



2022 Bloomington Fire Department Annual Report



“Dedicated to Our Community, Our Profession and Each Other”
Since 1868

Bloomington Fire Department: Mission Statement

"The mission of the Bloomington Fire Department is protecting life and property, minimizing the impacts of fire, medical emergencies, and other natural or man-made disasters without subjecting our personnel to unreasonable risk. Our mission is accomplished through public education, fire prevention, code enforcement, fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials mitigation, and fire investigation. We are dedicated to completing our mission in a competent and professional manner."

Fire Chief: Eric West

Mayor Mwilambwe, City Council Members, City Manager Gleason, and residents of the City of Bloomington, I am again pleased to present to you the 2022 Annual Report from the Bloomington Fire Department. This report will highlight the services the department provides, look at the accomplishments that occurred in 2022, and will review department statistics.



Notable Accomplishments in 2022:

- Hired five new firefighters.
- Added a new position, EMS Billing Manager, which was filled internally. Filled vacant Support Staff V and a Support IV positions.
- With the purchase of one Lucas device, all frontline ambulances and EMS 1 now have one of these on them. This device is a chest compression system that is used in cardiac arrests.
- One of the first departments in the state to begin using ultra-sound on cardiac arrest incidents. This allows the department paramedics to see what the heart is doing.
- Took delivery of a new ambulance, Medic 4. It is located at Station 4, 1705 S. Morris Ave.
- The Foreign Firefighters Insurance Board purchased thermal imaging cameras allowing each riding position on all frontline and reserve apparatus to have a thermal imaging camera.
- Replaced most of the vehicle Mobile Data Terminal's with IPADS and began using the Crewforce App to obtain information from Bloomington Dispatch and the CAD. Crewforce is a much more user-friendly platform than the program we were using on the Mobile Data Terminal's.
- Began using Operative IQ. This program is replacing our current inventory and asset management program and will help us manage our operations. We have worked with Fleet, and we are using this program to create maintenance tickets for our apparatus. We are also using this to create maintenance tickets for equipment and creating requests for supplies at the stations.
- Added more peripheral devices in the station for our station alerting. Placing new red LED lighting in the bedrooms that come on with the alarms instead of the previously used bright white lights. Studies have shown that being startled by bright lights is a health issue.
- Appointed a new Public Education/Public Information Officer.
- Exceeded over 15,000 followers on our Facebook page.
- Public Education was able to get in front of every kindergarten class in District 87, those Unit 5 schools in Bloomington, and private schools to provide a fire prevention program. These classes totaled over three thousand students.

- Relocated our Maintenance Coordinator office out to Station 5, 2602 Six Point Rd.
- Continued replacing lights in the stations with LED lights for more energy efficient stations.

The Bloomington Fire Department was awarded the American Heart Association Mission Lifeline Gold Plus Award.

In 2022 the department responded to 13,272 incidents, compared to in 2021 where we responded to 12,969 incidents. This equates to just over 36 calls a day for the department.

I cannot say enough about the members of our department. I am proud of the professionalism and service that each member of the department provides to the citizens and visitors of the City of Bloomington.

The department continues to struggle with hiring. In 2022, we made a change in the hiring requirements allowing us to hire licensed Pre-Hospital Registered Nurses, APRN, or Pre-Hospital Physician Assistants that meet the requirements set forth by the Emergency Medical Services Act. Working with IAFF Local 49 we also changed the residency requirement that allows a member to live anywhere in the state of Illinois. Even with these changes we did not see any increase in our applications.

On behalf of myself, my staff, and members of the Bloomington Fire Department I would like to thank the residents, Mayor Mwilambwe, City Council members, City Manager Gleason, and city staff and employees for their support and trust of the department, we look forward to serving all of you in the years to come.

Respectfully,

Chief Eric C. West

Who we are as a city and as a fire department?

The Bloomington Fire Department is a Fire/EMS service that provides protection to the City of Bloomington, Illinois. The department is a full-time department that runs out of five stations. The department runs a 3-shift platoon, with shifts working 24 hrs. and off 48 hrs. Bloomington Fire Department operates five stations throughout the city. Out of these five stations, we operate four Engine Companies, two Truck Companies, one Battalion Chief, four ALS Ambulances, one EMS Supervisor, a Hazardous Materials unit, and an ARFF unit. Our Engines and Trucks are staffed with a Captain, Engineer, and Firefighter. Members of the department are trained to the FFII or Basic Fire Operations certification with many at the FFIII or Advanced Fire Operations certification. Bloomington Fire Department provides the ambulance service for the City of Bloomington. We operate four ALS ambulances; each ambulance will respond with two Paramedics. We also have one EMS Supervisor, who is a Paramedic that operates in an ALS

equipped non-transport SUV. All the department's fire apparatuses are licensed to an EMS level and will respond to EMS incidents to provide EMS care before the arrival of an ambulance or will respond with the ambulance to assist the ambulance personnel. Our ambulance personnel are also firefighters and respond on fire calls with the fire apparatus, these members will be used for suppression, or they may be assigned EMS.

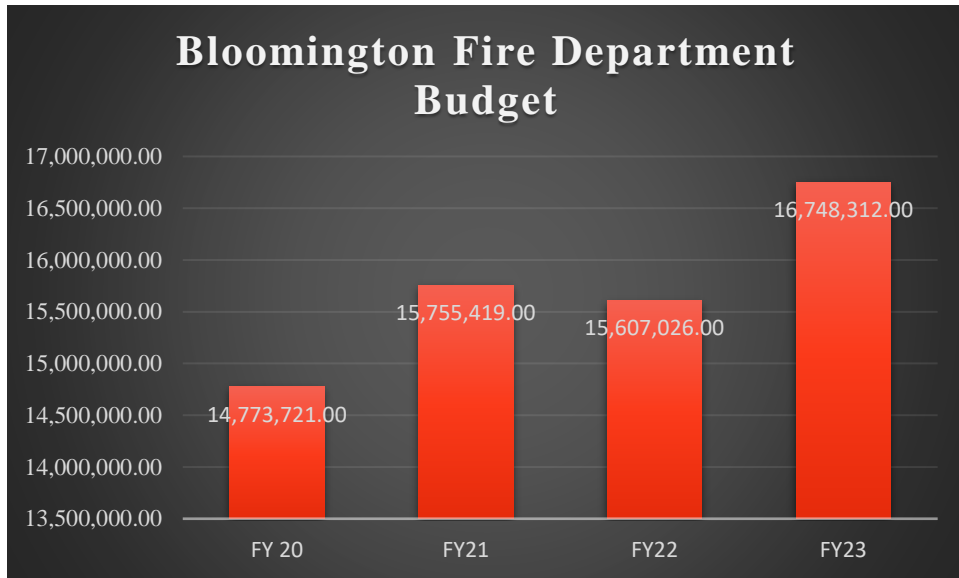
The Bloomington Fire Department provides both fire and EMS mutual aid to fire departments throughout McLean County. Most of our mutual aid is providing EMS intercept services with several of the rural ambulances that are located outside of Bloomington. These intercepts allow a BLS ambulance to be upgraded to an ALS ambulance.

