OCEAN CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

2022





SERVICE BEFORE SELF.

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FIRE CHIEF

To:

Honorable Mayor Rick Meehan
Council President James
Members of the City Council
City Manager Terry McGean
Ocean City Residents, Businesses, & Property Owners
Members of the Department

Every day and night, the volunteer and career men and women of the Ocean City Fire Department respond to a wide variety of



complex calls to protect life, property, and the environment while working to prevent disasters through code enforcement, community engagement, and prevention. The Ocean City Fire Department is an "all hazards response fire department."

Ocean City is a special place to so many, from residents who raise their families here, vacation here, own their family business here, or come to Ocean City to work and help create the many opportunities that Ocean City offers. Ocean City is so unique, our city continues to grow, and our responsibility to our residents, visitors, and businesses to provide the best level of community service and excellent care remains constant.

Your firefighters and Paramedics must continue to respond to emergency incidents that require extreme physical output and often result in physiological and psychological outcomes. Over time, these incidents can affect the overall wellness of the fire fighting and emergency response system. Our leadership team worked closely to initiate a wellness and fitness initiative that focused on maintaining a fit, healthy, and capable firefighter EMS provider throughout their career to help combat such effects. This program, as it grows, can have significant cost savings, a reduction in work-related injuries in lost work time, and worker's compensation. All while improving mental health.

As we move forward in 2023, it will be a busy year for the Ocean City Fire Department. Not only will we meet your service delivery expectations, but we will also exceed them. I am proud to lead the women and men of this department to deliver nothing but the best to those who live, work and visit Ocean City, Maryland.

Richard R. Bowers
Fire Chief



ABOUT THE OCEAN CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Ocean City Fire Department is a combination department of career and volunteer personnel. Our department responds to nearly 6,500 calls annually, many of which occur during our busy summer season. We provide fire, advanced life support emergency services, rescue, and fire prevention services. Within our department, we also offer life safety inspections, investigations, and Bomb Squad services. These vital services are provided to the 10 & ½ mile stretch of the beach area, West Ocean City, and provide mutual aid to Worcester County, Maryland, and Sussex County, Delaware.

The OCFD is composed of three divisions:

Career Fire /EMS

Fire Marshal

Volunteer

ONE TEAM.
ONE VISION.
ONE MISSION.

ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT

The Ocean City Fire Department is committed to preserving the health of our personnel and returning them safely to their families. We are an integral and vibrant member of our community with a keen focus on our vision, mission, & core values.

MISSION

Protecting the quality of life for Maryland's premier beach community.

VISION

Service before self!

PURPOSE STATEMENT

One Team!
One Vision!
One Mission!

2022 Quick View of Calls for Service!



6,524

Total 2022 Calls for Service

Key Challenges

COVID Effects

Staffing

Decontamination of Equipment

Recruitment & Retention



Brief overview by nature code.

EMS Nature Code

- 681 Falls
- 228 Overdose
- 56 Allergic Reaction
- 170 Assaults
- 386 Breathing Problems
- 79 Cardiac / Resp. Arrest
- 183 Seizures
- 155 Chest Pain
- 9 Burns / Explosions
- 79 Cardiac / Resp. Arrest
- 176 Hemmoraging
- 18 Near Drowning

Fire Nature Code

- 142 Fires ALL TYPES
- 206 Vehicle Crashes
- 506 Public Service Fire & EMS
- 28 CO Detector Activation
- 23 Investigate Smoke Odor
- 21 Aircraft Stand By
- 64 Gas Leak
- 73 Elevator Rescue
- 674 Fire Alarm Activations
- 22 HazMat / Spill

The above incident numbers are not all inclusive of all responses.

EMS Response Times



From the time of dispatch to the time an Ocean City ambulance arrives to the scene is:

4 minutes 27 seconds

Average

NFPA Standard 1710
establishes a 60 second
"turnout time" and 240
second "travel time"
(together, 300 seconds or 5
minute first "response time")
benchmark time goal for not
less than 90% of dispatched
incidents.



