

City of South Milwaukee
Fire Department
Annual Report - 2012



Serving the Community with
Commitment ♦ Honor ♦ Compassion



City of . . . **South Milwaukee**
Fire Department

929 Marshall Court, South Milwaukee, WI 53172

Honorable Mayor Thomas Zepecki
Common Council Members
Police and Fire Commissioners
Citizens of South Milwaukee

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the dedicated members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department, it is with great pleasure that I present our 2012 Annual Report. This report has special meaning for me personally as it is the first one I get to present as Fire Chief after being appointed to the position in December by the Police and Fire Commission.

This report is but a brief snapshot of the tremendous amount of hard work put forth by the members of our department. 2012 proved, once again, that the members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department are committed to providing an exceptionally high level of service and standard of coverage with the limited resources at hand.

The first eight months of 2012 proved to be especially challenging due to a shortage of shift personnel resulting from retirements that took place in 2011 that had yet to be filled. In August, three new members were added to the department: Benjamin Olberding, John Rhinesmith, and Jason Helmlinger. These new members were immediately introduced to the thorough training regimen of the department and quickly learned the "*South Milwaukee Way*".

Call volume remained relatively stable during 2012 with a slight uptick in both the number of emergency medical calls and building fires. Our department requested mutual aid from our neighbors for 10 working structure fires in 2012, which was more than the cities of Cudahy and St. Francis combined. Dollar loss due to these fires was also slightly higher than in 2011. In addition, the skill and professionalism of our members was tested at several high-profile incidents during 2012 including the Sikh Temple shooting in Oak Creek, a fatal vehicle crash / fire that also resulted in a house fire, and several rescues of distressed and lost boaters on Lake Michigan. As expected, the members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department performed honorably.

In closing, the South Milwaukee Fire Department will continue to answer the call and maintain its high level of service delivery as we respond to the needs of the community as an all-hazard, all-risk department. Our focus will remain on community risk reduction, fire prevention, public education, and citizen interaction. The members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department and I would like to thank Mayor Zepecki, the members of the Common Council and Police and Fire Commission, and our citizens for all their hard work and continued support.

Respectfully submitted,


Joseph Knitter
Fire Chief

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Dedicated to Excellence in Public Service



photos by Tim Stein of Fyrbix

**Structure Fire
922 Milwaukee Ave
May 23rd, 2012**

**South Milwaukee
firefighters made an
aggressive interior attack on
this well seated fire in the
early hours of May 23rd**





In one form or another, most fire apparatus has the emblem of a Maltese cross on it. Firefighters wear badges that also bear the shape of the Maltese cross. The Maltese cross is the very familiar center circle with four shapes emanating from the center. Many people inquire what the connection is between the fire service and that Maltese cross.

This emblem had its beginning during the Crusades and was the symbol of the knights of that period. The knights were designing a shield that wouldn't be too cumbersome while riding horses into battle. The cross design was adopted and put into use by the early Knights of Malta. The Knights of Malta became a charitable, non-military organization during the 11th and 12th centuries, providing aid to the sick and poor and helping to set up numerous hospitals. They would later take up arms and join with the Knights of the Crusades.

This new breed of knight was known as a colorful lot. They dressed in regal fashion to show their colors in a uniform manner. Large crimson-colored capes were worn over the suits of armor. Not only were the capes symbolic, but they also helped provide a defense against one of the newest weapons of war--fire. As invading forces attacked a castle, the defenders would throw containers of flammable liquids onto the attackers. Once the armies were soaked, a torch would be hurled onto them, igniting their fuel-soaked clothing.

With their fellow troops engulfed in fire, the Knights of Malta would approach on horseback, rip off their capes, and use them to extinguish the flames on their burning fellow fighters.

As a reward for their bravery, the (Maltese) cross worn by those Knights was decorated and inscribed by their admirers. It came to be known as the most honorable badge of acclaim that could adorn a uniform.

The legend of the Maltese cross grew as it became associated with the admirable qualities of loyalty, bravery and defender of the weak. Today, firefighters across the country wear the time-honored Maltese cross on their uniform and apparatus as a representation of similar attributes.

By Paramedic/Lieutenant Tom Kiurski - Livonia (MI) Fire & Rescue.