The Bloomington Fire Department provides the Hazardous Materials Response Team for the City of Bloomington, McLean County, and several surrounding counties. Bloomington Fire Department is a member of Illinois MABAS and is in MABAS Division 41. The department hazmat team is recognized as one of the state deployable hazmat teams and is deployable throughout the state or country through the MABAS organization.

The City of Bloomington is approximately twenty-seven square miles located in the central part of Illinois. Bloomington is the seat of the county government for McLean County. McLean County is the second largest county by area in the State of Illinois, being only smaller than Cook County, the estimated population of McLean County in 2020 was 172,164. The city is classified as an Urban Community, this is based on the 2020 Census population of 78,680 residents. The city is fully covered by a municipal hydrant system.

Bloomington is a white-collar community with a few industrial complexes located within the city. Bloomington is home to State Farm Insurance which has two large campuses that we protect along with Country Insurance and Country Financials home offices. Illinois Wesleyan University is also located in Bloomington. Bloomington is a twin city to Normal, Illinois which is home to Illinois State University. Two interstates, Interstate 55 and 74, and two major US highways are covered by the Bloomington Fire Department. Both Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern have rail lines that run through Bloomington. Amtrak does operate on the Union Pacific line. Union Pacific also has a small railyard located in the city. Central Illinois Regional Airport is in Bloomington. There are several commercial flights operated by Delta, American Airlines, Frontier, and Allegiant Airlines in and out of the airport daily. There are also several private planes that use the airport on a regular basis. FedEx also operates aircraft out of the airport. Bloomington Fire Department is responsible for the emergency response to both the facilities and aircraft incidents. Bloomington is the seat of county government. Both the county courthouse and the county jail are in the downtown area of the city.

Annual Fire Department Budget Highlights.



Fiscal Year 23 Budget Expenditure Highlights

- New Ford/Wheel Coach Ambulance – M-4
- 2 New Ambulances were ordered. (Expected delivery FY 24)
- 2 New E-One Engines (E-6 and E-4) were ordered. (Expected delivery in FY 24 and FY 25)
- New Portable Ultrasound
- Station Alerting Upgrades – First Arriving
- New SCBA packs and bottles (expected delivery in FY 24)
- New SCBA fill station for Station 3 (expected delivery in FY 24)
- Station Security



Budgetary Projects for Fiscal Year 24

- New Boilers at #1 and #2 stations
- New SCBA Fill Station at #4 station.
- Replacement of 3 Support Vehicles

Personnel



Sworn Personnel

Fire Chief	1
Deputy Chiefs	3
Battalion Chiefs	3
Public Education Officer	1
Captains	18
Engineers	21
EMS Supervisors	3
Firefighters	69

Civilian Employees

Maintenance Coordinator	1
Office Manager	1
Support Staff IV	2
Data Analyst	1
IT Specialist	1
EMS Billing Specialist	1
Total Staffing	126

Promotions and New Employees

The following individuals was assigned or promoted to new positions in 2022.

Assigned to Engineer



Aaron Ehrhart – A-shift

EMS Billing Manager



Lee Ann Gordon

The Bloomington Fire Department would like to welcome seven new employees that started their career with the Bloomington Fire Department during 2022.

Firefighters



Cody Cheeseman - A-shift



Tyler Eft - B-shift



Kyle Walder – C-shift



Vernon Dickey – B-shift

Administrative Staff



Karen Purnell
Support Staff 5



Angela Quinn
Support Staff 4



Chris Davis
IT Support Analyst

Retirements

The Bloomington Fire Department would like to recognize one individual that retired in 2022. Thank you for your service to the citizens of Bloomington and we hope you enjoy your retirement.



Engineer Joseph Hoeniges
20 Years of Service

Operations – Fire – DC Jeff Flairty



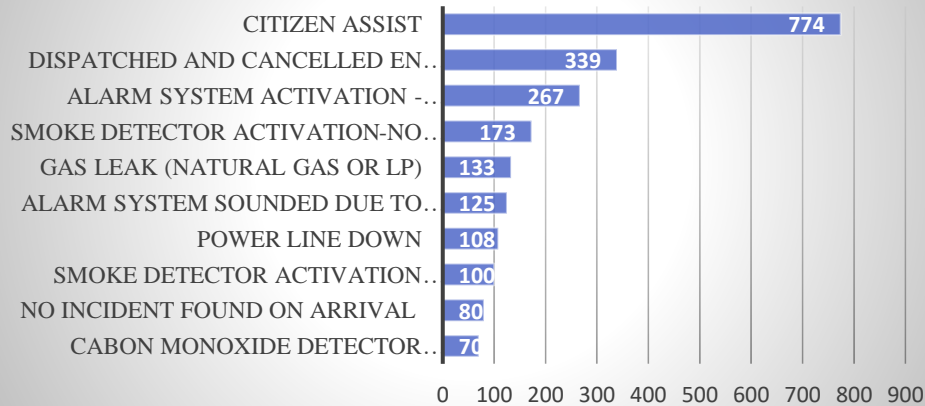
The year 2022 was a very busy year for the department. With 13,272 total calls for service, it was the highest number of incidents that we have ever responded to in a single year. This equals 36 calls for service daily year-round. In 2022, the Fire Department responded daily to numerous multi-alarm incidents and called in off duty personnel to assist more often than recent memory. Even with the ever-growing number of calls for EMS and Fire services, the Fire Department still responds daily with 29 total personnel, on duty, out of Five Stations throughout the city.

