



# VICTORIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

2022 Annual Report

## VICTORIA FIRE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

THE VICTORIA FIRE DEPARTMENT IS COMPRISED OF DEDICATED AND TRAINED VOLUNTEERS FROM THE COMMUNITY, WHO STRIVE TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACTS OF HAZARDS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES TO OUR CITIZENRY WITH INTEGRITY AND COMPASSION. WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY:

- ACTIVELY AND CONTINUALLY TRAINING TO MEET OR EXCEED ALL APPROPRIATE STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE
- RESPONDING IN A SAFE AND TIMELY FASHION TO ALL CALLS.
- ALWAYS STRIVING TO CONDUCT OURSELVES IN A PROFESSIONAL, HONORABLE, AND RESPECTFUL MANNER.
- CONTINUALLY EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ON HAZARD AWARENESS AND PREVENTION.
- LIVING AND BREATHING “EVERYONE GOES HOME”

## Welcome

**T**hank you for taking the time to learn more about your Victoria Fire Department. The intent of this report is to provide a brief glimpse into the activities and accomplishments of the department over the past year and to highlight the tireless work of our team. These men and women of our team are the backbone of our organization and provide an invaluable service to our city. These individuals provide countless hours of dedicated service in incident response, training, and public education to our community each year. They unselfishly provide these services while facing countless dangers including an elevated risk of cancer, cardiac issues, and mental health trauma.

The demands placed on our team continue to grow each year. Firefighters are constantly tasked with responding to an increasing number of emergency responses and training requirements. With the hazards facing our community, firefighters are constantly training to be best prepared to protect their community. Throughout these demands, firefighters pride themselves on providing the best possible level of service to the community.

The individuals who represent our organization are deeply invested in their community and take pride in the service they provide. They truly have the ability to help our fellow residents on some of their worst days. They provide this service with pride, compassion, and integrity oftentimes while making their own self sacrifices.

I am proud to have the opportunity to work with such a talented group of individuals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Heger', with a stylized, cursive script.

Fire Chief

Andrew Heger

## **Our Team**

Without the hard work and dedication from these men and women, none of the work highlighted in this report would be possible. The department is currently staffed by 30 paid on call firefighters and one full-time fire chief. Utilizing a paid-on call staffing model, the department provides fire suppression, basic life support, rescue services, hazardous materials management, and public education services to the City of Victoria and a portion of Laketown Township.



Our staff range in experience from six months to 45 years of service. The department has been fortunate with staff retention as our average staff tenure is currently 10.06 years. Through this wealth of experience, our team ensures the community's needs are met whenever called upon.

The departments' recruitment methods continue to be successful. In 2022 we welcomed three new members to our team. Firefighter recruitment and retention continues to plague departments across the state and nation. Our organization is committed to ensuring that our community continues to receive the highest level of service in their time of need with the most efficient and effective staffing methods. The organization will continue to modify service delivery to meet the future needs of the growing community. This will include the addition of duty crew shift hours as well as additional full time staffing positions.

While the organization celebrates the success of welcoming new members in 2022, we are constantly focusing on recruiting efforts to bolster our staffing for the future. This includes a plan for a 2023 hiring process to continue to strengthen our paid-on call roster.

## **Department Growth**

In November of 2022 the department welcomed new firefighters Ray Delshad, Eric Barber, and Ken Knapp to the team. New firefighters complete an extensive hiring process that includes multiple interview panels, criminal background check, medical evaluation, psychological evaluation, and physical assessment prior to being offered a position. These are all tools to ensure that the best possible candidates are selected to serve our community.

Eric Barber is a resident of Victoria, having relocated with his family from Colorado in 2020. He currently resides in the Hillpointe neighborhood with his wife and three children. Eric's motivation for joining the fire department is driven by his desire to give back to the community and gain valuable experience in a skill that can be used to help others during emergencies. He is looking forward to forming new relationships and providing exceptional service to his fellow residents.



Ray Delshad resides in the Lakebridge community of Victoria, with his family and one daughter. Ray works for a large medical device company as an IT program Manager. The reason for joining Victoria Fire department is not only to give back to the community that has welcomed him since 2017 but also due to a personal tragedy that happened in fall of 2021, where the Victoria Fire department helped and assisted him and his family through a very tragic event and this will pave the way for him to possibly do the same.



Ken Knapp and his family moved to Victoria in 2020 and built a home in the Laketown neighborhood. Ken has worked for the federal government since 2016 as an attorney after graduating from University of St. Thomas School of Law. He is excited to join the Victoria Fire Department as he prioritizes public service and wants to give back to the community.





## **Retirements and Well Wishes**

In 2022 our organization said goodbye to a few staff members due to life changes and planned retirements. Aaron Jurek, Tony Kuczek, Ryan Thayer, and Jeff Nordeen all left the organization in 2022. Aaron served the city for 22 years and previously held the ranks of lieutenant, captain, and assistant chief. Tony served the city for six years and served as a captain. Ryan served six years as a firefighter. Jeff served for 22 years as a firefighter/EMT. We express our gratitude for the service and dedication each of these individuals provided to our community during their careers with the organization. Their experience, skills, leadership, and most importantly friendships will be greatly missed.



**Aaron Jurek**



**Tony Kuczek**



**Ryan Thayer**



**Jeff Nordeen**

## **Length of Service Recognition**

Annually, the department recognizes staff members for reaching anniversary dates for length of service. In 2022 the following individuals were recognized for reaching the five-, ten-, and thirty-five-year milestones:

- ❖ Five years of service: Jeremiah Gossett, Brian Semira
- ❖ Ten years of service: Brady Lee, Ryan Rivers
- ❖ Thirty-five years of service: Steve Dahl

## Calls for Service

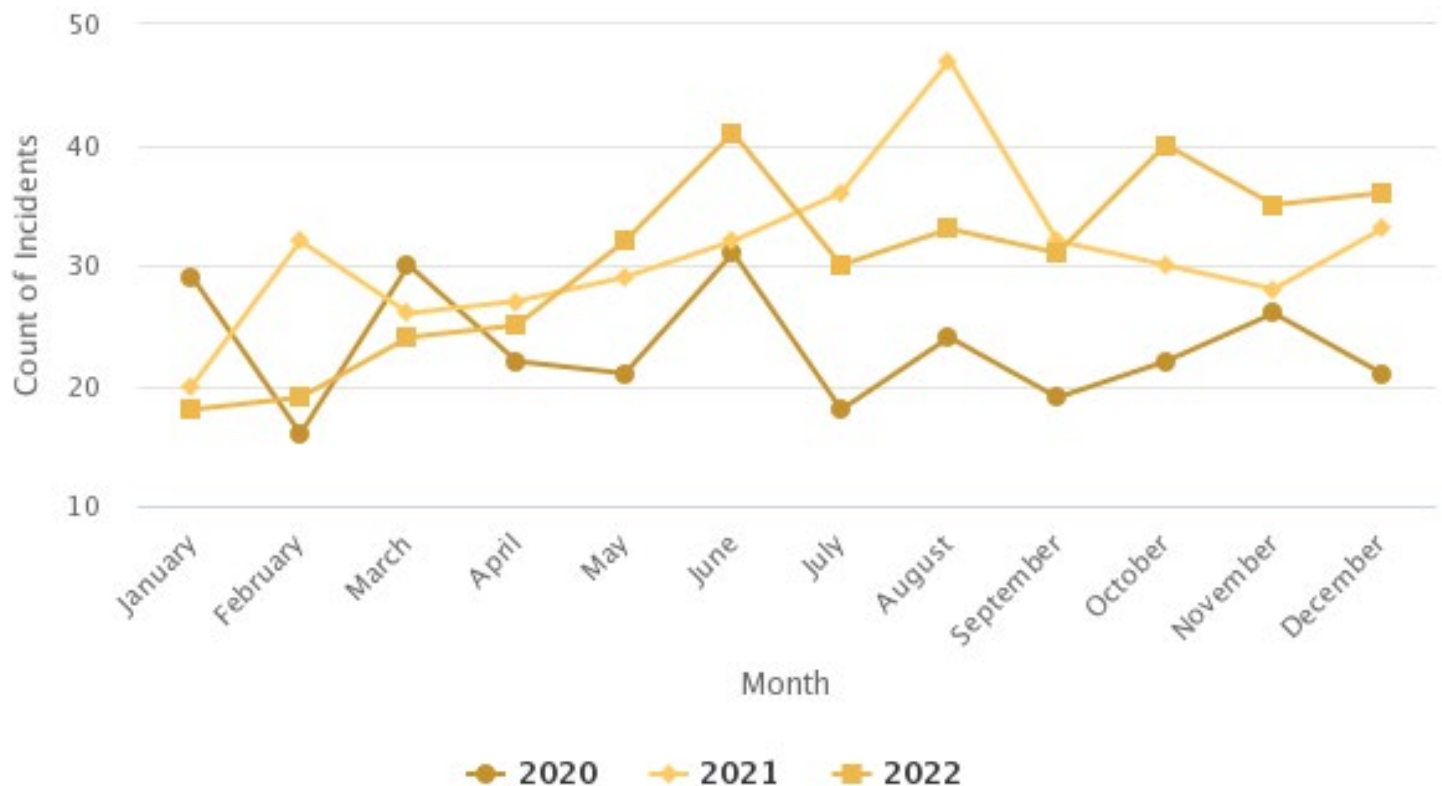
In 2022 the department responded to 364 calls for service. This was a slight decrease from 2021 in which the department responded to 372 calls. Firefighters contributed a total of 4,776 staff hours, down from 4,923 hours in 2021, responding to these incidents coinciding with the slight decrease in volume.

