

**To: David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer**  
**From: Jeff Slager, Fire Chief**  
**Re: Woodstock Fire Department Annual Report - 2024**

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## **AIM**

The purpose of this staff report is to provide Council with an annual summary on the performance of the department. The report summarizes the activities, operations, and successes completed over the course of the year.

## **BACKGROUND**

Ongoing evaluation and training within the Woodstock Fire Department to provide the level of service directed by Council through our regulating bylaw is essential to meet our communities needs.

Preparing an annual summary report is a best practice to inform Council on the performance of the department and new or evolving trends.

While typically presented during budget presentations, moving forward it is our plan to present this information to Council at an earlier meeting.

In addition to this report, a highlights booklet has been prepared and attached which will be made available to the public through our social media sites.

## **SUMMARY**

This report contains statistics and analysis of key fire service performance indicators summarized here:

- Emergency calls for service increased by 2% with a total fire loss of \$978,256 and 86 fire events
- Fire Prevention completed 402 fire safety inspections. This includes 17 Vulnerable Occupancy inspections, which are multi-day events (inspection & fire-drill observation).
- Fire Prevention staff were also active with sharing safety messaging at 195 educational events as well as utilizing social media to expand our audience. They achieved over 91,445 engagements and 999,875 views of the content.
- Fire Training delivered 2 eight-week recruit classes to 8 Probationary Firefighters hired in 2024, along with ongoing annual training requirements and promotional examinations for current staff.

Additional details from each division are shared below.

### **a) Fire Administration**

Fire Administration is responsible for managing all branches of the service. It oversees and directs the day-to-day operations as well as current and long-range strategic planning, employee wellness, labour relations, capital and operating budget development and monitoring, recruitment and succession, as well as facility maintenance.

The division is comprised of a Fire Chief, a Deputy Fire Chief, and an Administrative Assistant.

#### **Accomplishments and milestones in 2024 for the Fire Administration team include:**

- Worked with the consultant to complete the Fire Master Plan, including Station Location Study, to be presented to Council in 2025.
- Completed purchase of new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).
- Hiring of 8 Probationary Firefighters.
- Hiring of 1 Fire Training Officer.
- Established a shared Peer Support network with the other Fire Departments in the County of Oxford for Firefighter Mental Health services.
- Received funding from the Ministry of the Solicitor General – Fire Protection Grant for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Updated WFD Respiratory Protection Plan.

#### **Key initiatives for 2025 include:**

- Complete negotiations for a new collective agreement with WPPFA Local 477.
- Present Fire Master Plan and create strategic planning based upon recommendations.
- Complete purchase and installation of WFD radio equipment replacements.

### **b) Fire Training**

The Training Division is responsible for training new recruits and delivering ongoing training for all operations staff, including technical operations, emergency medical services, officer development, and training on all new apparatus and equipment. This division also has responsibility in employee development opportunities and succession planning initiatives.

This division is comprised of a Fire Training Officer – Captain rank.

## **NFPA Certifications**

- It is required under the Occupational Health and Safety Act that workers are trained, equipped, and can recognize the hazards of the work in which they are engaged. The use of an accredited, neutral third-party standard, such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), to verify the purported knowledge and/or skills provides industry-wide credibility to the training program.
- On April 14, 2022, the province of Ontario enacted O. Reg. 343/22: Firefighter Certification. This regulation lays out certification requirements for various roles in the fire service over the next 4-6 years. WFD is well positioned to be in full compliance with the regulation for the requisite compliance dates.
- To meet the requirements for July 1, 2026, WFD staff will be completing NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer, the sole certification outstanding.
- Courses for NFPA 1006 Technical Rescue certifications, to be completed by July 1, 2028, continue to be developed and released by the Office of the Fire Marshal & the Ontario Fire College, with scheduling for WFD completion already underway.
- As part of WFD's succession planning, and for continued staff development, we host or enroll various NFPA certification courses throughout the year for staff.
- The following chart illustrates the certification programs and number of personnel achieving additional qualifications in 2024:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Personnel</b>
1002 Pumper Operations	12
1021 Fire Officer I	6
1041 Fire Officer II	1
1041 Fire Instructor I	2
1041 Fire Instructor II	1

- The costs of training vary depending on such factors as whether it is online or in-person, internally delivered or at a Regional Training Centre (RTC).
- The cost to certify is marginal, as after completion of the training, a fee of \$65 is paid to the Ontario Fire College to write the certification exam.

