

Fire Department

Dale E. Freeman, Chief

The Mishawaka Fire Department has been serving the citizens of Mishawaka since 1904. The primary responsibilities of the Fire Department are fire suppression, fire prevention, fire investigation, emergency medical, hazardous materials, education, water rescue, and any other hazardous incident you might think of. The minimum manning for the Fire Department is 31 on duty 24 hours a day 365 days a year. This is split up over 4 engines, two ladder trucks, one heavy duty rescue, 3 ambulances and one command vehicle.



Mishawaka Fire Department Honor Guard

Divisions

Emergency Medical Services

The past year continued to be busy for the Fire Departments EMS Division. With the new addition of a 2014 Horton Heavy Duty Chassis ambulance the Fire Department continues to upgrade its fleet to serve the citizen's needs. We have budgeted for another new ambulance in 2015 as we continue our planned upgrades.

In 2014 the City of Mishawaka Fire and EMS Department was able to further our capabilities in responding to and treating critically ill or injured citizens and visitors of the City of Mishawaka. We took advantage of a State mandated change in the certification of the Advanced Emergency Medical Technician. This mandate eliminated the previous certification level and elevated it to a more advanced level that now allows these providers to administer certain lifesaving medications, perform critical and time sensitive 12-lead EKG's, perform invasive procedures to administer these medications and deliver defibrillation with manual defibrillators.



STATPACK

In order to utilize the abilities of these advanced EMTs we developed a program where all ambulances and fire engines are equipped with the same first-line medications and equipment. We now have our “STATPACK” program in place. This is a highly specialized backpack that stores all of the equipment needed by these Advanced EMT’s and even our Paramedics during the critical first minutes of a lifesaving procedure.

These advances in both the level of certification and the equipment will allow us to deploy these highly trained providers and equipment to any medical emergency where time is of the essence.

Money raised from the Rick Goddard Memorial Golf outing was given to Heart Reach Michiana who provide AED’s to the community at no charge. This year’s outing raised enough money to purchase 3 AED’s which were donated to the following organizations:

- Mishawaka Fire Department
- Marian High School
- Hannah’s House

In August of 2014 the MFD began an evaluation period with a new device to help improve oxygen supply to the brain during cardiac arrest. Twenty ResQPODS were donated by the manufacturer for a 120 day evaluation. Prior to the evaluation a representative from ResQPOD spent three days educating and training our first responders on the operation of the device. During the evaluation MFD administration tracked 15 data points during each use of the ResQPOD and then compared them to the same data points during cardiac arrests where the ResQPOD was not used prior to the evaluation. This data is currently being checked against hospital data on these specific patients.



Heart Reach Michiana

The goal of the MFD is to ensure that every out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patient has the best chance possible to survive the event and to recover neurologically intact. This evaluation data is expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2015. Due to promising preliminary data, the MFD is continuing to use the ResQPOD until all data is evaluated.

Fire Prevention Bureau

The Mishawaka Fire Prevention Bureau, under the leadership of Chief Jim Schuster, is responsible for inspecting buildings, new and old, to ensure the safe occupancy of the people who work in and visit them. In 2014, the Fire Prevention Bureau along with the Mishawaka Building Department performed over 1,920 fire inspections of buildings in the City. This is a 12% increase from the 1,720 inspections performed in 2013. In addition, the Bureau works

closely with the Mishawaka Building Department by reviewing all design drawings for new construction within the City to make sure all fire and building codes are met. Final inspections and testing of safety features are completed before a final Certificate of Occupancy is given.

Fire Investigators from the Bureau were called out 22 times to investigate fires compared to 32 times in 2013 which was a 31% decrease. These fires ranged from vehicle fires to house fires to large commercial buildings. All fire scenes are fully documented and photographed, and a written report is completed as to the cause and origin. Any fire that is considered suspicious in nature will be jointly investigated with the Mishawaka Police Department Detective Division. All Fire Investigators are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year.

