

SPOKANE FIRE DEPARTMENT

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Emergency
Call 911

Social Media

Spokanefire

@SpokaneFire

Non Emergency
509.625-7000

Website

spokanefire.org

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

As I reflect on 2024, one word stands out: resilience. This past year brought both tremendous challenges and extraordinary achievement — from record-breaking heat and multi-alarm fires to heartbreaking tragedies that shook our community. But through it all, the women and men of the Spokane Fire Department showed up with strength, compassion, and unwavering dedication. I couldn't be prouder to lead this team.

Spokane is a unique city—rich with history, surrounded by nature, and filled with people who care deeply about their neighbors. That's why our role is so much more than just responding to emergencies. We're here to serve, protect, educate, and connect. In 2024, we responded to more than 54,000 calls for service across our 69.5-square-mile city. From medical emergencies and structure fires to water rescues and hazardous materials calls, our firefighters were there—24/7, no matter the situation.

We also leaned into innovation and expanded key programs that will shape our future as a modern, compassionate fire service. We launched new EMS programs to get patients the right care faster, and we grew our CARES Team to offer long-term support to some of Spokane's most vulnerable residents. We implemented Nurse Navigation at the 911 entry point, Suboxone administration by our Behavioral Response Unit, and the continued

growth of our CARES Team reflect a shift in how we meet people where they are—prioritizing holistic, community-centered care. These initiatives, among many others, have earned statewide and national attention, and rightfully so. This is the future of emergency services—meeting people where they are and finding real solutions that last beyond the 911 call.

Our specialty teams—HazMat, Water Rescue, and Technical Rescue—trained harder than ever and responded to complex incidents both in Spokane and across the region. Our Prevention Division broke records in inspections and fire safety outreach. And our Logistics and IT staff worked behind the scenes every day to keep our stations, equipment, and systems running smoothly.

The challenges of 2024 tested us deeply. We mourn the tragic loss of life in several heartbreaking fires, including a devastating April blaze on North Howard Street that claimed four lives. Each of these losses is a painful reminder of why our work matters so much. These moments fuel our commitment to prevention, education and community connection. Every smoke alarm installed, every school visit, every fuel break cleared — they all matter. We also faced heat waves, ice rescues, and multi-alarm commercial fires, requiring fast, adaptive, and highly skilled responses. But even amid adversity, we saw the very best of our people.

Their heroism, professionalism, and teamwork shone through every shift and every scene.

I am proud to lead this organization, but even prouder of the dedicated women and men who make up the Spokane Fire Department. Their sacrifice and service define our success. I also extend my deepest thanks to Mayor Lisa Brown, the City Council, our regional partners, and the people of Spokane for your continued trust and support.

As we look ahead, our focus remains clear: we'll keep evolving, training, and growing to meet the needs of this incredible city. And we'll do it together.



With gratitude,
Julie O'Berg
Julie O'Berg
Fire Chief
Spokane Fire Department

OUR CITY-SPOKANE, WA

Spokane, the largest city in Eastern Washington with approximately 230,000 residents, serves as the dynamic heart of the Inland Northwest. Situated 280 miles east of Seattle and just 18 miles west of the Idaho border, Spokane anchors a metropolitan area home to nearly 750,000 people, functioning as a vital economic and cultural center.

The Spokane Fire Department protects a diverse 69.5-square-mile service area, encompassing dense urban corridors, suburban neighborhoods, and regions that interface directly with wildland areas. The Spokane River, which meanders through the city's core and is renowned for its scenic falls, presents unique operational challenges and considerations for emergency responders.

Spokane's varied landscape—from steep hills in the southern neighborhoods to expansive plains in the north—necessitates specialized emergency response strategies and equipment. Additionally, the region's climate, characterized by hot, dry summers and snowy winters, demands that firefighters be prepared to handle a broad spectrum of situations, including wildland interface fires and ice rescue operations.

The city's strong economy, driven by healthcare, education, financial services, and advanced manufacturing, attracts new businesses and residents. As the region's medical hub, Spokane houses multiple major hospitals and specialty care facilities, which require sophisticated and reliable emergency medical services from the fire department.

Spokane's architectural landscape blends historic early 20th-century structures, modern high-rise buildings, and sprawling residential areas, each requiring adaptable fire protection and emergency response strategies. Moreover, the city's extensive urban trail system and proximity to numerous state parks call for specialized rescue capabilities to manage outdoor recreational emergencies effectively.



ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT

The Spokane Fire Department (SFD) has served as a fire protection agency in Washington State since 1884. It operates as a division of the City of Spokane’s general government, under the requirements for first-class cities outlined in Chapter 35.22 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Located near the Idaho border, Spokane is the second-largest city in Washington. The Spokane Fire Department holds a Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) rating of 3, equivalent to that provided by the Insurance Services Office (ISO).