The department responded to 1395 fire related incidents in 2022, 89 of these were structure fires that totaled \$941,375.00 dollars in loss, with total fire loss for the year adding up to \$1,235,210.00. This resulted in our Fire Investigative Team investigating 43 fires.

Year	Calls	Dollar Loss
2018	10703	\$1,848,655.00
2019	11385	\$1,392,070.00
2020	11583	\$2,020,345.00
2021	12969	\$4,355,210.00
2022	13272	\$1,235,210.00

The Fire Department responds to, not only structure fires, but continues to respond to “all hazard” types of calls for service including EMS, Vehicle Fires, Vehicle Accidents, Hazardous Materials Incidents, and ARFF (airport rescue firefighting),

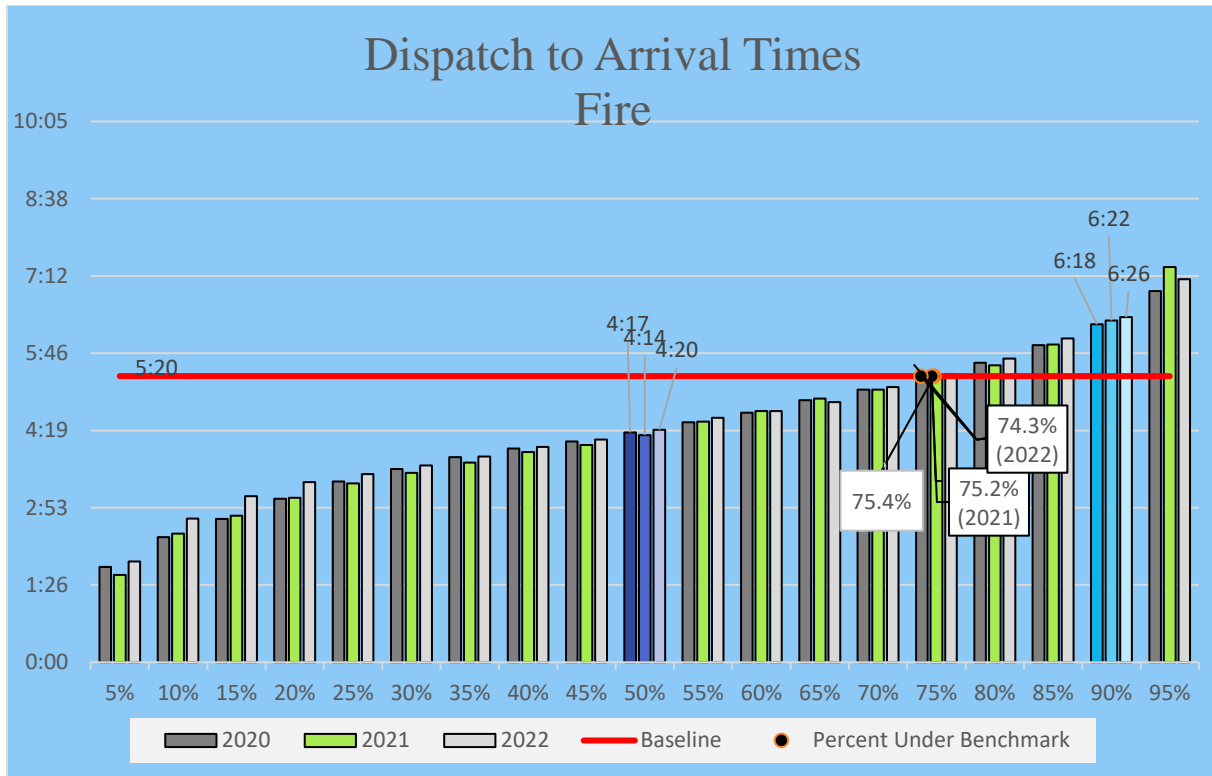
2022 Top 10 Fire Incident Types



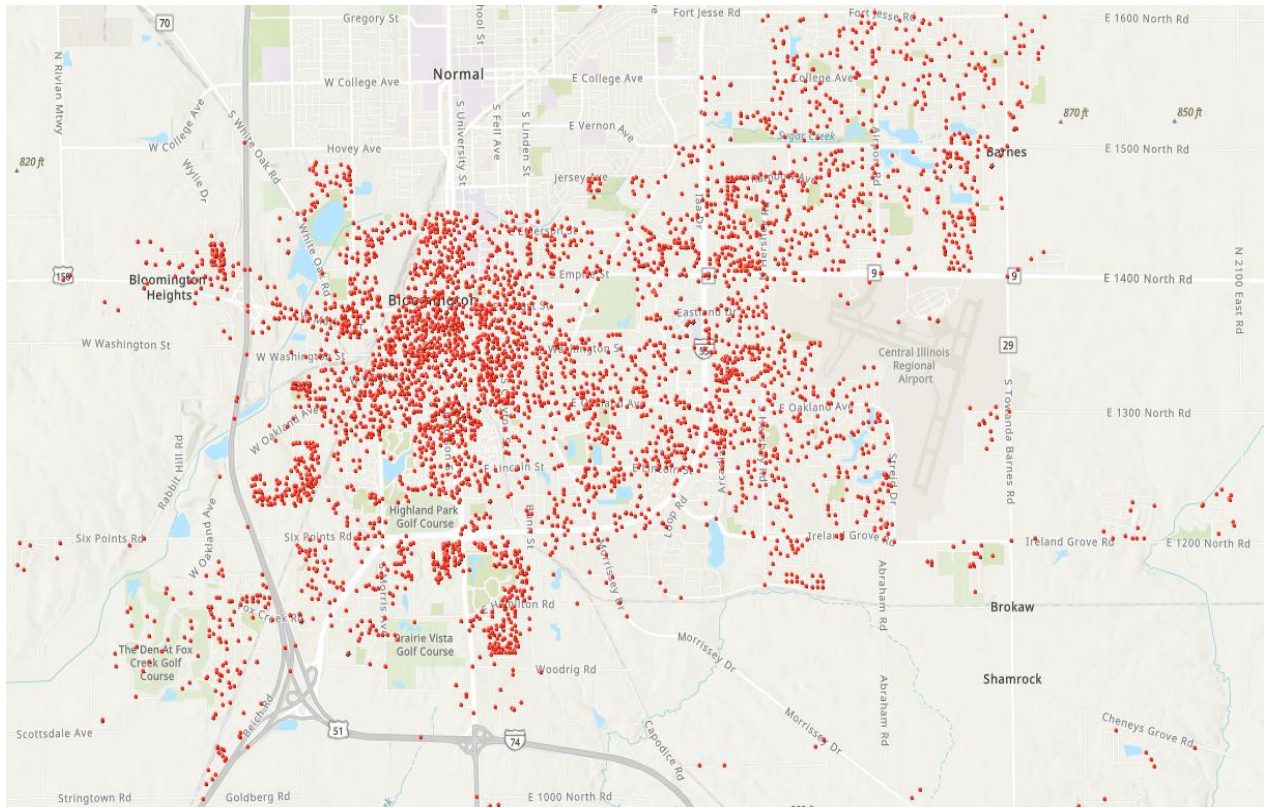
The department continues to strive to meet the performance measures that have been set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Through analysis they have developed performance measures for both Fire Response and EMS Response. For Fire Response they say that fire departments should strive to respond to a scene in a time of 5 minutes and 20 seconds on 90 percent of emergency calls received. This time starts when our units receive the dispatch from the Communications Center and stops once our first unit arrives on scene. This time includes a 1 minute and 20 second turnout time (the time it takes a firefighter to place all their personal protective equipment on and then get on the apparatus) and then a 4-minute drive time. For Emergency Medical Calls the NFPA reduces the response time to 5 minutes on 90 percent of emergency calls, a 1-minute turnout time and a 4-minute drive time. Please remember that for both responses they are emergent calls (lights and sirens) only, we do respond to calls without lights and sirens, these are not included in the data.

