



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 3/4/2025

REGULAR

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Dustin Kalis, Fire Chief & Anthony Svoboda, Assistant Fire Chief

AGENDA ITEM: 2024 Fire Department Annual Report

REVIEWED BY: Nicole Miller, City Administrator

CORE STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Vibrant, inclusive, connected community | ☒ Efficient, reliable, innovative services |
| ☒ Responsive, transparent, adaptive governance | ☐ Balanced Finances now and future |
| ☐ Managed Growth | ☐ Resilient Infrastructure |

BACKGROUND:

The 2024 Lake Elmo Fire Department Annual Report allows us to share our data regarding our responses to emergency incidents and the service we provide to our city and surrounding communities. It also allows the department to highlight some of the accomplishments, trainings and activities that took place throughout the previous year.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Should the City Council accept the 2024 Fire Department Annual Report as presented?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

The fire department annual report allows the department to share data regarding emergency incidents and provide insight into our overall department operations. Data gathered within this report is used planning future department goals and objectives.

RECOMMENDATION:

Motion to adopt the 2024 Fire Department Annual Report.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) 2024 Fire Department Annual Report.

- Annual Report -



2024



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A message from the Fire Chief, Dustin Kalis

For your Lake Elmo Fire Department, 2024 has been a key year in our department's history. This past year allowed department staff to settle into our new central station while fully adjusting to our new shift-based, combination staffing model of full-time and paid-on-call staff.



While providing the highest level of emergency response is our priority, and primary mission, the opportunities for educating, reducing risk, and fostering positive interactions and connections with our community are most important to our firefighters. We are so fortunate to be able to support and participate in community events like the 4th of July Kids Parade, Lake Elmo Night Out, Light Up Lake Elmo and our own Fire Department Open House. I believe that during events like these is where we make the biggest impact for our community.

We receive such a strong level of support from our residents, city council and administration. With that support, comes high expectations. Your Lake Elmo Fire Department strives each day to ensure we are doing everything we can to meet, and hopefully exceed, those expectations.

With this year's annual report, we provide clear and accurate data that provides us the basis to make planned and informed decisions regarding our service today and into the future. We will remain committed to providing the best possible service to community of Lake Elmo.

- *Proudly Serving Neighbors & Friends*

Introduction and Purpose

The City of Lake Elmo, Minnesota is a second ring/emerging suburb of Saint Paul. The Fire Department was established in 1957 and currently serves a population (2024) of approximately 14,033 residents. Services provided by the Fire Department include Fire Suppression, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, Code Enforcement, Community Education and Risk Reduction.

The intent of this document is to provide clear and accurate data pertaining to the functions of the Lake Elmo Fire Department. Its primary audience is the residents of the City of Lake Elmo, its City Council, and all those interested in learning about our operations.

This document includes information related to emergency responses, staffing, training, department fleet, and other critical data that Fire Department staff utilize on a regular basis to determine the effectiveness of your Fire Department. All information included herein is considered public data and, in accordance with the request of the City Council, some of which is reported on a quarterly basis.

PUBLIC SAFETY	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	2024	2023	2022
FIRE - Number of Fire/Rescue/EMS Responses:	264	270	305	298	1137	1047	791
FIRE - Number of Fire Inspections:	142	146	192	97	577	649	514
FIRE - Average Fire/Rescue Per 1,000 Residents (14,100 pop):	6.32	6.87	10.99	8.23	32.41	9.95	5.89
FIRE - Average EMS Incidents per 1,000 Residents (14,100 pop):	12.41	12.27	10.64	12.91	48.23	17.28	9.99
FIRE - Average Alarm to Enroute time in minutes:	1.28	1.1	1.24	1.38	1.25	3.07	n/a
FIRE - Average Alarm to Arrival time in minutes:	7.53	6.5	7.29	7.97	7.32	10.62	n/a
FIRE - Staffed turnout time within 90 seconds (Fire/Rescue) %:	52%	49%	47%	72%	55.00%	y	n/a
FIRE - Staffed turnout time within 60 seconds (EMS) %:	70%	79%	56%	41%	61.50%	y	n/a

Information as presented to the City Council in the Quarterly Report.

History of the Lake Elmo Fire Department

The Lake Elmo Fire Department was established in March 1957 by a group of community activists who realized the necessity for the village to have its own fire protection. A volunteer fire department was established, and a fire station was built downtown. The need became furthermore apparent as the siren blew and calls for service steadily increased. In the years that followed many changes impacted the fire department including the addition of medical and rescue calls.

History Highlights

- 1957 - 38 volunteers establish the fire department; Ed Kramer is named Fire Chief.
- 1981 - The department purchases its first Ladder truck, a 50ft tele squirt boom.
- 1986 - The department opens Station 2 on Jamaca Avenue North.
- 1990 – Dick Sachs is appointed Fire Chief and would serve a total of 43 years with the department.
- 2000 - Greg Malmquist is appointed as the first full-time Fire Chief.
- 2006 - The department moves Station 2 to the Public Works site, further North on Jamaca.
- 2007 – The department celebrated its 50-year anniversary.
- 2015 – The department replaced its 1981 Ladder truck after 34+ years of service.
- 2020 - Dustin Kalis is appointed as the second full-time Fire Chief.
- 2023 - The original 1957 Station 1 and Station 2 are closed, the Central Fire Station is opened.
- 2023 - The staffing model is updated to include 24/7 career firefighters on duty.



Administration and Organization



Dustin Kalis
Fire Chief



Anthony Svoboda
Assistant Fire Chief / Fire Marshal



Jeremy Penman
Captain – Paid on Call



Michael Schwarz
Captain – Paid on Call

1 Lieutenant – Paid on Call
6 Engineers – Paid on Call
20 Firefighters – Paid on Call

The fire department is administered by a career Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief, who are responsible for day-to-day operations. The remaining command staff consists of two paid on call Captains and one paid on call Lieutenant.

The department operates using a combination model of career and paid on call staff.

Paid on call staff work scheduled shifts and supplement the career schedule working as a crew member and filling open shifts.

In total, the department roster consists of 37 personnel (8 career, 29 paid on call).

