

# Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

## September 2023



(Extrication Training)

## Fire Chief Report by Chief Robert Barteck

September was another exciting month for our department. Several structure fires occurred that Deputy Chief Kopp highlights in his report. The crews completed their Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support refresher course, and we wrapped up another hiring posting with an offer to a firefighter/paramedic candidate.

Administratively, we continued with budget planning for 2024 and worked on leadership transition items between me and soon-to-be Fire Chief Jeremy Kopp.

With the naming of Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp as my successor, we immediately dove into the succession planning and passing of the leadership responsibilities. This began with the finalization of the 2024 budget. Chief Kopp collaborated with the Finance Department and our Administrative Analyst to craft the cost to continue the budget in the City's new Workday Adaptive budget tool. We then moved on to supplementary budget requests for 2024.

Wausau Community Communication Specialist Ethan Bares and I were asked to present at the Wisconsin Fire Chief's Education Fall Conference in Fond du Lac. We were the featured morning speakers with a two-hour time slot on the first morning of the conference. Our Presentation was titled *Transforming Community Connections Through Video and Social Media*. During the presentation, we highlighted how Ethan has used his talents to produce content to promote our department's initiatives. Ethan discussed equipment editing programs for any sized budget. I discussed how to leverage video and social media to communicate with our community and potential candidates. We have excellent data that support Ethan's work's effectiveness for the fire department, from his development of our YouTube page from zero to tens of thousands of views and followers. Since Ethan began producing content for us, every single candidate who has applied to our department has referenced watching our video.

In September we worked with Human Resources for another firefighter/paramedic recruitment. We offered one candidate a position from that process. We are still three positions short of our new staffing number of 74. With two anticipated retirements in December, the department must recruit five quality candidates to reach our staffing goals. Deputy Chief Kopp spear-headed an initiative with the Human Resources Department to find these essential fire/medics by appealing to current paramedic students. In the fall of 2022 and winter of 2023, we successfully recruited five paramedic students currently enrolled in a program. We hired those students and supported them through completing their paramedic course with the full support of the department and all the tools at our disposal. This plan worked, and we are optimistic that we can use a similar hiring strategy to fill these last remaining positions. More to come on this topic.

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 EMS Division received positive media attention upon hearing of our accreditation. New 12 came and did a great story explaining what this means to us as a department and what it provides to the community.



### Wausau Fire Department EMS earns national accreditation

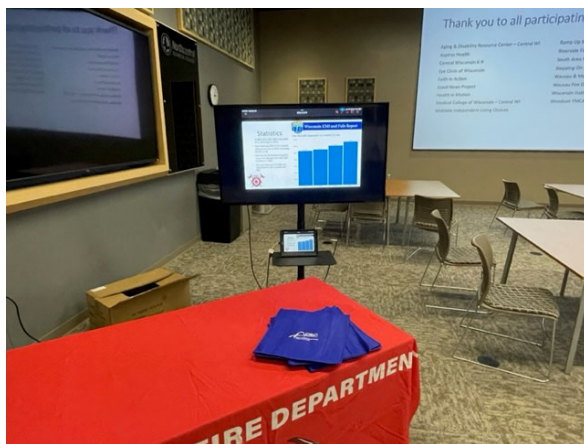


(WJFW) - **Wausau's Fire** Department has been providing **emergency** medical services...

wjfw.com · 1 week ago

### Outreach

On September 20th, the EMS Division participated in the "Improve Your Balance: Prevent Falls Recourse Fair" at North Central Technical College. The Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin and Aspirus Hospital presented this fair. This year, the Wausau Fire Department has responded to over 600 requests for ambulances due to falls. This was the number one dispatched reason in 2022. The fair highlighted how one can prevent falls and improve their balance. We talked with many residents about what we, as a department, see when responding to patients who fall, such as injuries, and what caused the falls. We set up a TV to share our data with individuals we spoke to.