Summer months, as shown by the graph below, often place additional demand on the staffing model as people are more active and potentially in need of fire department services.

The heat map below also shows where many of the responses occur across the community. When reviewing this data further, these hot spots be attributed to busy intersections on roadways, care facilities, vulnerable populations, and assembly areas.

### Fire Call Volume by Month

Jan 01, 2020 to Dec 31, 2022





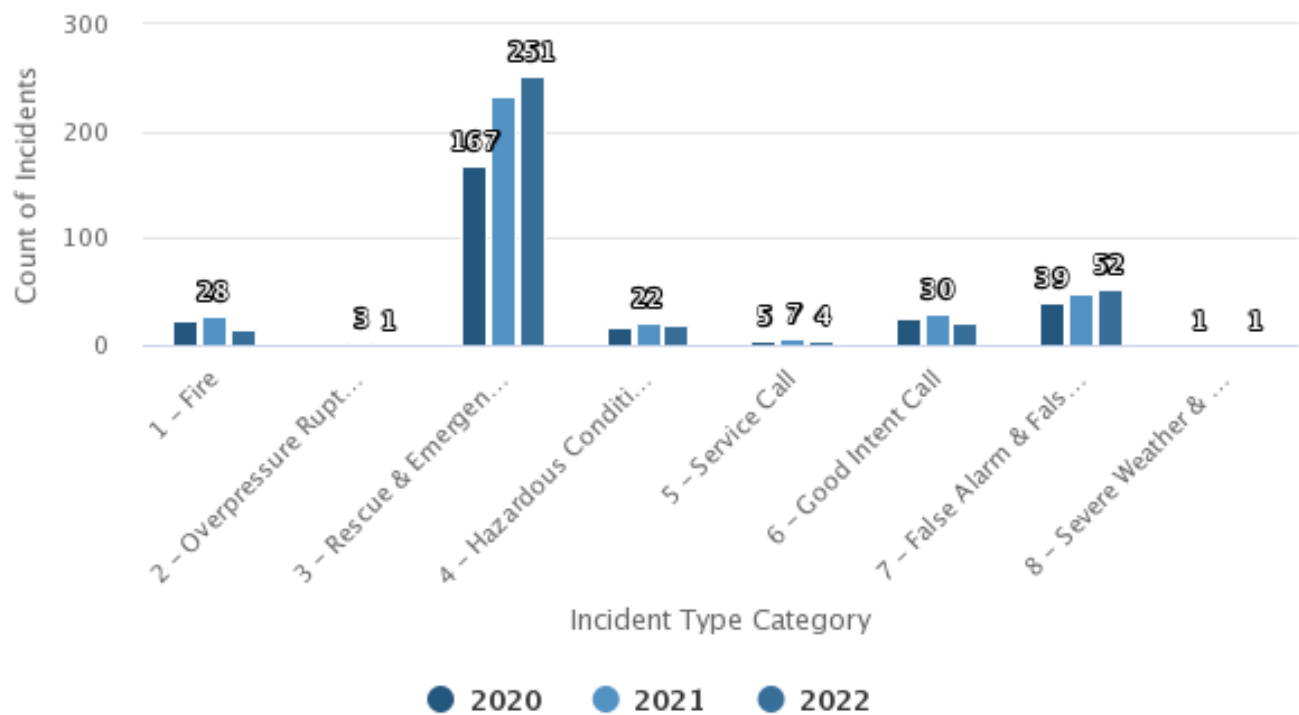


## Incident Types

Each incident that the fire department responds to is categorized for reporting purposes. Most of the calls for service, approximately 69%, that the department responded to in 2022 were in the Rescue & Emergency Medical Services category. This category includes medical calls, vehicle crashes, searches for missing persons, and water or ice rescue incidents. Our firefighters, over half of which are Emergency Medical Technicians, can provide crucial Basic Life Support functions until an Advanced Life Support Ambulance can arrive on scene. Since an ambulance is not typically stationed in our city, this response by the fire department can be vital in making a difference in positive patient outcomes.

