

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



2013 ANNUAL REPORT

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2013 was another very active and productive year for the City of Milton Fire Department which afforded great opportunities to implement positive improvements, placing the department in a very stable position for coming years. Overall emergency response activity was slightly below the prior year, allowing members to complete many ongoing projects, while also accomplishing several long-term goals. All of this activity has placed us in an excellent position to accomplish our primary mission of providing emergency services to the citizens of Milton.

EMERGENCY ACTIVITY

Despite a slight reduction in the overall number of emergency responses, 2013 still presented several challenging incidents requiring more than the response of the initial alarm assignment. The total number of emergency calls decreased by roughly 1.75%, down to 1,463 calls, from 1,489 the previous year. This reduction is attributable to two related issues: a reduction of nearly 5% in the number of medical response calls, and a nearly 16% reduction in the number of vehicle accidents. There is no clear explanation for the cause of these reductions. Otherwise, this year's activity actually reflects a continued stabilization of annual activity over the past 10 years to roughly 1,500 calls per year.

Rescue calls decreased this year, now totaling 1,202 calls, but still constitute the vast majority of our emergency calls, now 82% of our annual emergency activity. Rescue calls include: medical emergencies such as strokes, heart attacks, falls, etc.; all vehicle accidents including those that involve entrapment requiring forcible extrication with specialized hydraulic tools such as the "Jaws of Life"; and rescue calls like a child locked in a vehicle, elderly who have fallen and need help back into bed (lift assist), and even the occasional animal rescue. In 2012 we responded to 1,053 medical rescues, 112 vehicle accidents, and 37 other rescue calls.

Fire responses, while always a relatively small portion of our total emergency activity, remain our primary responsibility, and actually are the segment of our responsibility that requires the greatest resources, in terms of equipment, training and personnel. Although the vast majority of fire related incidents are quickly handled by the on-duty crew, we must always respond with the capacity to bring the full capabilities of the department to bear rapidly to effect rescue, protect exposures, and quickly bring a well-developed working structure fire under control. As we can never know when the next "big one" will occur, we must constantly maintain the readiness necessary to manage that incident. This includes continuous training of personnel and maintenance of vehicles and equipment to ensure that all is ready at a moment's notice. The number of fire related calls was up over 6% from 174 in 2012. This year we responded to 185 fire related calls, now amounting to 13% of our total responses. These included 42 structure fires, 6 vehicle fires, 2 brush or wildland fires, 100 false alarms or good intent calls, and 35 other fire related calls, such as illegal burning.

Our smallest category of emergency response, hazardous condition calls this year made up 5% of our emergency activity, but represents potentially the most dangerous aspect of our operations to both our members and the public. These include: natural and liquefied petroleum (LP) gas incidents; electrical problems such as downed power lines, arcing lines, and transformer fires; fuel leaks and spills, and all other hazardous conditions such as chemical releases, train derailments, building collapse, and terrorist acts. These incidents potentially involve very dangerous agents, present almost endless complexity, and often require responders to begin

operations with very little information in a very dynamic environment. The number of hazardous condition calls increased by nearly 25% this year, from 61 in 2012. In 2013 the department responded to 76 hazardous condition calls, including 26 gas incidents, 18 electrical incidents, 8 fuel leaks or spills, and 24 other hazardous condition calls.

On 90 occasions last year, we were dispatched to an emergency call while one or more units were already assigned to a previous call (concurrent calls). This means that over 6% of our emergency calls were received while we were already responding to, or on the scene of a prior emergency call. On at least 6 occasions we were dispatched to three or more simultaneous calls during the same period of time. On 4 occasions one or more of the concurrent calls occurred in conjunction with mutual aid provided to another jurisdiction. On at least 5 occasions a subsequent call was handled by a mutual aid agency providing temporary standby coverage to our district.

In every case an appropriate response was made without undue delay, and no calls have gone unanswered. On several occasions Engine 23 was required to respond to a medical emergency in place of Rescue 23, which was managing a previous call. Each of these incidences of concurrent calls results in a situation in which Engine 23 is not adequately staffed to respond to fire calls with its normal crew complement of four firefighters, creating extreme operational difficulties in addressing the immediate needs on the fireground should a fire occur.