### Training:

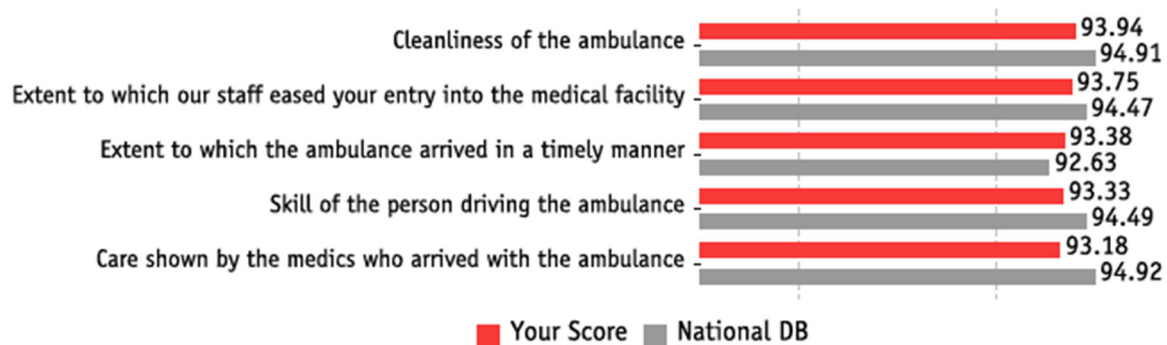
The EMS Division concluded our recertification process for our Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) certifications. Forty-five paramedics successfully completed both didactical and practical portions. This class is recognized worldwide as the leading continuing education program for prehospital emergency 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 91.22%. I want to highlight our five highest scores from this report.

#### 5 Highest Scores



Here is an example of a survey sent back by a patient to the EMS Survey Team and uploaded to our account. Paramedics Nate Clark and Ashely Sakis were the crew members on this call.

### Medics

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
Care shown by the medics who arrived with the ambulance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Degree to which the medics took your problem seriously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Degree to which the medics listened to you and/or your family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Skill of the medics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Extent to which the medics kept you informed about your treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Extent to which medics included you in the treatment decisions (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Degree to which the medics relieved your pain or discomfort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medics' concern for your privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Extent to which medics cared for you as a person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments (describe positive or negative experiences):

My medic in back with me was very kind to me!

### Office Staff

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
Professionalism of the staff in our billing office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willingness of the staff in our billing office to address your needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

N/A

Comments (describe positive or negative experiences):

### Overall Assessment

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
How well did our staff work together to care for you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Extent to which our staff eased your entry into the medical facility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Appropriateness of Emergency Medical Transportation treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extent to which the services received were worth the fees charged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Overall rating of the care provided by our Emergency Medical Transportation service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Likelihood of recommending this ambulance service to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Excellent!

Excellent!

Comments (describe positive or negative experiences):

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

City	# of Reports	% of Reports	# of Reports – YTD
City of Abbotsford	1	0.21%	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	1	0.21%	1
City of Wausau	450	92.59%	4,234
Clark County	0	0.00%	1
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Bergen	0	0.00%	1
Town of Berlin	3	0.62%	29
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	2	0.41%	24
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	3
Town of Marathon	1	0.21%	2
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	1
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	1
Town of Rib Falls	1	0.21%	5
Town of Rib Mountain	1	0.21%	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	4	0.82%	40
Town of Wausau	6	1.23%	101
Town of Wien	0	0.00%	3
Village of Athens	0	0.00%	5
Village of Edgar	0	0.00%	2
Village of Hatley	0	0.00%	1
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	1
Village of Maine	11	2.26%	116
Village of Marathon City	3	0.62%	8
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	1
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village of Weston	2	0.41%	26
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>4,626</b>

## Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

September Scheduled Training:

A brief breakdown of our scheduled activities follows:

- Vehicle Extrication
- Vehicle Fires
- Engineer Drill – Drafting Operations
- Railroad Incident Safety

September had lofty goals for training that relied heavily on external collaboration. Unfortunately, some of them fell through due to unforeseen circumstances. Four vehicles were slated for delivery to use for vehicle extrication among the three crews with one to be used for vehicle fire training. Unfortunately, only two vehicles were available due to neighboring departments training needs occurring at the same time as ours. Railroad safety training had been requested through two different railroad companies and one accepted our request. Unfortunately, they had to send their trainer to a national-level derailment which forced them to cancel on us only days before it was scheduled.

