PALM HARBOR SPECIAL FIRE CONTROL & RESCUE DISTRICT

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

OUR VISION

Our Department will serve the community by leading the way with progressive initiatives that shape the future.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Palm Harbor Fire Rescue is to reduce risk and improve the quality of lives.

LEADERSHIP

TO INSPIRE, MOTIVATE, AND PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY.

INNOVATION

CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT.

PROFESSIONALISM

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE THROUGH OUR APPEARANCE, SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION.

INTEGRITY

MAINTAINING ETHICAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AT ALL TIMES.

SERVICE

DEDICATED TO OUR MISSION, COMMUNITY, AND EACH OTHER.

A LETTER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

I want to start by thanking the men and women of Palm Harbor Fire Rescue for everything they do to serve our community daily. Without their dedication and commitment, we could not provide the level of service the community has grown to expect.

This annual report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the organization throughout the 2023 calendar year. The District once again had a very busy year where we accomplished several milestones. As a country, we officially declared an end to the global pandemic, which has had an undue effect on our operations and personnel for the last three years. While we are still dealing with the ripple effects of the pandemic, it is nice to move forward finally.

We started the year by taking delivery of a new ladder truck and going through the pre-build process for two new engines and a heavy rescue. The District also completed our first annual performance review as required by the State of Florida. This lengthy review, conducted by an outside agency, evaluated the District on fourteen financial and operational performance objectives. The review found the District performed well and had no significant deficiencies.

The District also completed our biennial promotional process, which resulted in three promotions, and negotiated a new three-year collective bargaining agreement. The collective bargaining agreement will help ensure the District attracts and retains the best-qualified candidates to serve our community.

A lingering effect of the pandemic has been the rebuilding of Station 68. After a lengthy design process that required multiple renditions, the District was finally able to land on a final product that will serve the needs of the District and the community while staying within the budget. After a five-year process, the District will break ground in January 2024, with an expected completion date of December 2024.

The department had 14,174 responses last year, a 1.4% increase over the previous year. This increase is lower than expected, considering the population growth throughout Florida. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Florida was the second fastest-growing state in 2023.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Board of Fire Commissioners and our community for their continued support.

I hope you enjoy this year's report.

Chief Scott Sanford

FIRE
PUSH IN
PULL DOWN

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FIGURES OF PROGRESS

17M

The district operated on a budget of $17,904,095. The majority of the District's funding comes from a 2.0 millage ad-valorem assessment. Included in the operating budget, the District received $3,622,377 from Pinellas County to provide ALS coverage to Palm Harbor and the surrounding communities.

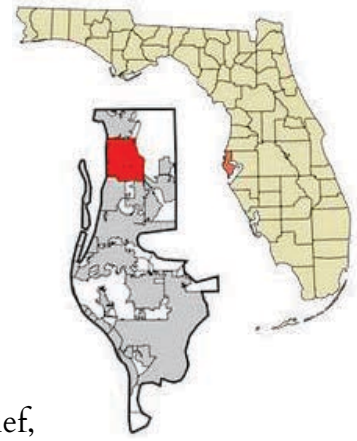
14K

The overall number of responses, which generated a total of 14,174 emergency responses for calendar year 2022-2023

↑1.4%

In 2023, the department experienced an 1.4% increase in call volume. The increased call volume is associated with our aging population and increased population density.

WHO WE ARE



Palm Harbor Fire Rescue (PHFR) is an all-hazards Fire Department that provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) medical services. The Department provides emergency response through Fire Stations 65, 66, 67 and 68, which are strategically located around Palm Harbor in order to maximize coverage and minimize response times. These stations are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by three separate shifts.

To meet the needs of our community, the Department is staffed with one Fire Chief, two Deputy Chiefs, three Division Chiefs, one District Chief, five Lieutenants, fifteen firefighters/EMTs/paramedics and five civilian personnel.

Every day, there are a minimum of seventeen members responding to emergencies across Palm Harbor. Depending on the type of emergency, the Pinellas County Regional 9-1-1 Center will dispatch the appropriate resources to provide fire suppression, Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Life Support (ALS) and technical operations. All PHFR firefighters are certified emergency medical technicians (EMT) and the majority are paramedics.

POPULATION - 61,533
MILES OF ROAD - 291.5
LAND SQ. MILES - 17.38
MEDIAN INCOME - $70,493
MEDIAN AGE - 51.9
HOUSING UNITS - 26,674
BUSINESS UNITS - 2,665

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue

Board of Commissioners

Department Attorney

Chief of Department

Public Information Officer

Deputy Chief Operations

Office Manager

Deputy Chief Support Services

Office Assistant

District Chief A Shift

5 Lieutenants
14 Firefighter EMT/ Paramedics

District Chief B Shift

5 Lieutenants
14 Firefighter EMT/ Paramedics

District Chief C Shift

5 Lieutenants
14 Firefighter EMT/ Paramedics

Department Maintenance

Division Chief of Training

Division Chief EMS

EMS Administrative Lieutenant

Division Chief Fire Marshal

Fire Prevention Officer

FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

DEPUTY CHIEF, RODNEY MALPASS

The operations division oversees Fire Suppression and Special Operations. Palm Harbor Fire Rescue works hard to provide the highest quality of care and response to emergencies in our communities.

The division comprises the Deputy Chief of Operations, three District Chiefs, fifteen Lieutenants, and forty-five firefighters. The current staffing levels are adequate to staff the three engine companies, one truck company, one heavy rescue, and one transport-capable rescue. In 2023, Palm Harbor Fire Rescue responded to 11,422 incidents, an increase of 213 calls for assistance.

PERSONNEL

In 2023, the Department hired ten employees to maintain staffing levels. This was due to District Chief Tom Greear and Lieutenant Steve Gorby's retirement in October and five firefighter resignations. To reduce firefighter work hours, the District and the Union, negotiated a "Kelly Day" into the labor agreement requiring the District to add three additional firefighters. Filling the vacancies, the Department hired:

Firefighter/Paramedic Ben Rachel

Firefighter/Paramedic Patrick Burford

Firefighter/EMT Shawn Perman

Firefighter/Paramedic Andrew Portale

Firefighter/Paramedic Doug Smith

Firefighter/Paramedic Anthony Planeta

Firefighter/Paramedic Michael Fogarty

Firefighter/EMT Nate Munson

Firefighter/EMT Liam Harvey

Firefighter/Paramedic Stephen Wright

There are eighty employees in the fire department, seventy-one fire-certified personnel, four civilian staff, and five Fire Commissioners.