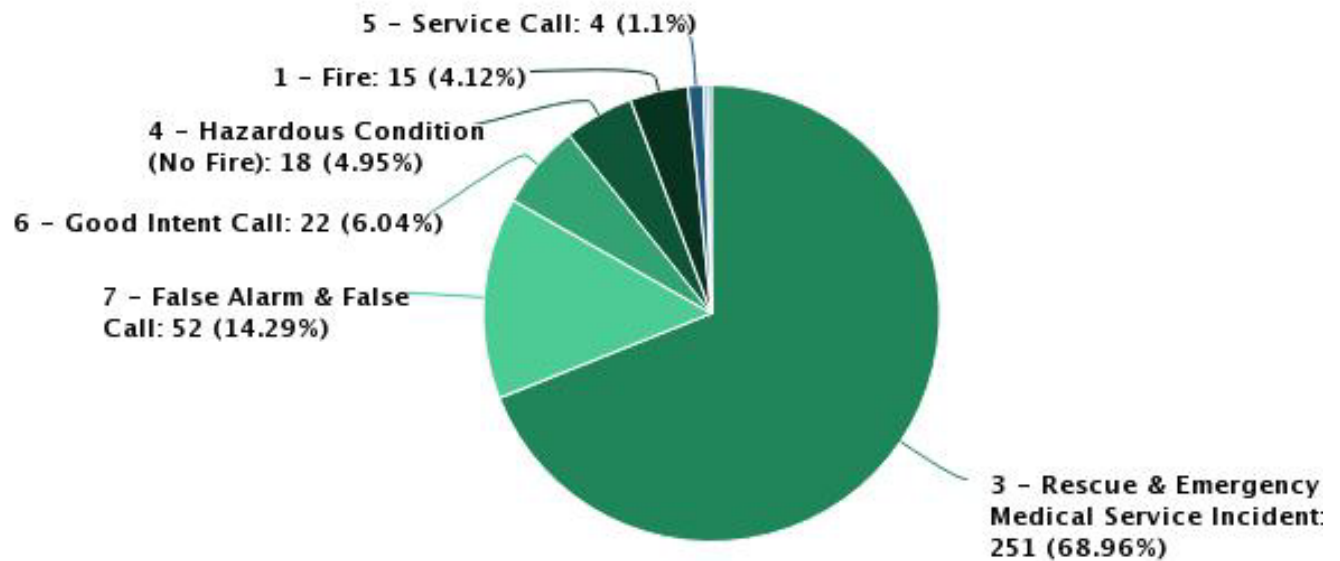
### Incidents by Category and Year

Jan 01, 2020 to Dec 31, 2022



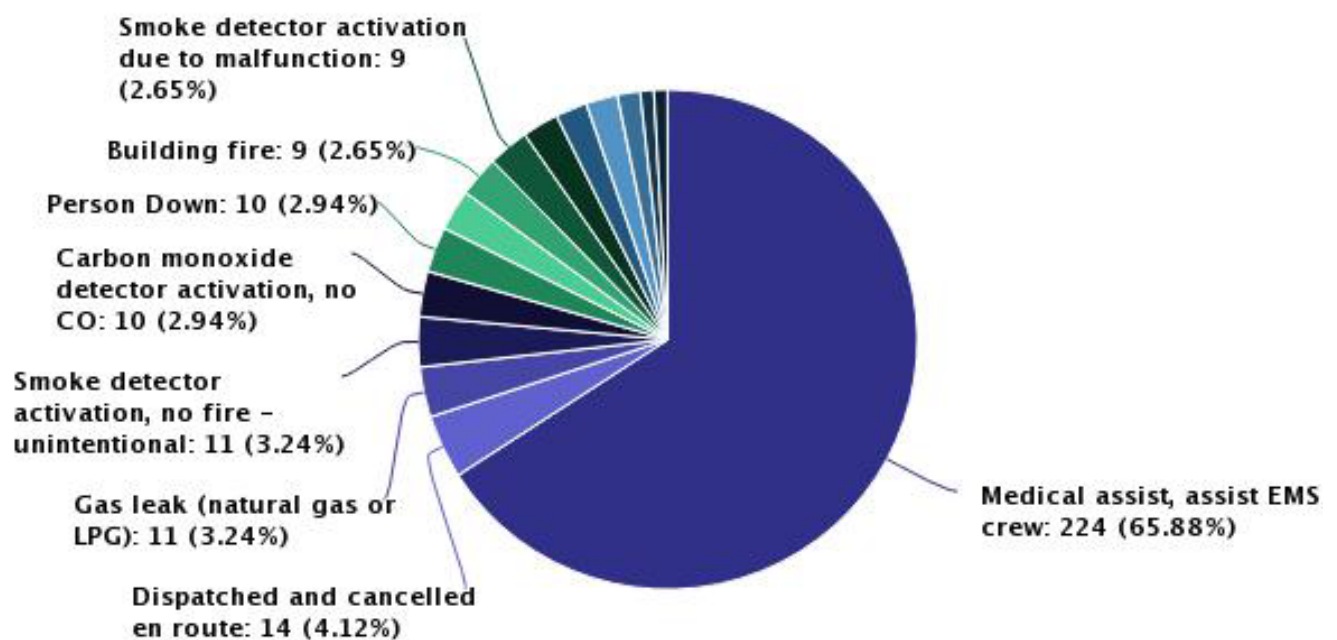
## Incident Type Categories

Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022



## Incident Types (Top 15)

Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022



## Calls by Hours of Day & Day of Week

Calls for service can be unpredictable, coming at all hours of the day. The department experiences some of the peak call volumes during the late afternoon and early evening hours. A significant decrease in call volume is noticed during the overnight hours. These numbers are constantly evaluated and used when staffing the fire station with duty crew shifts to meet peak demand.

### Incidents by Day and Hour

Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022

Day of Week	Hour of Day																							
	0000	0200	0400	0600	0800	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	0000	0200	0400	0600	0800	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200
	Sunday	3	2	1	1	1	0	2	1	1	6	0	3	3	3	1	1	5	7	4	3	5	2	1
	Monday	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	3	1	2	1	1	3	5	3	9	2	3	2	3	3
	Tuesday	1	0	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	1	1	4	3	2	2	5	4	5	2	5	3	3	2
	Wednesday	1	0	0	2	2	1	2	1	0	3	1	1	1	5	2	2	1	3	2	7	3	4	0
	Thursday	2	1	0	0	1	3	1	3	0	3	2	2	6	3	0	4	2	0	1	1	0	2	3
	Friday	0	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	2	0	3	2	1	1	3	3	3	3	5	0	5	4	1
	Saturday	2	3	2	0	4	3	1	0	4	2	3	3	3	4	3	0	6	0	3	4	3	4	6

## Automatic & Mutual Aid

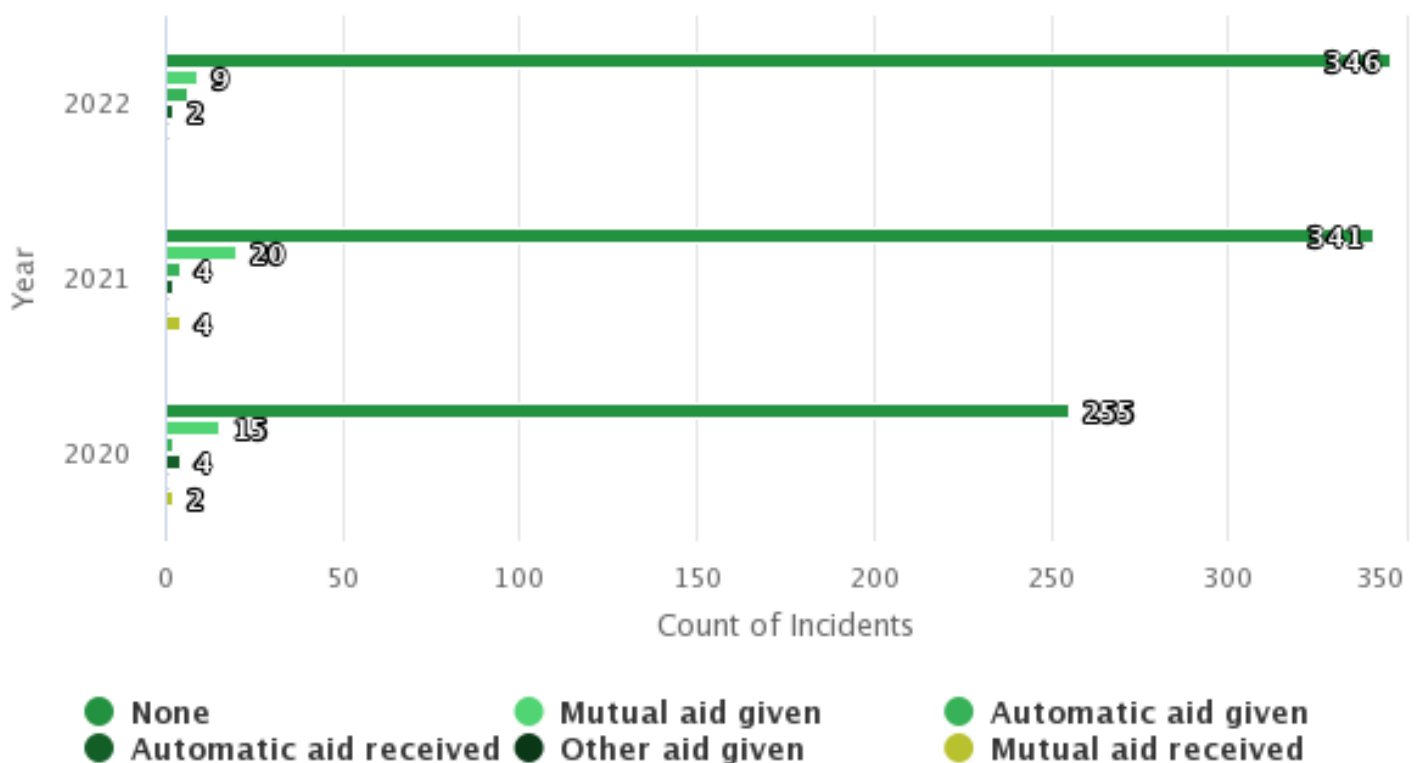
While most incidents can be managed with just our department staff, there are some incidents which require the assistance of neighboring fire departments. These are typically large fires, but can also include complex vehicle extrications, search and rescues, and hazardous materials incidents.

Due to the proximity of larger cities to our East, the department typically provides mutual aid more times in a year than we receive. The department maintains a very strong working relationship with these mutual aid partners to ensure the needs of all our communities can be met during an emergency.

The numbers below reflect the number of incidents on which the department received mutual aid on. Many times, there may be multiple departments on a single incident.