We have provided a graph for both Fire and EMS Response showing where the department stands compared to the NFPA performance measure. These graphs will show our performance over the past three years. You will see in the graphs that over the past three years there has been very little change in our response times.

In 2022, for Fire Responses, we are meeting the NFPA Performance measure of 5 minutes and 20 seconds 74.3% of the time, our response time at the 90% benchmark is 6 minutes and 22 seconds. For EMS Responses we are meeting the 5-minute benchmark 65.4% of the time and an average response time of 6 minutes 45 seconds at the 90% benchmark. For both responses we continue to look at ways we can reduce our response times.



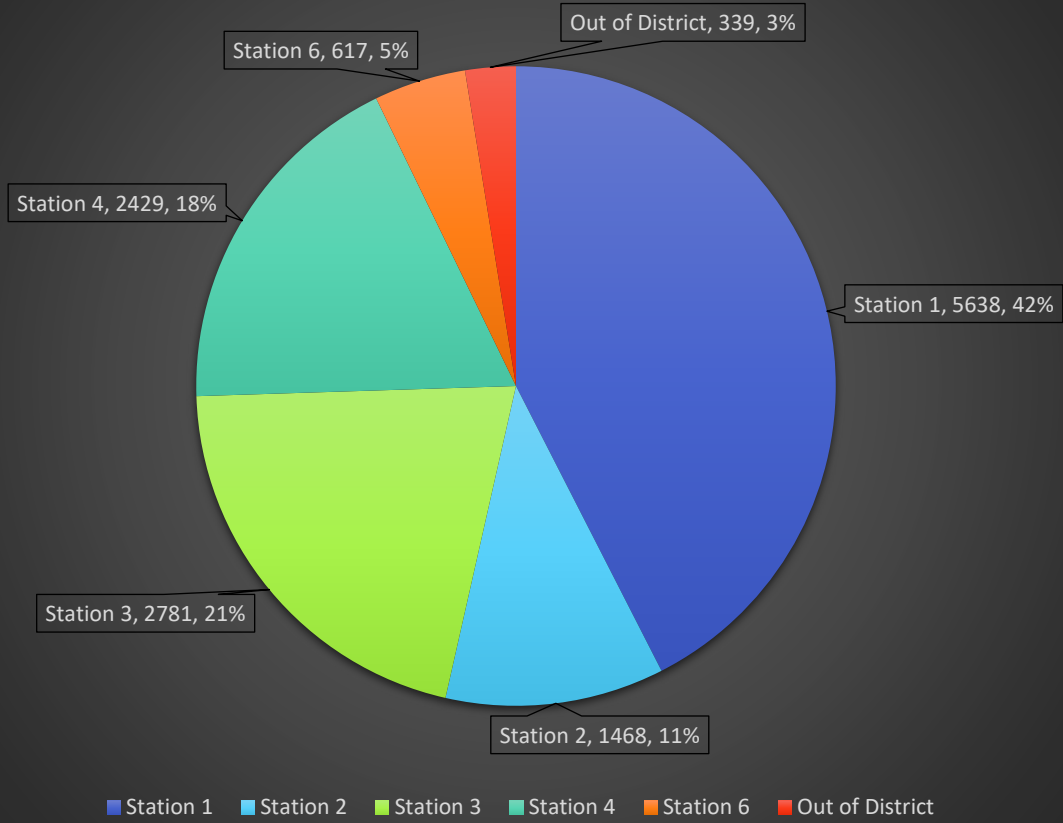
We continue to look closely at data trying to determine how we can lower these response times, to meet the standard, or get closer to it. Reviewing the data there two larger areas in the city that we struggle to meet the 4-minute drive time that the NFPA has allowed. The northeast area has been an area that has been talked about for several years, but we are also seeing an issue in the core of the city. This area is west of Veterans Parkway, north of Oakland Avenue, East of Linden Street, and up to Normal. We feel the only way to reduce these response times is to add an additional station to the core of the city and re-locate Station 3 on Empire to a location more to the northeast.



The above map points out the location of all of our incidents within the city limits of Bloomington and some outlying areas that occurred in 2022. You can see that the majority of our incidents occur in the downtown area and west of downtown. This area accounted for 61% of our incidents. Station 1 and Station 4 cover these areas. 26% of our incidents in 2022 were in those areas covered by Station 3 and Station 6, this is the area north and east of Veterans Parkway and Oakland Ave. While 11% of our incidents were in the southern part of the city which is covered by Station 2, 2% of our incidents were outside the city limits, this is where we provide mutual aid to other agencies, the majority of these would be our EMS chase vehicle assisting another ambulance as they are transporting a patient to the hospital. In this case we are upgrading the ambulance from Basic Life Support to Advance Life Support.