FACES OF THE OCFD





















OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

The Mission

The Ocean City Office of the Fire Marshal's mission is the preservation of life and the protection of property from fire, explosion and other associated emergency conditions in an effort to make the town virtually fire-free, accomplished through the development and implementation of proactive programs and services in the areas of investigations, public education, inspections and regulation. Our overall goal is focused on the prevention of death, injury and property loss to the residents, business owners, and visitors to the Town of Ocean City.

Calls for Service

Below are the statistics for various categories of field operations, with the overview of what comprises each category:

Plan Reviews Received 573
Permits Received 2736
Inspections / Property Checks 1848
Field Operations 780

Bonfire Program

The Office of the Fire Marshal processed 3,596 bonfires throughout the year, resulting in over 200 nights that residents and visitors enjoyed bonfires on Ocean City's beaches.



OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Significant Incidents Highlights

The office conducted 30 comprehensive origin/cause and/or explosive investigations over the year, the vast majority of which were attributed to accidental causes. Follow-up investigation continues on several open cases. Two significant incidents, highlighted below, resulted in arrests related to intentional acts that endangered the residents and visitors of Ocean City:

<u>Homemade Pipe Bombs Rendered Safe:</u> May 2022: Ocean City Bomb technicians, provided assistance to the Maryland State Police with rendering safe illegal pipe bombs in Somerset County, Maryland. It took technicians several hours to make sure the devices were safe.

<u>Improvised Mobile Meth Lab</u>, November 2022: Hazardous Devices Technicians with the Ocean City Bomb Squad were requested to assist the Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office and the Parsonsburg Volunteer Fire Company in Wicomico County, Maryland with a mobile meth lab. Technicians were able to sort all hazardous substances and render the mobile meth lab safe.





OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Promotions

Allison LeCates



From Fire Safety Inspector to Deputy Fire Marshal I

Riley Scott



From Fire Safety Inspector to Deputy Fire Marshal I

Joe Enste, Jr.



From Fire Safety Inspector to Deputy Fire Marshal I

Cardiac Arrest Information

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Out of hospital sudden cardiac arrest (OHCA) refers to the abrupt cessation of heart function, resulting in the interruption of blood flow to vital organs, which can lead to death if not promptly treated. Ocean City Paramedics practice advanced life support skills, including performing CPR, administering medications, and utilizing defibrillation to restore normal heart rhythm. These skills, combined with ongoing training and continuing education, contribute to Ocean City's higher-than-average survival rate of 16%, compared to the national average of 9%. The exceptional performance of Ocean City Paramedics in managing OHCA is attributed to their dedication, expertise, and commitment to providing high-quality emergency medical services to the community.

Number of Non-Traumatic Cardiac Arrest

54

National Average Survival Rate

9%

Ocean City Average Survival Rate





OFFICE OF TRAINING HEALTH & SAFETY

Annual SCBA Training

Ocean City firefighters use many tools at a fire or hazardous incident. Our self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is one tool we use on every fire, regardless of the size. Our SCBA must be functioning at 100 percent, and as firefighters, we must always be familiar with the use of our SCBA. We may not just use this breathing air during a fire for our protection, but we may need to provide breathing air to a trapped victim.

Therefore, annually, we train on skills using SCBA. During 2022, our SCBA training recertification was revamped to make it more realistic and dynamic. OCFD instructors added additional evolutions with "outdoor" classroom discussions. This proved to be beneficial in focusing more on actual suppression strategies and tactics relevant to our jurisdictional needs here in Ocean City.



Use of Acquired Structures Provides for Realistic Training

A local developer bought the old Beach Plaza Hotel and Mixed Use building, located between 13th & 14th Street. This has afforded our department a rare opportunity to conduct realistic training inside a functional commercial structure. This allows our firefighters to see first-hand the difficulties associated with interior firetactics related to larger mixed-use buildings. In 2022, with this building's use, our firefighters trained in search (high-rise, large area, living spaces & bedroom) tactics. It has enabled us to brush up on our RIT procedures and estimate, stretch, and handling charged hose lines. These operations will prove beneficial when we have a fire emergency along the Boardwalk or in a commercial structure.