### Aid Given and Received by Year

Jan 01, 2020 to Dec 31, 2022



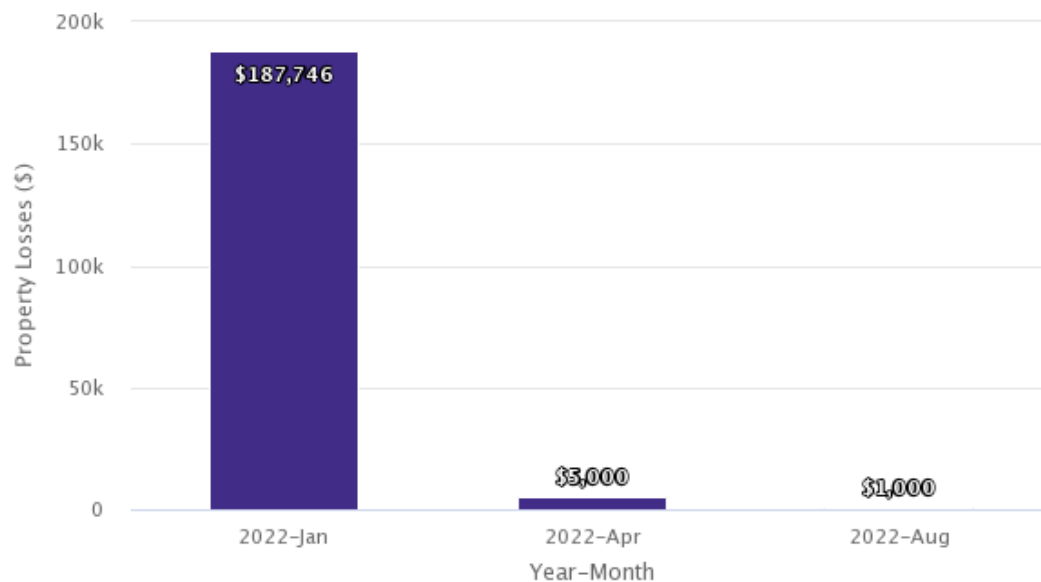


## Fire Loss

Fire loss calculates the estimated dollar amount lost due to fires annually within our city. This number tends to be underreported, often as low as ten times less than the actual loss, as the extent of the damage is often unknown until further evaluations of structures can be conducted and the insurance company complies a detailed claim. Also estimated is the value of the property and contents prior to the fire to determine the estimated value which was able to be saved by the department.

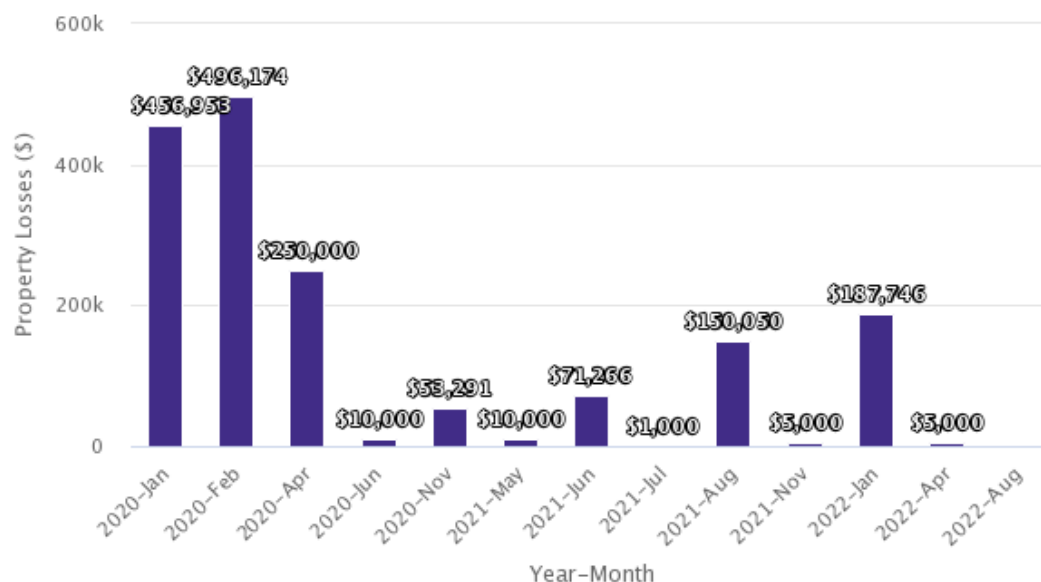
### Property Losses by Month

Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022



### Property Losses by Month

Jan 01, 2020 to Dec 31, 2022

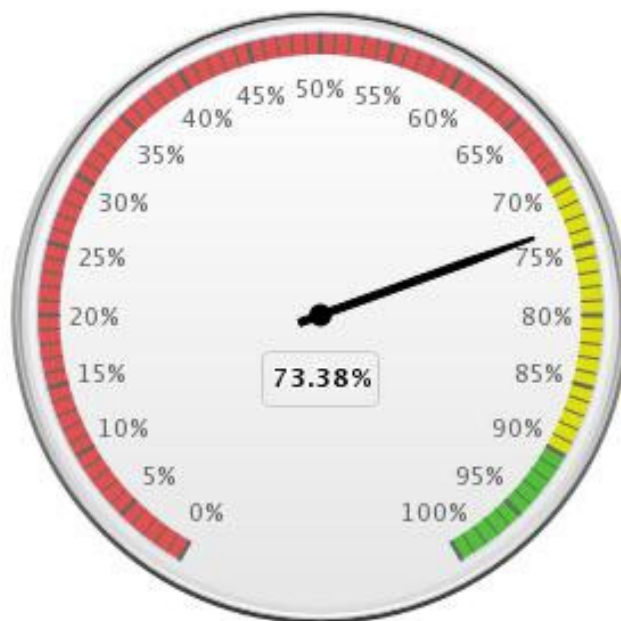


## **Response Times**

Response times are measured from the time when the department receives the page for service from the Carver County Sheriff's Office Dispatch until a fire unit arrives on scene. Response times do not reflect the time which a 911 caller spends on the line with a dispatcher to gain important information about the incident. This time can add up to another minute. Typically, a chief officer arrives on scene first and begins incident size up or patient care. Response times will vary based upon the type of incident, staffing levels, and time of day. The graphics below show the percentage of incidents responded to under the nine minute mark, median response time, average response time, average unit dispatch to arrival time by shift and unit. As noted in the dispatch to arrival graph, there is a significant reduction in response times when the fire station is staffed with a duty crew.

### **Percentage of Unit Total Response Times Under 09:00 Minutes**

Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022



## Median Total Response Time (MM:SS)

Date Reported: Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022



## Average Total Response Time (MM:SS)

Date Reported: Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022



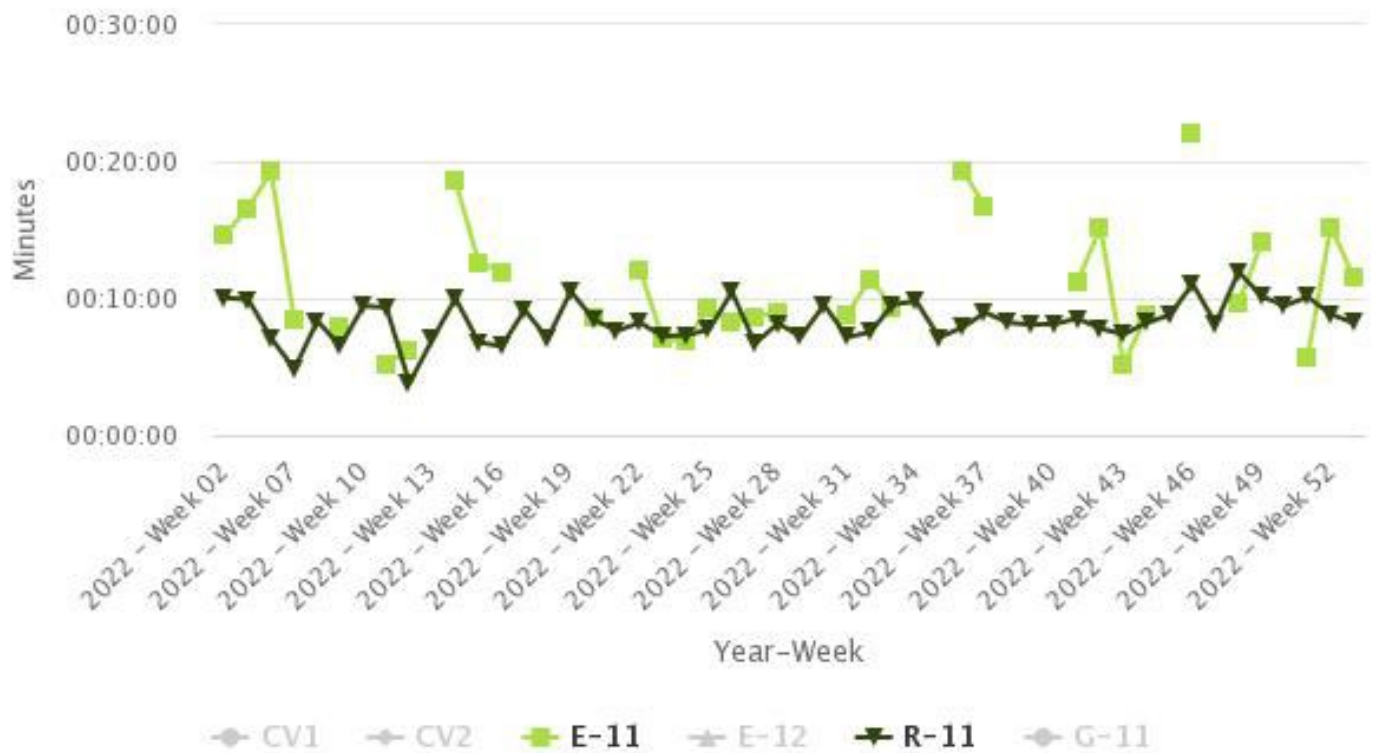
## Average Unit Dispatch to Arrival by Year-Week and Shift

Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022



## Average Unit Dispatch to Arrival by Year-Week and Unit

Jan 01, 2022 to Dec 31, 2022





## Fire Risk

A new tool released by the Minnesota State Fire Marshals Office provided departments with a means to evaluate the fire risk in their communities. This tool uses a multitude of datasets including demographics, education levels, smoking prevalence, median income, and fire incident data to determined overall community risk. This information can be vital to focus somewhat limited resources on community outreach efforts and public education messaging to assist with preventing a fire. Displayed via the graphs below is a score assigned to census tracts for the City of Victoria as well as factors contributing to fire ignition. This data can be powerful in preventing a fire from ever taking place. **Duty Crew**

Fire Risk Report Number of Block Groups: 4

powered by  URBAN LOGIQ

### Fire Risk Insights

#### Top Likely Factors for High Fire Risk

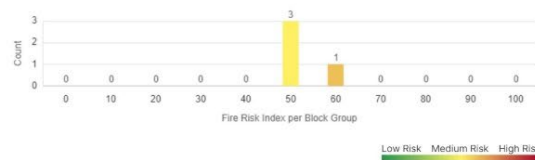
This area has a higher than average proportion of households with these characteristics.

- **Building Hazard:** unmaintained or old buildings
- **Distraction:** fires initiated by a distracted individual
- **Fire Alarm:** non-existent or dysfunctional fire alarms

#### Fire Risk Index Statistics

Average  
Fire Risk Index

51



Block Groups with the Highest Fire Risk Index

#### Block Group 2, Carver, MN (270190904022)

##### Fire Risk Index

57

##### Top 3 Ignition Items

- Electrical wire, cable insulation
- Item first ignited, other
- Multiple items first ignited

Common Education  
Highly Educated

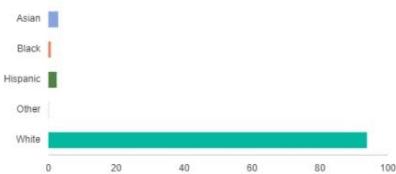
Region Type  
Urban

Poverty Level  
1.5%  
2.5 points below state average

Median Income  
\$157,000  
\$79,000 above state average

Smoking Prevalence  
12.4%  
4.2 points below state average

##### Ethnicity Breakdown



#### Block Group 1, Carver, MN (270190904021)

##### Fire Risk Index

52

##### Top 3 Ignition Items

- Electrical wire, cable insulation
- Item first ignited, other
- Light vegetation - not crop, including grass

Common Education  
Highly Educated

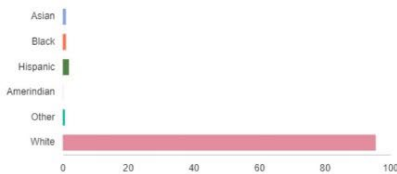
Region Type  
Hybrid

Poverty Level  
0.9%  
3.1 points below state average

Median Income  
\$163,000  
\$85,000 above state average

Smoking Prevalence  
12.4%  
4.2 points below state average

##### Ethnicity Breakdown



#### Block Group 2, Carver, MN (270190904012)

##### Fire Risk Index

48

##### Top 3 Ignition Items

- Electrical wire, cable insulation
- Item first ignited, other
- Light vegetation - not crop, including grass

Common Education  
Highly Educated

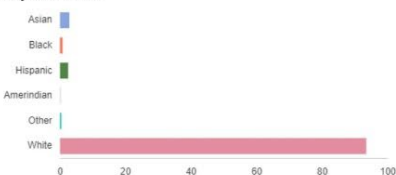
Region Type  
Hybrid

Poverty Level  
1.7%  
2.3 points below state average

Median Income  
\$154,000  
\$76,000 above state average

Smoking Prevalence  
11.6%  
5 points below state average

##### Ethnicity Breakdown



#### Block Group 1, Carver, MN (270190904011)

##### Fire Risk Index

46

##### Top 3 Ignition Items

- Chips, including wood chips
- Electrical wire, cable insulation
- Light vegetation - not crop, including grass

Common Education  
Highly Educated

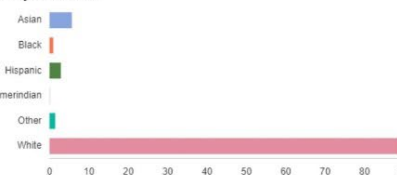
Region Type  
Hybrid

Poverty Level  
1.6%  
2.4 points below state average

Median Income  
\$133,000  
\$55,000 above state average

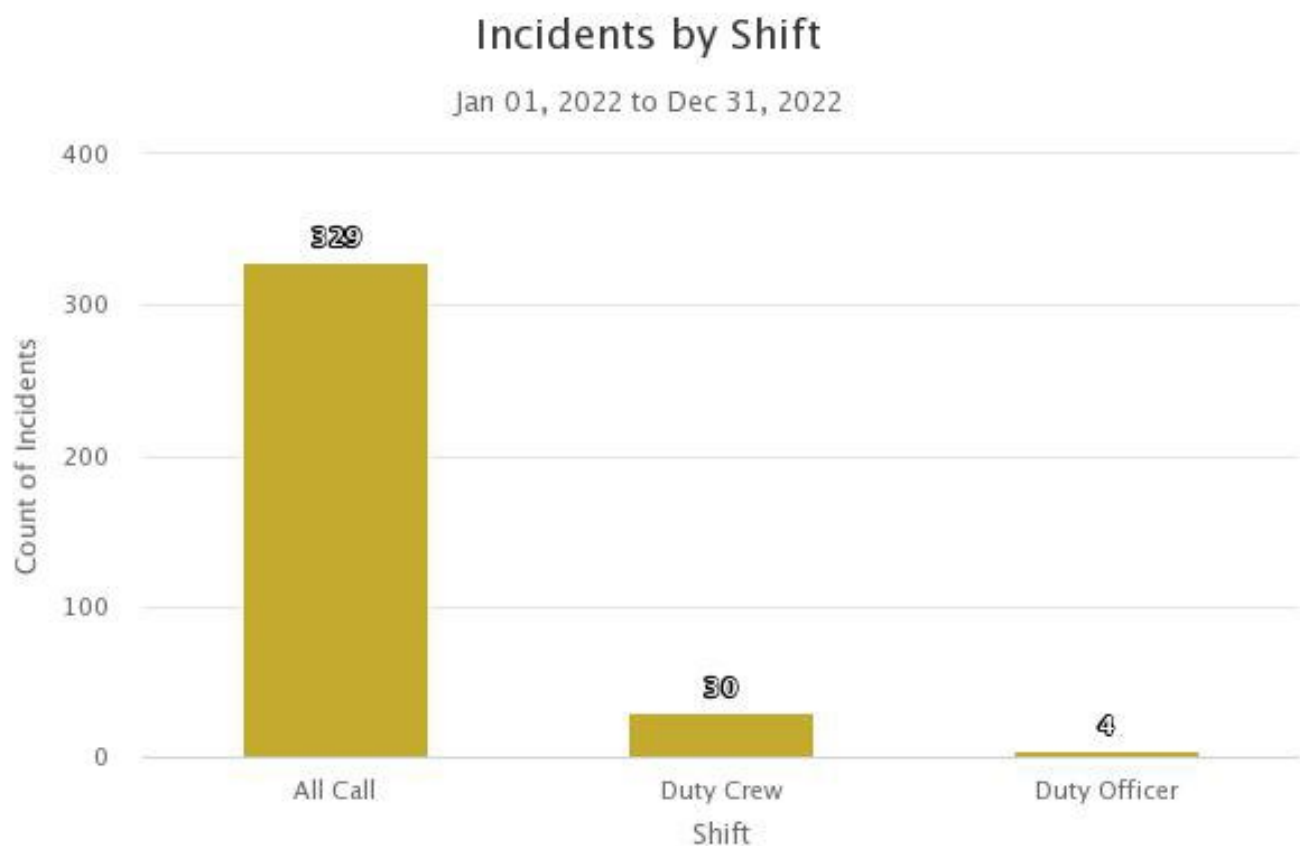
Smoking Prevalence  
11.6%  
5 points below state average