SFD’s service area covers approximately 69.5 square miles and encompasses a diverse mix of urban, suburban, industrial, and wildland environments.

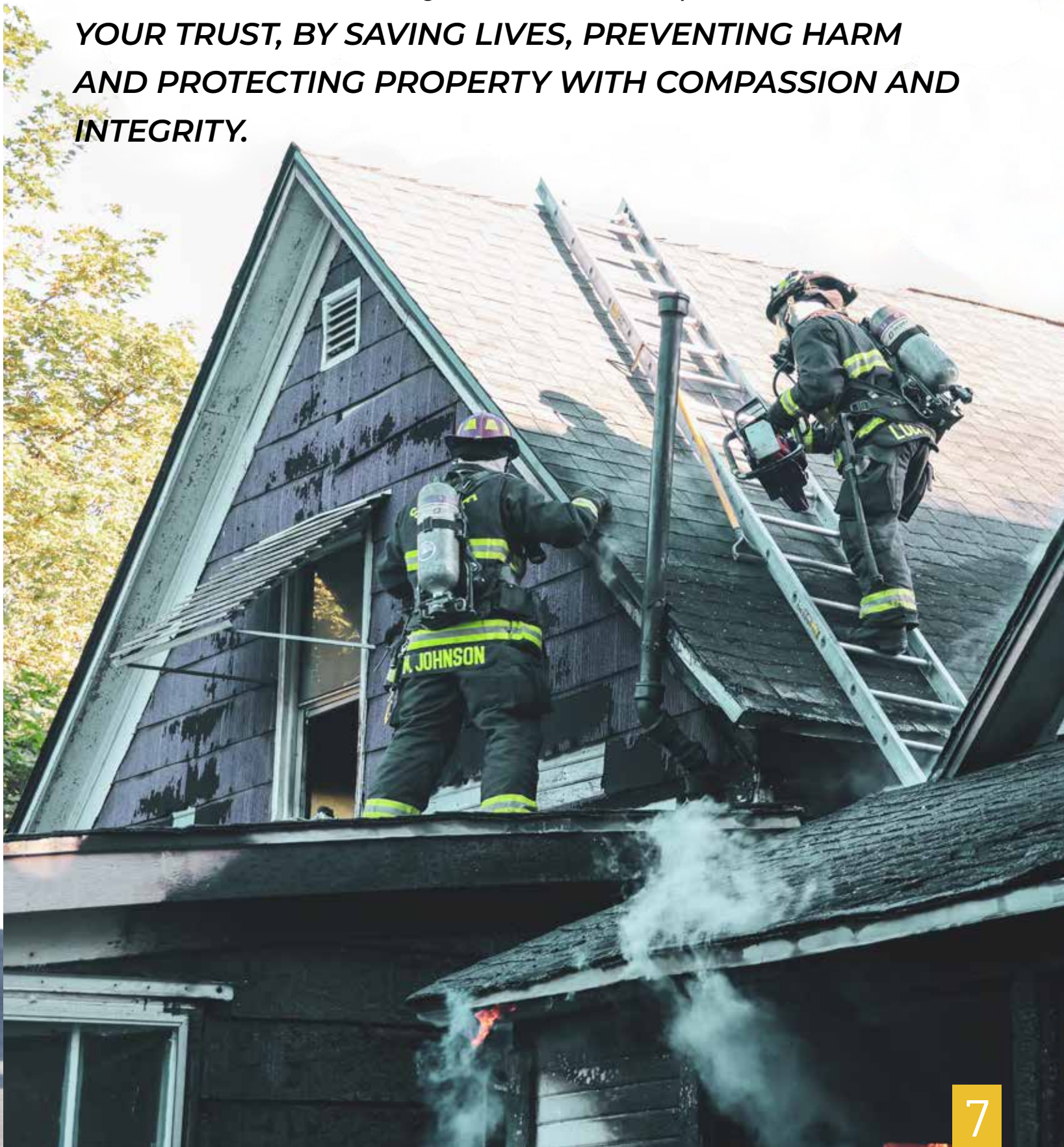
Core Services Provided by the Spokane Fire Department:

- All-hazards emergency Response: This includes fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), hazardous materials (HAZMAT), and technical rescue operations.
- Fire Prevention: Encompasses code enforcement, public education, fire-safe engineering, economic incentives, and wildland fuel mitigation efforts.
- Training Division: Manages and oversees training for all aspects of fire service duties.
- Special Operations: Includes specialized capabilities such as swift water rescue, technical rescue, structural collapse response, and hazardous materials management.