FIRE APPARATUS

In early 2023, the build process commenced for Squad 65, Engine 66, and Engine 68. The squad and engine committees traveled to Pierce in Appleton, Wisconsin, for all three units' engineering and design. Each committee spent three days working on the details to ensure the units met the needs of PHFR. The original delivery was scheduled for fall 2023; we expect all three to be delivered to the Department before March 2024. The Department also placed an order (letter of intent to purchase) through RevRtc Orlando for a 2024 Freightliner M2 ambulance. This apparatus will replace the current ambulance on its normal five-year replacement cycle.

RESERVE APPARATUS

The Department uses two 2011 E-One engines as spare apparatus when frontline units are out of service for repairs or maintenance. Our two 2014 engines will replace the 2011 ones once the new apparatus arrives from Pierce. When this transition occurs, the 2011 engines will be sold.

EQUIPMENT

The Department was awarded a grant through Firehouse Subs for Hurst Extrication equipment. The new equipment included :

Hurst SP555E3 Spreader (Grant)
Hurst S789E3 Cutter (Grant)
Hurst R521E3 Ram (Grant)
Hurst Stability Plate (Department Purchased)
Hurst Chain Set (Department Purchased)
Hurst C-Frame Ram Support (Department Purchased)

To increase firefighter safety when dealing with electric vehicles, the Department purchased an Emergency Plug by Darley to prevent an electric vehicle from unintended movement and shut off the high voltage.

Station 65

250 West Lake Road, Palm Harbor, FL 34684

Station 65 serves as a multi-functional building housing the Fire Administration Offices, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the Palm Harbor Fire District and provides fire suppression and emergency medical services (EMS) with advanced life support (ALS) equipment. The Board of Fire Commissioners hold monthly commission meetings at Station 65 on the second Monday of every month at 6pm. Emergency response equipment from this station includes Engine 65, Rescue 65, Squad 65, and District 65.

Fire station 65's area includes main arteries for commuters traveling north and south on US HWY 19 and Belcher Rd. and the central east and west arteries of Tampa and Curlew Roads.

It provides services to 12 single and multi-story complexes, which provide short and long-term care, rehabilitation, and independent living occupancies. The largest of these occupancies include St. Marks Village, Coral Oaks and Stratford Court. Additionally, this area includes multiple neighborhoods comprised of single and multi-family residential homes, three public elementary schools (Highland Lakes, Lake Saint George, and Curlew Creek), and numerous private schools.

The major thoroughfares are lined with medical offices, retail spaces, storage facilities and food and beverage services. Another point of interest in the heart of Station 65's response area is the 55 years + residential neighborhood, Highland Lakes. This large retirement community contains multiple clubhouses, a golf course, RV and boat storage, and 2,457 single and multi-family homes with approximately 30,000 part- and full-time residents.

Station 66

1123 Illinois Avenue, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Station 66 was the first station in the district built in 1966. It was torn down and rebuilt in 2000. It serves the southwestern portion of the fire district. Station 66 provides fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS) with advanced life support (ALS) equipment, Marine 66, Utility 66, and Fireboat 66 the departments Fire & Rescue Boat. Fire Boat 66 is located at Home Port Marina on a lift for rapid deployment.

Station 66 houses E66 and Marine 66.

ENGINE 66

2014 E-One Cyclone II
Cummins ISX 12 450HP Engine
Allison EVS4000 Transmission
Hale QMAX 2250GPM Pump
530 Gallon Water Tank
Advanced Life Support (ALS)

Station 67

2300 Glen Eagles Parkway, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Station 67 was the second station built to serve the community and serves the northeastern portion of the fire district. It was renovated in 1998 as the need for staffing increased and a 2000 square foot addition was built to house the crews. Station 67 provides fire Truck 67 for suppression and emergency medical service (EMS) with advanced life support (ALS) equipment. The departments Brush Truck 67 is also housed here and provides fire protection and suppression for the district's wildland interface.

TRUCK 67
2022 E-One Cyclone II
78' Aerial Ladder Truck
Cummins ISX 12 500HP Engine
Allison EVS4000 Transmission
Hale QMAX 2250GPM Pump
500 Gallon Water Tank
Advanced Life Support (ALS)

BRUSH 67/ HIGH WATER RESCUE
1996 Stewart Stevenson LMTV
500 Gallon Water Tank
Honda GX 13HP Motor
105 GPM Striker II Pump
2- 100' Hose Reels
High Water Rescue Capabilities

Station 68

3007 Alternate 19, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Station 68 was built in 1991; the last of the four stations and serves the northwestern portion of the fire district. It was originally designed to house the District's fire prevention division until 2007 when the fire prevention division was subsequently moved to Station 65 to bring all support services under one roof.

In 2022, the department's Hazardous Materials (Haz-Mat) team moved from Station 66 to 68. Haz-Mat provides coverage Palm Harbor and also responds as part of the Pinellas County Hazardous Materials Team. Emergency response equipment from this station includes Engine 68 and Haz-Mat 68 and DR68 (drone).

ENGINE 68
2014 E-One Cyclone II
Cummins ISX 12 450HP Engine
Allison EVS4000 Transmission
Hale QMAX 1500GPM Pump
530 Gallon Water Tank
Advanced Life Support (ALS)

HAZ-MAT 68

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The Department has continued our involvement as part of Pinellas County's northern post of the Hazardous Materials Response Team.

Hazmat 68 and DR68 (drone) (HM600 remained unchanged, locally PH600). The team makeup has remained unchanged: St. Petersburg Fire Department, Seminole Fire Department, Largo Fire Department, Pinellas Park Fire Department, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, and the Pinellas County Safety Services – Fire Division.