## **Recruit Programming**

- The Training Division completed a recruit training program in the spring and summer of 2024. Each program ran for eight weeks, or 320 hours, plus additional hours spent in planning and lesson development.

## Reclassification Exams

- With retirements and staffing increases, we are seeing a number of firefighters progress through the reclassification process:

Reclassification	# of FF	Hours/FF	Total Hours
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	0	4	0
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	2	4	8
3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	2	4	8
4 <sup>th</sup> Class	5	4	20

### c) Fire Prevention

The Fire Prevention Division is comprised of one Fire Prevention Officer – Captain rank (FPO), one Fire Inspector (FI), and one Public Information Coordinator (PIC). The FPO oversees all aspects of this Division.

#### i. Public Education

Public Education is the primary focus of the PIC, with focuses on the awareness and education of fire safety and fire & life safety regulations. The delivery of public education and certain components of Fire Prevention is mandated by the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA) for every municipality in Ontario. In addition, the PIC will provide educational programs to meet the needs identified in the department's Community Risk Assessment (CRA).

#### A summary of Public Education activities for 2024 includes:

Activity Type	Completed
Public Education Events/Presentations	15
Evacuation/Staff Training	6
Public Relations Events	5
Social Media (Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/X) posts	492
Station/Truck Tours	33
Public Education Training	106
Encampment Site Visits	25
The Arson Prevention Program for Children (TAPP-C)	5

The use of social media is a very important tool in today's society, as it allows us to generate public fire and life safety messaging towards a large audience.

The following table provides a summary of 2024 social media analytics:

Site	Posts/Tweets	Impressions	Engagements	Video Views	New Followers
Facebook	202	890,339	83,304	36,608	555
Instagram	143	92,714	5,746	10,680	148
Twitter/X	161	43,890	2,395	1,768	34

## ii. Fire Inspection/Investigation

Fire inspections and investigations are primarily undertaken by the FPO and the FI, and are completed to enforce the Ontario Fire Code. The enforcement of the Ontario Fire Code is a critical function in eliminating fires and reducing the loss of life and property due to fire.

The Fire Prevention division is responsible for conducting fire safety inspections in all types of occupancies within the City of Woodstock. Staff are appointed as Assistants to the Fire Marshal under the FPPA and Provincial Offences Officers under the Provincial Offences Act. WFD staff conduct fire safety inspections in all buildings within Woodstock and address violations of the Ontario Fire Code and other fire safety hazards within the authority of the FPPA and accompanying Regulations and Fire Marshal Directives.

Fire Investigations are conducted as required and regulated by the FPPA to determine origin, cause, and circumstances, and may include assisting the Woodstock Police Service (WPS) and the Ontario Fire Marshals Office.

Inspections Completed in 2024:

Inspection Type	Completed
Complaint	59
Request	8
Routine/Vulnerable	73
Re-Inspections	76
Business License Inspections	36
Open-Air Burn Permits / Complaints	103
Occupant Load / Liquor License	5
Inspection Orders	42
<b>Total Inspections Completed</b>	<b>402</b>

Other Fire Prevention Activities in 2024:

<b>Activity Type</b>	<b>Amount Completed</b>
File Searches	252
Fire Safety Plan Reviews	15
Fire Investigations	4
<b>Total Other Activities</b>	<b>271</b>

**d) Fire Suppression**

In 2024, the Fire Suppression division expanded to consist of 56 personnel working across 4 platoons. Daily operations of the division are run by 4 Captains. Emergency response crews are deployed from 2 fire stations within the city on a 24/7, 365 days per year basis.