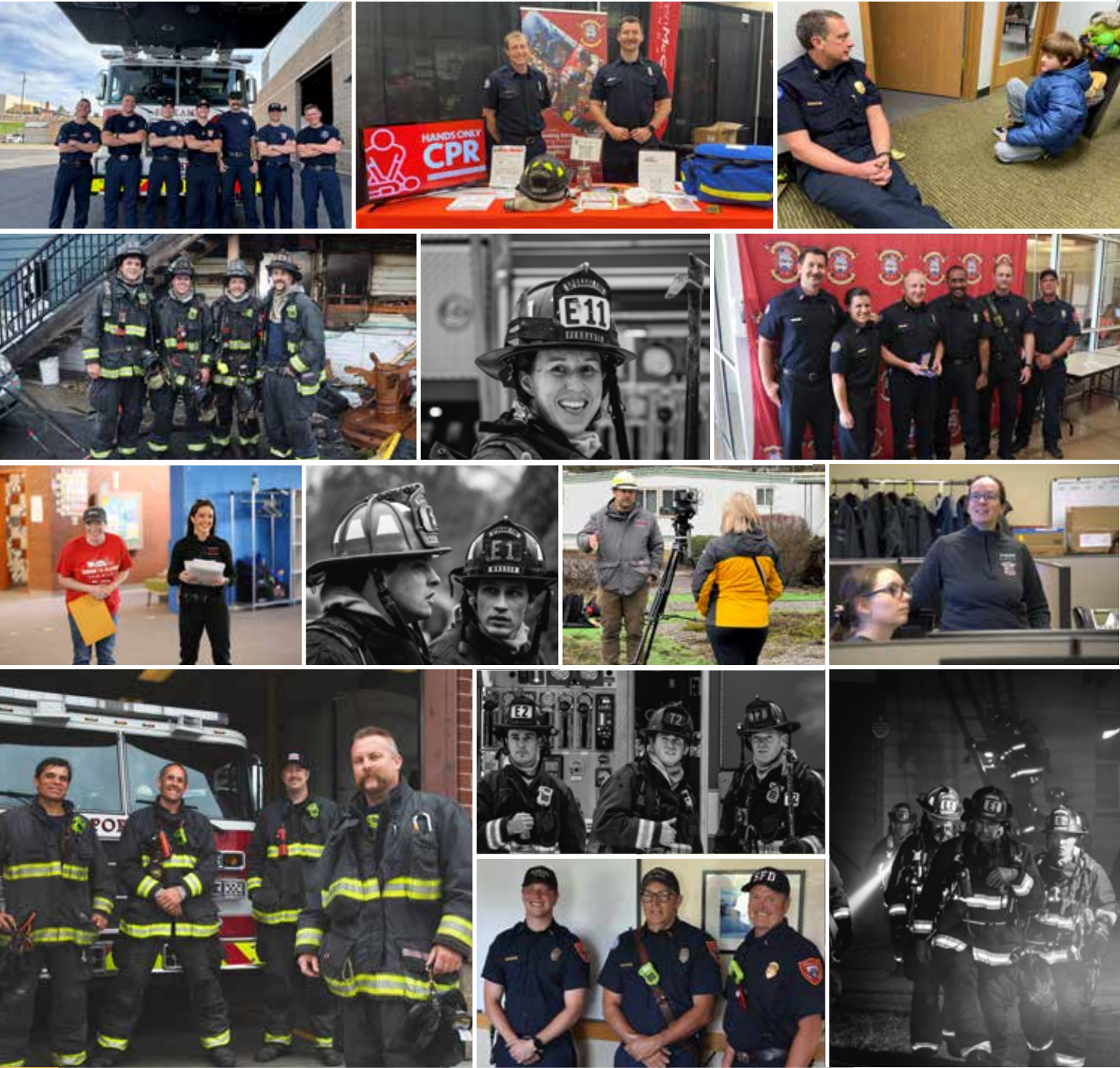
OUR VALUES

WE ENHANCE YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE, ALWAYS EARNING YOUR TRUST, BY SAVING LIVES, PREVENTING HARM AND PROTECTING PROPERTY WITH COMPASSION AND INTEGRITY.



OUR PEOPLE

The Spokane Fire Department's most prized resource is our people. They respond with professionalism and compassion to make someone's worst day better. They're the kind of people you'd like living next door.