##### Ethnicity Breakdown



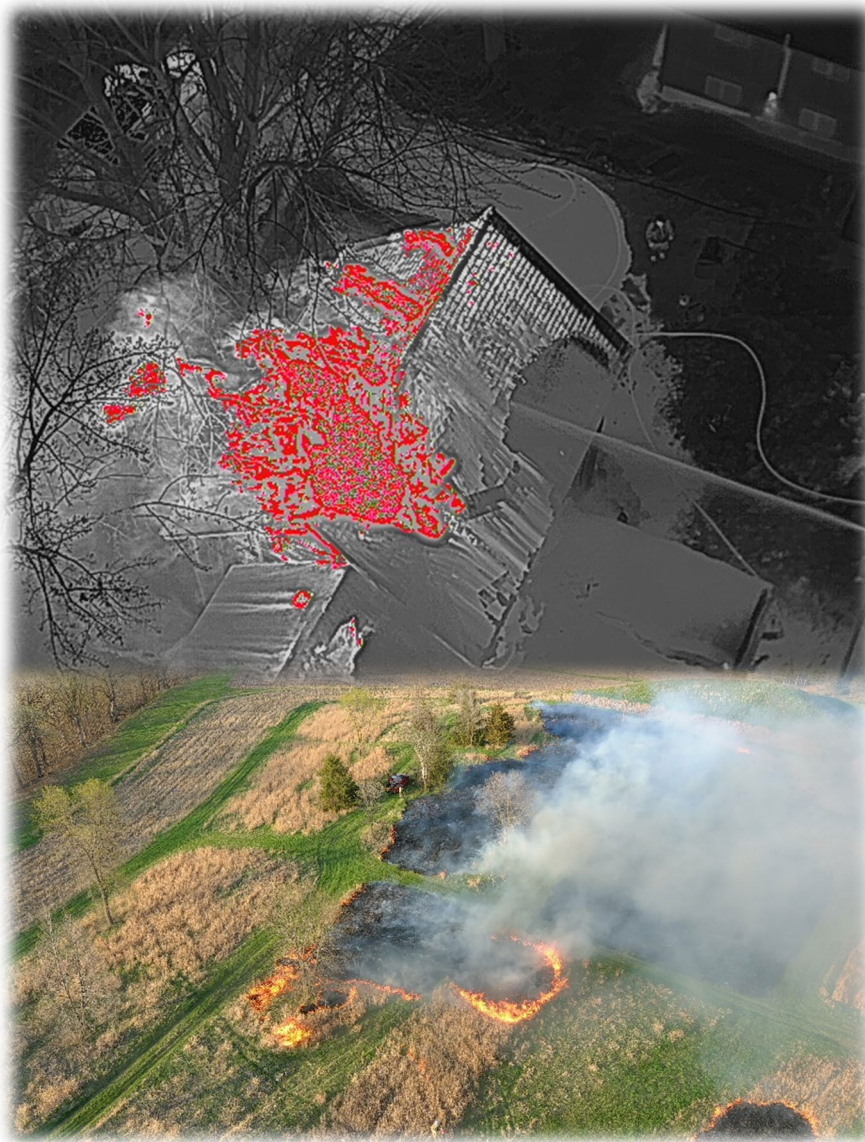
The department operates a duty crew program, staffing the fire station two nights per week. During this time, the staff on duty will respond to any calls for service, complete fire station and equipment maintenance, and conduct small group training sessions. In 2022 staff logged 1,334 hours in this program. Using this model, approximately ten percent of the 2022 call volume was handled by the crew on shift at the fire station without calling the entire department in.

This program provides an increased level of service to our community. A significant reduction in response time to place a staffed fire engine on scene, nearly five minutes on average, is recognized when the fire station is staffed with firefighters. This also allows our staff to contribute to the organization through a more structured, predictable model. Our staff gains valuable experience collaborating with other members whom they traditionally may not be able to work closely with. The call data, including time of day and day of week, shown in the section above is used to schedule the shifts to target peak call volume times.



### Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

The department added an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to the fleet of equipment to serve the community in 2022. The UAV allows for enhanced situational awareness on a variety of incidents. The UAV is equipped with both a high-definition camera and thermal imaging camera which allows firefighters to observe various thermal profiles. This can be used on fire incidents as well as searches for missing persons. Firefighters who are qualified to operate the UAV have received specialized training and earned a Remote Pilot Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration. In 2022, firefighters spent a total of 22 hours, 4 minutes of airtime operating the UAV. These hours include both training and incident responses. The photos below show an example of the thermal imaging capability and the standard camera.



## **Training**

Training is where department staff spend a vast majority of their time. In 2022 staff spent a total of 4,848 hours specific to training. The department strives to train on a variety of topics throughout the year to ensure that our team is properly trained to respond to all hazards in the community when called upon.

Covering a wide array of topics, firefighters attend a weekly training session to keep skills proficient and build teamwork. In addition to the weekly training sessions, there are numerous outside training opportunities available to firefighters throughout the year.

Improving the skills of our firefighters through advanced certifications and education helps increase the level of service the department provides to our community. The following individuals received extensive training and certification in various disciplines:

- Firefighter I, II, & Haz Mat-Matt Schuster, Ben Hagen, Steven Thuening
- Fire Instructor I-Thomas Erdmann, Brian Horgeshimer, Scott Wanzek
- Fire Apparatus Operator-Trent Michaels, Mike Weinberg
- Blue Card Local Hazard Zone Incident Commander-Scott Wanzek, Thomas Erdmann

To ensure the team's proficiency in fighting live fire, the department spends four drill nights annually at the SCALE facility in Jordan. During these trainings' firefighters experience live fire and search and rescue scenarios. This training is invaluable as it can sometimes be difficult to gain this real-world experience elsewhere.

The department's command staff and designated Right Front Seat Firefighters continue to maintain their Blue Card Incident Command certifications. Blue Card is a national incident command