Vehicle firefighting has been discussed among many of the fire companies and video-based training has been put in place temporarily to cover newer vehicle technologies and the risks associated with lithium-ion battery fires. Vehicle fire training and railroad incident safety will be rescheduled once we can work with our collaborators to make it happen.

### Vehicle Extrication

In 2022, the Wausau Fire Department responded for 139 vehicle accidents and an additional 6 extensive vehicle extrications. The skills required to remove a vehicle from around a victim are essential to rescuing motorists on our roadways. Due to the shortage of vehicles, two out of three crews were able to complete the hands-on training this month. Our supplier and transport service donate the vehicles to use for training, so we



are grateful for what we receive. We at times need to wait and reschedule to perform all skills.



Above: “B” and “C” crew work through scenarios utilizing tools and equipment at our disposal on rescue scenes.

#### Engineer Drill – Drafting Operations

As an urban fire department, drafting water from static sources is a rare requirement. The process of drafting requires a fire pump operator to remove all air from a fire pump to allow atmospheric pressure to “push” water in through hard suction hoses.

While this is a rare occurrence, it is something that does not have a zero-likelihood. Drafting is also performed during fire pump testing. In the event a fire pump service is performed, the pump needs to be re-tested to verify the repair did not impair the function, or it repaired the initial issue back to a functional state.

#### Wisconsin Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Taskforce 1

The Wausau Fire Department has been allotted 6 positions on Wisconsin Task Force 1. This Urban Search and Rescue team is in the process of training and certifying to become deployable throughout the state, country, and world. At this point in time, we have been given two preliminary positions and we were able to fill one. Firefighter/Paramedic Autumn Oertel was selected as our first member pursuing this highly technical training. Her introductory day of training took place on September 19<sup>th</sup>. She will continue to receive training in rope rescue, confined space, trench rescue, structural collapse rescue, water rescue, and other specialty disciplines throughout the next year. All initial training is held at the Regional All Climate Training center on Volk Field, Air National Guard Base.

#### Collaboration With NorthCentral Technical College

NTC recently took delivery of a tremendous asset to the Central Wisconsin area. The image below is of a FireVent firefighter ventilation training prop. We are currently working with NTC to determine when the opportunity to train on vertical ventilation can be brought to the Wausau Fire Department. Without the prop, or any other training facility, we currently use pallets staged on the ground to create a makeshift roof to cut with saws.



**WTCS Technical Rescue Committee**

The diligent work of the committee was nearing the accreditation process planned for September or October. However, the Wisconsin Technical College Coordinator has resigned, and this committee’s work is now on hold. We look forward to meeting the successor and working to bring technical rescue certification to Wisconsin technical colleges for the first time.

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	509.25	85.20%	5,453.40
Driver/Operator Training	33.2	5.55%	720.75
Facilities Training	0	0.00%	39
Hazardous Materials Training	25.5	4.27%	353
Misc Training	0	0.00%	55.25
Officer Training	13	2.18%	353.45
Specialty Training	16.75	2.80%	1095
Total	597.70	100.00%	8,069.85

*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	2.5	0.47%	109.5
EMS Training	496.75	93.02%	2,627
Fire Instructor Training	34.75	6.51%	439



Fire Prevention Training	0	0.00%	0
Investigation Training	0	0.00%	112.5
Total	534	100.00%	3,288

## Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

**Inspections:** Within the City of Wausau for the month of September, we performed 267 total inspections. We had 24 properties that had Fire Code Violations with 25.7% being Fire Alarm systems being out of date and 22.9% being coded for annual extinguisher service. These properties will require follow-up inspections to confirm compliance. We conducted two consultation inspections for the month. Both were for the testing of the Fire Alarm system placement at a Healthcare facility. We also received and recorded 109 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 September. These properties were all privately owned residential properties. One fire was due to an underrated extension cord, powering a hot tub located outside of the house, adjacent to an exterior wall. The remaining investigations were for a residence having two fires within 10 hours of each other, one of which unfortunately rekindled overnight. A “rekindle” is defined as a fire that had been extinguished, and at some point, reignited. Typically, this happens with complex construction situations where a smoldering fire is overlooked or missed. In this case, the attic had knob and tube electrical wiring connected to newer wiring, covered with blown in cellulose insulation. The origin was in the attic and the rekindle occurred near the origin. Because of the nature of cellulose insulation, it is known for harboring smoldering fires as embers are difficult to detect with thermal imaging devices.