Red Shift
2 Firefighters - Career

Gold Shift
2 Firefighters - Career

Black Shift
2 Firefighters - Career

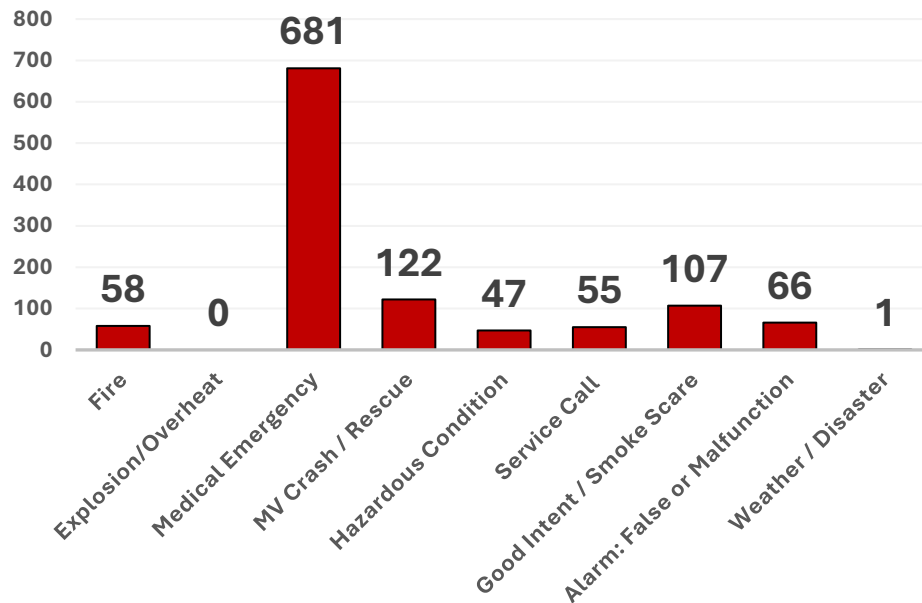
Operations - Emergency Response Overall

1,137

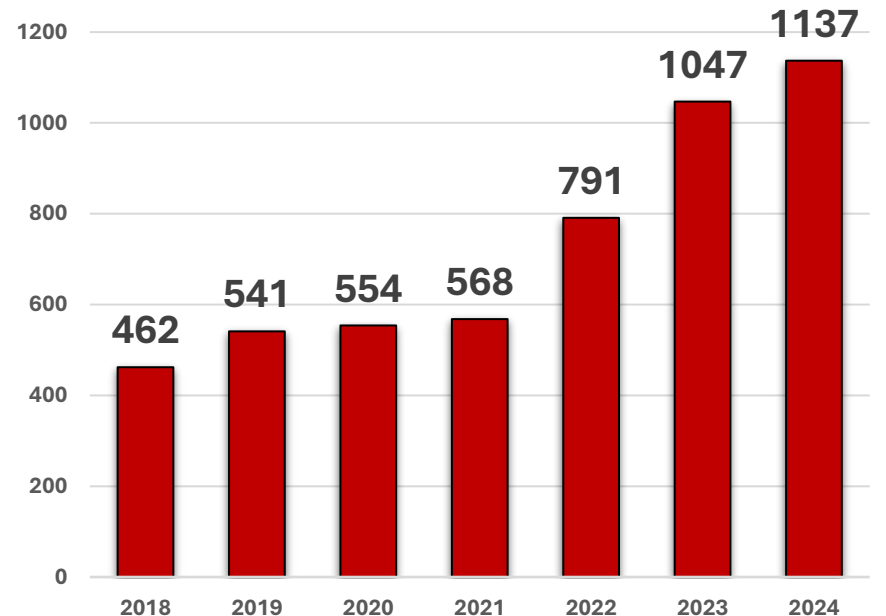
RESPONSE INCIDENTS

Calls for service in **2024 represent an 8.6% increase** in call volume compared to the year prior. Annually, the department has seen an 17% average call volume increase for the last five years.

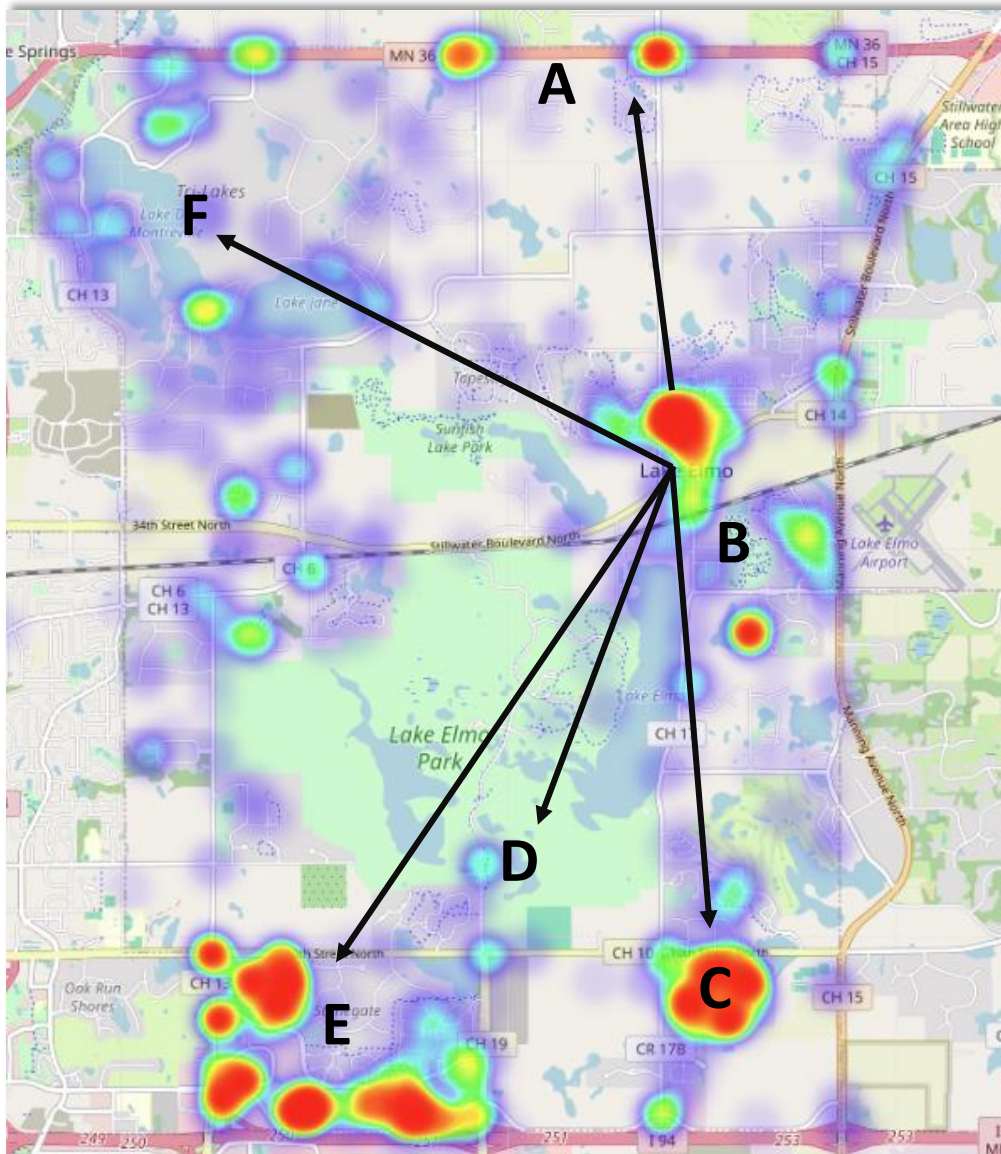
Responses by Type - 2024 Actual



Responses by Year - 2018 - 2024



Operations – Emergency Response Overall



The “heat map” is a great tool that helps your fire department gauge the areas of the city where incidents are most likely to happen. This map shows all incident locations in our city and their frequency. Red boundaries indicate a high volume of incidents. Some emerging neighborhoods are shown in yellow and orange.