Fire Suppression crews respond to emergencies that include fires, rescues, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, vehicle collisions, and other disasters and emergencies. Technical operations include ice/water rescue and auto extrication, with awareness level for confined space rescue and trench rescue.

Incidents by response type from 2021-2024:

<b>OFM SIR Code Category</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Property Fires/Explosions/Overpressure	59	78	74	86
Pre-fire conditions/No fire	54	50	69	76
Burning (Controlled)	86	96	137	138
False Alarms	337	361	361	446
Public Hazard	73	77	57	90
Rescue	224	296	283	309
Medical/Resuscitator Calls	394	453	1002	898
Other Response	53	80	66	47
<b>Year End Call Volume Total</b>	<b>1280</b>	<b>1491</b>	<b>2049</b>	<b>2090</b>

Fire Losses from 2021 to 2024:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fire Loss Total</b>	<b># Fires</b>
2024	\$ 978,256	32
2023	\$ 2,229,552	35
2022	\$ 3,401,600	35
2021	\$ 1,424,850	32

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff continue to focus on the first two lines of defence, fire prevention code enforcement and education outreach, to reduce the number of fires and ensure residents and property owners are implementing the proper measures to stay safe. Continued investments in training and wellness initiatives will ensure that staff are provided the necessary skills and tools to build resilience and be successful. Overall, Woodstock Fire Department is committed to ensuring the availability of effective, efficient emergency services to the residents of Woodstock, while focusing on continued improvement.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Woodstock City Council receive the Woodstock Fire Department annual report as information.

*Authored by: Jeff Slager, Fire Chief*

*Approved by: David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer*



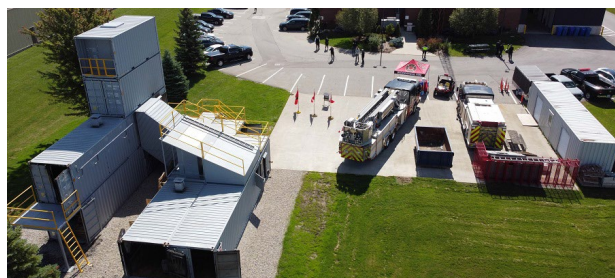
# WOODSTOCK FIRE DEPARTMENT Annual Report 2024





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## MESSAGE FROM WOODSTOCK FIRE CHIEF

On behalf of the members of the Woodstock Fire Department, I am pleased to present the Fire Annual Report for 2024.

This report provides an overview to the many activities, incidents, and programs undertaken by the dedicated team of fire professionals at WFD. I am extremely proud of the commitment and resilience of our members as they strive to maintain a fire safe community.



I would like to thank the Mayor, Council, & CAO for their continued support of the Fire Department, culminating with the approval of the final phase in the WFD Staffing Plan presented to Council in 2023. Achieving a minimum staffing model of 10 Firefighters is a significant milestone for both firefighter safety and service delivery to our community.

### Next Steps

The completion and presentation of the Woodstock Fire Master Plan in 2025 will provide a roadmap of continued goals and undertakings over the next 10 years for WFD. As our community grows, so must our ability to respond to and safely manage the new challenges and opportunities presented by this growth.

### Stay Connected

I hope you find this report to be an informative snapshot of 2024 and be sure to stay connected with us on:

- [Facebook.com/WoodstockFire](https://www.facebook.com/WoodstockFire)
- [Instagram.com/woodstock\\_firedepartment](https://www.instagram.com/woodstock_firedepartment)
- [X.com/WoodstockFireDe](https://www.x.com/WoodstockFireDe)



Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Jeff Slager.