**Public Outreach:** Throughout September we performed outreach several times. We witnessed and advised on three fire drills. Two were for elementary schools and one for Lactalis Heritage Dairy (Kraft) located on Townline Rd in Wausau. New smoke alarms and a CO detector were also installed in three separate private residences. We also performed a walkthrough inspection for a proposed “startup” business in town. This entailed walking with the potential owners through an existing building. The potential new owners wanted clarification on what would be needed to become compliant with the Fire Code.

**Education:** The month of September the Prevention Division worked on maintaining our EMS certifications. We completed Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) pretest for our refresher class scheduled for November. This is a requirement for the Paramedic level of EMS. We also attended the IAAI Fall Seminar which will provide tested hours to maintain our FIT certification in investigations.



### Fire Prevention MONTH

"Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety"

- ☒ Hear a BEEP, get on your feet. Get out and stay out. Call 9-1-1 from outside.
- ☒ Hear a CHIRP, make a change. A chirping alarm needs attention.
- ☒ Replace the batteries or the entire unit if it's over 10 years old.
- ☒ Test all smoke alarms at least once a month.

National Fire Protection Association [nfpa.org](http://nfpa.org)

## **Prevention Division Activities:**

<b>Inspections Completed</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>
Routine Fire Inspections	259	2,293
Re-inspections	7	246
All other Inspections (Consults/burn complaints,etc)	1	39
<b>Total Inspections</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>2,464</b>
Fire Investigations	2	17
<b>Inspection Department Activities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Public Engagement Activities	4	85

## **Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp**

### **Significant calls:**

Wausau Fire responded to 4 structure fire calls, 2 garbage can fires, and one brush fire in the month of September. The brush fire started on accident in front of a house where the owner was using chemicals to get rid of a bee's nest and caught the landscaping on fire. Fire department personnel noticed the fire from the fire station and jumped into action preventing the fire from extending into the house. Our fire prevention bureau is tracking the suspicious garbage can fires and will be working with PD if they keep happening to find out cause. The 4<sup>th</sup> structure fire was a rekindle from a fire the crews fought earlier. This was an extensive fire in a home with blown in insulation, these types of rekindles are common throughout the country because of smoldering insulation that is hard to track and extinguish. The tenants were evacuated and staying somewhere else after the initial fire and not home at the time of the second fire.

### **Recruitment and Retention:**

One hiring process closed in September in which we were able to move a candidate on to the Police and Fire Commission at the end of October. We also welcomed new Firefighter Marshal DeValk to our Paramedic cohort at station two with expected graduation date in December becoming a paramedic. Another process will open in October and close on October 31<sup>st</sup>. We are hoping to get some candidates from other technical schools who graduate next May in this process. In November we will know how short we are from hitting our full staffing goal in 2023 and decide if we want to do another EMT basic class in conjunction with NTC like we did this year. Fingers crossed we get enough applicants in October to reach our end of the year goals!

### **Fleet:**

Fire Marshal Stahl's new pickup is in and will be replacing the old Ford Fusion and going into service October 6<sup>th</sup>. The other two pickup trucks should be arriving in October according to DPW.

### **Buildings and Grounds:**

Station three has received new landscaping in the back of the station and additional parking on the west side of the building, thank you DPW! New beds have arrived at central; we are no longer sleeping on cots. The women's bathroom is awaiting new vanity and paint.