Points of Interest:

These points of interest in our city highlight our response profile and the variety of incidents and locations throughout the jurisdiction.

A: Highway 36 (Intersections) – **102 incidents**

B: “Old Village” (Downtown, Arbor Glen, Fields) – **258 incidents**

C: Cimarron / Oak-Land Middle School– **147 incidents**

D: Park Reserve (Trails, Boat Launch, Camps) – **36 incidents**

E: Hudson Boulevard (The Springs, Boulder Ponds, High Point Surgery, HealthPartners, Holiday Inn) – **363 incidents**

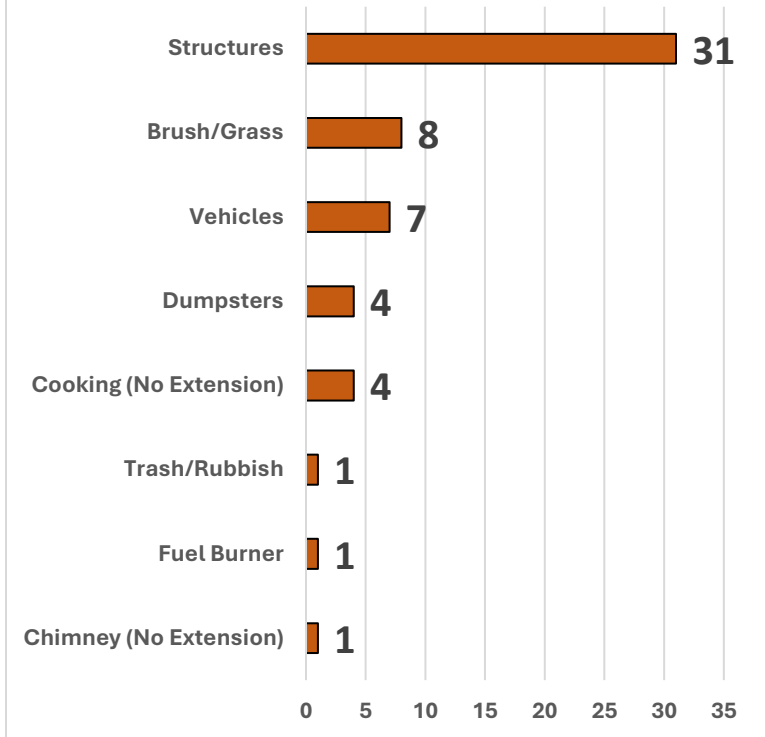
F: Hidden Bay/Tri Lakes Area – **120 incidents**

Operations – Fire Suppression

Overall, the fire department's response to “fires” remains relatively low, compared to other incident types across the city. Fire incidents include structure fires, vehicle fires, brush fires, chimney fires, and all situations where suppression equipment is used. In 2024, the fire department responded to 58 fires.



Fire Suppression Incidents - 2024



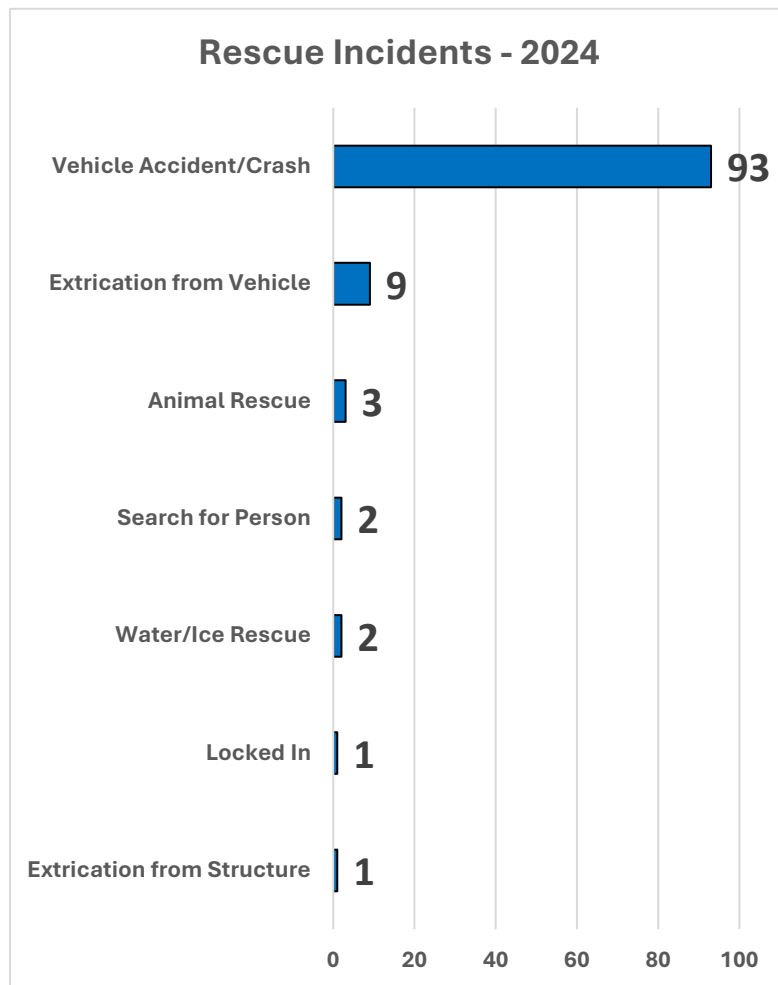
Upper Left: Brush Fire on 10th ST.

Upper Right: RV Fire within LE Park Reserve.

Lower: Structure Fire in Newport.