As you will see in the graph below, Station 1 continues to be our busiest station responding to 42% of the calls in the city. Station 3 is second, followed by Station 4, Station 2, and Station 6.

2022 Incidents By Stations



Operations – EMS – DC Cory Matheny



10,313

Emergency Medical Incidents

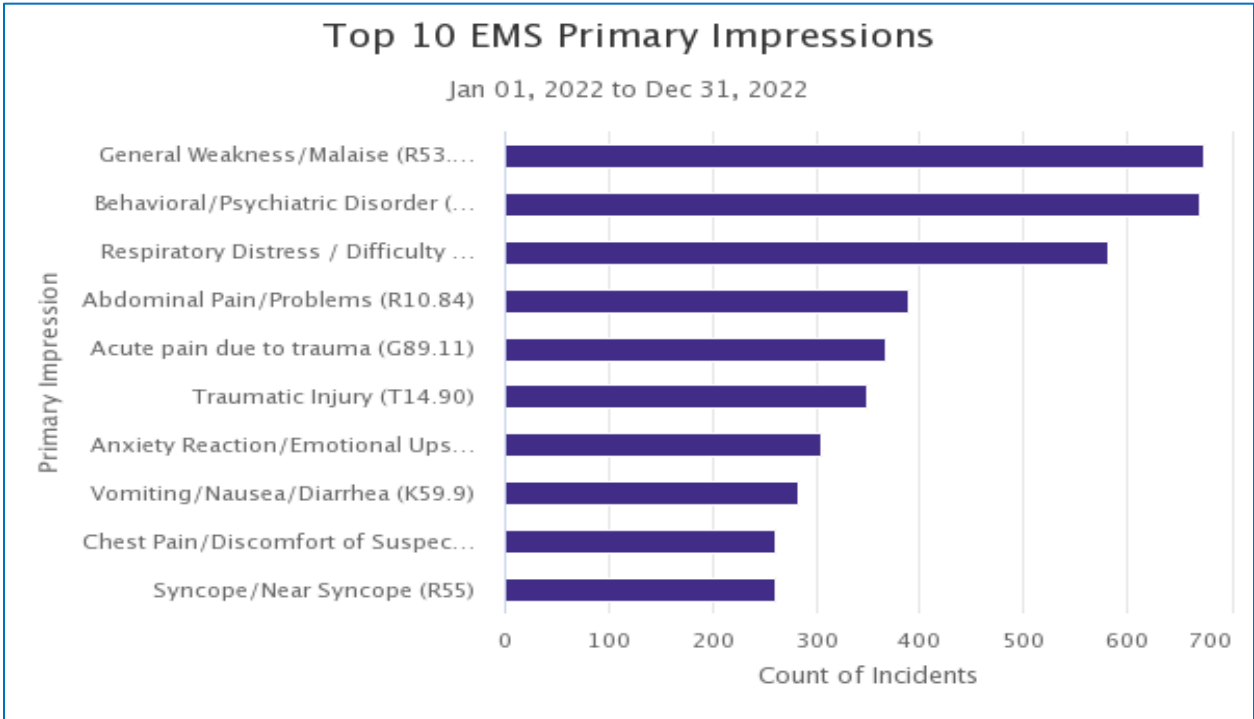
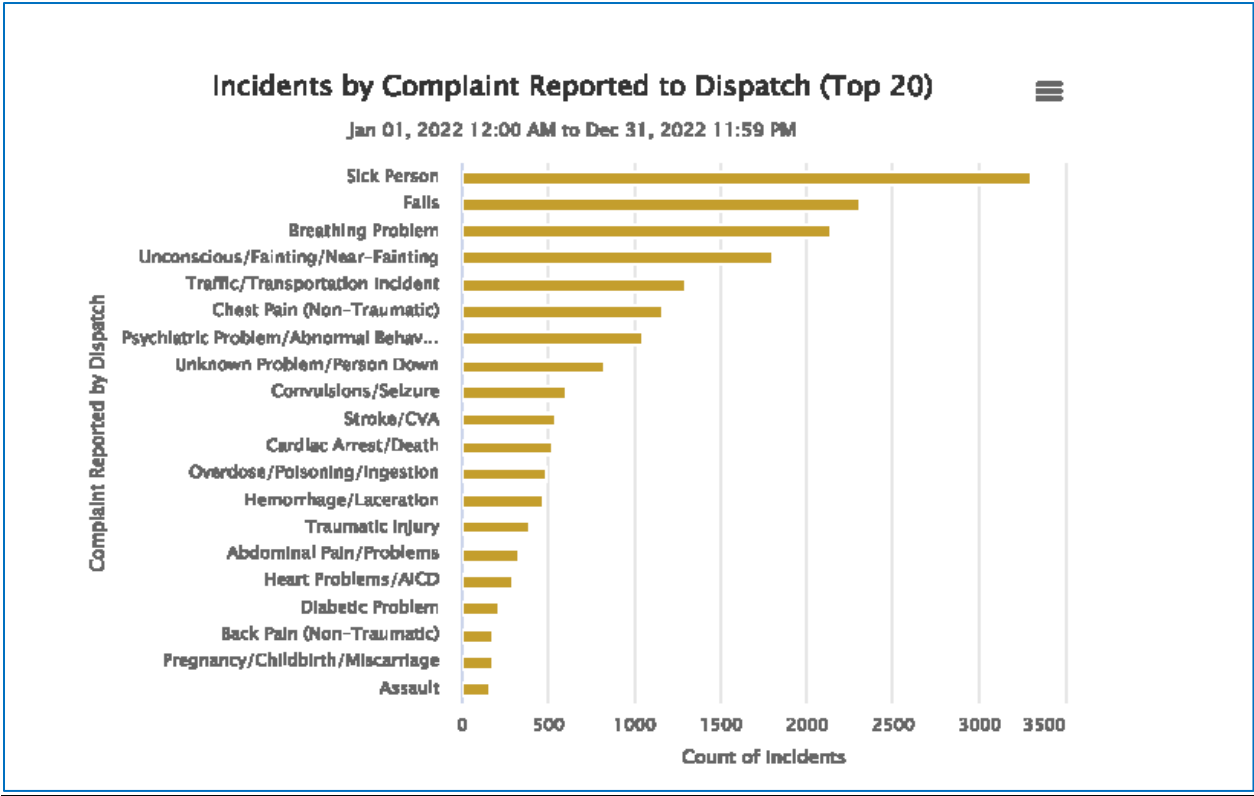