Some team highlights include:

- The drone (DR68) is back in full service
- Hazmat Responses for 2023

  H66/68, DR66/68, HM600

  Hazmat 68 and HM600 (PH600) experienced fifty-one responses, including radio and phone consultations with field units seeking information and direction.

HAZMAT RESPONSES

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All hazmat team members continue to maintain a required minimum level of training. The Department continues sending on-duty Hazmat personnel to training and backfilling their positions not to impact service levels. The Department Hazmat staffing continues to be a minimum of six per shift.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

MARINE RESPONSE

DISTRICT CHIEF, RAY TRACY

Palm Harbor's Fire and Marine Boat 66 are specialized response units that address emergencies in our various water environments. These units are crucial in responding to calls for assistance spanning the Gulf of Mexico, Lake Tarpon, and numerous lakes and waterways in Palm Harbor and its surrounding area. Palm Harbor responded to 78 marine incidents in the waters of North Pinellas in 2023.

The scope of Palm Harbor's marine rescues is broad, encompassing distressed boaters, medical emergencies on the various barrier islands, paddle boarders, kiteboarders, jet skiers, and kayakers. PHFR marine units collaborate seamlessly with other Pinellas County marine units under the automatic aid agreement, and we are the only marine unit capable of shallow water rescues in North Pinellas. The personnel stationed at Station 66 engage in joint work and training initiatives with other fire departments, the United States Coast Guard, the Florida Wildlife Commission (F.W.C.), and the Pinellas and Pasco County Sheriff's Offices. This collaborative approach ensures a comprehensive and efficient response to maritime emergencies.

We are currently handling these calls that are inshore, nearshore, and within the inland waters of our area with our two marine assets, Fireboat 66 and Marine 66. Fireboat 68, a 25' Ameracat Hybrid Catamaran, and Marine 66, a 17' Key West center console, are equipped with FLIR, Garmin Side Vu Sonar, and high-output L.E.D. lighting. The fireboat has a 500 G.P.M. pump, an elevated tower for increased search visibility and shallow water navigation, dual Power Poles, and a jack plate. Fireboat 66 is on a lift and response ready at Home Port Marina in Ozona, and it is available for mutual aid response along Pinellas County's Gulf of Mexico coastline. Marine 66 will be responding from Station 66, and its primary mission is to provide marine rescue coverage on Lake Tarpon. Marine 66 is also available for mutual aid in the County where a boat launch is accessible.

In 2023, we secured a water rescue grant from Pinellas County, allowing us to add a 16' Jon boat equipped with a 20hp Mercury motor. This valuable addition augments our existing fleet, which includes a 14' Aluma Craft powered by a 6hp Honda and a 14' Sea Ark powered by a trolling motor. These fully equipped Jon boats are strategically positioned on our stackable trailer at Station 66, enhancing our readiness to respond to various water rescue calls, particularly during coastal and inland flooding.

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2023 Marine Reponses

Looking ahead to 2024, we anticipate further enhancements through the water rescue grant program. Our plan includes utilizing grant funding to incorporate three wireless headsets into Fireboat 66, a move aimed at fostering improved communication among crew members, responding units, and dispatch. Moreover, we intend to allocate grant funds to update the electronic package on Fireboat 66, which has faithfully served for nearly a decade, ensuring its continued effectiveness in our critical life-saving missions.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

WILDLAND RESPONSE & HIGH WATER RESCUE

Wildland Response

In 2023, Brush 67 responded to seven brushfire incidents within Pinellas County. Five of those responses were in Palm Harbor.

High Water Rescue

Responding from Station 66 is a 14' Aluma Craft Jon boat powered by a six hp Honda, and a 14' Sea Ark powered by a trolling motor. Both have been recognized by the County as a full-time asset. The district has received funding to outfit the boats with safety gear and equipment that will allow our crews to effect rescues in difficult bodies of water to access, flooding events and assist with specialty teams. The Jon boats are wrapped in high visibility graphics and the County has approved to provide funds to purchase a stackable trailer, ensuring a safe deployment of Jon boats when needed.

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue's wildland response is achieved with the use of Brush 67. The Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) is a military surplus vehicle on loan from the Division of Forestry. The vehicle has been retrofitted for both wildland firefighting and high-water rescue.

FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

DEPUTY CHIEF, BRENT BREUER

The support services division oversees emergency management, emergency medical services, training, public education, fire prevention, and facilities maintenance. The division consists of a Deputy Chief, Division Chief of EMS, Division Chief of Training, Public Educator/Public Information Officer, Division Chief of Fire Prevention/ Fire Marshal, and a part-time facilities maintenance position.

Fire Station 68 Project

The cost of construction has been on the rise in recent years, and it's a trend that's expected to continue. The cost of materials, labor, and land all contribute to inflated costs for commercial construction projects. The costs to build are commonly inflated and most projects can be millions of dollars over budget and Palm Harbor Fire Rescue is being affected by these economic challenges.

Despite these challenges, the Palm Harbor Fire Rescue Department decided to readvertise our construction project to explore other design teams. After the competitive process, Nelson Construction was awarded the design-build contract for the building. The building committee went back to the drawing board with the new team, and Sofarelli and Associates redrew the construction plans and are moving the project forward. The district is anticipating the ceremonial groundbreaking to occur in early January.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue's Emergency Management (EM) program is designed to address the National Preparedness goal of the Federal Emergency Management Administration, which is to coordinate, respond, recover, mitigate, and prevent disasters within the community. It is the responsibility of EM to coordinate the district's responsibilities.

According to The Weather Channel, the 2023 hurricane season produced 20 named storms. Many of them tracked away from our fire district, except Hurricane Idalia.

On August 26, 2023, a tropical depression formed, which eventually developed into Hurricane Idalia. Hurricane Idalia was a Category 3 storm and was projected to stay westerly off the coastline approximately 80 miles offshore. The position and timing of this storm placed the fire district at risk of a flooding event.