The Mishawaka Fire Department Prevention Bureau has always had a strong commitment to educating the citizens, employees, students, and visitors to our city. Throughout 2014, we trained many businesses in the hands-on operation of fire extinguishers. Extinguishing a live-fire in a controlled environment helps people learn how and when to use fire extinguishers properly and effectively. Also during 2014, many seminars and presentations were given to businesses on topics such as evacuation drills, fire safety plans, fire extinguisher use, emergency planning and preparedness, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, fire suppression systems, and fire alarm systems. Our main focus is on occupancies that contain the elderly and children.

During Fire Prevention Month in October, we brought our “Fire Safety Obstacle Course” to elementary schools, reaching a total of approximately 900 students. This program was initiated 13 years ago by Walt Disney P.E. teacher Steve Govorko. The Fire Safety Obstacle Course combines physical fitness and fire safety messages into a single class. Twelve different stations are set up, each having a different fire safety theme including the following:

- A blindfolded hose crawl
- Over-and-under obstacles
- Connecting hoses on fire hydrants
- Climbing ropes
- Ladders
- Window escape
- Stop drop and roll
- Coordination drills

In addition, a fire safety talk is given prior to each session. This program has been a great success and we plan to continue it for many years. With Mishawaka’s assistance, this program has expanded into other school districts with the help of Penn Township Fire Department, and the Clay Township Fire Department. We hope to continue to expand this valuable learning program again in 2015.

We continue to partner with businesses in Mishawaka to promote fire safety, prevention, and education. We were very fortunate again in 2014, receiving a \$1,000 donation from Lowes of Mishawaka. This money was used to purchase smoke detectors and extra batteries, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, and fire safety escape ladders. The Mishawaka Fire

Department continues our program that offers these items free of charge to the elderly or for those who may not otherwise be able to afford them.