Several incidents of note occurred during the year. Among these was a residential structure fire occurring very early in the morning of January 9 on Hamilton Bridge Road near Glover Lane. The home was occupied by a family of four, who were all home at the time of the fire. The fire had started in the garage just after midnight, and by the time the department arrived the garage was well involved. Thankfully, all members of the family had escaped and were gathered in a neighbor's yard as Engine 23 arrived to begin the offensive operation to control this fire before it could advance into the attic area or adjoining portions of the house. The fire was brought under control, with little damage to the rest of the house, and department personnel remained on scene for over two hours conducting extensive overhaul to remove the contents of the garage and check for any remaining hot spots. The owner was advised of the dangers of hidden hot spots, provided with a brochure explaining precautions to be taken, and advised to have someone remain on scene and watch for any signs of a fire and to call the fire department immediately if necessary. Less than an hour after returning to quarters, the department was dispatched back to the same address for a reported structure fire, arriving to find a well involved fire which totally destroyed the home. Despite the admonition to stay and watch for any signs of recurring fire, the occupant had left the home, and fire was discovered shortly thereafter and reported by someone driving by.

A fire occurred in a house on Magnolia Street very early on the morning of March 6 which destroyed the home. Members of the department arrived to find flames through the roof of the right side of the building, with heavy fire involvement in the living area on the west end of the house. Engine 23 initiated a combination attack through the front window of the fire room, as well as through the living room, pulling ceilings and extinguishing the advancing fire in the attic. The fire was soon brought under control and an investigation and extensive overhaul were commenced. The sole occupant of the house was not home at the time of the fire, and his dog, a female Pit Bull, was loose in the fenced back yard, and taken by Animal Control until later reclaimed by the owner. It was found that the fire had begun in a utility room in the right rear corner of the home.

On the morning of June 7 a fire occurred on the third floor of the Medical Office Building at Santa Rosa Medical Center that, while very small, had the real potential to become a serious incident. Although the building is fully sprinklered, there is no standpipe, and none of the windows are operable, creating extreme problems in locating a fire, delivering fire streams and evacuating heat and smoke. At 11:16 am we were dispatched to a commercial structure fire at this location and arrived to find the evacuation well underway. The fire was confined to an X-ray machine in a third floor doctor's office, and no sprinkler head had activated, but smoke had spread throughout the floor. In this case the fire was small in nature and quickly extinguished. Extensive operations were undertaken, however, to remove the acrid smoke from the building, involving the assistance of mutual aid companies. The building was returned to management and reoccupied within one hour of the fire.

Despite these, and a few other fires, vehicle accidents actually presented more challenging situations than any other this year. Improbably, for the second year in a row, on no less than six separate occasions we were dispatched to a report of a vehicle that had crashed into a building. While the first three of these were merely situations in which the vehicle had struck the exterior of the building, the other three incidents involved a vehicle that had crashed through the wall to some degree and into the building, causing considerable damage to both the building and vehicle. The first of these was a hit-and-run on February 27, when a car was driven into the side of the Tom Thumb at Dogwood Drive and Berryhill Road, breaking a water line, and then fled the scene. The second occurred on June 6 when the driver of a car westbound on Berryhill Road swerved to avoid a cat and crashed into the corner of the former Covenant Hospice building on the corner of Oak Meadows Drive. The third incident involved a car that lost control and crashed into a home at the corner of Park Avenue and Saratoga Street on July 21. Thankfully, in none of these cases were life-threatening injuries sustained.

The three subsequent incidents presented more serious situations. On the afternoon of August 14 three sisters were driving into town on Munson Highway when the driver suffered a seizure and continued across Stewart Street, up the driveway and directly into the wall of the cafeteria at Milton High School. School was scheduled to start the following week, and the building was occupied only by maintenance personnel, who sustained only minor injuries. Although extensive damage was done to the building, a steel support column stopped the vehicle and prevented it from proceeding through the open dining area to the other side of the building. All three occupants of the vehicle had to be forcibly extricated and were transported to the hospital.