Jeff Slager  
Fire Chief & CEMC

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

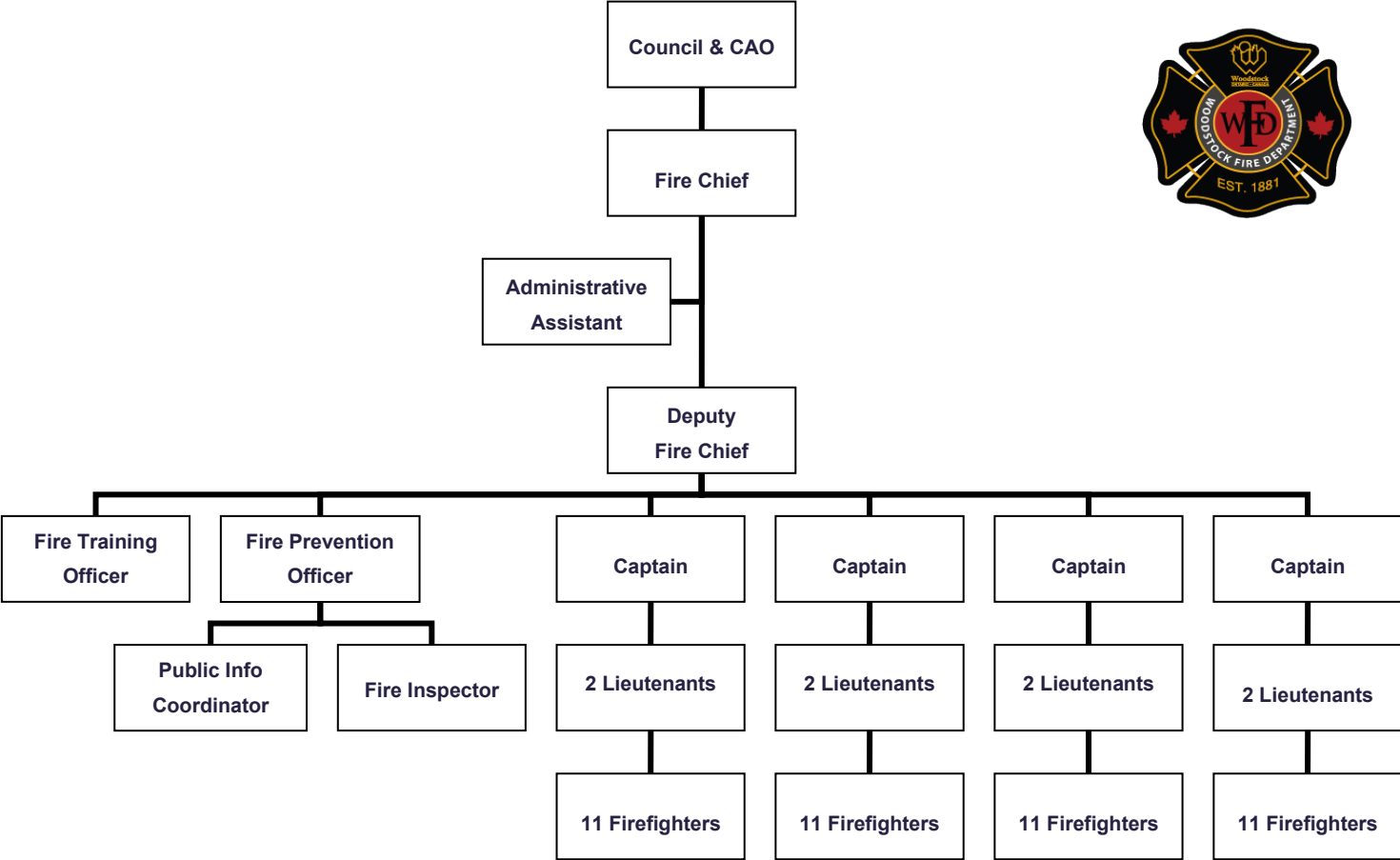
## Summary and highlights of important information

- 5 Retirements
- Hiring of 8 new firefighters
- Receipt of \$16,460 from Ministry of the Solicitor General – Fire Protection Grant.