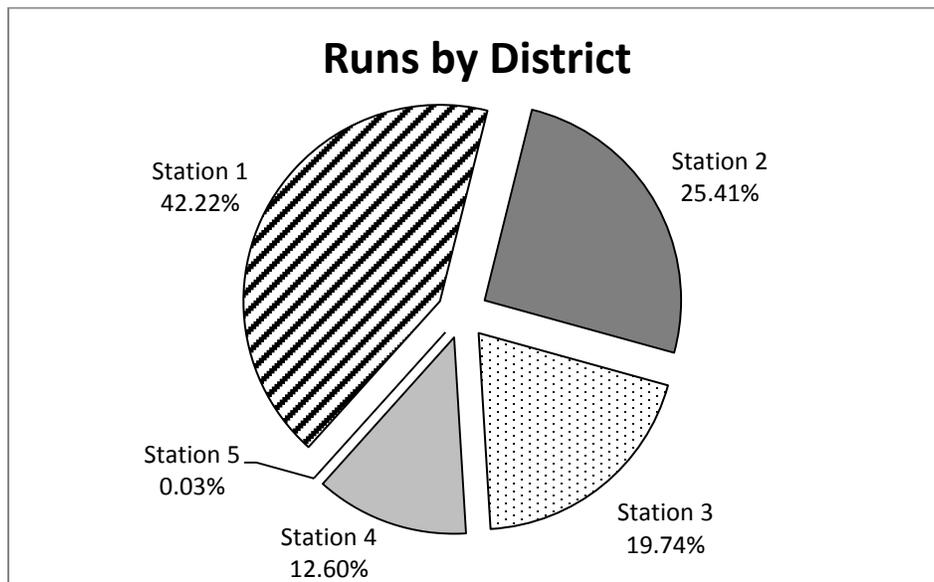
Public Education

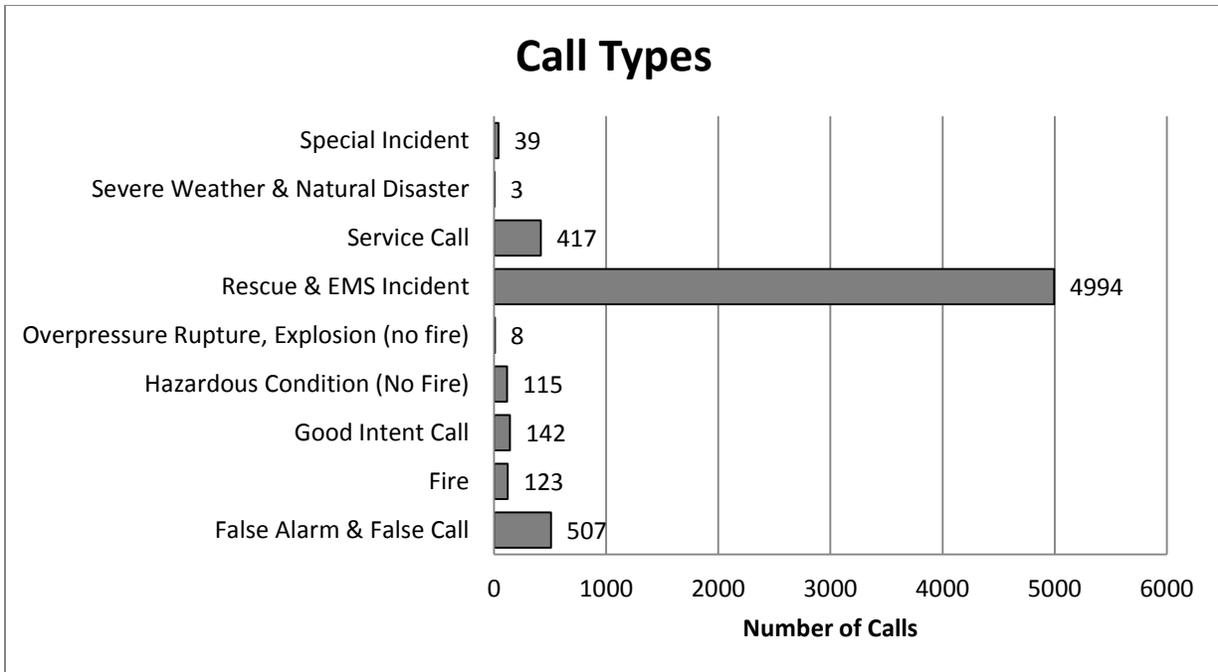
2014 was the 30th Anniversary of the Survive Alive House. Since its inception in 1984 153,123 people have toured the facility. In 2014, 63 groups and 1,543 people took part in the joint educational effort between the Mishawaka Fire Department and the School City of Mishawaka. Congresswoman Jackie Walorski presented a resolution honoring the house for its public education value.

- Little Red, the talking Fire Truck, gave classes to 10 groups of 162 preschoolers.
- Assemblies and tours accounted for another 36 groups of 1,649 people.
- As part of its Child Passenger Safety Program in 2014, the Fire Department helped install 105 car seats, through fitting stations located at each the City's 4 fire stations.

Statistics

Total run volume for the fire department decreased in 2014 with 6,353 total calls for service as opposed to 6,425 in 2013. This still averages over 17 runs per day. Total emergency medical runs accounted for 80% of call volume. Total EMS runs for 2014 were 4,940, a slight decrease from 5,115 in 2013. The department also responded to 9 commercial fires, 29 residential fires, 2 garage fires, and 10 apartment complex fires.





Training

The Mishawaka Fire Department is moving forward with the motto “Every Day Is A Training Day” because continuing education is the key to our profession. Our training hours keep going up every year which in turn translates into keeping our citizens better served and protected.