2024 BUDGETED STAFFING

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Budgeted FTE Fire/EMS..... | 375.63 |
| Uniformed vs. Civilian FTEs..... | Uniform: 350.00 |
| | Civilian: 25.63 |









2024 NEW HIRES

| | DATE HIRED | POSITION |
|------------------|------------|--|
| Dylan Montgomery | 7/8/2024 | Deputy Fire Marshal |
| Scott Campbell | 8/19/2024 | Supervisory Information System Analyst |
| Lea Cantu-Altom | 11/5/24 | Social Work Case Manager |
| Bulten, Jodilyn | 12/23/24 | Social Work Case Manager |

2024 RETIREMENTS

| | DATE HIRED | POSITION |
|-----------------|------------|------------------------|
| Rex Strickland | 1/18/2024 | Deputy Chief Training |
| Brian Schaeffer | 8/19/2024 | Fire Chief |
| Jeff Estes | 11/5/2024 | Fire Lieutenant |
| Chad Childears | 6/22/2024 | Battalion Chief |
| DJ Hill | 8/14/2024 | Fire Captain |
| Laura Thurston | 12/2/2024 | Administrative Manager |

COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  Julie O'Berg Fire Chief |  Tom Wiliams Assistant Fire Chief |  Darin Neiwert Deputy Chief Operations |  Ryan Redding Deputy Chief Training & Safety |  Lance Dahl Deputy Chief Prevention |
|  Mike Forbes Staff Battalion Chief Administration |  Kyle Chase Staff Battalion Chief Logistics |  Anne Raven Staff Battalion Chief Integrated Emergency Medical Services |  Justin de Ruyter Public Information Officer | |

Significant Incidents 2024

APRIL 9, 2024
1203 W 8th AVE

Engine 9 from the Cannon Hill neighborhood responded to a fire at an eight-unit apartment building, arriving to find heavy flames pouring from a top-floor window on the south side. Fire crews quickly sprang into action, containing the blaze within 30 minutes. While the top floor suffered significant fire damage, smoke and water impacted the entire building. One adult was transported to the hospital with moderate burns



APRIL 29
2807 E 29th Ave
2nd Alarm

Engine 14, from the Lincoln Heights neighborhood, responded to a commercial building housing a US Bank branch, where heavy smoke was pouring out. Just 25 minutes after arrival, a catastrophic roof collapse briefly trapped eight firefighters inside, triggering a "Mayday" call. Thankfully, all firefighters could self-extricate, with only minor injuries sustained. The fire was caused by a malfunctioning heated pipe wrap meant to prevent the roof downspouts from freezing. The building was a total loss. have any working smoke alarms.



AUGUST 8
2902 S. Geiger Blvd
2nd Alarm

Amid temperatures exceeding 100 degrees, firefighters battled a multi-hour blaze at a large commercial recycling facility. Burning debris spread throughout the building until the conveyor belt system was shut down, creating multiple fire hotspots fueled by a heavy load of combustible materials. After hours of effort, the fire was finally brought under control. Thankfully, no injuries were reported.



DECEMBER 4
228 N Howard
2nd Alarm Commercial Structure Fire

Truck 1, responding from the downtown Riverside neighborhood, arrived at a fire alarm in a high-rise residential building and found heavy smoke emanating from the cockloft. While the cause is still under investigation, it was determined that the fire started in a kitchen on the 6th floor and spread through void spaces into the cockloft. During their response, firefighters discovered that the building's sprinkler system had been tampered with, and a valve in the basement had been shut off, cutting off the water supply. Adapting quickly, firefighters supplied the standpipe system, allowing the activated sprinkler heads to suppress the fire. Despite the response, extensive water damage throughout the building led to the long-term displacement of 64 residents.



APRIL 20
1717 North Howard St.
2nd Alarm

Engine 3 from the West Central neighborhood responded to a single-family home with heavy fire pouring from the front porch. Facing intense flames and thick smoke, firefighters from Truck 2 swiftly deployed ground ladders to access a second-floor bedroom at the rear of the house. Within seven minutes of arrival, they rescued four unconscious family members, passing them to waiting crews outside. Despite the firefighters' heroic efforts, all four tragically succumbed to their injuries. An investigation later revealed the fire was caused by an old extension cord permanently wired into the home's electrical system.



JUNE 24
1600 Blk W Water Ave
2nd Alarm

Engine 4 and Truck 4 from the Browne's Addition neighborhood responded to find one home fully engulfed in flames, with the fire rapidly spreading to a neighboring house. Firefighters worked for about 40 minutes, conducting extinguishment and ventilation efforts before gaining control of both fires. Fortunately, no injuries were reported. The American Red Cross was called in to assist with housing for four displaced adults — two from each home. Fire investigators could not determine the cause of the blaze, but they confirmed it started on the front porch of one home before spreading.