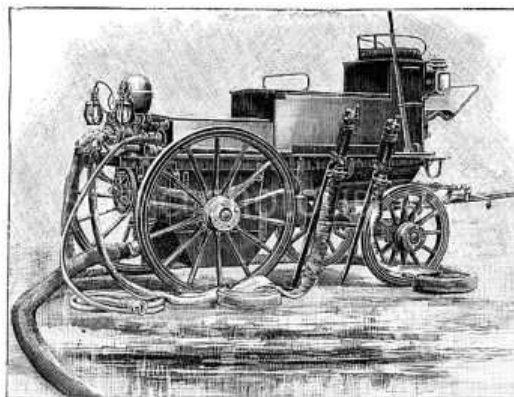
Mission Statement

THE MISSION OF THE SOUTH MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS TO PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF FIRES, SUDDEN MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND EXPOSURE TO HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS. THIS COMMITMENT IS ACHIEVED BY DEVELOPING, PROMOTING, AND MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE FIRE SUPPRESSION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THESE QUALITY SERVICES THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO ALL WHO LIVE, WORK, VISIT OR INVEST HERE.

Department Information

The South Milwaukee Fire Department is an all-risk, all-hazard department that provides fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical services to an estimated 21,424 residents who reside within an area of 4.78 sq. miles. In addition, we respond on a mutual aid basis to any community as part of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) and on a reciprocal agreement program known as a “Working Still” to the surrounding communities of Cudahy, Oak Creek and Saint Francis, and the 128th Air Refueling Base at Mitchell International, for all structure fires. In return, these communities respond to our city when requested.

SMFD Organized – 1893



City Officials

Elected Officials

Mayor Thomas Zepecki

Craig Maass
District 1 Alderperson

Frank Van Dusen
District 1 Alderperson

Ray Navarro
District 2 Alderperson

R. Patrick Stoner
District 2 Alderperson

Lisa Pieper
District 3 Alderperson

Joseph Bukowski
District 3 Alderperson

David Bartoshevich
District 4 Alderperson

Erik Brooks
District 4 Alderperson

James Shelenske
City Clerk

Joe Murphy
City Attorney

Karen Skowronski
City Treasurer

Bill Fenger
Municipal Judge

Police and Fire Commission

Darrell Francis, DDS

Peggy Clark

Donald Schmidt

Patrick Moran

Mark Milinovich

Department Personnel

Joseph Knitter
Acting Fire Chief

Gail Kaebisch
Administrative Secretary

Black Shift

Vacant
Lt. Daniel Lang
FF/EMT Ryan Kurz
FF/EMT John Rhinesmith*
FF/P Brian Bieganski
FF/P Michael Olson
FF/P Thomas Reid
FF/P Scott Wallis

Green Shift

Capt. John Czajkowski
Lt. Glen McCoy
FF/EMT Ronald Wainio
FF/EMT Ryan Behling
FF/EMT Benjamin Olberding*
FF/P Steven Bartlein
FF/P Jerre Schlax
FF/P John Frost

Red Shift

Capt. James Dorangrichia
Lt. Craig Boschke
FF/EMT Michael Landgraf
FF/EMT Ryan Wendt
FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger*
FF/P Tad Beutin
FF/P Kurt Egner
FF/P Andrew Mahn

*Hired 8/12

Paid-on-Call Personnel

FF/EMT Alex Andryk
FF/EMT Luke Schmidt
FF/EMT Ryan Porter
FF/EMT Kyle Quirk

There were no retirements in 2012

When fully staffed, the South Milwaukee Fire Department maintains a three-platoon system utilizing three shifts of 8 personnel each on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week schedule. Off-duty personnel, including paid-on-call firefighters, are also notified by pager when staffing levels at the station fall below a pre-established minimum or when the department responds to a report of an emergency incident that will require additional personnel to mitigate.