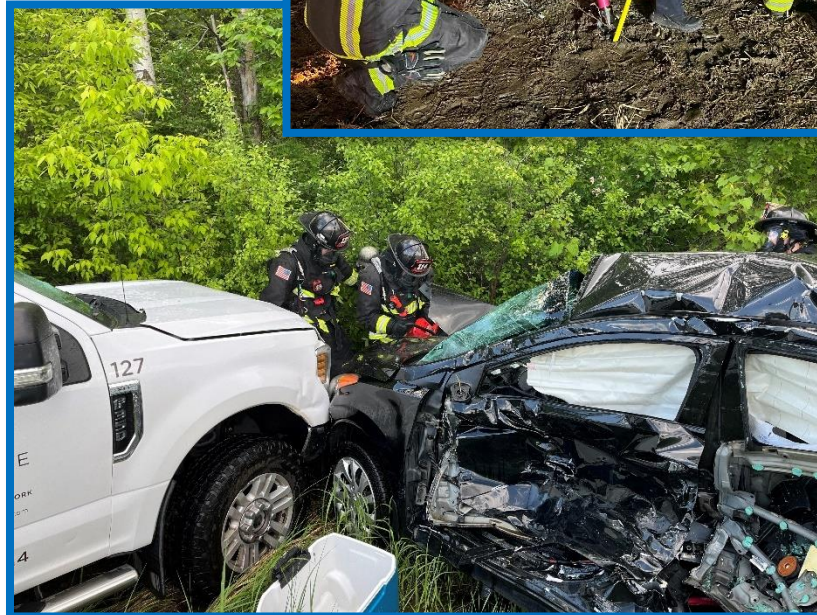
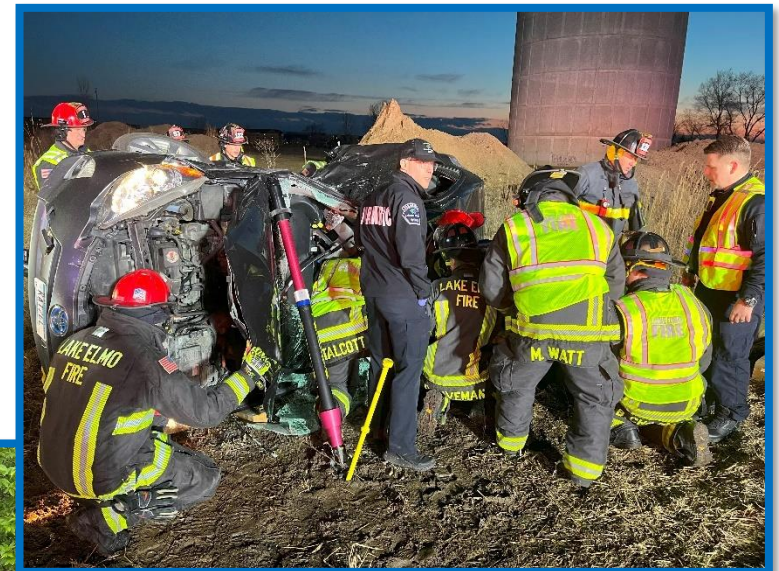
Operations – Rescue

Within the profile of the city, a network of state and county highways increases the risk of vehicle accidents. Vehicle accidents, as well as other special and technical rescues, make up the Rescue response profile of our overall response totals. In 2024, the department responded to 110 rescue incidents.



Top: Vehicle Accident with Extrication at Hudson Blvd and LE Ave.

Bottom: vehicle Accident with Extrication and Fire at LE Ave and 50th St.

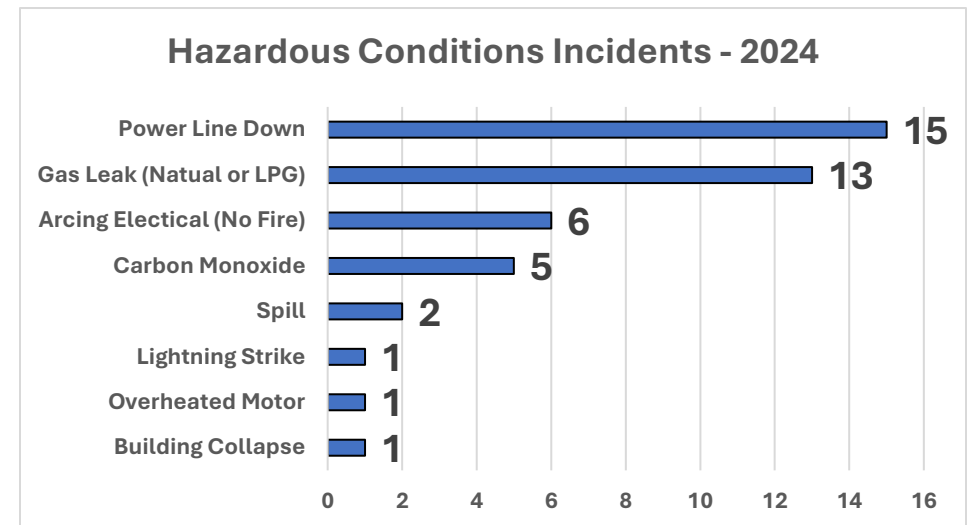
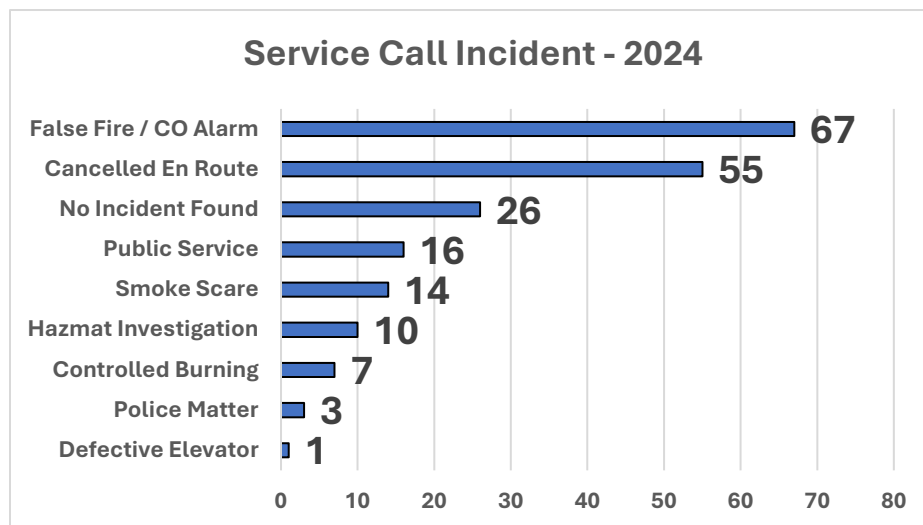


Operations – Hazardous Conditions

Hazardous condition incidents encompass a large variety of emergency and non-emergency incidents that include gas leaks, power lines down, electrical issues, and suspected hazardous materials incidents. In 2024, the department responded to 44 hazardous conditions incidents

Operations – Public Service, Good Intent, and False Alarms

Public Service, Good Intent, and False Alarms calls equate to the rest of the response profile (excluding medical emergency). These calls include instances where we were dispatched then cancelled enroute, instances where we were dispatched to a location but couldn't find a problem, unauthorized burning (no suppression), and a handful of other service type calls. Good Intent calls include responses where someone believed there was an emergency but there was not. False Alarms play a crucial role in reporting, considering that we expect them to be legitimate emergencies until proven not.