AUGUST 18
2600Blk W Riverside Ave
2nd Alarm

Engine 4 initially responded to a grass fire when a second fire broke out across the street, prompting a 2nd Alarm response. Additional support arrived from Spokane Valley Fire, Washington DNR, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The second fire quickly spread across 3 to 5 acres of steep hillside near The Ridge Condominiums. Crews successfully used an irrigated lawn as a natural firebreak to protect the \$4.5 million property. Both fires were contained without any injuries or property damage. The suspected arsonist fled into nearby woods and remains at large.



FIRE STATIONS



01 44 W Riverside Ave.
Engine 1
Truck 1
Medic 1
Support Unit 1



02 1001 E. N Foothills Dr.
Engine 2
Truck 2
Water Rescue 2



03 1713 W Indiana Ave
Engine 3
Water Rescue 3
Boat 3



04 1515 W First Ave
Engine 4
Truck 4
Squad 4
Tech Rescue 4
Battalion 1



05 115 W Eagle Ridge Blvd
Attack 5
Brush 5



06 1615 S Spotted Rd
Engine 6
Brush 6



07 1901 E First Ave
Engine 7
Hazmat 7
Brush 7



08 1608 N Rebecca St
Engine 8
Safety 1
Brush 8



09 1722 S Bernard St
Engine 9
HAZMAT 9



11 3214 S Perry St
Engine 11
Brush 11



13 1118 W Wellesley Ave
Truck 13
Battalion 2



14 1807 S Ray St
Truck 14



15 2120 E Wellesley Ave
Engine 15
Brush 15



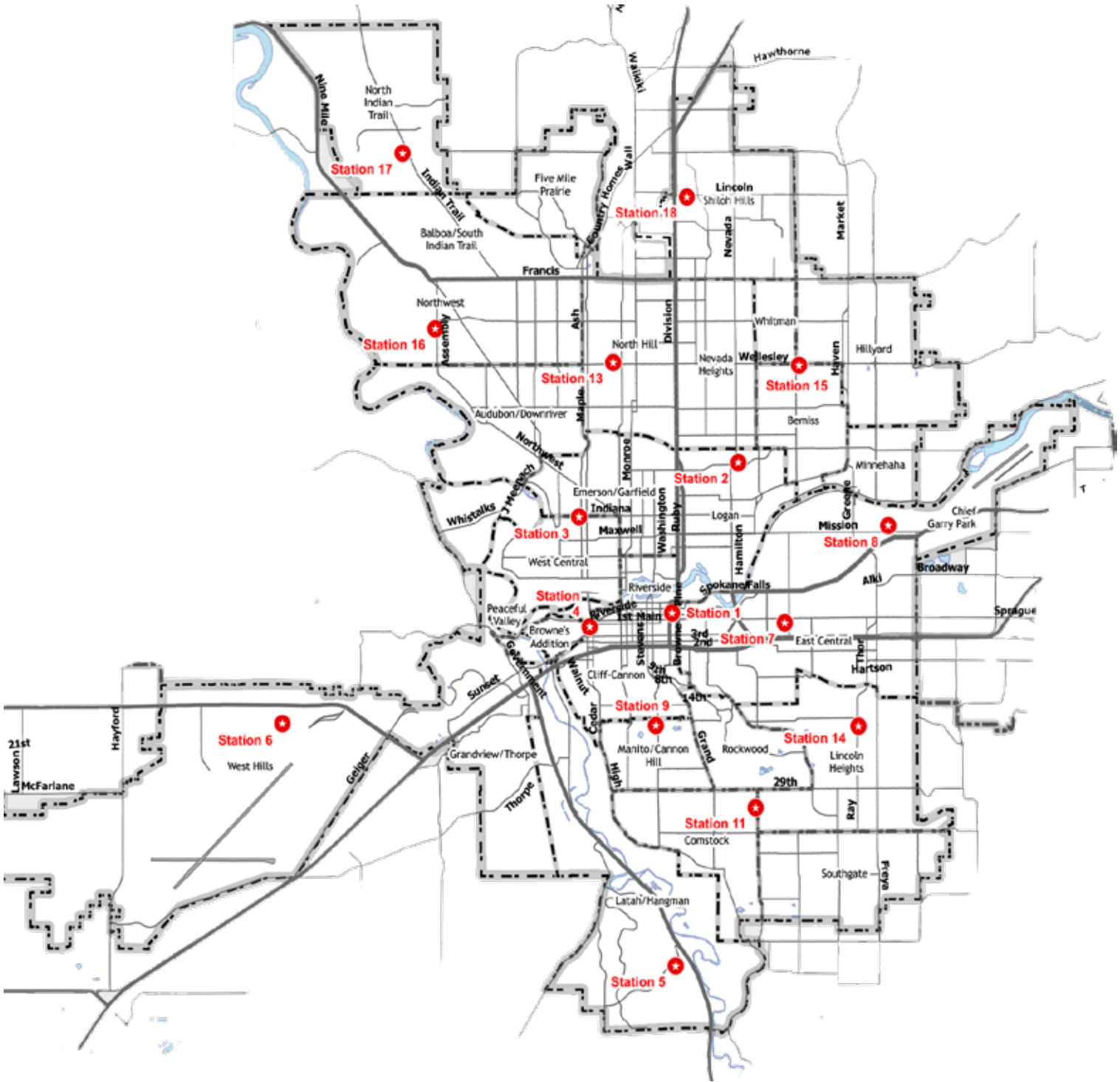
16 5225 N Assembly St
Engine 16
Brush 16