OFFICE OF TRAINING HEALTH & SAFETY

Battalion Chief of Training



On October 5, 2020, Firefighter / Medic Michael Wood was hired as the department's Training Coordinator. This part-time position has since transitioned into a full-time Battalion Chief of Training position on August 15, 2022. The training division is tasked with developing strategies and procedures to meet our city's demands and teach tactics based on our departmental parameters. With this position, we have created the ability to begin constructing a "living" OCFD Training Manual. This will outline strategies, tactics, and equipment necessary in mitigating emergencies in our city.

It will focus on EMS, fire, rescue, and even marine-related emergencies. Training is the key to operational readiness, and we plan to evolve this division so that eventually, the OCFD can have its own training facility capable of providing proper training while remaining inside our jurisdiction.

Volunteer Division Training Nights

Members of the Volunteer Division conducted scheduled drill nights twice a month. During the Tuesday training nights, many pertinent disciplines were covered, such as ground ladder tactics, search & rescue, cross-lays & bumper lines. Training has been flexible with the acquisition of the Beach Plaza Building.



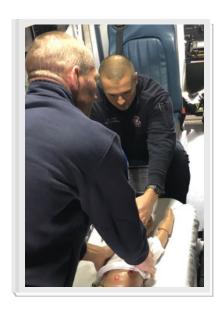


OFFICE OF TRAINING HEALTH & SAFETY

Career Fire / EMS Division - Shift Based Training







Training is the backbone of the Ocean City Fire Department. Our firefighters and paramedics train on every shift, while our volunteer duty crews train when they arrive for their nightly duty crew assignment. This allows for us to have a well-prepared work force that enhances proper execution of our basic everyday skills. Our training not only benefits our firefighters, but it benefits our entire community. Often times our volunteer and career firefighters train together, making us a strong team!

Volunteer Division - Highlights



Calls For Service: 1,607

Hours In Service For Calls: 7,234

Drills & Training: 1,477 Duty Crew Hours: 7,668 Meeting Hours: 7,400

Collateral Duties: 1,219

WATER RESCUE TEAM

Our Dive & Water Rescue Team consists of 15 public safety divers and 37 rescue swimmers. These elite members are specially trained and respond to various water incidents, from emergency responses to evidence recovery. The OCFD rescue swimmers are a vital part of our water rescue emergency response.

Frequently, these rescue swimmers deploy in the ocean before and after Ocean City Beach patrol are on duty. Our relationship with Ocean City Beach Patrol, Maryland Natural Resources Police, and the United States Coast Guard provides exceptional training, ensuring our rescue swimmers are ready to deploy and rescue a swimmer in distress.

Water Rescue Team Significant Incidents Highlights

<u>Navy Plane Crash, March 2022</u>: Ocean City Rescue Divers took part in a rescue operation after a U.S. Navy Er-D Hawkeye aircraft crashed in waters near the Easter Shore boundary of Virginia and Maryland just outside of Stockton, Maryland.

<u>Crash Into Pocomoke River, March 2022</u>: Ocean City Divers responded to assist the Snow Hill Volunteer Fire Company with a vehicle into the Pocomoke River. Rescue Divers pulled one sole occupant from the vehicle who was pronounced dead at the scene.









DID YOU KNOW?

Partnership With Allied Agencies

Our water rescue team works closely with members of the Ocean City Beach Patrol and conducts yearly training together. This provides a level of service to our residents and visitors who may become trapped in a rip current or become an exhausted swimmer. This training incorporates using vessels owned by Maryland Natural Resource Police and the United States Coast Guard.



Special Event Support

During many special events, our water rescue swimmers and divers provide support for the protection of attendees and participants. Events include the AirShow and Penguin Swim to name a few!