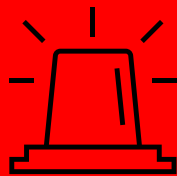
Woodstock Fire Department attended over 2,000 incidents in 2024. This annual report not only highlights some of the challenging moments but also accomplishments.



# WOODSTOCK FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



Firefighters responded to **2,090** emergencies

## Training of new

### Firefighters & Officers

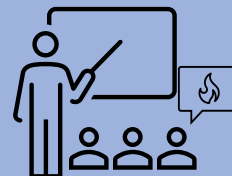
- 8 new firefighters completed training
- 9 reclassification exams completed for advancing firefighters



Firefighters attended 58 homes as part of the Home Smoke Alarm Door-to-Door Education Program



Fire Prevention conducted 402 fire safety inspections



Carried out 195 Public Educations events/lectures



Performed 17 vulnerable occupancy inspections & evaluated all mandatory evacuation drills in Care & Retirement Homes



# TRAINING DIVISION

## Overview

Woodstock Fire Department Training division provides training programs to all fire department personnel. Our training programs are continuously improving to meet the current and future needs of the department and the community.



## Fundamental Functions

- Ensures all 56 firefighters complete ongoing curriculum training as part of the NFPA Standards, Ontario Standards, and job specifications.
- Provides new recruits with knowledge and skills to be successful in their careers.
- Develops training classes for new equipment, changes to building code, and firefighting techniques.
- Evaluates training programs and maintains all training records.

## 2024 Accomplishments

- 8 new firefighters completed training
- 9 reclassification exams completed for advancing firefighters.



# SUPPRESSION DIVISION

## Fire Suppression & Emergency Response Services

Through safety programs, rescue operations and by responding to emergencies, Woodstock Firefighters safeguard the health, safety, welfare and property of all citizens residing and visiting the City of Woodstock. Firefighters are responsible for rapidly and efficiently performing various duties under emergency conditions. These emergency conditions frequently involve considerable hazard.