At just after 6:00 am two days later, an empty flatbed semi-truck travelling northbound on Stewart Street drifted across the center lane just north of Magnolia Street and struck a southbound SUV head-on, instantly killing the driver of the SUV which was spun into the front of an southbound empty school bus. The semi continued across the roadway until it struck a building on the west side of Stewart Street, knocking the building completely off of its foundation and destroying the corner of the building. The driver of the semi was later determined to have been driving under the influence at the time of the accident.



Later that same day, a driver heading east on Caroline Street lost control of his vehicle and drove through the parking lot of First Baptist Church, across MLK Drive and directly into the side of the building, coming to rest in the side of the prayer chapel on the west side of the building.



Other noteworthy vehicle accidents include: an incident involving a log truck that overturned while turning from Caroline Street onto Dogwood Drive on June 27; another involving a log truck that failed to stop at the STOP sign at Magnolia and Stewart Streets, jackknifing and striking a power pole; a pedestrian that was struck by a southbound car at Dogwood Drive near

Simpson Drive, on the evening of August 14, the same day as the accident at Milton High School; several incidents in which vehicles struck and damaged power poles; and finally, an accident just outside the city in the curve of Glover Lane in which a pickup truck overturned into the rain-swollen drainage ditch, trapping the driver with his head in the water under the overturned vehicle. In this last incident, our department had been dispatched as part of an Automatic Aid Agreement, and worked with Skyline Fire Department and LifeGuard Ambulance, using air bags to lift the vehicle while the driver's head was held out of the water, quickly and safely removing the occupant.

MUTUAL AID

The maintenance of effective mutual aid agreements is a crucial element in our overall ability to meet the needs of our citizens. While we are able to manage the vast majority of emergency calls with on-duty personnel, supplemented when necessary by the recall of off-duty personnel, incidents do arise wherein the resources of the City of Milton Fire Department alone are not sufficient to manage the situation. In these situations we must call on the support of surrounding fire departments to develop a coordinated response structure. During calendar year 2013 the department provided mutual aid to other departments on 26 occasions, and received mutual aid on 25 occasions, amounting to 1.8% and 1.7% of total calls, respectively. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was provided decreased from 45 in 2012. Several of these calls involved working structure fires where department personnel and resources were involved in active firefighting operations, including working structure fires at Immanuel Baptist Church, on Chantilly Way, Syrcle Drive, and South Airport Road. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was requested and received increased by 5 from the 2012 total of only 20 instances.

VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

With minor exceptions, our fleet of firefighting apparatus is in very good shape and has continued to serve us well throughout the year. Rescue 23, our 13-year old rescue vehicle, is the busiest vehicle in the fleet, and continues to experience frequent mechanical issues. We have prepared specifications for a replacement vehicle and are seeking funding options to replace this unit within the next few years. The Fire Chief's 2001 Chevy Tahoe also experienced chronic maintenance issues which ultimately resulted in a complete replacement of the main electrical wiring system that has, so far, seemed to solve its problems. All of the department's Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) were inspected and tested early in the year. All ground ladders were also inspected and tested.

In June we were awarded a \$13,270.00 grant from the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation to purchase a Hurst e-Draulic combination rescue tool. This tool, commonly known as the "Jaws of Life," is used to cut and spread metal and other materials to rescue entrapped victims from vehicle accidents, building collapse, and similar situations. This particular tool is a battery powered version of the hydraulic extrication equipment that the department currently carries on Rescue 23. This new tool is carried on Engine 23. Unlike existing equipment, the new tool is not tethered to a power unit by hydraulic hoses, and can be deployed anywhere, even inside of a burning building to rescue trapped firefighters. This tool has the same cutting and spreading force as existing units and will be invaluable in any emergency situations where rapid extrication is required.