Special Assignments

Acting Chief Joseph Knitter	Duties of the Fire Chief Inspections MABAS Liaison <i>* Health & Safety</i> <i>* Reports & Policies</i>
Capt. John Czajkowski	Apparatus / Facilities Maintenance Personnel Records AFG & Education Radios & Communication <i>* Facilities and Grounds</i>
Capt. Jim Dorangrichia	Training Coordination Health & Safety Reports & Policies Personnel Protective Equipment Equipment and Testing Certification <i>* Training Coordination</i> <i>* EMS Coordination</i>
Lt. Daniel Lang	EMS Coordination / Training and Safety
Lt. Glen McCoy	Information Technology / Training and Safety
Lt. Craig Boschke	Public Education / Training and Safety
FF/P Kurt Egner	Fire Inspection
FF/EMT Ryan Kurz	Fire Inspection
FF/P John Frost	Fire Inspection

Check out our website at . . .

www.southmilwaukee.org

Emergency Medical Services Report

Fire Department-based Emergency Medical Services (EMS) continues to be a major part of our response profile. The central location of the fire station allows for minimal response times of specialized equipment and well-trained personnel. By utilizing a flexible staffing model, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is able to provide emergency care to the Paramedic level on any given call. A Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance is available when Paramedic staffing is unavailable. Citizens in South Milwaukee benefit from a high level of service when requesting Emergency Medical Care.

TOTAL EMS RESPONSES *2494

Total ALS / PFR / BLS Responses

* includes ALS out-of-city responses

1372 - Transports to St. Luke's - South Shore Hospital	147 - Transports to St. Luke's – Main Campus Hospital
73 - Transports to St. Francis Hospital	83 - Transports to Wheaton Franciscan (Franklin)
44 - Transports to Froedtert Hospital 7 - Transports by Flight For Life	22 - Transport to Children's 148 - Transports to other Hospitals
54 - Medical Examiner, Funeral Home	353 -Transport Refused 35 - Other Hospitals 155 - Other Service calls (Walk-ins, stand-bys)

General EMS Response Information

1798 / 72% Responses to Homes / Residences

245 / 10 % Responses to Nursing Homes / Residential Institutions / Clinics

* 187 / 7 % Response to Schools, Industry, Public outdoors, Other

263 / 11% Street/Hwy / public outdoors

*Includes service calls and fire related responses



**FIRE BASED EMS
VITAL TO THE COMMUNITY!**

Facility / Apparatus / Equipment Maintenance Report

One of the most frequent compliments paid to members of our Department is the extremely clean and well-kept appearance of both our apparatus and fire station. Visitors are often impressed at the condition of our apparatus and are shocked to learn their vintage and high level of use. Members of our Department take great pride in the care and maintenance of both the apparatus and fire station. We proudly care for the equipment and building that the citizens of South Milwaukee have entrusted us with.

Below is a list of our current apparatus and their relative condition:

ID	Type of Apparatus	Year	Make / Model	Condition
1663	Engine	2003	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1665	Engine	2007	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1671	Aerial Ladder	1995	Pierce Lance 105' Heavy Duty Ladder – 1500 GPM Pump, 300 Gal. Water Tank	Good
1680	Ambulance	2001	Med-Tech (Ford) Type III	Good
1681	Ambulance	2009	Med-Tech (Ford) Type I	Very Good
Med-10	Ambulance	2003	Med-Tech (International)	Fair
1692	Chief's Car	2009	Ford Escape	Excellent
1693	Gator	2003	6 x 4 Wheel Drive Utility Cart	Very Good
1694	Rescue Raft	2006	14' Mercury Inflatable w/ 25 HP Outboard	Very Good
1695	Rescue Boat	2010	25.6' Steiger Craft Twin 150 HP Suzuki 4 stroke	Excellent
1696	SUV	2007	Ford Expedition	Fair
1697	Pick-up Truck	1995	GMC ¾ Ton Utility Truck	Fair
1698	Mini-pumper	2008	Pierce (Ford) – F550 150 GPM Pump, 250 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1699	Rescue Trailer	1993	14' Pace American	Good

**MOVE OVER FOR
EMERGENCY VEHICLES**



**IT'S THE
LAW!**

Training Report

The Training Bureau is managed by the Department Training Officer whose primary responsibility is to organize, develop and schedule training for all department members in compliance with requirements and industry standards. The training goal is to provide all employees with quality training that is specific to their job description and needs, providing them with the knowledge, skills and abilities to fulfill the mission of the department. Funding for training is provided by a budget line item that not only reflects the City's commitment to maintaining well trained employees, but the department's dedication to providing the best trained "customer-service" delivery force available.



SEPTEMBER, 2012

Probationary firefighters train on recognizing hazardous conditions like "Flashover" using the MATC Training Grounds at the Oak Creek campus.