To prepare for this storm, the district recalled one shift, staffed three storm units and boats, and three general and special need shelters. A mandatory evacuation was ordered for Level A residences and mobile home parks. Once the storm passed, the district experienced significant flooding in the Ozona and Crystal Beach areas of our district and our members evacuated 7 citizens from their homes who became trapped from floodwaters. Overall, our district fared pretty well from this storm, and our members' did an excellent job protecting our fire district and the citizens.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

DIVISION CHIEF, DOUG ZIMMERMAN

The mission of Palm Harbor Fire Rescue is to reduce risk and improve the quality of lives. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is an integral component in achieving this mission. The goal for the EMS Division is to provide high-quality patient care in the pre-hospital setting.

EMS Training

This year all paramedics renewed their Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), this is a mandatory certification for all Paramedics and is done every two years. PHFR Paramedics completed the recertification with a 100% success rate. Continuing Medical Education (CME) is the primary method we receive our medical training which is mandatory to have in order to maintain our Paramedic or EMT license. This year paramedics completed 25 hours of training and EMT's had 21 hours. Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration was prepared to transition to the Philips Tempus Pro/LS cardiac monitor as the current Philips MRx was past its life cycle. In early 2023 it was determined that we would not be able to source the new Philips device anytime soon and it was clear the MRx needed to be replaced. It was decided by Pinellas County that we would purchase the Stryker Life Pak 15 Version four with an anticipated delivery date of August/September 2023.

All Pinellas County clinicians were trained on the Tempus Pro/LS, with the change moving towards purchasing the Life Pak required all clinicians to go through training on the new device. Over the summer of 2023 training was conducted on-line as well as a face-to-face in classroom work that allowed for extensive hands-on exercises. This was completed and PHFR moved into the new device in late September.

Zoll is the current electronic patient care reporting system used in Pinellas County, this software is outdated and in need of replacement. Image Trend was sourced as a replacement and implemented throughout the month of November. This software platform is web based and has much more functionality than the Zoll product. In addition to the patient care reporting side, there is a License Management System (LMS) that stores all our certificates and can be accessed by individual clinicians from any location.

PHFR continues to precept St. Petersburg College EMT's & Paramedics to aid in their development as EMS Professionals. Having clinical ride time on an ALS unit is an important segment in producing a quality EMS clinician and Palm Harbor continues to be very active with these students. Currently, there are 16 PHFR employees that volunteer their time with this program. In 2023, they had a total of 2,085 hours where they precepted students.

EMS

Medical Director's Office

Office of the Medical Director is under the direction of Dr. Angus Jameson and he is involved in the day-to-day operation of the EMS system. Dr. Dooley (MD-2) decided it was time to step down and partially retire, she is still working for OMD as an on-line doctor. Dr. Jameson has developed a new website, pcemsomd.com, which has a tremendous number of resources available for clinicians to access. January 2023 an updated and overhauled Medical Operations Manual (MOM) became available, this is now a "Living Document" which allows for immediate updates to be inputted into the manual. The MOM can be found on every tablet used for ePCR's and the new website.

Employee Wellness

All employees receive a comprehensive health and fitness exam through Life Scan. This is a three-hour long exam and follows the standards in NFPA 1582 & 1583. This exam includes a thorough analysis of blood work, ultrasound of the core areas of the body and a physical fitness test which has a monetary incentive component associated with it. In addition, all four PHFR fire stations have a dedicated gym with exercise equipment for employees to use on and off duty.

Quality Assurance

The Pinellas Quality Assurance Committee was formed to discuss the challenges Pinellas County is experiencing and to explore ways to improve the system. FirstPass is utilized as our chart review system in Pinellas County. This process reviews 100% of the records generated to evaluate if defined core quality measures have been met and documented. If a chart does not meet the appropriate quality measure, then the record is flagged and reviewed with the clinician by the EMS Chief.

In 2023, 8,006 charts were reviewed for PHFR with 298 having a deficiency. This is in comparison to 2021 with 8,286 charts reviewed and 394 being flagged. This is in comparison to 2022 with 8,400 charts reviewed and 305 being flagged. It is important to note that in 2023 First Pass was turned off at the end of November due to the transition to Image Trend.

	2023	2022	2021
Total PCR Reviewed (Patient Care Reports)	8,006	8,400	8,286
PCR Flagged	298	305	394
Percentage of Reports Flagged	3.7%	3.6%	4.7%

TRAINING

DIVISION CHIEF, JASON HAYNES

The goal of Palm Harbor Fire Rescue (PHFR) is to provide a learning platform for our personnel that encourages their professional growth with great emphasis placed on the skills necessary to protect our community that we serve. Our department continues not only to meet the training standards, but far exceeds the standards set forth by the following organizations:

National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). In 2022, PHFR logged a total of 13,825 training hours. The training categories are as follows:

Company Training: There were **8,085 hours** completed by Department members. This training includes various topics that a firefighter may participate in, including hose line evolutions, search and rescue, extrication of victims from motor vehicles, ground ladder deployment, ropes and knots, and safety and survival. This year, our members focused on multi-company evolutions and other specialized training that involved victim rescue involving water emergencies, including swift and high-water emergency preparedness during hurricanes and the rising threat of lithium-ion battery fire mitigation.

Facility Training Drills: There were **1,588 hours** completed. This category has very stringent guidelines. It is defined as any training performed at a certified training center. It requires the facility to have at least two acres of property, a three-story training tower, and a burn facility. This category of training can be quite a challenge for PHFR to obtain since the department does not have this type of facility in the district, and the department must rely on other organizations such as Tarpon Springs and Clearwater Fire Rescue as well as the St. Petersburg College Fire Academy Training Center. Our facility drills covered the annual air consumption drill, firefighter survival, ladder evolutions, and other fire company evolutions.

Officer Training: There were **2,494 hours** of training completed in this category. Some examples of training in this area are incident command, leadership, interpersonal dynamics, and conflict resolution. This year, our officers and acting officers participated in our well-developed leadership program. This program engages our officers every quarter and reviews topics such as leadership in the fire service, handling issues in the firehouse, training, and other hot topics during that quarter. On top of this quarterly training, we engaged our officers in a few internal leadership sessions with external speakers specializing in leadership and team dynamics.

