of Reports	% of Reports	# of Reports – YTD
City of Abbotsford	1	0.20%	2
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%	0
City of Wausau	471	91.99%	3,784
Clark County	0	0.00%	1
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	1
Town of Berlin	2	0.39%	26
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Cassel	2	0.39%	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	2	0.39%	22
Town of Johnson	2	0.39%	3
Town of Marathon	1	0.20%	1
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	1
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	1
Town of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	4
Town of Rib Mountain	1	0.20%	4
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	0.98%	36
Town of Wausau	9	1.76%	95
Town of Wien	2	0.39%	3
Village of Athens	1	0.20%	5
Village of Edgar	0	0.00%	2

Village of Hatley	1	0.20%	1
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	1
Village of Maine	10	1.95%	105
Village of Marathon City	1	0.20%	5
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	1
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	1	0.20%	24
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
Total	512	100.00%	4,140

Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

August Scheduled Training:

A brief breakdown of our scheduled activities follows:

- High Rise Fire Operations
- NFPA 1410 #10
- Standpipe and Portable Standpipe Operations
- Technical Rescue Drill – Rope Rescue Horizontal Movement

High Rise Fire Operations & Standpipe/Portable Standpipe Operations

High Rise firefighting is an extremely challenging and physically demanding sub-types of our fire response. These fires require more firefighters, carrying hoses to elevated floors, an exceptional knowledge of fire behavior, and coordination of difficult ventilation of smoke to perform search and rescue. Every member practices and perform skills on aspects of high rise fires each year. We are also in the writing an improved high-rise policy to strengthen our response and standardize the approach to these incidents.



Above: Ladder 2 crew “stretches” a line to supply the standpipe while simultaneously carrying hoses to attack the fire within the structure.

NFPA 1410 #10 (Forward lay to an aerial)

NFPA 1410 is the national Standard on Training for Initial Emergency Scene Operations. Each year, we perform various drills/assessments on 1410 listed proficiencies. This type of training provides the companies and crews with benchmark times to perform specific tasks. A difficulty with performing these drills is that they are based on a higher staffing model per apparatus than we have at the Wausau Fire Department. The times listed provide us with a benchmark to perform to through the best of our abilities.

Technical Rescue Drill – Rope Rescue Horizontal Movement

Our monthly technical rescue drill requires members to rig rescue ropes to move a person/victim horizontally. Nearly all forms of horizontal movement are a technician level skill according to NFPA 1006: Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications. Our members are trained in low-tension methods first

and then we work through methods that add tension to rope to move a person further horizontally. This skillset is one of the few we can perform in which we can literally pull a 9000-pound rope to the point of failure. However, through training and a sound foundation in physics and rope-rescue principles, these tasks can be performed safely.

Recruit Training (Paramedic Class Cohort)

Our paramedic student cohort completed their recruit fire training in early August. During their year of Paramedic training, they had a four week break from their technical college courses. This break provided us with the opportunity to complete fire training to shorten the time between the completion of Paramedic and the time when they will be on the street serving the community. Recruit training took them through dozens of skills and lessons from their initial state certification and built on their knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve the City of Wausau in a more intelligently aggressive manner.



Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	1148.75	86.42%	4,944.15
Driver/Operator Training	13.5	1.02%	687.55
Facilities Training	0	0.00%	39
Hazardous Materials Training	35	2.63%	327.50
Misc Training	0	0.00%	55.25
Officer Training	3.5	0.26%	340.45
Specialty Training	128.5	9.67%	1,078.25
Total	1329.25	100.00%	7,472.15

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	2	0.70%	107
EMS Training	228	80.28%	2,130.25
Fire Instructor Training	54	19.01%	404.25
Fire Prevention Training	0	0.00%	0
Investigation Training	0	0.00%	112.5
Total	284	100.00%	2,754.00

Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

Inspections: Within the City of Wausau for the month of August, we performed 113 total inspections. We had 24 properties that had Fire Code Violations with 28.6% being Fire Extinguisher Annual Maintenance and 22.9% being coded as “Other”. The “other” classification covers items such extension cords and electrical junction box coverings. These properties will require follow-up inspections to confirm compliance. We conducted 1 consultation inspection for the month. This one was for Knox Box placement. We also received and recorded 81 reports through the Compliance Engine for services rendered for fire suppression systems at varying businesses.

Investigations: The Prevention Division investigated three fires in the month of August. These properties included one vehicle fire, one unattached garage, and unfortunately, Station #1. The vehicle fire is currently under investigation. The fire at the unattached garage was classified as incendiary. Wausau Police Detectives are finalizing their portion of this investigation. The fire at the Fire Station is being categorized as “accidental”. It is suspected that new LED lights being placed into a 1960’s era fixture was the culprit. The hypothesis is that the connector attachments in the fixture were loose and worn making the connection insufficient.

Public Outreach: Throughout August we performed outreach two different times. One of these was a Special event meeting for the festival of arts. One was for a new business that requested an early inspection for future compliance with Fire Inspections. The other was witnessing a fire alarm test at a healthcare facility.

Education: Throughout the month of August the Prevention Division worked on maintaining our EMS certifications. We completed training on Bloodborne Pathogens and EMS HIPAA awareness training. With the completion of the Community Risk Reduction Class Lt. Kariger attended, we are now actively researching ideas and ways of enhancing our community’s safety. Lt. Kariger has projected finishing his bachelor’s degree before the end of 2023. Once Lt. Kariger has finished, he has plans to challenge the IAAI CFI Certification. This certification is for the “Certified Fire Investigator” designation through the International Association of Arson Investigators. Currently, all our investigators have the IAAI Fire Investigation Technician (FIT) designation.

THE FACTS

Fires in student housing cause an average of **one death, 32 injuries, and \$15 million** in property damage per year.