A formal presentation and dedication program was held on October 1 at the local Firehouse Subs in Gateway Plaza on Caroline Street, in front of the store's mural depicting the City of Milton Fire Department fighting the 2009 Caroline Street Fire. Store owner Tony Pietsch expressed his appreciation for the relationship he has with the City of Milton Fire Department. The walls of his Milton store are adorned with images of the members and equipment of the City of Milton Fire Department through the years, images donated by the department.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) objectively reviews the fire suppression capabilities of communities throughout the nation and assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC), a number from 1 to 10, which is used to determine local fire insurance rates. ISO representatives visited Milton in June to conduct an updated PPC survey. During this visit fire department equipment and facilities were inspected and department records, fire hydrant flow-tests, and fire incident reports were examined. The City of Milton Fire Department has again maintained its very favorable Class 4 Rating from ISO. Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet minimum recognition criteria. Insurance companies utilize this PPC classification for underwriting and calculating premiums for residential, commercial and industrial properties. A Class 4 rating represents the most favorable rating effecting residential insurance rates. With this Class 4 rating, ISO places the City of Milton Fire Department among the top 16% of all fire departments in the nation.

ISO's Public Protection Classification system analyzes three critical feature of a community's structure fire suppression delivery system, weighting each on its relative importance. The fire alarm and communication system, which are the facilities and support for handling and dispatching fire alarms, accounts for 10% of the total classification. The water supply system, including wells, storage tanks, water distribution system, and fire hydrants, accounts for 40% of the total classification. Finally, evaluation of the fire department itself, including its facilities,

apparatus, equipment, pumping capacity, training, and personnel, accounts for the remaining 50% of the total classification. Maintenance of this Class 4 rating is testimony to the constant efforts of the City of Milton and the members of the department to provide professional and efficient fire protection to the citizens of Milton.

As the fire station is the city's most visible public facility, members of the department felt very strongly that the grounds should look as attractive as possible. With this in mind, department personnel initiated an extensive landscaping plan for the fire department property, in keeping with the city's overall landscaping theme. Members worked with the city's Landscape Director to develop a phased landscaping plan and then set out over several months to execute the plan.



TRAINING

As always, training remains a vital part of the fire department's normal activity. With the wide array of situations to which the department is called to respond, it is imperative that all members of the department remain current and proficient in all areas of firefighting, basic life support, technical rescue, hazardous materials, etc. In accordance with the department's annual training calendar, each member undergoes a minimum of 20 hours of in-service training each month. In addition to this company training, many members have participated in additional specialized training.

In April, the department conducted a Tactics and Strategies course taught by Captain Jim Custred through the Florida State Fire College. Chief Reble, Captain Lee Devine, and Firefighters Daryl Auerbach, Peyton Blackledge, Paul Gilliard, Jeremiah Hatcher, Steve Maddox and Scott Snowden attended this course. Gulf Power conducted a Powerline Safety training for all members of the department in May. In July, 11 members of the department participated in Active Shooter Response Training in conjunction with the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office. Special training sessions were arranged to conduct practical (hands-on) training on rough terrain rescue in April and vehicle extrication in September.

In September Chief Reble, Captains Devine and Custred, and Lieutenant Freeman attended a three-day Fire Service Leadership Conference in Panama City, where some of the most respected Chief Officers in the country presented classes on leadership and management in the fire service. Five members of the department completed the National Fire Academy's "Courage to be Safe" class. Firefighter Jeremiah Hatcher attended RT-130 and Portable Water Supply training. Firefighter Scott Snowden attended Public Information Officer training. Lieutenant Geoff Freeman completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Public Safety Administration from Saint Petersburg State College.



With the pending demolition of the housing units on James and Grace Streets, the members of the department have had the opportunity to conduct extensive fire attack (simulated smoke) and search and rescue training in these vacant units, including VES (vent – enter – search) training in August.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

While internal training is a crucial element of department operations, external public education remains a very important element of the department's overall fire prevention program. The department operates with a stated goal to, "Put ourselves out of business through fire prevention and public education." While a lofty goal indeed, the department does consistently see a positive impact from their efforts toward educating the public. We would like to think that the reduced number of fire calls over time is at least partly attributable to our success through public education. The department attempts to offer a diversified public education program in an effort to reach all age groups throughout the community. Fire Prevention is taught through school programs, station tours, fire drills, fire extinguisher demonstrations, fire prevention classes, informational displays, and our Fire Safety Puppet Show. During 2013 the fire department conducted 20 school programs, reaching 1,117 students, 5 fire extinguisher classes, reaching 112 persons, one fire drill for 125 persons and 23 other programs, including station tours, reaching 2,451 people, for a total of 49 programs reaching 3,805 people.