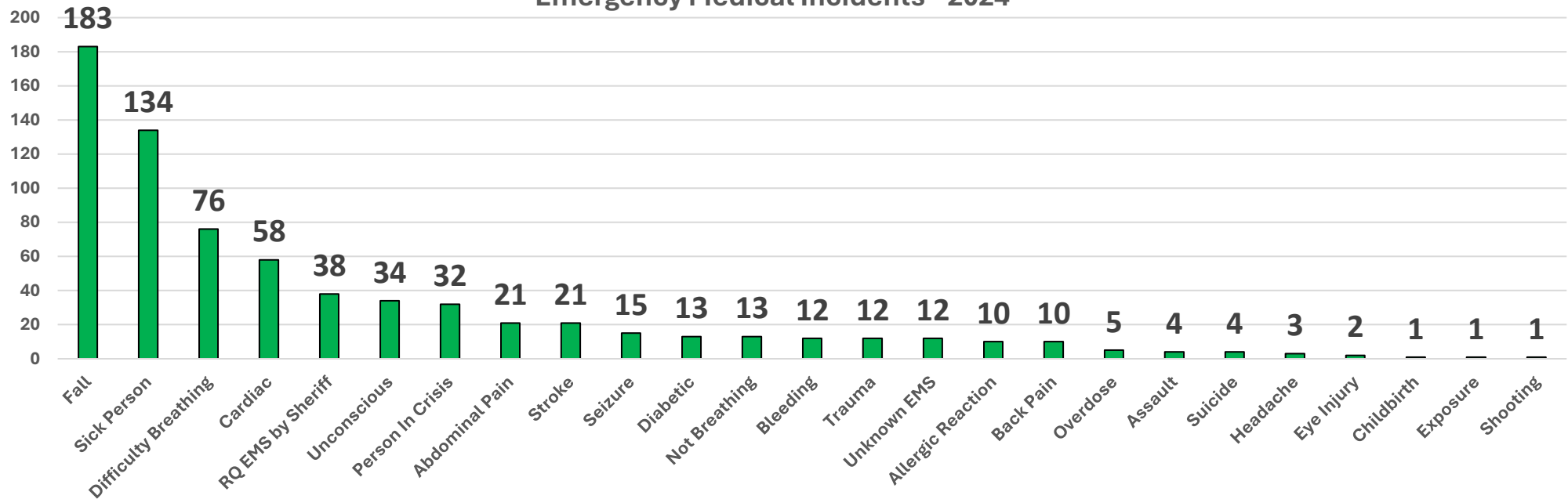
Operations – *Emergency Medical Services*

In 2024, 63% of the incident responses made by the fire department were medical in nature.

All fire department staff are minimally certified as Emergency Medical Responders. Currently 22 of our 37 personnel are certified as Nationally Registered EMT's, including all of our career staff.

The fire department provides Basic Life Support care.

Emergency Medical Incidents - 2024



Operations – *Emergency Medical Services*

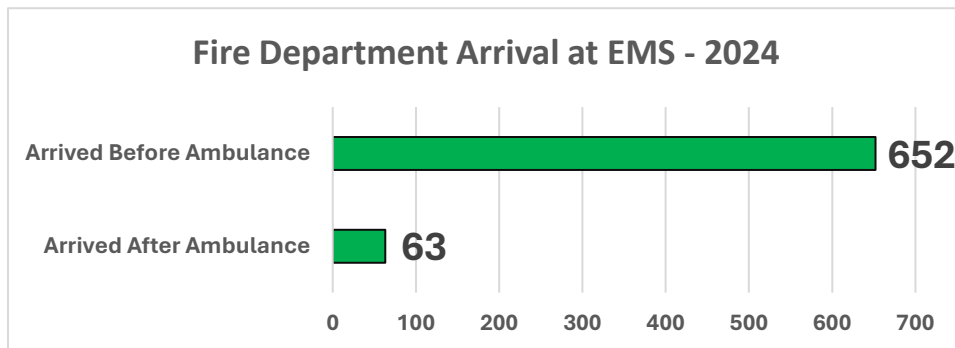
Paramedic Ambulance and Advanced Life Support transport is provided by Lakeview Health Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Lakeview EMS supports ambulances with two paramedics and provides service to the City of Lake Elmo for all medical emergency calls for service. Ambulances are dispatched by a separate service after emergency calls are received at the 911 center. After dispatch, the ambulance responds into Lake Elmo from one of its three bases. A Lakeview EMS Ambulance is not stationed in Lake Elmo.

Depending on the location of the ambulance, the fire department often arrives at the scene of a medical emergency before the paramedics.

In 2024, the fire department arrived at the scene of a medical emergency 652 times before the ambulance of the 715 total medical calls.

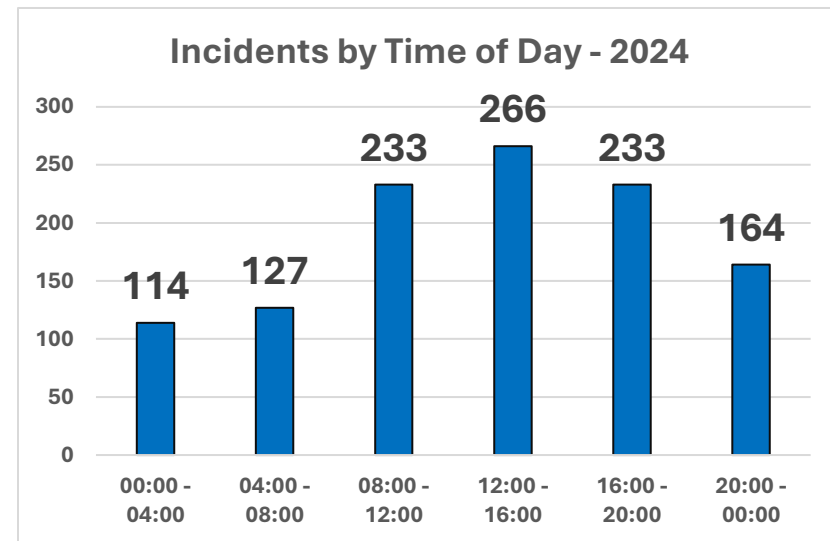
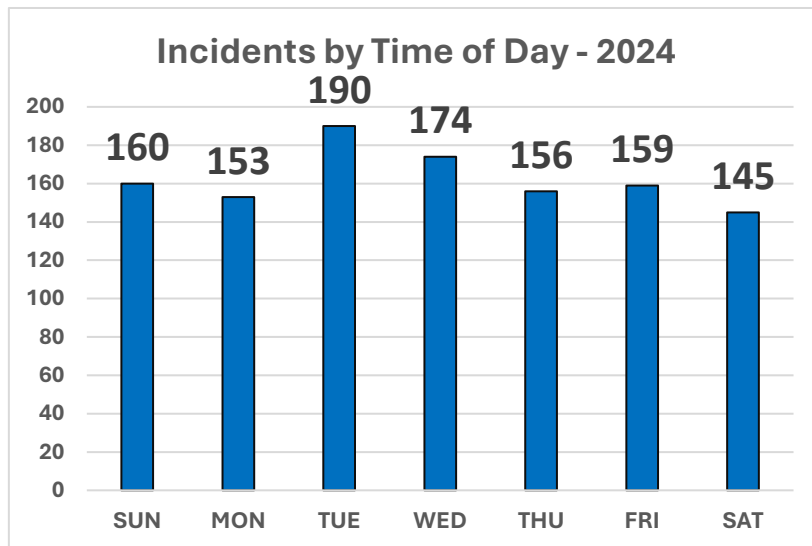
The fire department arrived before the ambulance 91% of the time in 2024.