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

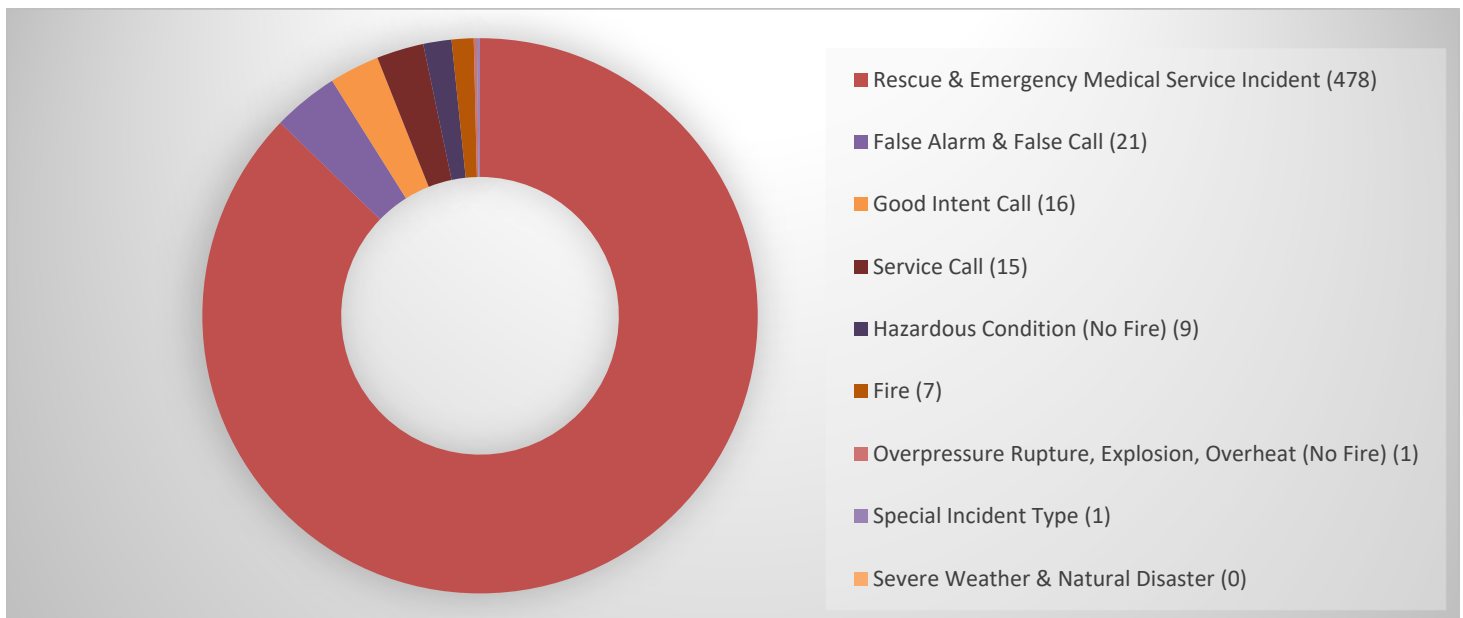
## **Significant Fire Events:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Incident #</b>	<b>Type</b>
9/5/2023	3006 Seymour Lane	City of Wausau	F23001499	Natural vegetation fire, other
9/8/2023	911 North 9th Avenue	City of Wausau	F23001521	Building fire
9/17/2023	526 Porter Street	City of Wausau	F23001577	Building fire
9/19/2023	111 South 1st Avenue	City of Wausau	F23001584	Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire

9/25/2023	518 North 2nd Avenue	City of Wausau	F23001628	Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire
9/28/2023	302 North 8th Avenue	City of Wausau	F23001647	Building fire
9/29/2023	302 North 8th Avenue	City of Wausau	F23001650	Building 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	548	524	525	4.58%
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	1	0.18%	3
City of Antigo	0	0.00%	1
City of Colby	0	0.00%	0
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	2
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	1	0.18%	1
City Of Wausau	515	93.98%	4,706

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	0.36%	28
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	2	0.36%	21
Town of Johnson	0	0.00%	3
Town Of Marathon	1	0.18%	2
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	2
Town of Norrie	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Rib Falls	1	0.18%	5
Town Of Rib Mountain	1	0.18%	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	3	0.55%	37
Town Of Wausau	5	0.91%	97
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	0	0.00%	3
Village Of Athens	0	0.00%	4
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	11	2.01%	113
Village Of Marathon City	3	0.55%	8
Village Of Rothschild	0	0.00%	2
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	2	0.36%	25
Wittenberg	0	0.00%	0
Wood County	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>5,088</b>

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

Category	Time Committed
NFIRS Incidents	221:03:46 Hours
EMS Incidents	792:08:15 Hours

Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	681.25 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	1,131.70 Hours

## **Aid Responses:**

Type of Aid	# of Runs
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	8
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	14
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	0
Mutual Aid Received – EMS	2
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)	9