NEW MEDIC UNIT

2023 PARAMEDIC UNIT

REPLACEMENT UNIT

This unit replaces a 2006 International DT 466 Horton 603 body

EXTERNAL Features

603 F Body All Whelen LED Lighting New paint scheme & logo

Make & Model

2022 Ford F-550 - Four Wheel Drive Liquid Spring

INTERNAL FEATURES

Window separating patient compartment & driver.

Horton Occupant Protection System



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



AM AM



JUNIOR FIRE CAMP

The Summer of 2022 continued a unique opportunity for the Ocean City Community. Junior Firefighter Camp was first held in July 2020 and since then this camp brought about the opportunity for our firefighters and EMS providers to inspire youth to start volunteering in their community or start a public safety career.

The OCFD teamed up with local public safety partners such as the Ocean City Police
Department, Maryland State Police – Berlin
Barrack, Worcester County Sheriff's Office, the
Worcester County Fire Marshal's Office, Ocean
City Beach Patrol, and the Ocean City Recreation
Department. This strong partnership allowed
campers to gain insight and interest in becoming
long-term members of the emergency services
field.

The Ocean City Junior Firefighter Camp is designed to be educational, safe, and fun. In 2023 the OCFD will host two junior firefighters camps, one in June and one in July.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Ocean City Fire Department had an eventful year with community engagement activities aimed at reducing fires and injuries in the Ocean City community. These engagements helped to foster better relations between the Fire Department and members of the community. Through various programs, the Ocean City Fire Department achieved significant milestones in fire prevention, fire safety education, and injury reduction.

Smoke Alarm Checking and Replacement:

One of the key highlights of the Ocean City Fire Department's community engagement program was the checking and replacement of smoke alarms for residents. The department visited over 200 homes in the Ocean City community and changed smoke alarms, batteries, or provided information on the importance of having a working smoke alarm. This program was crucial in ensuring that residents had properly functioning smoke alarms that would alert them in case of a fire.

Visiting Senior Members of the Community:

The Ocean City Fire Department visited senior members of the community at the Berlin Nursing Home. During these visits, the department provided gifts and interacted with the seniors, providing them with vital information on fire safety. This program was important as it not only provided the seniors with important safety information but also showed that the Fire Department cared about the community they serve.





COMMUNITY OUTREACH







Fire Prevention Week:

Our firefighters and EMS providers play a crucial role in fire prevention education for children. This year we made contact with over 700 elementary school children. Our team was able to teach children to recognize potential fire hazards, to dial 911 in an emergency, and to have a designated meeting place in case of a fire. By educating children at an early age, our firefighters help ensure that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to keep themselves and others safe from fire.

Media Interviews on Fire Safety:

The Fire Department engaged with the media to highlight important fire safety information. The interviews focused on cooking and heater safety, which are two of the leading causes of residential fires. By educating the public on these issues, the Fire Department was able to raise awareness about fire safety, and prevent potential fire disasters.

Community engagement is a vital aspect of fire prevention and safety. By engaging with the community, our department continues to build trust and establish a positive relationship with members of the community. These relationships foster a culture of safety, where community members take responsibility for their safety, and that of their families and neighbors. Through our community engagement programs, we were also identify areas where the community needs support and develop targeted programs to address those needs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS











FIRE DEPARTMENT MECHANICS

The Ocean City Fire Department must be ready to respond at a moment's notice for any emergency. This requires our vehicles, tools, and equipment to be prepared for use on demand. Our department employs two firefighters / EMT - Mechanics to meet this need. These positions are staffed by Firefighter / EMT & Mechanic Bill Tilghman and Firefighter / EMT & Mechanic Norm Bradford. Both of these individuals are responsible for mechanical work in the repair, overhaul, and maintenance of light and heavy automotive equipment, trucks, fire apparatus, emergency medical vehicles, marine vessels, and non-automotive equipment.

Daily, Bill and Norm communicate with volunteer and career officers to establish priorities on vehicle and equipment repairs, diagnoses problems, perform repairs.