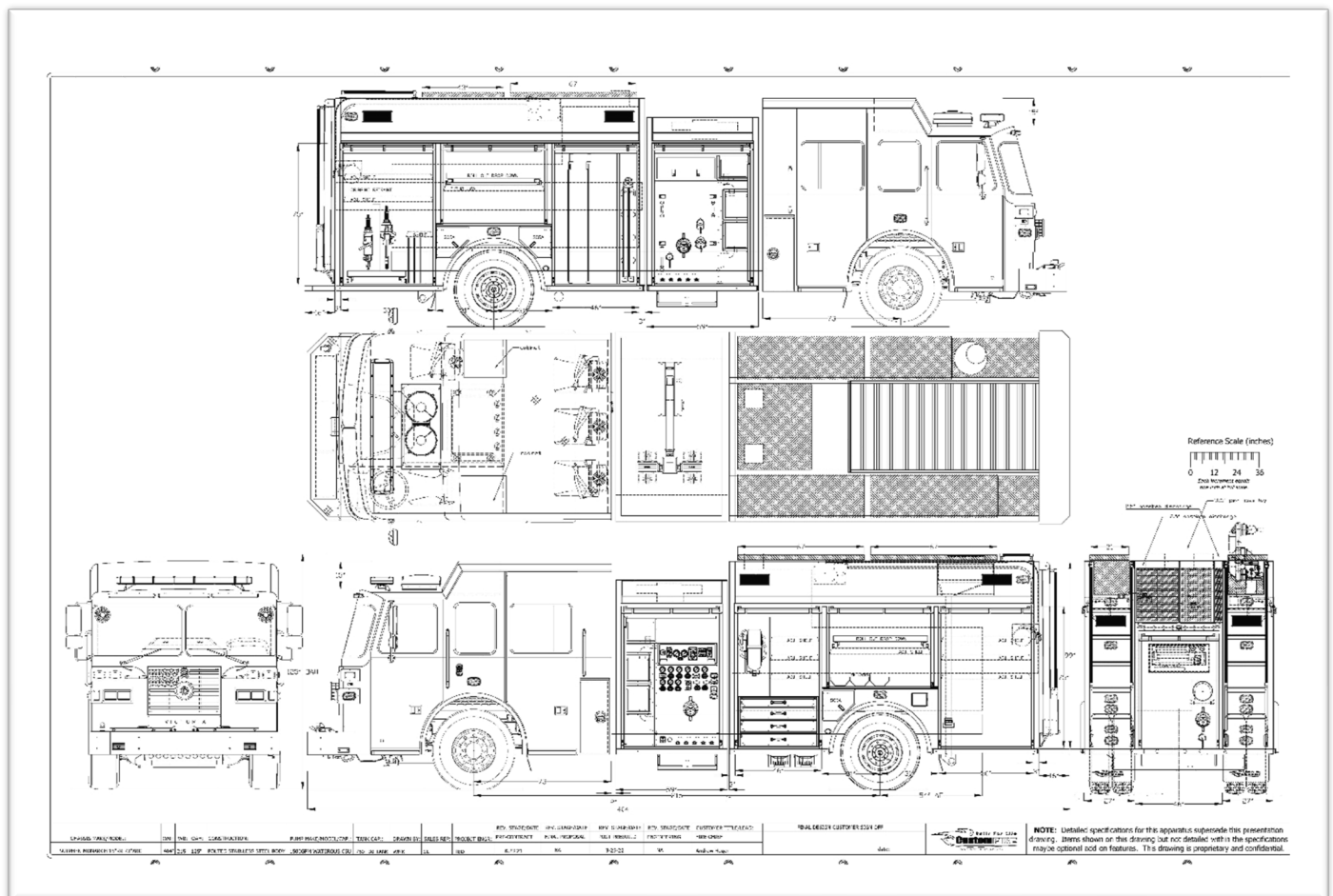


certification program. The initial certification consists of a 50-hour online module, followed by a 24-hour simulation lab. Every three years staff must renew their certification by completing an additional 36 hours of online training followed by another eight-hour simulation lab. This program gives command staff the valuable skills to manage incident scenes effectively and safely.



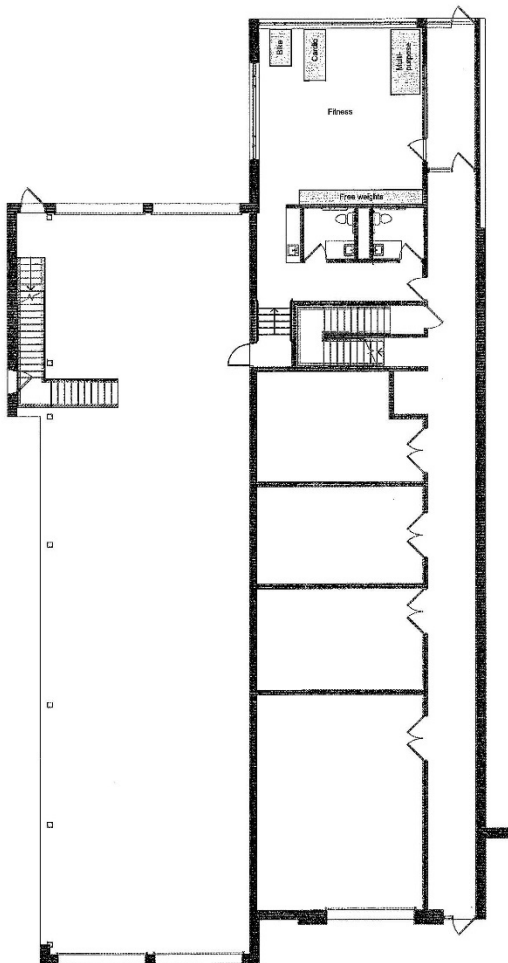
## Apparatus

The fire engine that was purchased in June of 2021 was further delayed as a result of supply chain constraints. The new fire engine is expected to arrive in early summer of 2023. Once in service, the truck will provide fire suppression, Emergency Medical Services, rescue, and hazardous materials capabilities to the community. The two pieces of equipment that this truck is replacing, a 1991 fire engine and a portable light tower, will be sold after the new truck is placed into service. The new fire engine will serve the community for the next 20 years.

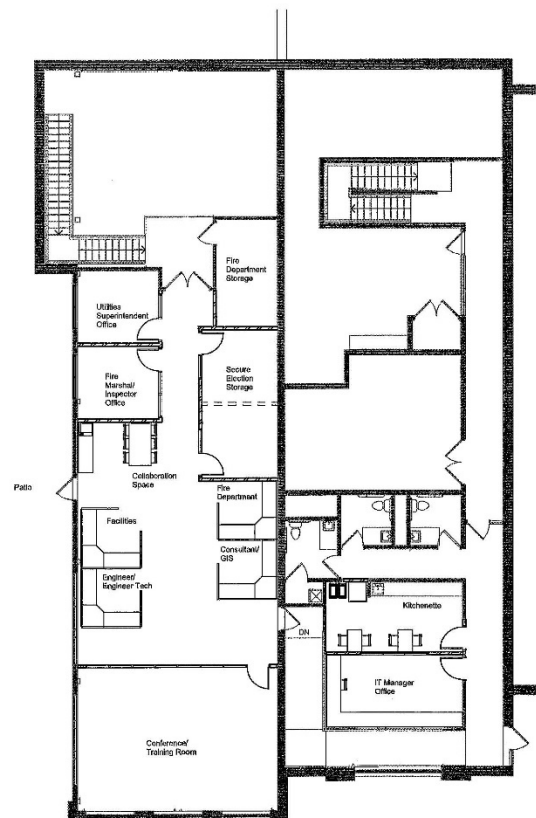


## Facilities

In 2022, city council approved a construction project to buildout the mezzanine space of the fire station. This space was constructed as part of the 2005 Water Treatment Plant and Fire Station project. The space was previously used for storage and a workout space. The space was identified as a short term need in the 2021 Space Needs Assessment. Construction kicked off in August of 2022 and should be completed in early 2023. The new space was constructed to maximize the long-term staffing needs of the city, even after the departure of the fire department from the facility.