Operations – Response Times and Figures

In 2024, approximately **80.6 of every 1,000 people** in Lake Elmo dialed 911 in need of the fire department.

The average alarm to enroute time was 1.25 minutes in 2024.



A critical factor in our response which cannot be changed, based on the current location of the fire station, is the time from enroute to the arrival of the first apparatus to the dispatched address. Geography reflects the drivability of our city and the time it takes to go from Point A to Point B. The City of Lake Elmo and our response area spans 25 square miles.

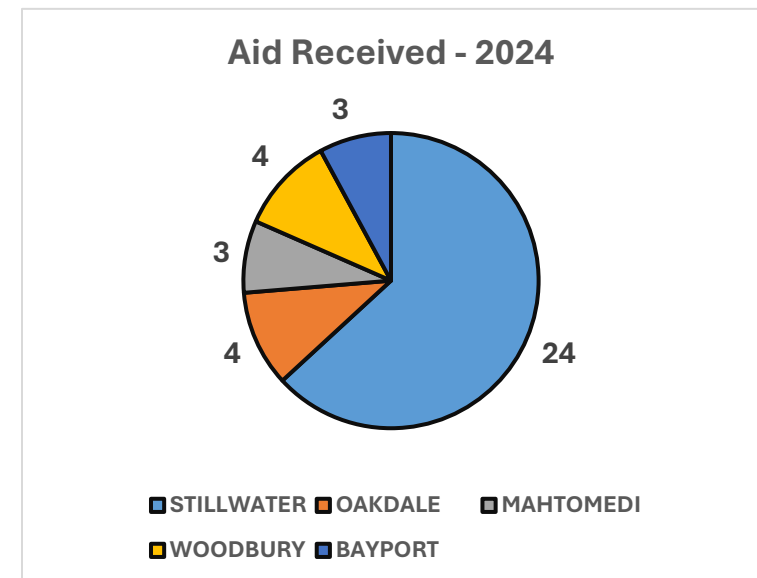
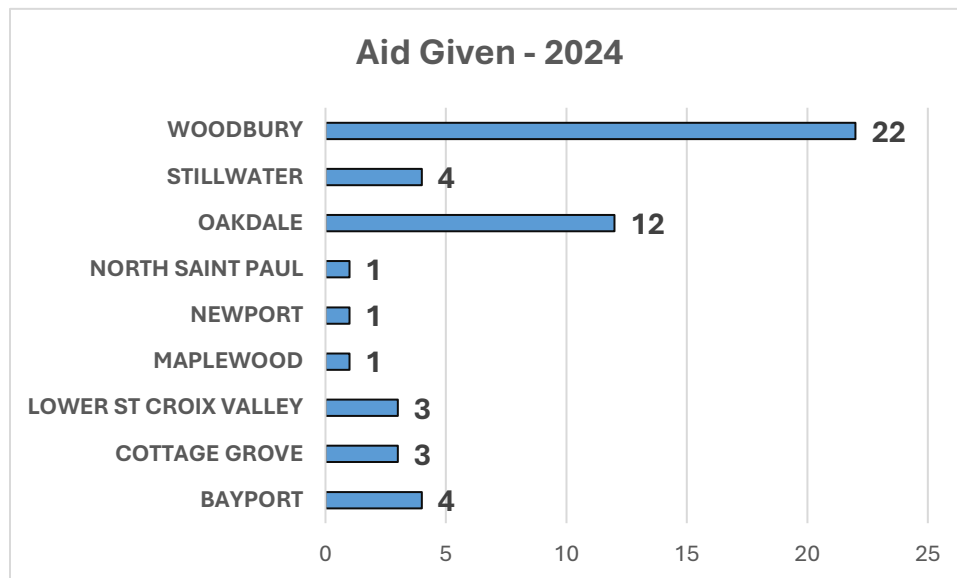
The average travel time to an incident was 7.49 minutes in 2024.

Operations – Aid Given and Received

Your fire department plays a critical role in supporting neighboring agencies. In return, the same support is received when requested. Mainly, aid is given and received for larger scale incidents, such as structure fires. Lake Elmo has automatic aid agreements with neighboring fire departments for structure fires and vehicle accidents along Highway 36 (Stillwater).

The fire department utilized aid agreements 85 times in 2024.

Of those 85 times, 38 were for instances of aid requested in Lake Elmo. The fire department provided aid 51 times outside of the city.



Operations – Equipment and Fleet

The fire department maintains a fleet of emergency vehicles and equipment which serve the department for various lengths of time.

Age of Fleet - 2024	
Engine 1	1 year of service
Ladder 1	9 years of service
Rescue 1	6 years of service
Rescue 2	<i>Retired in 2024</i>
Tender 1	4 years of service
Tender 2	17 years of service
Brush 1	2 years of service
Brush 2	20 years of service
Utility 1	<i>New in 2024</i>
UTV	15 years of service
Chief 1 Tahoe	3 years of service
Chief 2 Durango	1 year of service
Boat	1 year of service

In 2024, the fire department continued to implement the vehicle replacement process. As noted, the department was pleased to place in service Utility 1. This new vehicle will provide crew response, support on emergency incidents and general department use. This also provides the department with an additional vehicle that can be used for towing and hauling. The open pickup bed will allow for the safe hauling of dirty, contaminated fire hose, equipment and turnout gear following incidents.

The fire department continuously evaluates the reliability of our equipment. In 2024 key purchases made it possible to upgrade our fire hose nozzles, acquire additional battery powered extrication equipment, purchase additional sets of turnout gear, and replacement gear washers.