Driver Training: There were **1,816 hours** of driver training completed. This category includes any vehicle operations that require the Emergency Vehicle Operator Criteria. PHFR personnel must complete various emergency driver courses, including rollover prevention and preventative maintenance of emergency vehicles. Also included in this training category is pumping the apparatus and calculating flow rates for hose lines. This year we completed a large relay pumping operation simulating long distances from hydrants. These skills are vital because some areas in our jurisdiction, including our neighboring jurisdictions, have areas with minimal hydrants to provide water for fire suppression.

Marine Training: There were **137 hours** of marine fireboat training completed. This included search and rescue drills, swift water rescue, conscious and unconscious swimmer rescue techniques, and annual swim requirements. Palm Harbor Fire Rescue trains annually with the surrounding jurisdiction's marine fireboats.

Hazardous Materials: There were **761 hours** completed by our members. Hazardous materials cover chemicals and fuels that may have spilled or leaked, causing a hazardous condition. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) are also covered under this umbrella of hazardous materials. This year's training included mitigating lithium-ion battery fires, gas leaks, and spill recognition.

Vehicle Extrication Training: There were **79 hours** of training completed in this category. Vehicle extrication is the process of removing a vehicle from around a person who is trapped or pinned inside. A delicate and precise approach is necessary to remove victims from such events safely. Our members can complete this valuable training thanks to our partnership with Day's Collision Painting & Repair, Inc., and Bradford's Towing. They provide a location on their property and vehicles for us to cut on and practice this valuable training. This year, we saw fewer hours due vendors shortages. (Part of the total for Company training hours).

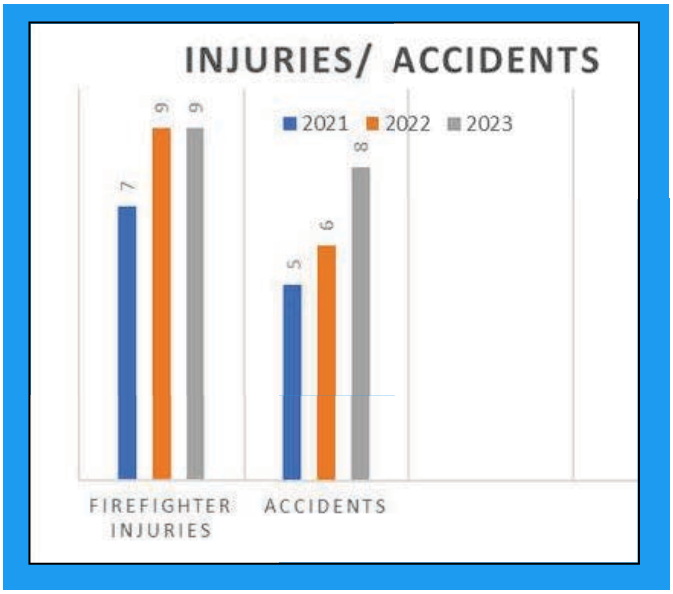
Wildland Fire Training: There were **69 hours** of training completed in this category. Wildland fire training is achieved through the training division's partnership with the Division of Forestry and St. Petersburg College. Our members have opportunities to participate a few times a year when fire academy students at St. Petersburg College obtain their wildland firefighter certification. Additionally, our members participate in the Division of Forestry's controlled burns conducted at the Brooker Creek Preserve or Upper Tampa Bay Park. We utilize Brush 67, a unit designed for fighting wildland fires. Without the incredible partnerships, our members would not get much real live wildland fire experience. (Part of the total for Company training hours).

NORTH COUNTY TRAINING GROUP

Our department continues to participate in the North County Training Group (NCT) which includes the following departments: Palm Harbor, Dunedin, Eastlake, Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs. Palm Harbor Fire Rescue members regularly train with these other agencies on a pre-determined North County Training annual program that includes various firefighter job-specific skills. This year, post-COVID-19 our departments trained together for six out of the twelve months in 2023.

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue members are dedicated to the citizens and visitors of our Palm Harbor communities. As you can see, they are invested in the hours they train to better themselves for the service of others. Rest assured your fire department is ready and will be there in your time of need!

HEALTH & SAFETY



Palm Harbor Fire Rescue has placed the safety division within the Training Division of the fire department. Establishing such a vital component to the organization is to investigate and review all workplace accidents, safety-related incidents, reportable injuries, illnesses, diseases, and fatalities. This is done so by forming our own departmental Safety Committee. This Committee is made up of both management and labor staff. This committee is required under Florida Administrative Rule 69A, Florida State Statute 633, and NFPA 1500.

Meetings are held quarterly to review member injuries, accidents, and broken equipment. These incidents are reviewed and analyzed to ensure the health and safety of our members, along with recommendations and actions to prevent and or reduce these incidents from happening in the future. In 2023, we had nine injuries to our personnel. This is the same amount as the previous year, which had a total of nine in 2022. In 2023, we had eight accidents involving damage to vehicles. This is a slight increase in accidents from the previous year, which was six in 2022. The safety committee has reviewed the incidents and made recommendations to the administrative staff regarding any possible corrective actions necessary. One notable change this year was adding an additional spotter outside the vehicle when backing our apparatus. The committee is continuously looking for ways to improve health and safety for our members through a review of new equipment, apparatus design, current national standards, trends, and our policies and procedures.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER ELIZABETH GRAHAM

The overarching purpose of fire and life safety education programming is to reduce deaths, injuries, and property loss within our community and Pinellas County. This is achieved by helping to increase knowledge and modify attitudes and behaviors towards fire and life safety. The following chart identifies the number of outreach programs and age demographics.