Our department also provides Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Classes to target groups and the general public. With our outstanding classroom facility, we have been able to increase this program to offer a regular schedule of public classes, and again offer the program to all city employees. We generally offer CPR and First Aid to the public on the first Saturday of each month, and will gladly arrange special classes for groups that desire such training. Through the department's Training Center, headed by Firefighter/EMT Steve Maddox, 32 individuals were taught CPR, and 4 were certified in First Aid.



This year again, during National Fire Prevention Week on October 12, we held our third annual Fire Prevention Open House. This 3-hour program featured equipment displays and demonstrations, station tours, displays and demonstrations by our community partners, our *Fire Safety Puppet Show*, fire safety demonstrations, and refreshments. This event was attended by well over 1,000 people and was again deemed a great success.

FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY

The City of Milton Fire Department is also responsible for enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code and Life Safety Code. Chief Reble serves as Life Safety Officer and Fire Official for the City of Milton. With the slow economy, development, and the resulting demand for inspections of new construction and new business had dropped off considerably. In 2013 this activity continued to rebound slightly. Chief Reble conducted 55 Life Safety Inspections, 30 Follow-up Inspections, 39 Construction Related Inspections, and 60 plan reviews, totaling 184 inspections and reviews.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Milton Fire Department continued its long tradition of community involvement throughout 2013. The City of Milton Fire Department supported the Milton High School Quarterback Club by providing standby coverage for their Big Cat Jamboree in August. Fire trucks were displayed at Family First Network's Fall Festival in October. During Literacy Week, members of the department read to children at Capstone Academy and Rhodes Elementary School. The department participated in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade in January and participated in the dedication of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. monument, carried the Milton High Panther in the Homecoming Parade in October, participated in the Veterans Day Parade in November, and again delivered Santa Claus at the end of the annual Milton Christmas Parade in December. Also in December, members of the department provided support to the local United Way chapter to help with the Toys for Tots campaign.

Recognizing the need for a local honor guard to support ceremonial functions, the Board of Directors of the Santa Rosa County Firefighters Association established the Santa Rosa County Firefighters Association Honor Guard in 2012, consisting of members of the several fire departments in Santa Rosa County. Two members of the City of Milton Fire Department, Firefighter/EMTs Stephen Steele and Ben Stockdale, were selected as charter members of this Honor Guard. The honor guard participated in several events, sadly including several funerals, and were this year selected to lead both the Pace and Milton Christmas Parades.



In an effort to maintain a close supporting relationship with our neighbors, in November the department hosted a spaghetti dinner at the fire station. Invitations were sent to individuals throughout the immediate neighborhood of the fire station and guests were treated to a meal of home cooked spaghetti, garlic bread, salad, and tiramisu, while enjoying a multi-media presentation on the history of the Milton Fire Department presented by Chief Reble. This event was well received and greatly helped to solidify the close relationship and support we enjoy with our neighbors.

INTO THE FUTURE

The work of the past few years has put our department in a very strong position, confident of our ability to meet the demands of serving and protecting the residents of Milton. We will continue to examine department staffing needs in order to insure that we will remain always ready to provide the level of service our citizens have come to consistently expect from our agency. Our new fire station facility provides us with the resources that will be needed to sustain our high level of service for many years to come. The addition of our new fire engine, with the associated realignment of our fleet, puts us in a very strong position from a firefighting point of view. While the department must soon look to replace Rescue 23, our 13-year old first-due rescue vehicle, we find ourselves well equipped to meet the continued demands of protecting the lives and property of our citizens well into the future. We also look forward to planning an appropriate celebration of our department's 100th Anniversary in 2014.

**City of Milton Fire Department
Always Ready ... Always There**

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2013

ACTIVITY REPORT

ALARM RESPONSES

FIRE CALLS

TYPE:	Vehicle Fire	Structure Fire	Brush Fire	Alarm*	Other**	Total
NUMBER:	7	37	3	96	31	174

* Includes false and unintentional alarms, smoke scares, good intent, etc.
 ** Includes fire investigations, unauthorized burns, etc.