17 5121 W Lowell Rd
Engine 17
Brush 17



18 120 E Lincoln St.
Engine 18
Medic 18



RESPONSE TIMES

ANATOMY OF A 911 CALL



Fire Department Response Time

CALL

Community members
call 911
For an emergency

DISPATCH

911 center processes the
call and dispatches units

TURNOUT

Time from when a unit is
dispatched to when the
crew is dressed in gear
and in the vehicle, ready
to go

TRAVEL

Time from when the unit
starts moving to when it
gets on scene

SFD uses the standards outlined in our Standard of Coverage for Emergency Response Document for response time reporting. These standards are listed as our objectives in the response time.

Turnout time is measured from the time of initial responder dispatch to the time the responding apparatus begins traveling towards the incident.

Travel time is measured from the time the responding apparatus begins moving to the time it arrives at the incident

Response Time is the period from notification of responders by dispatch to the arrival of the first unit at the scene of the incident.

A full alarm assignment consists of a minimum 14 firefighters on scene.

Data was organized by call type as identified at dispatch. This may or may not correspond to what was found when a crew arrived on scene, but is the best representation of how crews prepared and responded in terms of gear and safety requirements.

FIRE RESPONSE TIMES

2023

2024

TURNOUT TIME

02:29

Objective:
90 seconds, 90% of the time

02:25

Objective:
90 seconds, 90% of the time

RESPONSE TIME - FIRST ARRIVING APPARATUS

05:30

Objective:
Dispatch to Arrival,
8:30, 90% of the time

05:29

Objective:
Dispatch to Arrival,
8:30, 90% of the time

STRUCTURE FIRE-FULL ASSIGNMENT

97%

Objective:

Dispatch to Arrival of Full
Alarm (14 FF), 11:00, 90% of
the time

97%

Objective:

Dispatch to Arrival of Full
Alarm (14 FF), 11:00, 90% of
the time

TRAVEL TIME - STRUCTURE FIRE

02:29

Objective:
1st Unit in 7:00,
90% of the time

02:25

Objective:
1st Unit in 7:00,
90% of the time

EMS RESPONSE TIMES

2023

2024

TURNOUT TIME

02:12

Objective:
60 seconds, 90% of the time

02:05

Objective:
60 seconds, 90% of the time

RESPONSE TIME - BLS CALL

09:44

Objective:
Dispatch to Arrival,
11:30, 90% of time

09:33

Objective:
Dispatch to Arrival,
11:30, 90% of time

RESPONSE TIME - ALS CALL

06:34

Objective:

Dispatch to Arrival,
8:30, 90% of the time

06:30

Objective:

Dispatch to Arrival,
8:30, 90% of the time

TRAVEL TIME - EMS CALL

06:49

Objective:

1st Unit in 7:00, 90% of time

06:51

Objective:

1st Unit in 7:00, 90% of time

| STATION RESPONSE AREA | TOTAL RESPONSES | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------|------------|
| | 2024 | % of total | 2023 | % of total |
| STATION 1 | 9,755 | 18% | 8,776 | 17% |
| STATION 2 | 3,932 | 7% | 3,793 | 7% |
| STATION 3 | 5,246 | 10% | 4,883 | 10% |
| STATION 4 | 5,088 | 9% | 4,684 | 9% |
| STATION 5 | 335 | 1% | 338 | 1% |
| STATION 6 | 800 | 1% | 745 | 1% |
| STATION 7 | 2,701 | 5% | 2,649 | 5% |
| STATION 8 | 2,253 | 4% | 2,938 | 6% |
| STATION 9 | 916 | 2% | 943 | 2% |
| STATION 11 | 3,313 | 6% | 3,001 | 6% |
| STATION 13 | 3,607 | 7% | 3,228 | 6% |
| STATION 14 | 2,174 | 4% | 2,084 | 4% |
| STATION 15 | 4,115 | 8% | 3,952 | 8% |
| STATION 16 | 2,398 | 4% | 2,104 | 4% |
| STATION 17 | 1,047 | 2% | 920 | 2% |
| STATION 18 | 6,599 | 12% | 6,089 | 12% |