Utility 1 – 2024 Chevrolet Silverado



New turnout gear washer/extractors

Training - Overview

Lake Elmo Firefighters participate in regularly scheduled training events, typically on Monday evenings. Training topics are based on the Minnesota Board of Fire Training and Education standards. All firefighters, regardless of career or paid on call, are held to the same standards.

116

Training Events

4,212

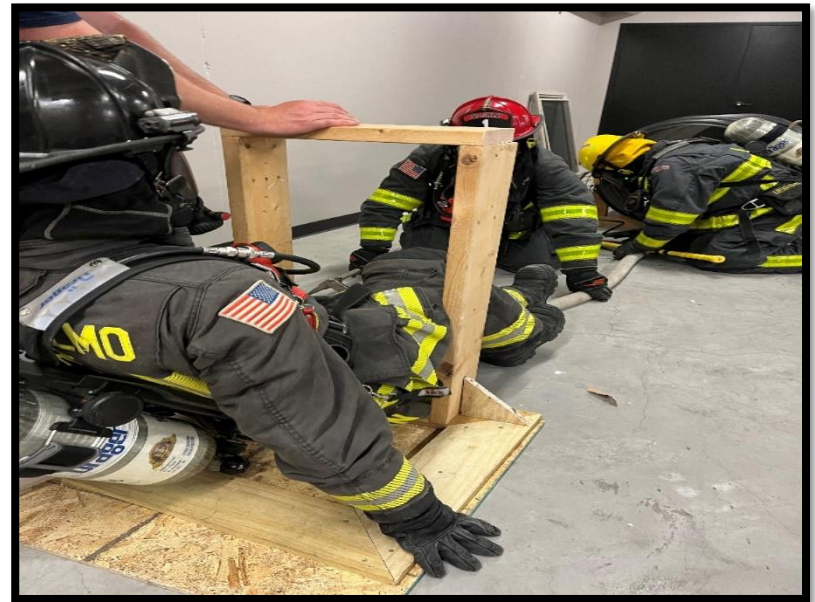
Personnel Hours

Within the scope of training, your fire department participated in quarterly Emergency Medical certification training. These classes are supported in house by two Regions Hospital EMS Education certified fire department staff.

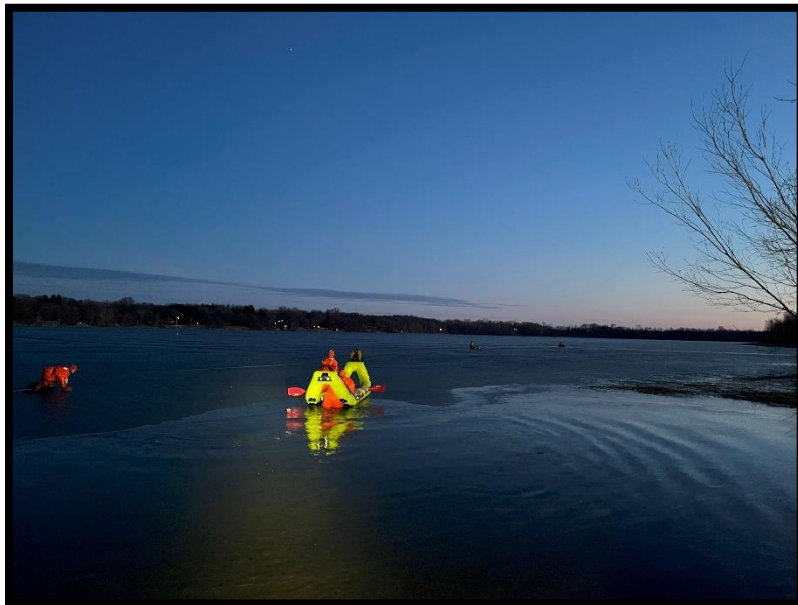
Additionally, we sent three new recruits to the Ramsey County Fire Academy. These recruits were successful in completing all the necessary training and certifications to become licensed firefighters.



Water Rescue and Boat Training on Lake Elmo – Summer 2024



Confined Space / SCBA Training – Spring 2024



Ice Rescue Training on Lake Elmo – Winter 2023/2024



Brush Fire / Wildland Training at Lake Elmo Park Reserve – Fall 2024

Training – Washington County Fire Rescue Dive Team

In 2024, your Lake Elmo Fire Department allocated resources and staff to assist with the Washington County Fire Dive team. The team is supported by Washington County fire departments to aid in the search and rescue during water and ice emergencies throughout the county.

Captain Mike Schwarz, Firefighter Brian Talcott, Firefighter Joe Hathaway, and Firefighter Adam Lembrich are the department's current divers. Other fire department staff are trained in various support positions.



Training

Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education Reimbursement

The Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education's (MBFTE) mission is to promote excellence in the fire service by funding standardized training and through the licensing of Minnesota firefighters.