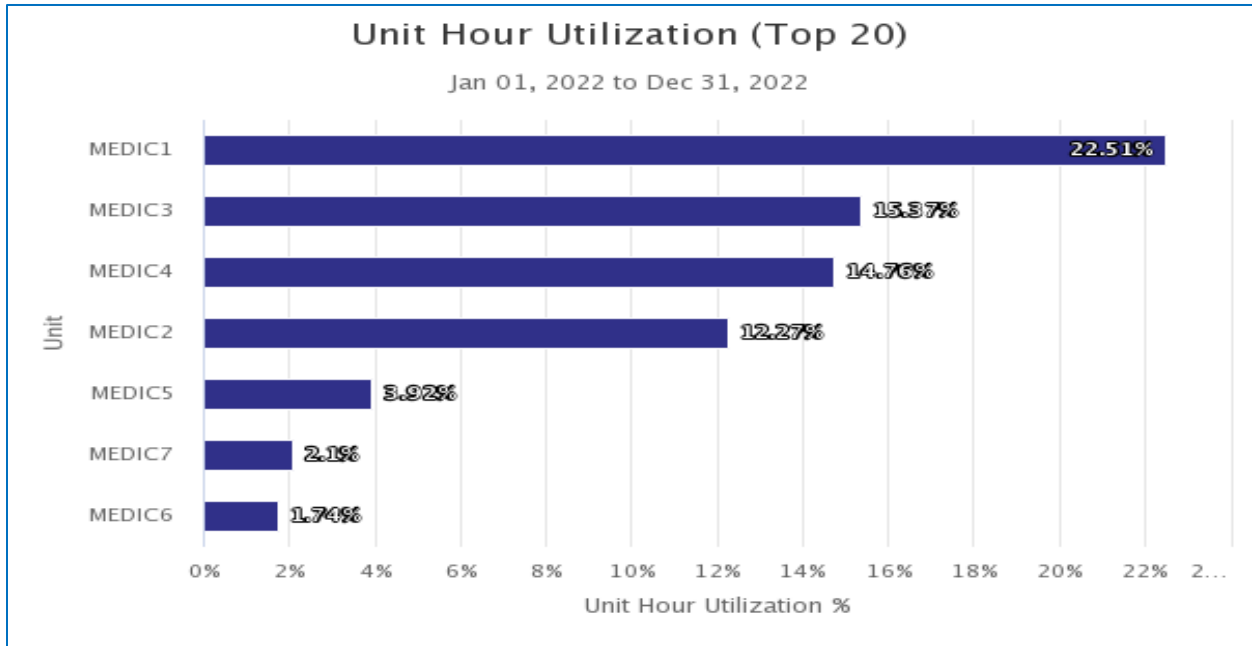
Emergency Medical Services incidents continue to be the leading call for service for the fire department, accounting for 78% of our total call volume. The department provides EMS services to the community through a mix of different level providers, which includes firefighters licensed at the Paramedic, EMT-Intermediate or EMT-Basic level. Each different license level has unique requirements that bring the necessary skills to the scene of an emergency. The department continues to experience significant growth in the demand for EMS service, with a 6.8% increase over the previous year.



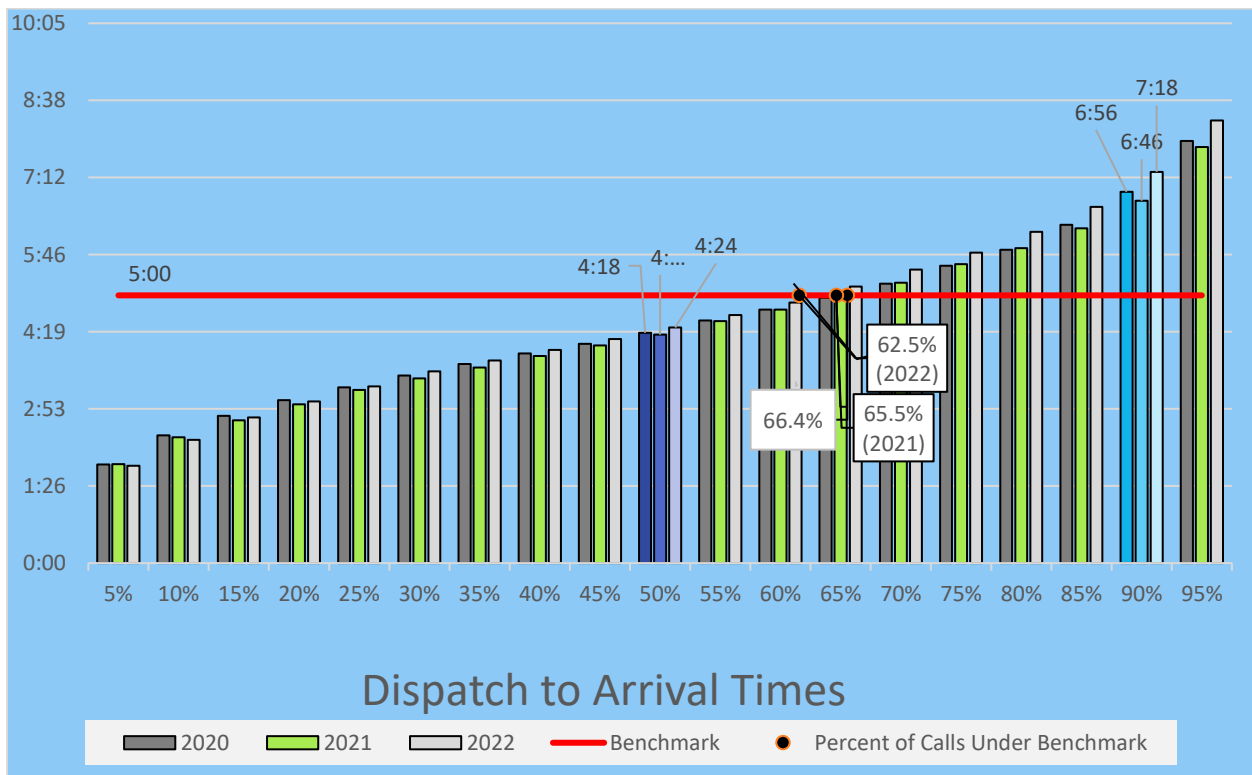
The department's response to EMS incidents begins as vital information that is collected by the City's 911 telecommunicators. Our dispatch system uses Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) along with Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems to send the closest ambulance to the emergency. Utilizing International Standards for Emergency Medical Dispatch, the 911 center prioritizes calls based on the severity of the problem. As the severity of the call increases, such as a possible heart attack or stroke, the department also scales up its response, often sending a fire apparatus and our EMS supervisor. This allows for rapid treatment and transport of critical patients to our local emergency departments.