54,279

Total responses in 2024

47,845

EMS & Rescue incidents

1,244

Fire incidents

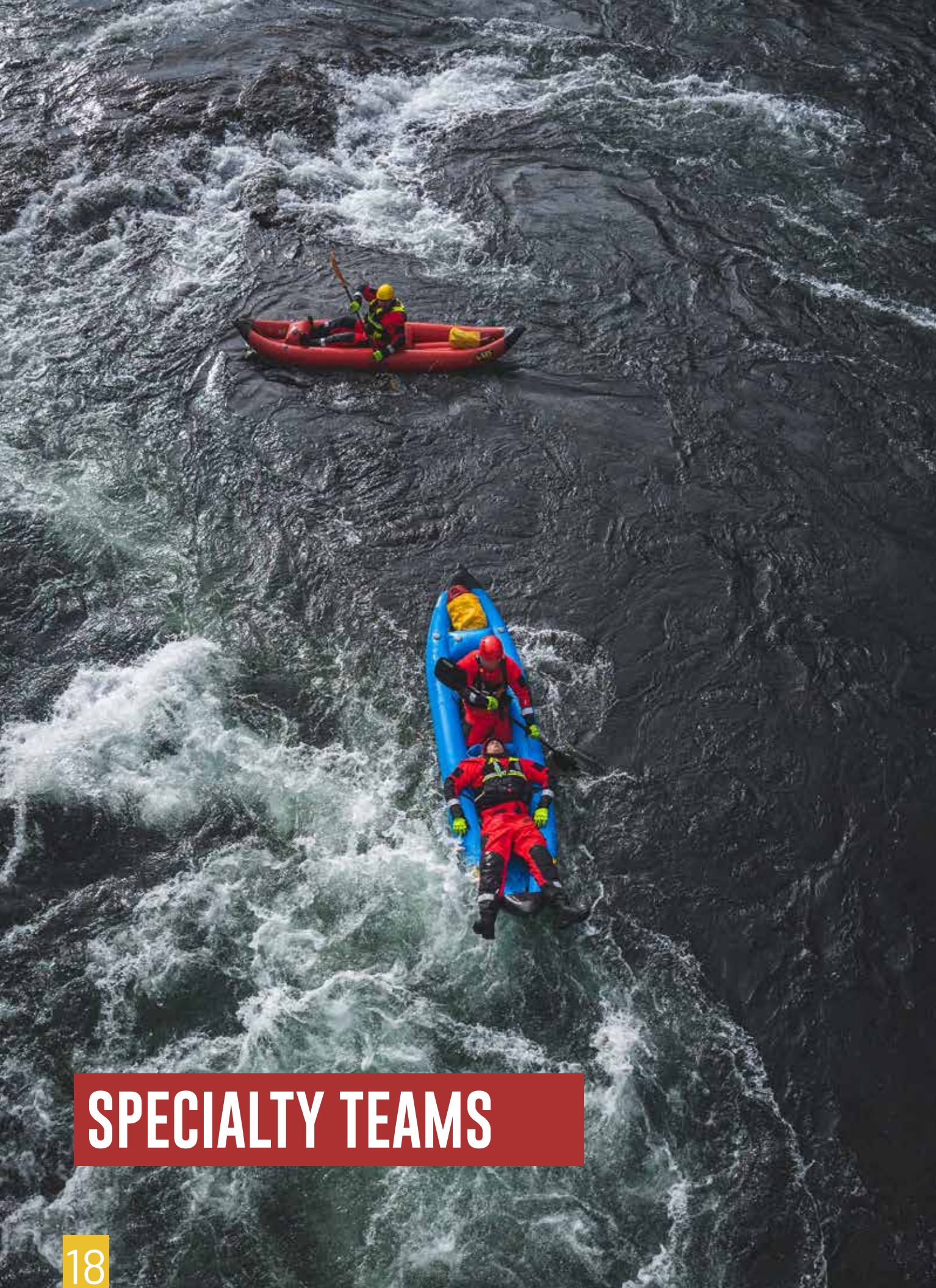
15,701

Good Intent Calls

3,846

Service Calls





SPECIALTY TEAMS

TECHNICAL RESCUE

The Spokane Fire Department's Technical Rescue Team was established in the early 1990s to address complex rescue scenarios that exceed the capabilities of standard fire companies. Serving both the City of Spokane and Spokane County, the team has spent more than 30 years responding to a wide range of high-risk and high-profile incidents. These include building collapses, confined space rescues, trench and excavation emergencies, machinery entrapments, and high- and low-angle rope rescues.