Training is provided to all shifts on a Monday through Saturday basis by their respective Captain, Lieutenant or another carefully chosen "expert" in the topic. Much of the training information is taken from the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) texts or based on NFPA standards and locally or nationally recognized best practices. Because of the unique cross-staffing format utilized by the department, members are cross trained in all aspects of every position.

Additional training activities take place at locations remote from the fire station utilizing outside resources. During 2012, the training listed below was conducted department-wide:

- Confined Space and entrapment rescue training was conducted in our confined space training vessel.
- Live fire training was conducted at the MATC fire training facility in Oak Creek for our probationary firefighters.
- Combined training with the Cudahy and Franklin Fire Departments was conducted at the South Milwaukee High School on drafting from a collapsible portable water tank. This was part of our annual driver / operator training.
- Rescue boat operations and open water rescue training was conducted at the South Milwaukee Yacht Club and Lake Michigan.
- Additional open water rescue training at the South Milwaukee Middle School pool.
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Confidence Course and Firefighter Survival training was conducted using the newly constructed props.

Training



South Milwaukee has training props designed and built by South Milwaukee firefighters. The “Confidence Course” prop simulates situations that firefighters may encounter during rescue and firefighting.

Firefighters navigate the course by following a hoseline, which is set up differently each time. Their facepiece is blacked out simulating zero visibility.



Simulations Shown:

Top –Exiting a window

Middle – Passing through a tight opening

Lower – Crawling in an attic on rafters and finding the attic access scuttle

South Milwaukee Rescue Boat

File photo



The South Milwaukee Fire Department operates a rescue boat kept ready to deploy with the cooperation of the South Milwaukee Yacht Club, who graciously provides a slip. The boat, which was acquired with money from a Port Security Grant provided by the Urban Area Security Initiative, is for assisting people in emergencies and does not have firefighting capabilities. In 2012, a water rescue/emergency boating specialist was brought in to do a train-the-trainer boat operations class which will be passed on to all members. Basic boat specifications are listed below:

Steiger Craft Fiberglass Rescue Boat

25' 6" in length
12' 8" in height (on trailer)
¾ Enclosed pilot house
Dive / Recovery door
150 gal fuel tank
Twin 150hp Suzuki outboard motors

Equipment

Radar / Chart plotter
GPS/Side Scan / Down Scan Sonar
VHF Marine & 800 Mhz Radios
Forward Looking InfraRed (FLIR)
Fixed / handheld spotlights
Assortment of rescue equipment
-Throw rings
-Sheppard's Crook
-Life vests

Fire Department Values Statement

- 1. Customer Service – We will be responsive to our customers needs, striving to provide high quality services in a respectful and courteous manner.**
- 2. Commitment to Excellence – We continuously strive to improve our services and maintain a strong desire to serve the community with the courage to act.**
- 3. Integrity – Our everyday actions and decisions reflect the highest standards of honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.**
- 4. Responsibility and Accountability – Through innovation, conservation and cooperation, we use our resources to efficiently and effectively enhance our services. We are responsible for our actions and decisions.**
- 5. Teamwork – We achieve common goals and solve problems through interaction with our internal and external customers.**
- 6. Safety – While providing for the safety of our community, we work safely with an emphasis on safe practices, fitness, wellness and survival.**
- 7. Community Diversity – We recognize the value of a diverse community in strengthening our organization and our service to the public.**
- 8. Professional Development – Our personnel support and achieve high quality training and education on a daily basis, increasing efficiency and effectiveness by enhancing our professional potential and mentoring future leaders within the organization.**
- 9. Professionalism – We strive to maintain a high level of professionalism and dedication in our service to the community, city, organization and ourselves through the development and adherence to recognized policies, rules and regulations.**



Public Education Report

The South Milwaukee Fire Department continues to pride itself on an interactive public education program.

Our philosophy is that fire safety starts early on; building strong foundations in education. Each fall, students in the local schools are visited by our firefighters. Elementary students in kindergarten and 1st grade are given fire safety programs during the annual National Fire Prevention Week. When students reach the 5th grade, they are given a more advanced Fire Safety Program that focuses on preparation for their adolescent years and the importance of home/fire safety. The 5th graders are assigned take home projects, where family involvement is encouraged. The students are also taught general home safety, such as general first aid and burn care, as many of the children are reaching babysitting age.