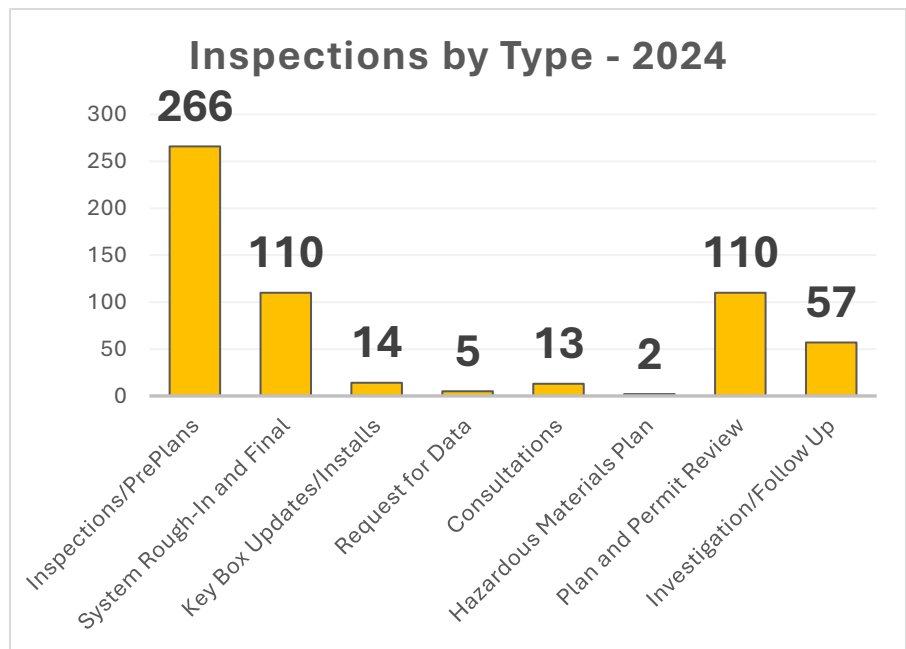
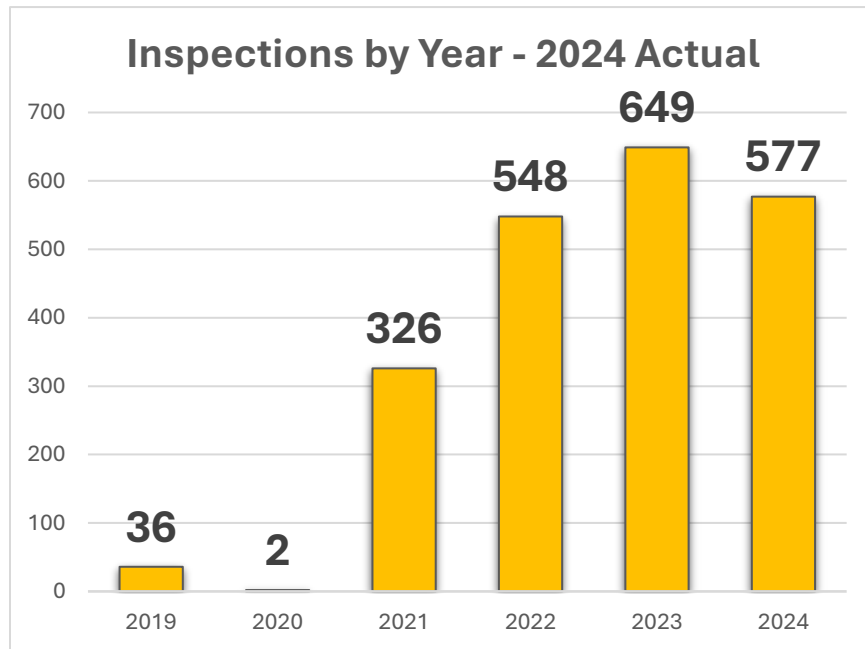
The MBFTE is funded by the Minnesota Fire Safety Account, which was created by the Minnesota State Legislature in 2006 to hold revenue from a fire safety insurance surcharge on homeowner and some commercial insurance policies. The MBFTE provides every fire department a training reimbursement award as a supplement for training and education based on the departments roster size.

In FY2024, your fire department received \$14,879.75 in reimbursement awards for firefighter training and education. Since 2014, the department has received \$101,694.08 in training reimbursement through this program!



Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement

The purpose of the fire prevention program is to promote fire safety, provide education, and (when necessary) enforce codes and ordinances. Since the inception of the inspections program in 2021, the fire department has continued to maintain our records system to accurately represent the building and business profile of the city, inspect all commercial occupancies, and regulate established guidelines for ongoing growth in the city.



The fire department also spends a considerable amount of time reviewing construction plans for new developments and buildings. Taking time ahead of the project to review the process reduces the potential for problem areas in the future. Specifically, the department focuses on access, sprinkler/alarm systems, hydrant placement, addressing, and layout.

Community Education & Events

The fire department participated in several community education events in 2024. The Fire Department continues to support the 4th of July Kids Parade, Lake Elmo Night Out, Light Up Lake Elmo. We hosted our annual Open House speaking engagement with Lake Elmo Elementary students for Fire Prevention Week.



Preschool Visit – Growing Explorers



Fire Department Open House



Light Up Lake Elmo



4th of July Kids Parade

Personnel Recognition – *Retirements*

Last year, we celebrated these individuals on their retirements from the Lake Elmo Fire Department. Their service and dedication to “Proudly Service Neighbors & Friends” was demonstrated through their many years of service to our community.



Firefighter
Robin Goodspeed #93
Retired
14 Years of Service



Chaplin
Richard Glanzer
Retired
11 Years of Service



Support Services
Richard Sachs, Jr. #60
Retired
27 Years of Service

Personnel Recognition – *Years of Service Awards*

The Lake Elmo Fire Department is proud to recognize these individuals who achieved years of service accomplishment milestones in 2024 with our department.



Wole Awoyinka #109
Firefighter / EMR
5 Years of Service



Bret Anderson #111
Engineer
5 Years of Service



Nate Wagner #103
Firefighter / EMT
5 Years of Service

Many of your Lake Elmo Firefighters started their fire service careers outside of our fire department. Those that celebrated overall fire service milestones in 2024 are listed below:

Jeremy Penman – 25 Years

Dustin Kalis - 20 Years

Matt Watt – 15 Years

Nate Wagner – 10 years

Joe Hathaway - 5 Years

Personnel Recognition – *Appointments*



Andrew Lilly #136

Appointed to:

Firefighter/EMT



Jordan Thone #138

Appointed to:

Firefighter/EMT



Nick Rosenberg #139

Appointed to:

Firefighter/EMT



L to R: Andrew, Jordan, and Nick at their Live Burn Training event. March 2024



Brian Chapman #126

Appointed to:

Firefighter/EMT - Career

Donations and Grants

Throughout the year, the fire department was awarded several grants and received many generous donations. We are very fortunate to receive such strong support from our community.



CenterPoint Energy Community Safety Grant:

Proceeds funded a FAST Board, used for quick rescues from buildings or water.



FST Fire Suppression Donation:

*In April, Lake Elmo Fire Department received a donation of two Fire Suppression Tool (FST) devices from the **Lake Elmo Rotary** and **St. John's Masonic Lodge #1**. The tools are kept in the two Chief's vehicles.*

Key Accomplishments – 2024

The fire department is proud of the work that we have done in 2024. Of those accomplishments, we wish to highlight the following:

- Hosted our first Open House at our new station. This event allowed us to showcase the dangers of kitchen grease fires and demonstrated the importance of sleeping with your bedroom door closed.
- Placed into service two new apparatus: Boat 1 and Utility 1.
- Recruited 8 new paid-on-call staff to supplement the duty shift, backfill open positions, and respond to large scale incidents. Recruiting and retaining area residents to serve as paid-on-call firefighters will continue to be a priority for our operations.
- Added the necessary equipment and staff training to fully support the Washington County Fire Dive team.

Into 2025 and beyond...

As we look into 2025, your fire department remains committed to serving the community in the best of our capabilities. Our main priority for 2025 is to maintain the level of service you expect. To fulfill our commitment to service, we are looking forward to these upcoming goals:

- Updates to our equipment maintenance system, which includes the installation of an equipment decontamination machine. This will help reduce our exposure to cancer causing carcinogens.
- Facilitating community CPR, AED and fire extinguisher training classes to our residents and businesses.
- A Fire Department Open House focusing on our public safety partners and risk reduction.
- Community Smoke and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm replacement program in partnership with the Red Cross and Washington County.

***“Proudly Serving Neighbors & Friends”
Since 1957***



Photo Credit: LEO A DALY and Tom Grady Photography