Three out of four of these fires began in a **kitchen or cooking area**.

The likelihood of a fire is much greater on **weekends** and on **weekdays from 5 – 9 p.m.**



The most common months for student housing fires are **September and October**.

Prevention Division Activities:

Inspections Completed	Monthly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	87	2,034
Re-inspections	25	239
All other Inspections (Consults/burn complaints,etc)	1	38
Total Inspections	2,310	2,197
Fire Investigations	3	15
Inspection Department Activities	Number	YTD
Public Engagement Activities	5	81

Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp

Significant calls:

Wausau Fire responded to seven fire calls in August and one water rescue. One of the fire calls was a vehicle fire and one of the fire calls was a fire in our very own home (central fire station)! This fire occurred in the female locker room on the second floor in the light fixture above the sink. The fire grew and filled the second floor with smoke causing major smoke damage throughout the second-floor dorm area and fire damage to the female locker room. Crews were alerted by one firefighter smelling smoke from base of the steps on the first floor, then investigating the smell to find the fire. Crews took care of the fire quickly and ventilated the building, ventilation was difficult because there are not any windows that open on the second floor. An alarm system would of surely notified us sooner to the fire, nonetheless crews did a very good job taking care of the incident. Crews were displaced for a few days having to sleep on cots in office spaces on the first floor while remediation of the second floor was done by Northstar Restoration.

Recruitment and Retention:

Researching new ways to recruit is always being looked at and discussed throughout the department, the chiefs and the peer focus group are working together with retention ideas and getting surveys completed to learn mor about why people leave and why they stay so we can work on retention strategies. Recruitment talks with the Deputy Chief are still in full force and if you know anyone who may be interested in a career with the Wausau Fire Department, please send them my way for a tour and a chat.

Fleet:

Not much new with fleet other than we are still waiting to receive the new inspector trucks.

Buildings and Grounds:

DPW has started work removing old blacktop and working on landscaping to remedy water leaking into the building. DPW will also be putting in a parking space for two more vehicles on the west side of the building to accommodate employee parking and snow removal. The bids for apparatus floor will close in September with work to be completed by mid-November. Central fire will be receiving new beds and ceiling tile in the second-floor dorm.

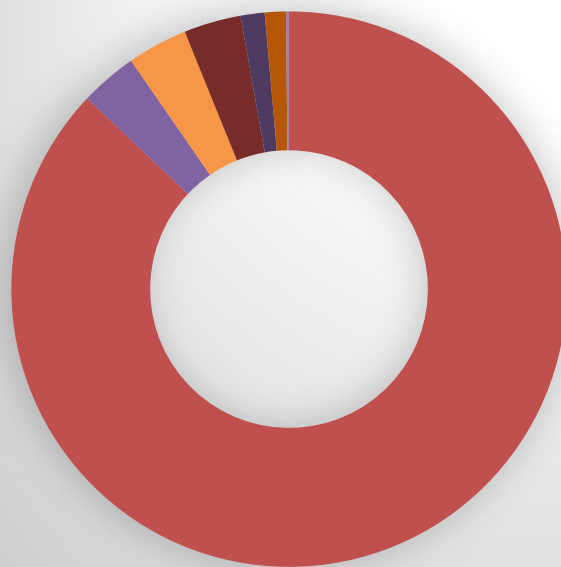
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or stop by my office. 715-261-7901.

Significant Fire Events:

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
8/9/2023	805 North 7th Avenue	City of Wausau	F23001349	Fire, other
8/9/2023	702 Jefferson Street	City of Wausau	F23001352	Cooking fire, confined to container
8/12/2023	381 River Drive	City of Wausau	F23001366	Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire
8/14/2023	4017 Troy Street	City of Wausau	F23001377	Fire, other
8/17/2023	606 East Thomas Street	City of Wausau	F23001400	Building fire
8/27/2023	914 South 9th Avenue	City of Wausau	F23001447	Trash or rubbish fire, contained
8/29/2023	1606 Maple Hill Road	City of Wausau	F23001454	Passenger 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	574	556	0.00%
June	553	590	583	-6.27%
July	679	531	587	27.87%
August	571	600	577	-4.83%
September		524	525	
October		545	552	
November		574	562	
December		612	590	
TOTAL		6686	6490	



- Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident (497)
- False Alarm & False Call (19)
- Good Intent Call (20)
- Service Call (19)
- Hazardous Condition (No Fire) (8)
- Fire (7)
- Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire) (0)
- Special Incident Type (1)
- Severe Weather & Natural Disaster (0)

Responses by Municipality (All NFIRS Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs - YTD
City of Abbotsford	1	0.18%	2
City of Antigo	0	0.00%	1
City of Colby	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	1	0.18%	2
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City Of Wausau	530	92.82%	4,191
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	2	0.35%	26
Town of Bern	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Cassel	2	0.35%	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	2	0.35%	19
Town of Johnson	2	0.35%	3
Town Of Marathon	1	0.18%	1
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	2
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	4
Town Of Rib Mountain	1	0.18%	4

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	0.88%	34
Town Of Wausau	9	1.58%	92
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	2	0.35%	3
Village Of Athens	0	0.00%	4
Village Of Brokaw	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Edgar	1	0.18%	3
Village of Hatley	1	0.18%	1
Village Of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	2
Village Of Maine	9	1.58%	102
Village Of Marathon City	1	0.18%	5
Village Of Rothschild	0	0.00%	2
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	1	0.18%	23
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
Total	571	100.00%	4,540

Activity/Incident Hours Committed:

Category	Time Committed
NFIRS Incidents	135:59:54 Hours
EMS Incidents	783:45:37 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	760.75 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	1,613.25 Hours

Aid Responses:

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	10
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	18
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)	13