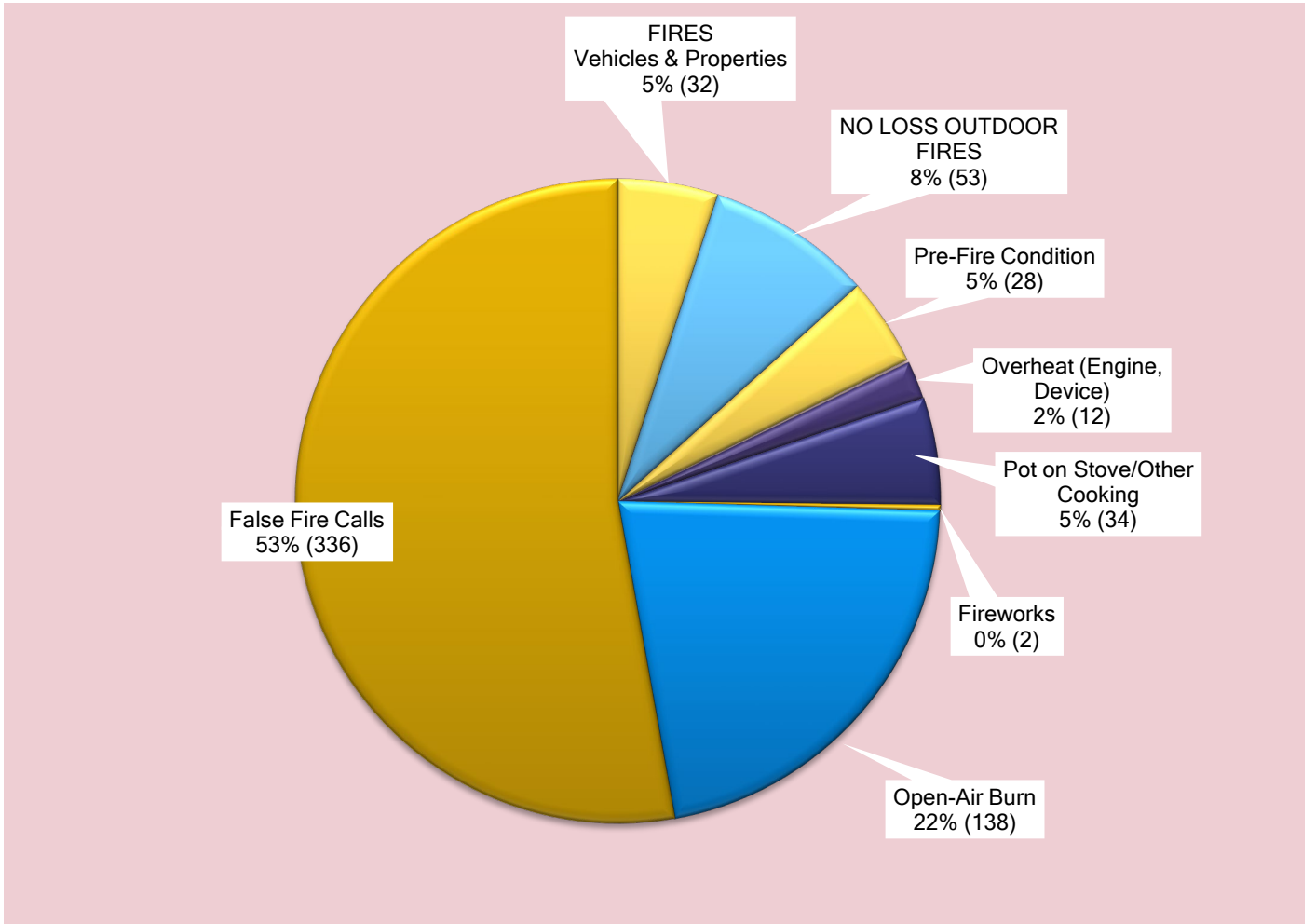
### More than just Fires

Woodstock Firefighters respond to a wide variety of incidents and life threatening situations that includes the following: medical emergencies, vehicle or multi-vehicle collisions, carbon monoxide emergencies, natural-gas and propane emergencies, support in hazardous and flammable materials spills & leaks, CN & CP railroad incidents and emergencies, swift water rescue, open water rescues, ice water rescues, industrial accidents, elevator rescues, aid and assist in confined-space/trench/high-angle rescues, as well as many other types of rescues and of course ALL FIRES, such as residential fires, commercial fires, industrial fires, vehicle fires and wildland fires. In addition to attending incidents and responding to emergencies, Firefighters engage in the following:

- Use sophisticated firefighting apparatus and rescue equipment
- Check all personal protective equipment, vehicles and rescue equipment
- Perform apparatus and station maintenance
- Promote fire safety through educational talks, programs
- Demonstrate the use of firefighting equipment during public relations events
- Perform pre-incident planning
- Complete training activities and practical drills during training exercises
- Perform continuous physical and academic training
- Work with Police & Ambulance personnel as well as other government agencies
- Conduct post-fire salvage and cleanup on fire-scenes
- Help contain spills on city roadways, county roads, 401 & 403 highways