608

**K-4, K-5 & 1st Grade
Students who took part in
fire safety presentations**

205

**5th Graders who participated
in the 6-week fire safety
program**

185

**Fire Station Tour
Participants**

60

**Fire Extinguisher
Instruction Participants**

The Historical Origin of Fire Prevention Week

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871. According to popular legend, the fire broke out after a cow - belonging to Mrs. Catherine O'Leary - kicked over a lamp, setting first the barn, then the whole city on fire. Chances are you've heard some version of this story.

The 'Moo' myth

Like any good story, the 'case of the cow' has some truth to it. The great fire almost certainly started near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milking cows. But there is no proof that O'Leary was in the barn when the fire broke out - or that a jumpy cow sparked the blaze. But if a cow wasn't to blame for the huge fire, what was? Over the years, journalists and historians have offered plenty of theories. Some blamed the blaze on neighborhood boys smoking; others believed that a neighbor of the O'Leary's may have started the fire. Speculation by others of a fiery meteorite that may have fallen to earth on October 8, starting several fires that day - in Michigan and Wisconsin, as well as in Chicago.

The biggest blaze that week . . . Peshtigo, Wisconsin

While the Great Chicago Fire was the best-known blaze to start during this fiery two-day stretch, it wasn't the biggest. That distinction goes to the Peshtigo Fire, the most devastating forest fire in American history. The fire, which also occurred on October 8th, 1871, roared through Northeast Wisconsin, burning down 16 towns, killing 1,152 people, and scorching 1.2 million acres before it ended. Historical accounts of the fire say that the blaze began when several railroad workers clearing land for tracks unintentionally started a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area 'like a tornado,' some survivors said. It was the small town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin that suffered the worst damage. Within an hour, the entire town had been destroyed

Fire Inspection Report

Fire inspection duties are completed by shift members assigned to each of the three shifts and are conducted during the course of their regular duty day. This arrangement often presents a formidable scheduling challenge due to an increased call volume, ever-increasing training requirements and other obligations to our community.

FF/P John Frost, FF/P Kurt Egner and FF/EMT Ryan Kurz, who are State of Wisconsin Certified Fire Inspectors, each conduct fire safety code inspections in accordance with Chapter 27 - *Fire Prevention, Protection, and Control* of the City's Municipal Code and the State of Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapters 61 through 65, as overseen by the Department of Safety and Professional Services. The Inspection Bureau also works in close cooperation with the City's Building Inspection and Health Departments to mitigate other health and safety code violation matters that impact the quality of life for the residents of and visitors to the City of South Milwaukee. Also, upgrades, repairs and new sprinkler and alarm system installations are reviewed by a private consultant. This consultant often accompanies the Inspectors to the job-site for plan review and testing purposes.

800

Bi-annual fire inspections conducted

78

Re-inspections conducted

276

Violations found



Inspection Responsibilities

FF/P Egner

Commercial

Residential attached to Commercial

FF/P Frost

Residential

**City, County & Federally-owned
properties**

FF/EMT Kurz

Industrial

Manufacturing

Churches

Schools

Nursing Homes

Doctor / Dental Offices

● ***Smoke & CO Detectors and Fire Sprinklers Save Lives*** ●

***Please see our Web Site for information on
Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors.***

Response Statistics

	2009	2010	2011	2012
EMS Calls	2558	2464	2426	2494
Basic Life Support Incidents	1126	1029	1054	1225
Advanced Life Support Incidents	650	821	872	959
ALS (requests) outside of So. Milw.	468	503	500	(440)
EMS other fire / support response	314	111		310
Fire Incidents	68	82	71	85
Building Fire	40	32	28	44
Cooking fire	7	7	7	9
Rubbish / Trash Fire / Dumpster	11	10	13	10
Grass / Brush Fire	10	14	13	10
Other			10	12
Hazardous Conditions	72	88	81	73
Vehicle Accident Clean-up	26	20	13	36
Carbon Monoxide Invest.	11	21	25	7
Electrical Problem / Power line	4	7	17	13
Chemical Leak / Spill	7	3	7	7
Natural Gas Leak	16	12	13	9
Other	-	-	6	1
Service /Good Intent	116	161	145	138
Smoke or Odor Removal	11	10	6	9
Unauthorized Burning	30	26	27	32
Smoke detector / Other / Invest	75	75	27	97
False Alarms	68	68	100	74
System Activation – Malfunction	9	14	19	24
System Activation – Unintentional	24	26	28	31
System Activation – Malicious	6	7	5	3
Systems - Other	29	21	21	16
Other Incidents	58	122	145	67
Grand Total	2940	2985	2968	2931