AGE GROUP	# Programs YTD	# Participants YTD
Preschool/ Infant	46	2272
School-Age	61	7305
Adults	81	4452
Seniors	104	1237
TOTAL	292	15,266

Month	Post	Description	Reach	Reactions, Comments & Shares
January		Last shift for FF/PM Tony Tremblay	15,300	829
February		Rollover Crash	24,100	447
March		Helping Ms. Edna after a fall and replacing broken shelf	48,500	2,600
April		PHFR Promotional Process	6,900	535
May		Palm Harbor golf cart owners; expanded boundaries...	27,625	705
June		When you're the only kid to show up at camp...	25,000	1,200
July		Child sees firefighters during a LZ	20,600	640
August		Telsa Fire in Dunedin	98,263	2,400
September		Publix donates food to Fire Stations	22,887	833
October		When our coworker, Ruby wants attention...	11,878	1,100
November		Welcome New Firefighters	21,942	1,400
December		Santa Ride Routes...Denis Phillips predicting bad weather	78,600	1,100

CONTENT WITH THE HIGHEST REACH PER MONTH

FIRE PREVENTION

DIVISION CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL, WILLIAM FISHER

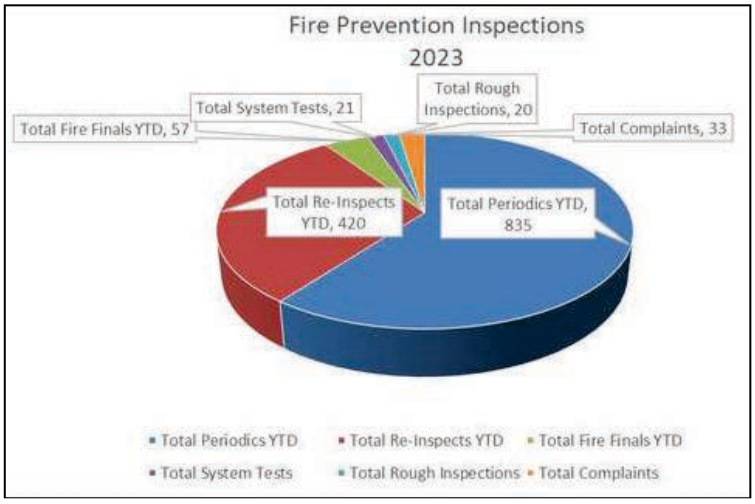
Palm Harbor Fire Rescue's Fire Prevention Bureau is staffed with a Fire Marshal, Fire Prevention Officer and a 410 program. We utilize life safety and fire code compliance to keep the citizens, the visitors, and our community of Palm Harbor safe.

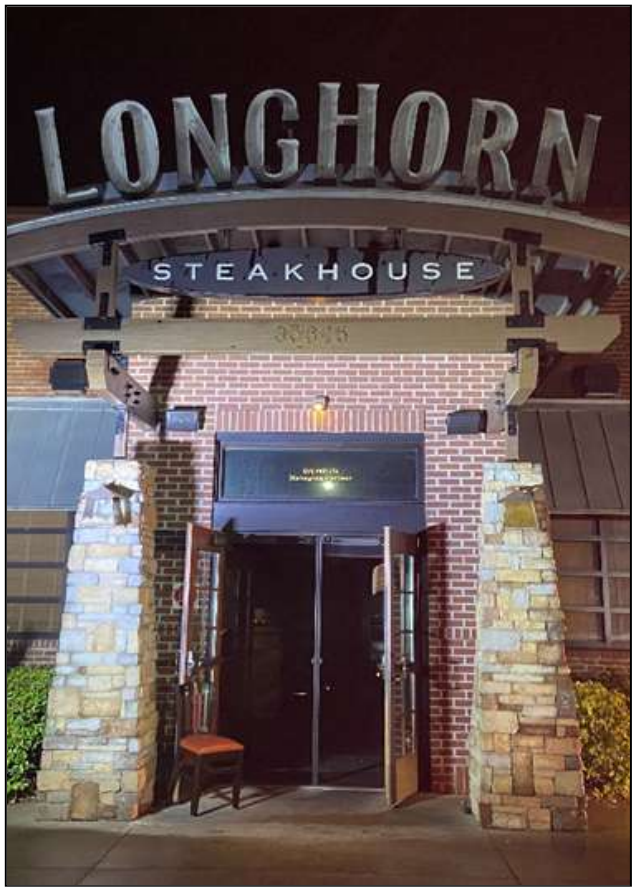
The Fire Prevention Bureau's mission is to save lives, property and protect the environment within the Palm Harbor Special Fire Control and Rescue District from fire, life safety emergencies, hazardous material releases, and other preventable tragedies. We promote life safety and fire code compliance through education to prevent tragedies before they occur.

Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement

The Fire Prevention Division is responsible for periodically inspecting all existing commercial and multi-family residential properties within the District. Our property list is currently at 3,215 and continues to grow every day. The Division is required by law to complete all 3,215 inspections in accordance with the minimum inspection frequency schedule specified in the current edition of the Florida Fire Prevention Code.

The Division has implemented a plan to complete 1,200 annual/periodic inspections per year, including all critical infrastructure inspections and all required annual licensed facility inspections. As the division's needs continue to grow, we will work to ensure that our commercial businesses and multi-family residential communities are safe.