This is a unique position with the fire department, as both Bill and Norm often drive fire apparatus, respond to high priority medical calls, and even perform duties as firefighters. This is invaluable to the service delivery to Ocean City residents and business owners.



Firefighter / EMT & Mechanic Bill Tilghman works on a fire engine behind fire headquarters.



Firefighter / EMT & Mechanic Norm Bradford works underneath fire apparatus after performing diagnostic work.

PEER SUPPORT TEAM





2022 marked the third year since our department established the Ocean City Fire Department's PEER Support Team. The PEER Support Team is designed to allow our firefighters and EMS providers to help each other through the rough part of the job – seeing death, destruction, and illness, day in and day out. The work of those in the fire department, law enforcement, and even our military is typically not understood by the general public.

The team consists of passionate individuals who received the Peer Support Training offered by the International Association of Firefighters. The team is led by Firefighter/Paramedic Eric Olson and consists of 15 personnel.

There are eight career members, two allocated per shift, five volunteer members, and one retired member, and the team operates under the clinical guidance of Heather Brown, RPsyA.

Our PEER Support Team has had over **393** contacts with fellow first responders. This is a 19% *increase* from last year. All of these contacts were not within the Ocean City Fire Department; however, some were other police and fire agencies that requested our team's deployment after a potentially traumatic event.

The goal of our PEER Support Team for 2023 continues to be – help fellow first responders through rough, traumatic events and build resiliency.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE

For the past two years, the fire department command staffed established a mental health and wellness initiative to improve the quality of life for all OCFD personnel.

Firefighter/Paramedic Eric Olson focused on mental health challenges via videos to all members of the department while Firefighter/Paramedic David Macia, helped develop functional fitness videos for each shift, volunteer duty crews, and members of the Ocean City Police Department to participate in.

While fitness and mental health can be tied directly to the foods we eat, the third component of our mental health and wellness initiative was nutrition.

Our wellness and fitness initiatives are demonstrating the value of investing in our teams wellness. This allows our department to maintain fit, healthy, and capable fire fighters and EMS responders.



Firefighter / EMT Jeremy Hoeferkamp prepares a healthy dinner for the crews at Fire Headquarters.



Firefighter / Paramedic Aaron Driscoll works out during shift as part of the departments fitness and wellness initiative.

MOBILE INTEGRATED COMMUNITY HEALTH (MICH)

As we reflect on the achievements of our department over the past year, we are proud to highlight the success of the Worcester County Mobile Integrated Community Health (MICH) program. This program has been instrumental in providing care coordination services to high utilizers of Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Department services in our community.

Paramedics play a crucial role in the MICH program, working closely with Health Department Nurses to provide care coordination services in the patient's home. These services include home safety assessments, health assessments, chronic disease education, and linkage to primary care and specialty care providers. Through these interventions, our paramedics and nurses are able to connect patients with social support resources and help them manage their chronic illnesses more effectively.

We are pleased to report that the MICH program has already had a significant impact on the health outcomes of enrolled individuals in our community. We have seen increased utilization of primary care services and improved self-management of chronic diseases, which has led to a decrease in the need for non-emergent care in the Emergency Department.

Yvette Rode, our dedicated paramedic assigned to the MICH unit, has been instrumental in the success of this program. Her expertise and commitment to providing high-quality care coordination services has been invaluable in improving the health outcomes of our community members.

As we look to the future, we are confident that the Worcester County MICH program will continue to have a positive impact on the health and well-being of our community. We are committed to working collaboratively with our partners in the Health Department and Atlantic General Hospital to ensure that high-risk individuals have access to the care they need to manage their chronic illnesses effectively and lead healthy, productive lives.



Firefighter / Paramedic Rode coordinates all Ocean City Community Members MICH.

OCEAN CITY PARAMEDIC FOUNDATION

The Ocean City Paramedic Foundation is comprised of community volunteers focused through fund-raising efforts on training of Ocean City Paramedics and the purchasing of equipment.