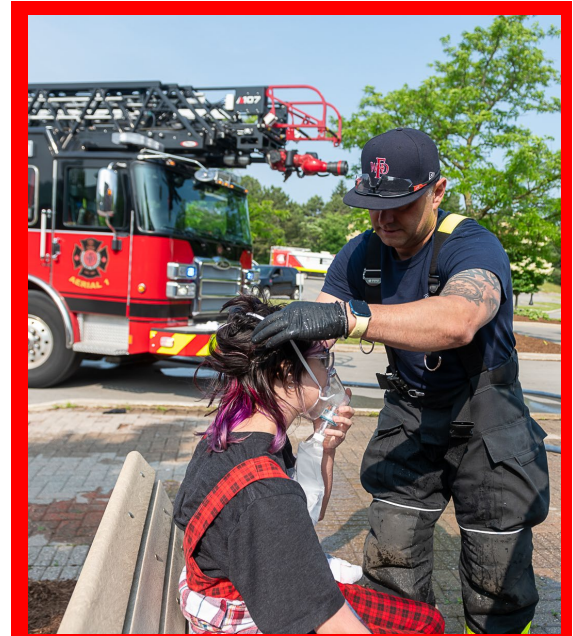
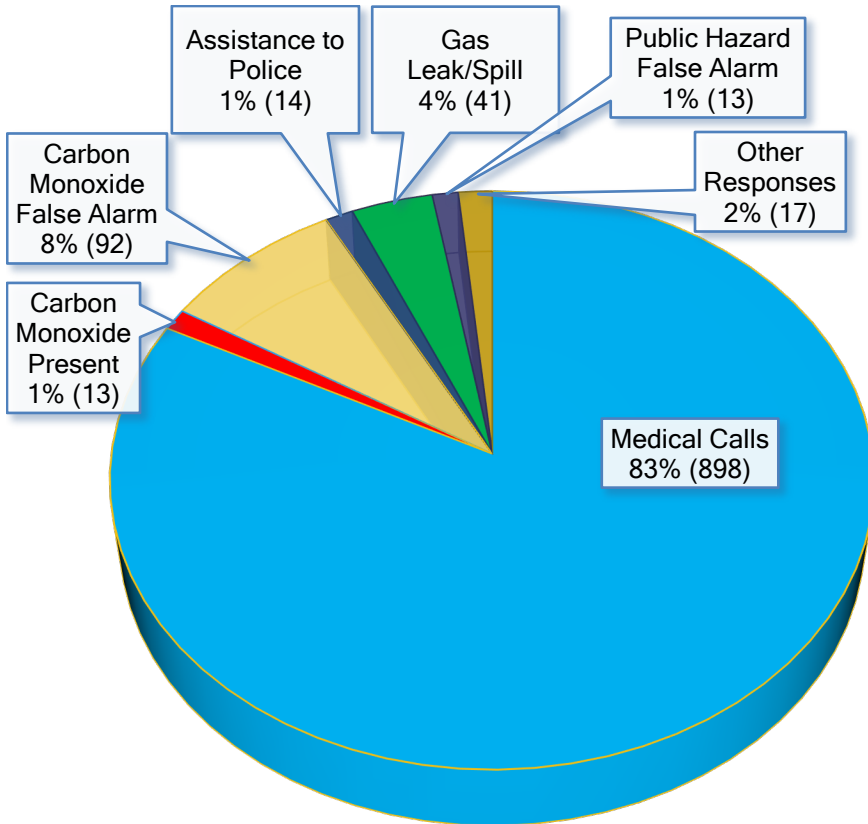