Working with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) some of our officers went to see first-hand some of the latest studies of fire dynamics, or how fires burn and move throughout a structure in today’s modern style of construction. They attended live burns in Chicago at UL’s facilities and our department also was able to be involved with several other local departments, such as Penn Township Fire Department, the Indiana Firefighter Training System, and UL using an acquired structure to do live, scientific burns. This was a ground breaking study and the data that was collected is now being used across the country to help develop and demonstrate new tactics to be used on fire-grounds to keep firefighters safe and is also featured in the new “Indiana SLICE-RS New Tactics Training Video.”

Our partnership with Lisa Greco and Bethel College is continually growing every year. Along with our leadership program, which is still going strong, we are now in the process of building a wellness and fitness program to aid our firefighters in living a healthier lifestyle on and off the job. This type of education is very important to our firefighters due to the stress of the job and will deliver first class information to guide and help us with nutrition, physical fitness, and mental health.

On the EMS side the Mishawaka Fire Department is involved in a clinical study on how to deliver more efficient CPR by using a brand new device. This ongoing study involves a device called a RES Q POD and it is expected for studies to show how it will help increase the chance survival for heart attack patients.

As usual, our overall hours of training last year also increased to a new total high of 25,000. In an effort to save tax dollars and provide the high quality training needed for our members we have sent several of our EMS officer's to be PALS, and ACLS, instructors to streamline the process and improve the quality and assurance of our members so we can provide the world-class service the citizens of Mishawaka deserve.

Lastly, with no intentions of slowing down we are starting off the year of 2015 with a Fire Officer Academy by holding three classes that meet NFPA and State of Indiana certification requirements that will teach, coach and mentor our members to help them become the future leaders, trainers and officers of our Department. Members will be certified Instructors and Fire Officers at the end of the academy in late spring. One of our main goals after moving to a 3 Platoon system 2 years ago was to create a department of men and women who are highly trained in both EMS and fire suppression and are more than capable to ride in every seat of any apparatus at any given time. We are committed to this goal and will continually work to meet it. Our citizens can rest assured that whenever a vehicle bearing the Mishawaka Fire Department name arrives to their call, they will receive nothing less than World Class Patient Care and Customer Service.

Giving Back

This year's recipient of the Mishawaka Firefighter of the Year was Captain David Ray. In addition to his duties as Captain at our Union Street station Captain Ray is the head of the Honor Guard for the Department and serves as the coordinator of the Department's very successful "Fill the Boot" campaign. This year's campaign set a record of \$12,069 dollars raised. The money will be used to send children to Camp Potawatomi.

Two t-shirt campaigns, the Pink Shirt for Breast Cancer, and the Camouflage T-Shirts raised money for local women's cancer support services, and "Honor Flight" trips to Washington D.C. for our W.W. II veterans to visit the memorial there.

Needy Family Project

This year's needy family campaign was a grand slam. Together, as one department, we raised a total of \$4,287. An outstanding effort by everyone! We also had a few donations from some very kind citizens from the community who heard about our program. A few were in Meijer while we were shopping, one was from a car seat, and a few were drop offs. Big thanks go out to Meijer, who was very helpful throughout the shopping and check out process, and also donated a whopping \$700 in gift cards. Thanks also to Kroger who was very helpful in the grocery process. Kroger also donated \$200 in gift cards.

This year things were a little different than our normal process but things worked out exceptionally well in the end. We helped a total of seven families. One family was picked up by their school, and only needed food. The rest of the children received a wonderful Christmas, getting just about everything on their lists for Santa. This year Kroger asked us to help one of their own, who was struggling this year due to medical problems. Kroger was unable to obtain

funds to help this person out and asked if we would be willing. We were able to purchase food for this Kroger employee in honor of the Kroger employees and the Mishawaka Fire Department.

One of the families we helped was involved in a car accident the 23rd of December. This put an even bigger damper on the holidays for this family. Her car was considered totaled as a result of the accident, she needed a new car seat for her daughter, who was not injured, and she was also 8 months pregnant. This family was very grateful for the aid we offered them during the holidays, as were all the families. It can be easy to lose sight of what this program is about, but in the end it is the right thing to do.