This allows our department to have the best possible life-saving capabilities for our families, friends, and neighbors in the Ocean City Community.

During the year 2023, the Ocean City Paramedic Foundation helped make it possible to purchase new Ultrasound Field Units, Stryker Stair Chairs, new education tables, and funded for a new Zoll X Series Advanced Cardiac Monitor.

It is the contribution to our department that enables our paramedics to save lives with state-of-the-art equipment and the best service delivery possible.



Paramedics Ryan Womer & Yvie Rode train using equipment funded by the Ocean City Paramedic Foundation.

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Ocean City Paramedic Foundation oversees the Robert T. Adkins, M.D. Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship provides financial assistance, for educational purposes, to those wishing to enter the field of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and those currently employed in EMS desiring to advance their certification, inclusive of a Management Degree in a related field of study. In 2022, the Foundation awarded nine scholarships to members of the Ocean City Fire Department.

WHO WAS DR. ADKINS?

Dr. Robert T. Adkins was very active in developing the local emergency medical services (EMS) system for the Eastern Shore of Maryland and was instrumental in the education and training of the medical personnel "in the field," our paramedics. He served as Medical Director for Region IV for MIEMSS EMS for many years and was awarded "EMS Physician of the Year" in 1995. He was a very active member of the Ocean City Paramedic Foundation, acting as a liaison between the Foundation and the Ocean City Paramedic (OCFD) and guiding the fiscal operation of the Foundation. He served as the president of the Foundation in 2000–2001. We are proud to honor his legacy by naming this scholarship after him.

OCEAN CITY VOLUNTEER FIRE CO. CADET PROGRAM

Formed in the fall of 1960, the Ocean City Volunteer Fire Company Cadet Program was formed in 1960 and provides young people from within the community an opportunity to actively participate in public service. The program is made up of young adults between the ages of fourteen and eighteen who live in the Ocean City Volunteer Fire Company's first due response area. Cadets assist the fire company on all incidents and play a significant role in establishing water supplies, deploying small tools and equipment, facilitating rehabilitative operations, and assisting with many exterior operations.

The goal of the Cadet Program, as a whole, is to provide operational support to the Volunteer Fire Company. While giving that support, the program aims to instill confidence and respect in its members, teaching them the skills necessary to function efficiently within the fire service. Each member is provided the opportunity to experience leadership roles by either being elected to an administrative leadership position by their peers or assigned an operational leadership role by a panel of instructors. The Cadet Program is an excellent opportunity for young people from our community to come together, learn life-saving skills, grow as individuals, and have fun!

The Cadet Program is always looking for new members who are anxious to learn, make new friends and make a difference within their community.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the possibility of joining our program, please contact any instructor through Ocean City Fire Headquarters, (410) 289-4346.





2022 RECOGNITION

Years of Service

5 Years Active Service

- Cory Brown
- James Carter
- Ryan Cropper
- Michael Knowles
- Kyle Tanner
- Ryan Wooten

10 Years Active Service

• Joey Lessman

15 Years Active Service

- Freddie Senger
- Parker Sandrowsky

20 Years of Service

• Darrick Elliott

25 Years Active Service

Will Savage

35 Years Active Service

Chris Shaffer

45 Years Active Service

• David Cropper

50 Years Active Service

- Reggie Bell
- Roger Steger, Sr.

Incident Citations

- Robert Magee
- Darrick Elliott
- Ryan Stacey
- Rick Koch, Sr.
- Cory Brown
- Travis Hearn
- Daniel Wills
- Justin Harper
- Ryan Wooten
- Aaron Driscoll
- Alexander Bean
- Chris Shaffer

Yearly Awards

President's Award

- Patrick Mumford
- Kevin Knowles

Chief's Award

• Tony Villani

Member of the Year

• Mark Wilson

Paramedic of the Year

• Yvette Rode

Firefighter of the Year - OCVFC

Michael Knowles

Firefighter of the Year - Career

David Macia

CONTACT US



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