# Fire Incident Responses

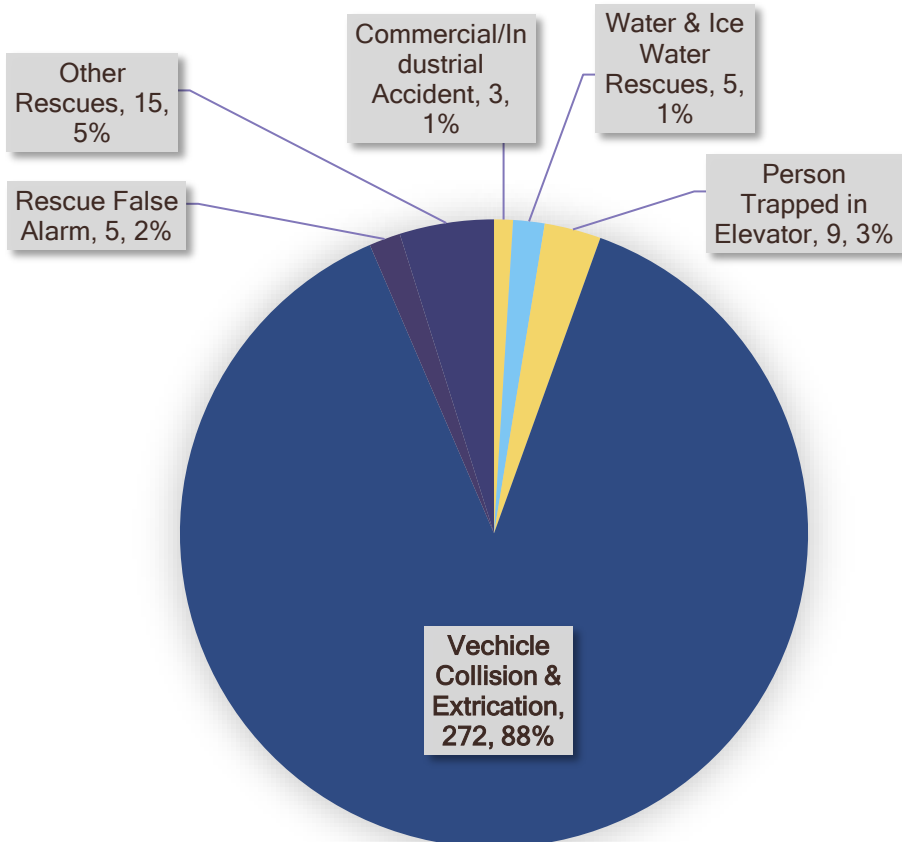




### Medical & Public Hazard Responses



### Rescue Incident Responses



## Fire Causes

Analysis of fire causes for building fires is an important factor in identifying potential trends. Fire causes are grouped into the following types: incendiary, accidental, & undetermined.

The “incendiary” fire is one deliberately ignited when the person knows that the fire should not be ignited. These are typically classified as arson fires, where a fire is set for personal gain through insurance payment, or be part of acts of vandalism.

The “accidental” category recognizes several of the common causes fires that consider both human behaviour (examples: unattended cooking, improperly discarded smoker’s materials) and equipment failures (example: electrical failure). Within the “other” category the following causes are grouped together: unattended candles, improper maintenance of machinery or chimney, improper maintenance of barbecues, unattended open-air burns, mechanical failure of equipment, industrial welding and cutting operations, etc.

NATURE	FIRE CAUSES 2024	TOTAL	% TOTAL
ACCIDENTAL	<b>Smoking: careless, unsafe discarding</b>	5	21%
	<b>Cooking: careless, unattended</b>	1	4%
	<b>Electrical failure</b>	2	8%
	<b>Other accidental causes</b>	8	34%
INCENDIARY	<b>Incendiary: includes arson and vandalism</b>	2	8%
UNDETERMINED	<b>Undetermined</b>	6	25%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>



# FIRE PREVENTION

## Overview

The fire prevention division is responsible for fire safety inspections and public fire safety education efforts to raise public awareness of fire prevention and fire safety as well as protection from the dangers of carbon monoxide in the City of Woodstock.



## Fundamental Functions

- Respond to and resolve citizen complaints related to fire safety.
- Public relations and public education.
- Community events, social media, school safety talks etc.
- Origin and cause fire investigations.
- Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario inspections.
- Enforcement of fire related bylaws.
- Issuing Open-Air Burn Permit and professional fireworks display permits.

## 2024 Accomplishments

- Carried out 195 public education sessions.
- Performed 402 fire safety inspections.
- Performed 17 vulnerable occupancy inspections and evaluated evacuation drills, in the Woodstock General Hospital, care occupancies and retirement homes.
- Increased our social media presence on Facebook, X and Instagram to allow for fire safety messages reaching a greater audience.
- Investigated 4 structure fires to determine origin, cause and circumstance surrounding each fire.