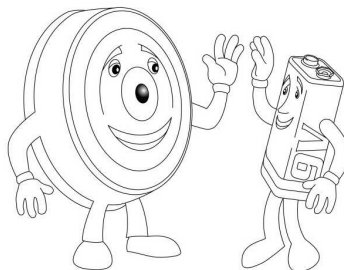
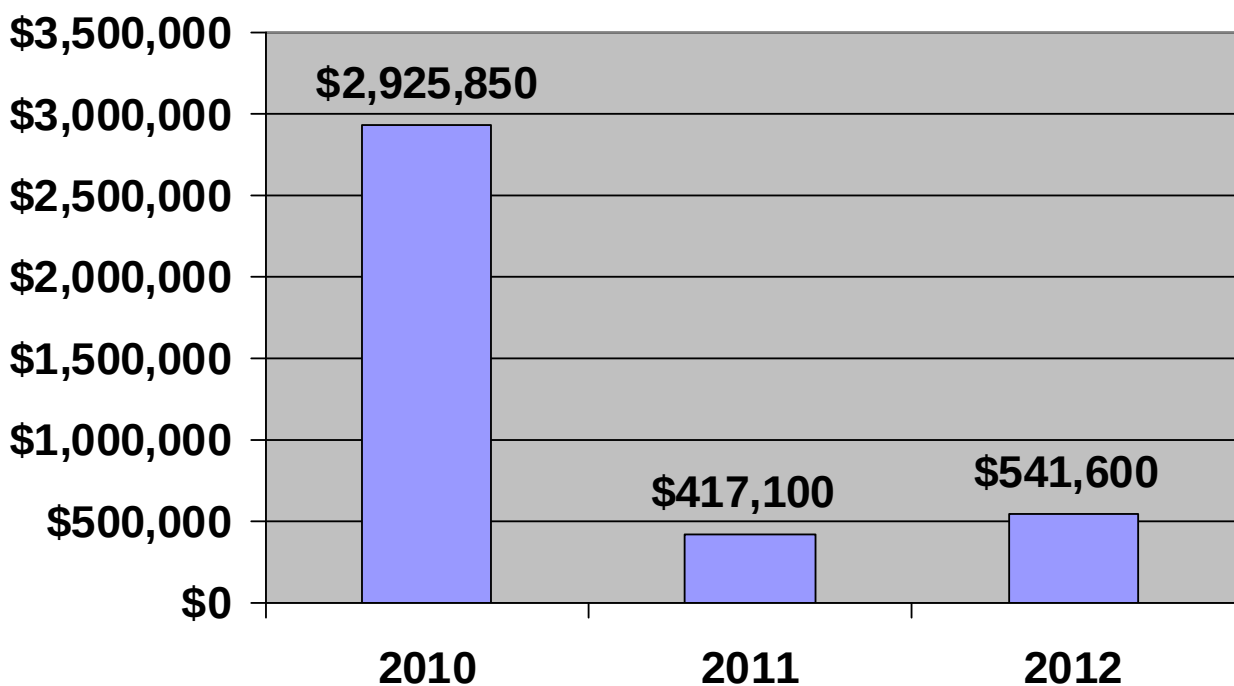
Note: Due to a change in statistic gathering methods, individual categories have been re-identified.

Response Trends

To properly understand the statistics provided on this page, one must understand that the categorizing of incident responses is subject to both the efforts of the person writing the report and the methods used to identify the appropriate code assigned to an incident.

Dollar Loss

In addition to the actual number of emergency and non-emergency incidents that our personnel respond to, one of the most sought after statistics is that of the dollar loss to physical property due to damage from fire. In the past, the justification for the existence of a fire department was based on how great this dollar loss was. Now, because of all of the ancillary responsibilities of our personnel, the effectiveness of a department is based on the amount of property that was saved through aggressive fire suppression and prevention efforts. In 2012, the City of South Milwaukee had a moderately busy year. Dollar loss increased from 2011 with a total dollar loss estimated at \$541,600.