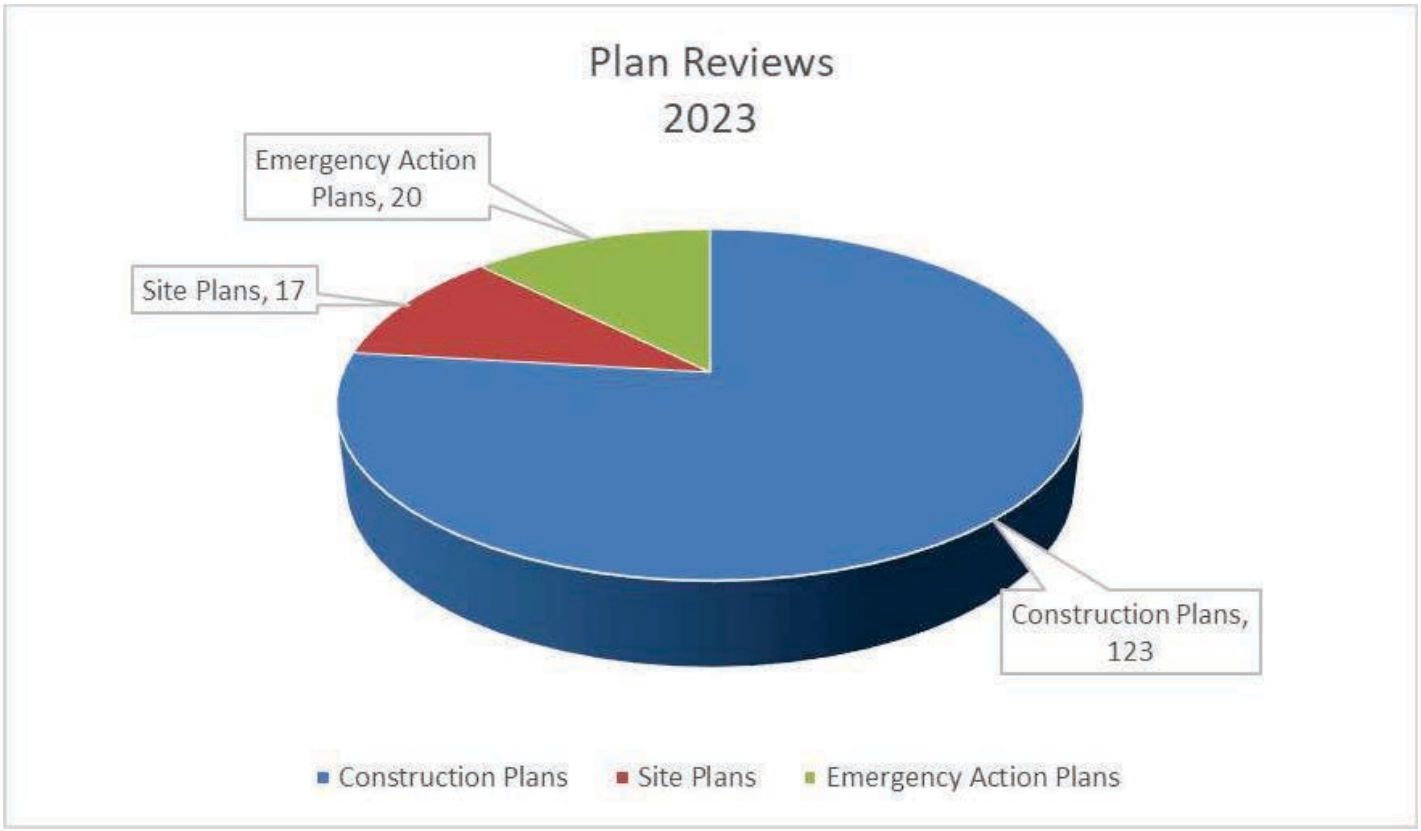


Residential and Commercial Knox Boxes

The Fire Prevention Division administers the Palm Harbor community's residential and commercial "Knox Box" program. This tool allows our firefighters and paramedics to rapidly access residences and commercial structures in case of a medical emergency, fire alarm, or structure fire. This creates efficiencies within our emergency responses to the community. Annually, the division confirms that all Knox Boxes are functioning appropriately.

New and Rehabilitation Construction Projects

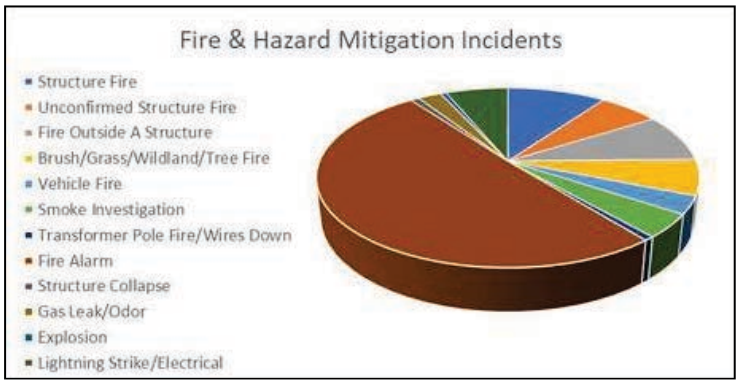
The Fire Prevention Division reduces community risk by conducting plan reviews and field acceptance inspections for all new construction and renovation of existing buildings within the district. We utilize the plan review process to collaborate with architects, engineers, contractors, business owners, and county plan review officials on the importance of fire and life safety code compliance that is required by Florida State Statute, Florida Administrative Code, the Florida Fire Prevention Code, NFPA 1 Fire Code, and NFPA 101 Life Safety Code. The Fire Prevention Division reviewed 160 plans for various construction projects within the district. The plan review process includes new construction, rehabilitation construction, fire protection systems review, development review, site plans review, special events, emergency action plans, and complaints.



Fire Investigations

The Fire Prevention Division conducts investigations to determine the origin and cause of fires. Fire investigations can determine fire trends, which can reduce community risk through educational outreach by utilizing the National Fire Incident Reporting System. Fire scene investigations may require assistance from the State of Florida Fire Marshal's Office and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue's investigators include Division Chief/Fire Marshal Bill Fisher, Fire Prevention Officer Coty Walker, and Division Chief of Training and Safety Jason Haynes. There were approximately 685 fire and hazard mitigation incidents in 2023. The following is a breakdown of the fire incidents recorded and documented through the Pinellas County 911 dispatch center.



The following is a breakdown of the fire incidents recorded and documented through the Pinellas County 911 dispatch center.

Pre- Incident Planning

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue conducts pre-incident planning of target hazards within the District to assist personnel in effectively managing incidents and events to protect occupants, responding personnel, property, and the environment. The District utilizes a designated technology platform, currently E.P.R. Fireworks, as a tool to maximize the District's pre-incident planning capabilities. The platform provides us with a standardized method for data collection and allows us to incorporate overhead satellite imagery site plans. This pre-incident planning process was developed in accordance with NFPA 1620 Standard for Pre-Incident Planning. Personnel completed 70 plans this year; the District will continue to update our pre-incident plans on a periodic basis with the goal of being 100% complete by the close of 2027.

FIRE CHAPLAIN

CHAPLAIN, MILTON SMITH

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue has witnessed many changes over the past year. The most important of them is the change in new personnel. Personnel is the greatest asset of the department. As chaplain, I am committed to be available to all of our members. We have resources available to help members stay fit for duty both physical and mentality. As chaplain, I am here to assist both emotionally and spiritually. Annually, I work to educate myself on the best practices to connect with firefighters and stay visible. Here is a brief glance of my service over that last year.