RESCUE CALLS

TYPE:	Medical Response	Vehicle Accident / Extrication	Other	Total
NUMBER:	1108	133	13	1254

HAZARDOUS CONDITION CALLS

TYPE:	Natural Gas*	Electrical Problems**	Fuel Leak/Spill	Other	Total
NUMBER:	26	10	9	20	65

* Includes gas leaks, smell of gas, etc.
 ** Includes downed power lines, transformer fires, arcing wires, etc.

MUTUAL AID:	GIVEN:	45	3.01%	RECEIVED:	20	1.34%
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TOTAL CALLS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2013

1493

TOTAL CALLS IN 2013:	<u>1493</u>	TOTAL CALLS IN 2012:	<u>1489</u>
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PERCENTAGE INCREASE: -0.27%

PUBLIC EDUCATION

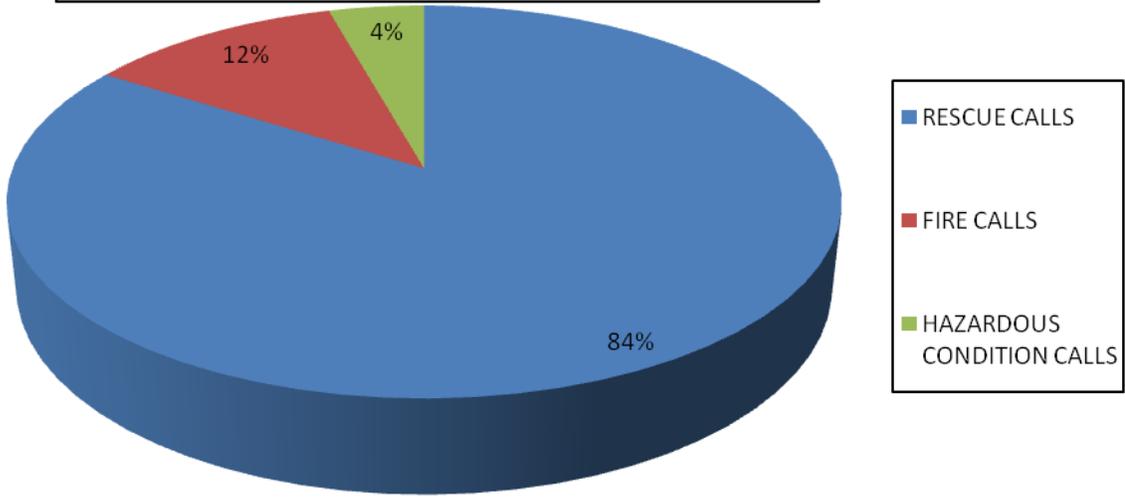
TYPE OF PROGRAM:	School Class	Extinguisher Demo	Fire Drill	Other	Total
Number Conducted:	20	5	1	23	49
Number Attending:	1117	112	125	2451	3805

LIFE SAFETY

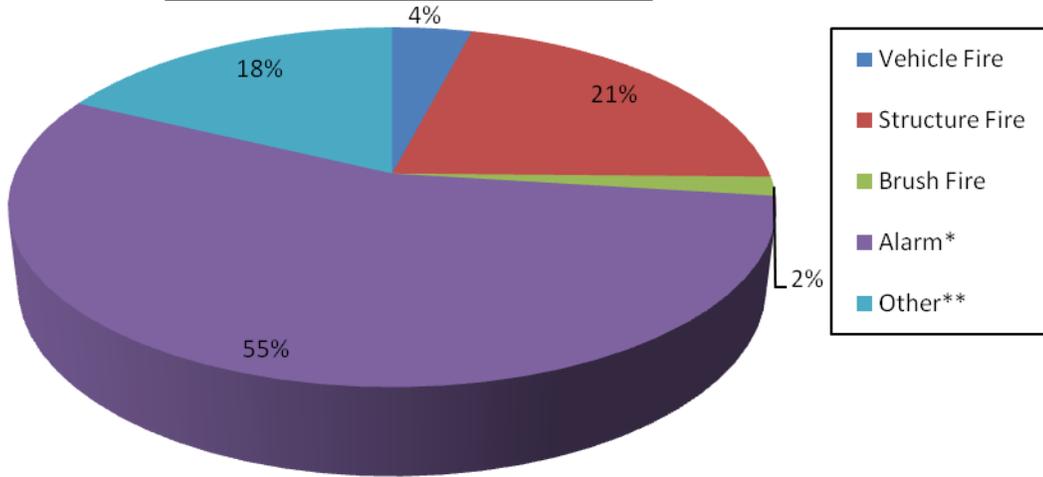
TYPE:	Life Safety Insp	Follow-up	Construction	Pre-plan	Plan Review	Total
Number:	55	30	39	4	60	188