Rescue Photos



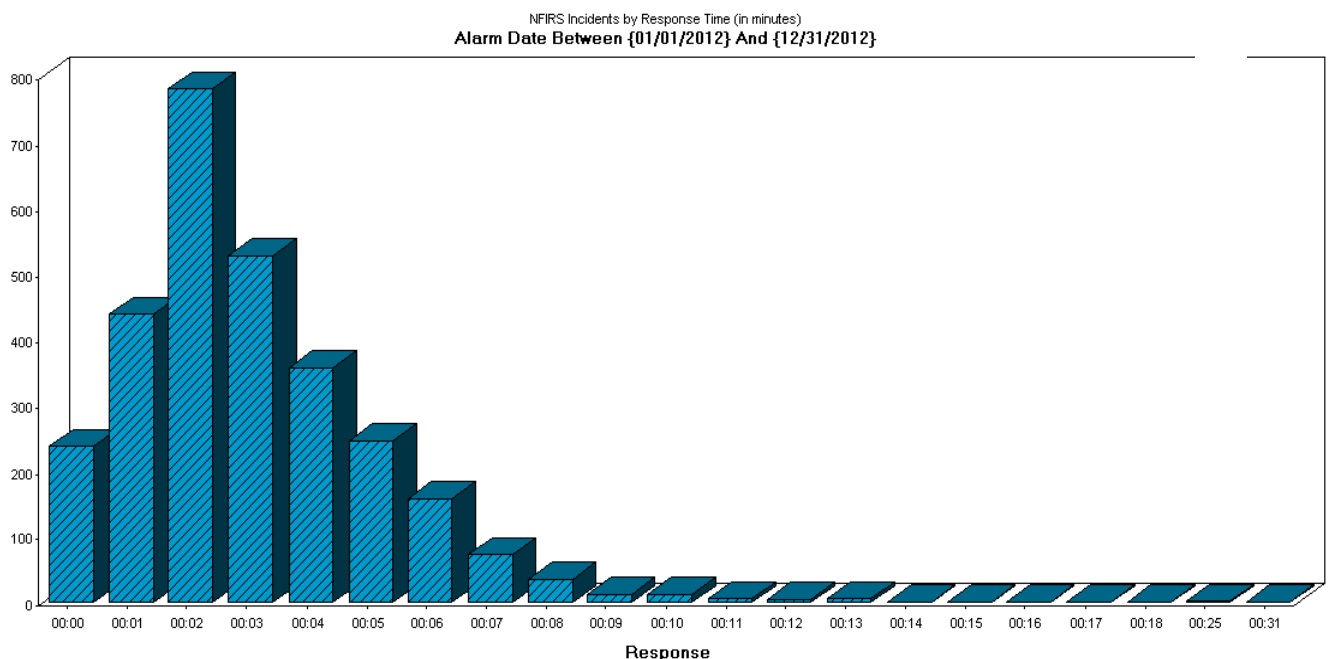
South Milwaukee Firefighters extricated and rescued two men from this car that ended up on its roof after a high-speed crash near College Avenue.



Firefighters stabilize a vehicle that rolled onto its side after a mid-morning crash

Response Time Analysis

In 2001, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) released a standard for the *Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, known as NFPA 1710. In this standard, the NFPA established a minimum response time objective of four minutes or less for the arrival of the first arriving engine company at a fire suppression incident or the arrival of an emergency medical unit with first responder or higher level capability at an emergency medical incident 90% of the time. As is shown by the following graph, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is in compliance with this nationally-accepted performance standard. In 2012, the response time average was 2.54 min for the first responding apparatus to arrive on scene.



*It is important to note that this graph reflects *ALL* responses, both emergency and non-emergency, and provides no means to account for the errant inputting of data or calls delayed because of absolute low priority. Additionally, with the Mutual Aid MABAS system, South Milwaukee resources can be requested to areas as far away as North Shore and beyond, thus reflecting some of the extended response times.



Fire Photos

Firefighters make an aggressive attack on this early morning fire at 515 Madison Avenue



A car crash and subsequent house fire was mitigated by firefighters at 721 Edgewood Avenue.

National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Park

Emmitsburg, Maryland