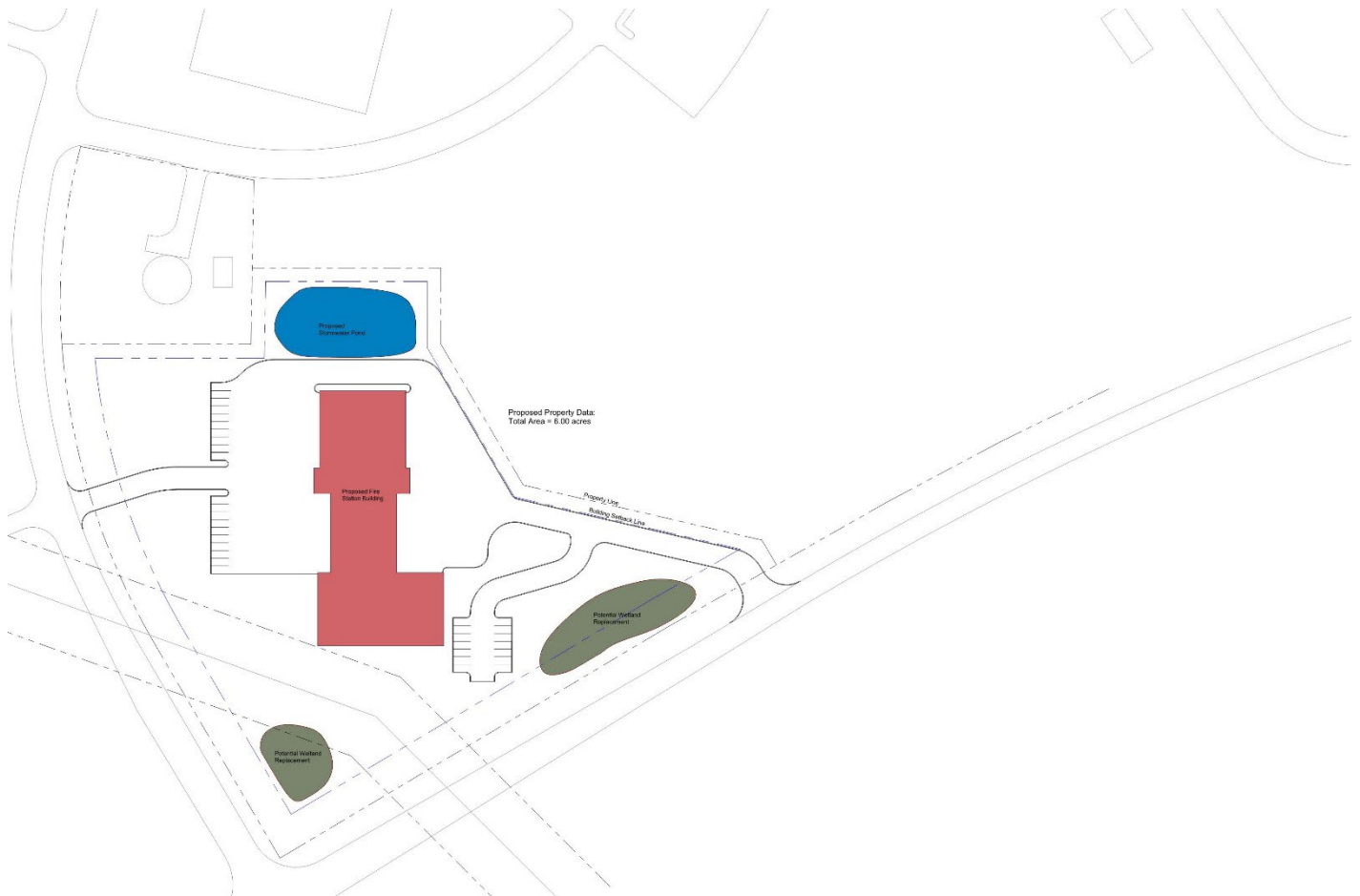
A4  
SC09  
Schematic First Floor Plan  
1/8" = 1'-0"



A10  
SC09  
Schematic Second Floor Plan  
1/8" = 1'-0"



A long-term recommendation in the 2021 Space Needs Assessment was the construction of a new fire station to serve the community. The current fire station turned 40 years old in 2022 and has many deficiencies related to firefighter healthy and safety and staffing needs. City staff retained the services of a real estate broker to assist with the search for property. After a thorough review of several sites the city finalized the purchase of six acres of property from Holy Family Catholic High School for the construction of a new fire station. This property is located at the intersection of County Road 18 and Kochia Lane. Construction of the new facility is expected to commence in 2025. A concept plan is included below to demonstrate one possible layout scenario.





## **Grants**

The department aggressively pursued grant funding from numerous sources and was able to secure \$56,532 in grant awards in 2022. These funds were used to fund a variety of projects from training to equipment upgrades that were not included as part of the annual operating budget.

- \$1,900 Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative Operation Round Up for the purchase of a Compressed Air Foam fire extinguisher.
- \$1,500 CenterPoint Energy Operation Round Up for the purchase of battery powered hand tools.
- \$8,020 Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education for training reimbursement.
- \$45,112 Urban Area Security Initiative grant for the purchase of wireless air monitors.

In addition to these grants, the department received many generous donations from citizens and businesses throughout the community in appreciation for the organization's services.

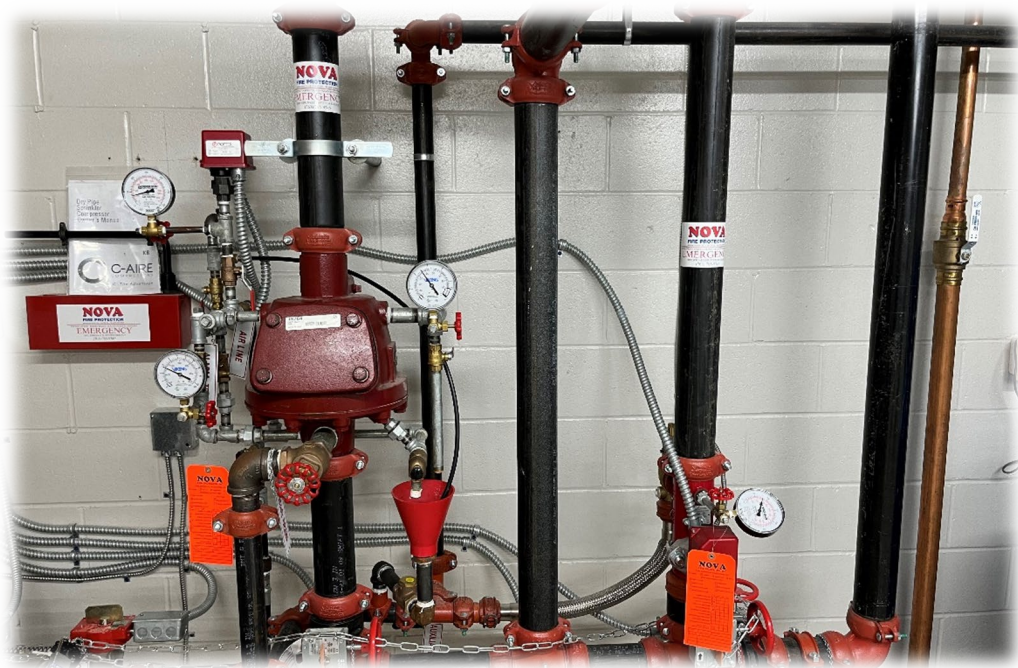


## **Inspection & Permits**

The fire department is responsible for conducting all life safety, fire alarm, fire suppression inspections, plan review, and permitting within the city. The goal of these inspections is to ensure the proper installation, function, and maintenance of critical life safety systems within buildings. The best tool for reducing fires is prevention!

A total of 157 inspections were conducted on the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems. Most of these inspections were conducted in multi-unit residential structures.

Fire prevention inspections were resumed in 2022 with a total of 14 inspections being completed. These inspections are a proactive means of identifying hazards in existing buildings and eliminating the hazard before it poses a threat to life safety.



## **Community Outreach & Public Education**

The department takes pride in participating in a variety of community outreach and public education events throughout the year. After having to modify the delivery of these services for several years prior due to the pandemic, 2022 saw a return to normal for most of these activities. In 2022 staff spent 296 hours specifically dedicated to these events. Listed below is a snapshot of several events the department hosted or participated in throughout the year. These events are important opportunities for the firefighters to build lasting relationships with the community.

- Victoria Fire Department Open House
- Night to Unite -20 neighborhood parties visited
- Several visits to daycare and the elementary school
- Neighborhood smoke detector battery change outs
- Victoria Library Storytime
- Various neighborhood parties
- Victoria Elementary School pop up splash pad
- Victoria Park and Recreation pop up splash pad
- Victoria Park and Recreation truck rodeo
- Victoria Park and Recreation safety camp
- 30 participants were taught Hands Only CPR
- Bayfront Park Tree Lighting Event
- City of Victoria Senior Resource Expo



## **A glimpse into 2023**

Staffing for the future will remain a top priority to ensure the department can continue to serve the needs of the growing community.

A full time Deputy Fire Chief position will be added to the team in 2023. This position will focus on the training and operations aspects of the department, taking much of the workload off the paid-on call staff. This position will also help bolster daytime staffing levels.

Preliminary design work will begin on the new fire station. A RFP will be released in the summer of 2023 to engage the services of an architecture firm. A team of firefighters will be selected to serve as the design team alongside the architecture firm. This team will also attend the Fire Station Design Conference in St Louis to educate themselves on the process of designing a fire station.

Firefighters will spend the summer months training on the operations of the new fire engine. Over the course of several months, the team will hone their skills prior to the truck being placed into service.

These are just a few large projects that the team will undertake in 2023. Most importantly, the team will continue providing the best service possible to the community.