The department responds to a wide range of medical incidents, ranging from general illnesses and minor injuries to more critical situations like heart attack, stroke, and cardiac arrest victims. We are often the first point of medical care that many residents see and are an extension of our local emergency departments. Fire department paramedics are highly trained providers that bring advanced level skills, medications, and equipment to the scene of the emergency. Below are the top 20 reasons that an EMS response is requested through our Dispatch Center.





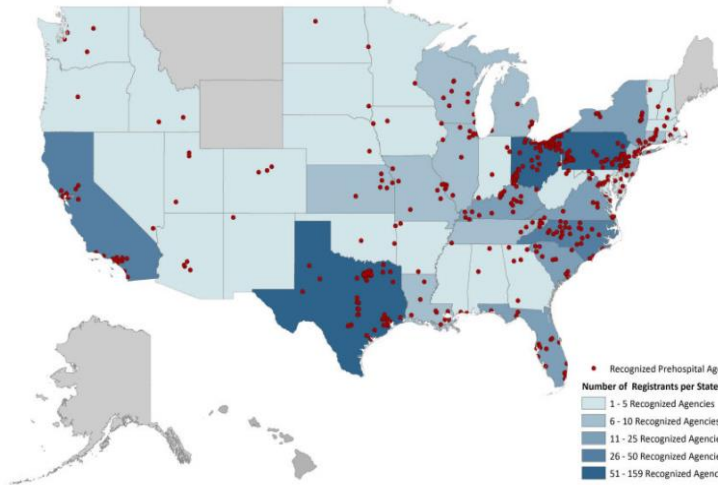
The graph below shows we are still struggling to meet our response time goal of arriving at a scene within 5 minutes or less 90% of the time. In 2022 we met that 5 minute or less 62.5%, our time at the goal of 90% time was 7 minutes 18 sec., we are reviewing data and our response model to try and determine why we had a significant increase in 2022.





The department strives to provide exceptional medical care and be leaders in our local EMS community. Our EMS providers were recently awarded the *Mission Lifeline Gold Plus* award for the outstanding care provided to heart attack patients. Bloomington Fire Department was one out of seven in the State of Illinois, and 324 nationally, to receive this prestigious award.

2022 Awarded Agencies



Name	City	State	Award Type
Bloomington Fire Department (IL)	Bloomington	IL	Gold Plus
Chicago Fire Department	Chicago	IL	Gold Plus
Downers Grove Fire Department	Downers Grove	IL	Gold Plus
Elgin Fire Department	Elgin	IL	Gold Plus
MedStar Ambulance, Inc.	Sparta	IL	Gold Plus
Oswego Fire Protection District	Oswego	IL	Gold Plus
Rockford Fire Department	Rockford	IL	Gold Plus
Elmhurst Paramedic Metro Contract	Elmhurst	IL	Silver Plus



Training – DC Carl Reeb



The Bloomington Fire Department is comprised of some of the most talented, hardworking firefighters in the State. 2022 saw the Bloomington FD run a record number of calls for service as mentioned earlier in other parts of this annual report. The Department continues to respond to a variety of different call types including airport rescue firefighting (ARFF), emergency medical service (EMS), fires, hazardous materials, ice water rescue, and vehicle accidents. Answering these calls requires personnel to have a knowledge base and hands-on skills in a variety of different disciplines. Some of these skills are developed by taking classes outside of the department and other skills are learned in-house through training.

Why Did We Train?

There are associated risks with every profession and firefighting is no different. The way you control for risk is through training, repetition, and oversight. Much of the training we do as a department is mandated through the Illinois Department of Labor (IL-OSHA). If a department fails to meet their annual training mandates fines can be assessed. The Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) maintains a list of state certifications. Firefighters wanting to keep those certifications current must complete the necessary continuing education for each certification every 4 years. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has the power to revoke EMS licensure if a provider fails to provide the level of care expected or fails to complete the required continuing education hours. Lastly, most fire departments also try to meet many of the expectations of Insurance Service Office (ISO). A department's ISO rating can have an impact on what commercial businesses pay for insurance in your municipality. Most of the training we complete on an ongoing basis seeks to meet the requirements for each group.

How Did We Train?

On most days personnel can be found completing in-house training online, as a station, working with a new hire or student, or drilling at our training grounds. In May, the department honed our rapid intervention skills in the event of a "mayday" being called on the fireground. This year we partnered with IFSI to have a recognized subject matter expert in rapid intervention skills provide critical feedback to our department where we could continue to make improvements. Overall, the feedback that was provided was positive, reinforcing the training that we do yearly in May is serving the department well. One area of improvement that was recommended was to include our dispatchers in this annual training (some of our dispatchers had been able to observe this training but did not participate). In May of 2023, the department plans on including dispatchers in these drills.

Where Did We Train?

BFD personnel continued to take advantage of outside the department training opportunities hosted by the Illinois Fire Service Institute, National Fire Academy, NIPSTA, AFFI-IAFF, and other various trade conferences and hands on training opportunities. Some of these courses were no cost, as they were grant funded courses that are offered at the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI). IFSI is the state's fire academy located on the campus of the University of Illinois.

Who Helped Us with Realistic Training?