- Conducted fire station visits throughout the year.
- Hosted 6 First Responders Breakfasts in Palm Harbor.
- Hosted the Federations of Fire Chaplains 44th Annual Conference 7 days.
- Visited Pinellas County 911 Center.
- Attended Palm Harbor Annual Union & Department Family Picnic.
- Participated in 5 New Member Onboarding Orientations Sessions.
- Attended, conducted or participated in 6 firefighter memorials and funerals.
- Invocation at Dunedin Fire Rescue Push-in ceremony for Rescue 60.
- Invocation for the Annual Pinellas County Fallen Law Enforcement Officers Bike Ride.
- Speaker at the Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Annual Conference, Westley Chapel.
- Speaker at the Pinellas County SPC Fire Academy for classes.
- Assisted the 2nd Alarm Project- Behavioral Health Access Program (BHAP Toolkit), Orlando.
- Attended the 2nd Alarm Project Building Resilience Conference, Tallahassee.
- Attended the Soul Injury Training at My Warrior's Place, Ruskin.
- Attended the Fallen Firefighter Annual Memorial at the Florida State Fire College, Ocala.
- Visit Resiliency Retreat, Sarasota.
- Attended some of the Palm Harbor Fire Commissioner Meetings.
- Attended Florida Westcoast Fire Associations Meetings, Palm Harbor.
- Hosted Chaplain's meetings.
- Attended Retiree Ceremonies at St.65.
- Attended Palm Harbor Fire Rescue Retiree's picnic at Reddy's Retreat.
- Attended Peace Keeper's Initiative in Largo.
- Invocations at Pinellas County Board of Commissioners Meeting.
- Invocation at Pinellas County School Board Meeting.
- Invocation at Pinellas County Emergency Medical Advisory Board Meeting.
- Conducted hospital visits of firefighters.
- Participated in Palm Harbor Annual Awards Appreciation Dinner.
- Responded to school stabbing at Countryside High School.
- Responded to Bicycle verses Vehicle crash with fatality in Tarpon Springs.

Additionally, I continue to contribute articles to the department's newsletter, the FDC. Our members have an opportunity to read words of encouragement and reminders to look out for one another. I continue to visit stations to build better relationships with our members. We never know when the bad call will come in. The goal is to know them before the call, support them during the call and be there to hear them after the call. I appreciate the Fire Chief, Fire Commissioners and department for allowing me this opportunity to serve. It's an honor to serve as Fire Chaplain for Palm Harbor Fire Rescue for another year.

LOCAL 2980

PRESIDENT, GREG SMART

It was an exiting year for our Local in almost all aspects of Union business. Early in the year we attended the FPF Legislative Conference, where we were able to secure monumental improvements to the Florida State Retirement System. While we still have some more work to do to achieve full restoration, the move back to 25 years of service or age 55 was a huge accomplishment.

Although Palm Harbor is no longer an FRS department, having a healthy and robust FRS is in the best interest of all firefighters within the State and we are proud to have helped in that lobbying effort. Further on the State level we attended the FPF State Convention in Orlando. There, we received education on how to better serve our members and attended to Statewide Union issues.

Here at home, we continued our work of supporting our members and working with our counterparts to improve working conditions, benefits, and resources to ensure Palm Harbor Fire Rescue will be a safe and desirable place of employment for years to come. While our successes in this arena were many, the one I want to highlight is that we became the first North County Department to implement a Kelly Day. This was no easy task and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our Administration and our Board of Fire Commissioners for working with us to make this a reality.

Of course, no annual summary would be complete without recognizing the amazing charitable and fraternal events we have enjoyed together. Our golf tournament and annual picnic were great as always and I want to thank everyone who helped set the stage for those events. I believe a special thanks to Josh Lovetere, Chris Zipeto, and Billy Gonnelli is in order as well. We also saw the addition of a new event. The first annual Suncoast Animal League event was a huge success. I thank all of you that attended and worked together for a great cause. And once again I would like to offer a special thanks to Ashley White who worked tirelessly to coordinate this event.

Next, I want to recognize our phenomenal board of Union Officials that carry the weight of this Local on their shoulders every day. I thank you for your commitment to those you serve and for all the tasks you take on to improve our organization. Your efforts are admirable and effective, and I am proud of the way you advocate for our membership.

Lastly, I would like to thank our steadfast and active members. Our strength is directly related to our solidarity and when the chips are down you always show up in a big way. It is an honor and a privilege to serve this Local and I look forward to what the next year will bring.

Fraternally,

Greg Smart

FIRE CADETS

FIREFIGHTER ROBERT BRACY

This has been a very productive year for the North Pinellas Fire Cadets. Throughout this year our Cadets have assisted the department in numerous community events including Fire Ops 101, Fire Safety Expo at Countryside Mall, 9/11 memorial at Curlew Hills, Federation of Fire Chaplains Annual Conference, Oldsmar Fire Rescue's Open House, and Tarpon Springs First Friday Night Festivals.

The North Pinellas Fire Cadets are still operating out of Station 68, showing great amounts of pride and ownership in having a place to call their own. During weekly meetings the cadets are taught a variety of EMS and fireground skills including obtaining vital signs, patient assessments, rapid dress, ground ladders, search and rescue, forceful entry, SCBA evolutions, and much more. The Cadet program has experienced an influx in interest this past year, with as many as 18 active cadets involved in the post at once. Our two most recent members to be hired are our very own Liam Harvey with Palm Harbor, and Michael Patella with Oldsmar. Also, Cadet Caleb Oka move back to his home state of Pennsylvania to volunteer at a local fire department this past year. We currently have two cadets attending EMT school, one with SPC and the other with School of EMS.

Members of the cadet post also competed at the Summer Gator Fire Games in Gainesville. I would like to recognize and thank Advisor Justin Barker and Mike Ross for all their hard work building props, and training the Cadets for the competitions. All your hard work reflected in the cadet's performance. I would also like to thank PIO Liz Graham for working with Servpro, providing 25 brand new gear bags to the Cadet Post. Lastly, I would like to thank the department and all the members for assisting in the Cadet Post whether it be hosting trainings at other stations, using spare pumpers, or helping with general meetings.

Palm Harbor Fire Rescue
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