EMERGENCY RESPONSES

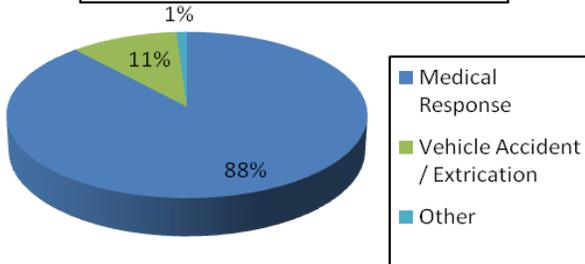
CALENDAR YEAR 2013



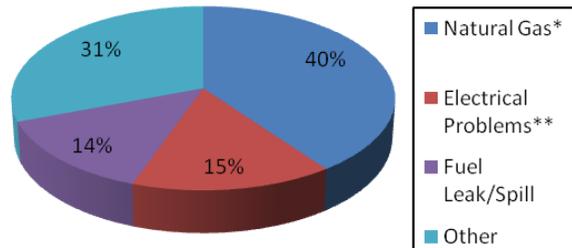
FIRE CALLS



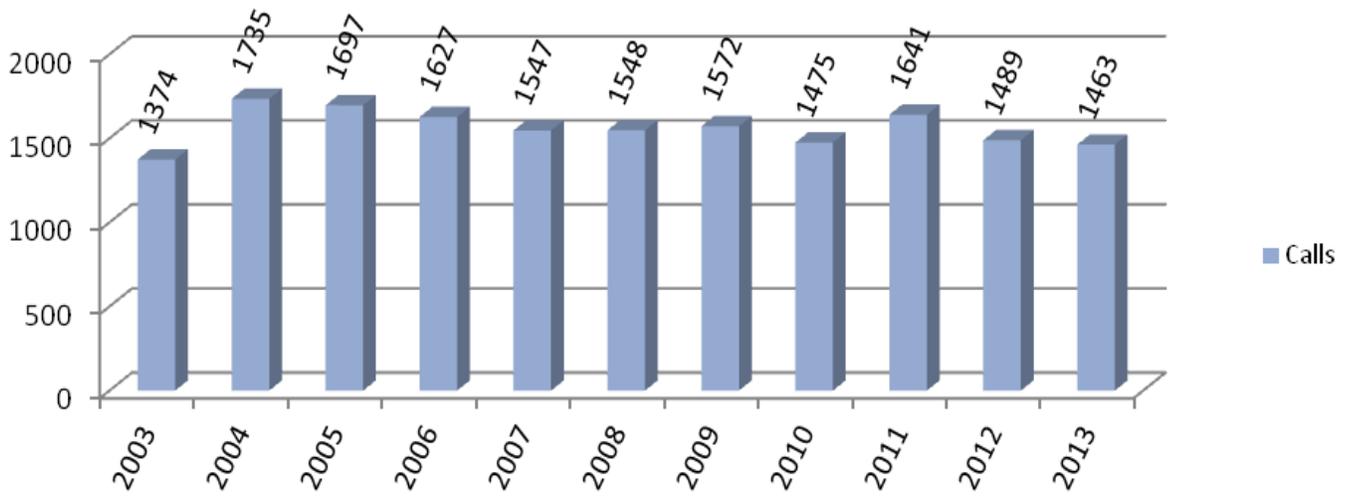
RESCUE CALLS



HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS



Emergency Calls 2003 - 2013



Emergency Calls 1980 - 2013