The Bloomington FD is blessed to have several different community partners that make delivering quality training easier to do on a budget. In 2022 the department worked with:

Ameren	Holiday Inn
Bloomington Housing Authority	Illinois Wesleyan University
Bloomington Parks Department	Joe's Towing
Habitat for Humanity	State Farm

Ameren provided a powerline safety classes for the department. Bloomington Housing Authority, Holiday Inn, and IWU routinely allow us to train on and in their properties. Habitat for Humanity allow us to regularly train in properties they have acquired and plan on razing. Bloomington Parks allows us to conduct ice water rescue training on various bodies of water throughout the city. Joe's Towing allow us access to vehicles destined for the junk yard to use for extrication training. Annually, State Farm allows us to use its parking lots at corporate south to complete our driver training obstacle course.

Summing 2022 Up and Challenges for 2023 and Beyond

A challenge we face as a growing department is a tension between our two highest priorities, answering 911 calls and being prepared to respond those calls. Without a doubt our number #1 priority each day is answering 911 calls. However, to answer those calls in the way the public expects requires proper training. As was mentioned earlier we responded to a record breaking 13K plus calls last year. As a department we continue to be creative in how we can deliver quality training and be mindful of the increased call volume that our personnel are responding to.

Another challenge we continue to face is finding and training the next generation of Bloomington Firefighters. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the Bloomington Fire Department is comprised of some of the most talented firefighters in the State. In some fire departments across the state a firefighter is allowed to concentrate on one or two disciplines (fire and non-transport EMS). However, in Bloomington we ask our firefighters to be skilled in many different disciplines. It is not for everybody, we continue to lose some new firefighters to departments that do not demand as much of them as we do. It is frustrating to lose a new firefighter to another department after spending so much time, money, and effort on their initial training. However, the future remains bright as we embrace and look to new opportunities in recruiting and hiring for the future.

This annual training report barely touches the surface of what we accomplished during 2022. It was a memorable year for sure. A couple of highlights that I did not want to overlook is our department's growing drone program. We started with our initial four pilots and have added four more and are waiting on a couple of others to finish their FAA exams. I also am immensely

proud of our personnel who either started, or continued to work on completing either their associate, bachelor's or even master's degree in some cases.

Respectfully,

Carl Reeb

DC/Training Officer

Public Education/P.I.O. – Frank Friend



2022 was an exciting year for public education in the Fire Department. I began my new position in July. We attended numerous large outdoor events including the 50th anniversary of the Gingerbread House as seen below. Our firefighters spent much of the summer and fall with the public in some fashion. We opened the stations for tours again. We invited eighteen groups into the stations from July to December to see our equipment and learn about fire safety. Our impact to public safety is brighter than ever and we look forward to 2023.



Hazardous Materials Team – BC Gavin Pitcher



The hazmat team of the Fire Department has been extremely busy in 2022, responding to a total of 196 incidents involving hazardous materials. The team has successfully handled 17 class one spills of gasoline or other flammable liquids, 133 responses to natural or LPG gas leaks, and 8 responses to carbon dioxide leaks, among others.

One of the notable calls the hazmat team received was a food truck leaking LPG from it's tanks at a festival. The team responded quickly, moving the truck to a safe distance, and mitigating the problem efficiently, thereby avoiding any potential danger to the public.

Apart from responding to these incidents, the hazmat team has also been actively engaged in training and upgrading their equipment. Over the course of the year, the team has completed over 1,369 hours of specialized training in the field of hazmat. They have also been maintaining an assortment of specialized technical tools and monitors that they use for detecting and identifying hazardous chemicals.

To ensure that they are always prepared to handle any hazmat incident, the team has been replacing their old, outdated equipment with new ones. This year, they replaced four of their old level-A entry suits with four new ones, providing the team with the latest and most effective protective gear.

Despite the team's busy schedule, they have managed to respond to other 911 calls throughout the city, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to serving the community. Additionally, other nearby fire departments have often sought the Fire Department's expertise and guidance when handling potential hazmat incidents within their jurisdictions.

Overall, the hazmat team of the Fire Department has demonstrated their proficiency and dedication in responding to hazardous material incidents. As they continue to train, learn, and expand their knowledge in this field, they will undoubtedly continue to be an invaluable asset to the community they serve.



Fire Investigation – Captain Mark Langellier



For the year of 2022, the Bloomington Fire Department Fire Investigation Team conducted a total of forty-four fire investigations. Of the forty-four investigations conducted, thirty-seven investigations are closed at the time of this report. The remaining files are awaiting further witness information or lab reports from the State Crime Lab before they can be closed.

There was a total of fifteen fires classified as “Accidental,” 9 were classified as “Undetermined” and 13 were intentionally set or involved a juvenile. Not all the set fires had suspects that were arrested or tried in court. Some of them remain “Open” since all the possible leads have been exhausted and the case has gone cold until any further information becomes available.

The team conducted two Juvenile fire setter assessments with youths and their families.

Training: The team collectively participated in nearly 170 hours of training in the realm of fire investigation. This number is down comparatively speaking due to the years timing of in-person training classes resuming post-COVID.

The BFD recently teamed up with the BPD and sent four Police Department Detectives through the OSFM Fire Investigation Modules totaling 480 training hours (120 hours x four attendees). All four detectives successfully completed the training and are now certified Arson Investigators through the Office of State Fire Marshall. Having the Police Department team up with the Fire Department works well and is much needed because of the arrest powers of the police. When the investigation becomes criminal, the path that it takes is a parallel effort by both departments. The Investigation Team members of both BFD and BPD, meet regularly to discuss cases and training topics.

Captain Mark Langellier

Fire Investigation Team Lead



Aircraft Rescue Firefighting – BC Dave Talley



The Bloomington Fire Department maintains a comprehensive ARFF training program in compliance with Part 139. This ensures that the Bloomington Fire Department is able to provide ARFF response to the CIRA. This training program is annually audited by a FAA inspector. In 2022, the ARFF training program successfully passed inspection with no major recommendations for changes. This is a monthly program which includes both classroom and practical application. We currently have five authorized ARFF drivers per shift that participate in this program.

In 2022, we successfully initiated our first in-house ARFF Academy. The participants covered all the training topics and practical exercises required by CIRA for initial driver training. This training was a collaborative effort between the Bloomington Fire Department and Operations Personnel from CIRA.





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