Based at Stations 4 and 15, the team is made up of 40 highly trained personnel equipped with specialized rescue gear. Leadership of the team is provided by the captains of these stations, while overall program administration falls under a Battalion Chief, who reports to the Deputy Chief of Operations.

The SFD Technical Rescue Team is also a key component of the Region 9 Technical Rescue Team, a regional alliance that includes members from the Spokane Valley Fire Department and Spokane County Fire District 9. Together, this regional team comprises 94 personnel and operates under a mutual aid agreement that enables swift, borderless responses across jurisdictional lines within the Inland Northwest.

In 2024, the Region 9 team secured over \$80,000 in grant funding from the Homeland Security Grant Program. These funds are being used to acquire advanced rescue equipment in alignment with the National Preparedness System, supporting the broader goal of building a secure and resilient nation.

Throughout 2024, the Regional Technical Rescue Team responded to 56 emergency calls. Of these, 34 were categorized as heavy rescues—typically involving vehicles into structures or collisions with large, heavy vehicles. Additionally, the team conducted 16 high- or low-angle rope rescues, two confined space rescues, two machinery entrapments, and two trench rescues. Thirty-six of these incidents occurred within the Spokane city limits.



HAZMAT

The Spokane Fire Department's (SFD) Hazardous Materials Team stands as a critical response unit, managing incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear substances that pose threats to people, the environment, and property. Operating within the City of Spokane and providing regional support to partner agencies, the team maintains constant readiness for hazardous material incidents.

CORE OPERATIONS

At hazardous material incidents, the SFD HAZMAT Team executes multiple critical functions:

- Rescuing endangered individuals
- Identifying and isolating hazards
- Stabilizing dangerous situations
- Implementing decontamination procedures for personnel and equipment
- Providing technical expertise to incident commanders

The team's response priorities remain steadfast:

- Preserving Life
- Protecting the Environment
- Safeguarding Property
- Stabilizing Dangerous Situations

TEAM STRUCTURE

The Hazmat Team consists of 52 dedicated members distributed across three fire stations, ensuring daily operational capability. All team members undergo comprehensive initial training upon assignment and participate in ongoing professional development to maintain and enhance their expertise in handling hazardous material incidents.

2024 TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

The team significantly expanded its capabilities and partnerships in 2024 through several key initiatives:

ADVANCED TRAINING

Four personnel completed the Hazardous Materials Technician course at the prestigious training facility in Anniston, Alabama.

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHPS

- Collaborated with the 10th Civil Support Team to conduct monitoring operations during the Bloomsday event.
- Regional Coordination: Maintained active participation in the Spokane County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).
- Innovation in Safety: Launched a comprehensive lithium battery program with accompanying Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG).
- Specialized Response Preparation: Conducted boom training with the Department of Energy for river emergency response.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

In 2024, the team demonstrated its regional support capabilities through mutual aid response to Fire District 3 for a critical I-90 rollover incident involving one fatality. The SFD HazMat team provided specialized support with the foam trailer, showcasing the importance of regional cooperation and specialized response capabilities.



WATER RESCUE



The Spokane Fire Department's Water Rescue Team stands as a vital guardian of public safety on our region's waterways. Operating with 40 highly trained technicians based at Stations 2 and 16, this specialized unit responds to diverse water emergencies throughout Spokane County, working seamlessly with the Spokane Valley Water Team and Spokane County Sheriff's Dive Team. From swift water rescues on the Spokane River to emergencies involving ponds, ice, and flooding, our dedicated professionals utilize specialized equipment including jet boats, cataracts, and kayaks to conduct life-saving operations. In 2024, the team responded to 36 water-related incidents, demonstrating their critical role in our community's emergency response system. The team's commitment to excellence extends beyond our city limits, as evidenced by their spring certification training which welcomed participants from various regional agencies,

including firefighters from Kootenai County.

SIGNIFICANT WATER INCIDENTS

• **May 2, 2024** — Upriver and Cuba: A male driver drove his truck down the bank into the river and was later seen floating downstream. Rescue 2, Rescue 3, and E2 launched kayaks from the Green Street Bridge. Water 3, operated by two members from Station 3 and a boat operator from T2, deployed a jet boat and rescued the victim after he became caught on bridge supports underwater. CPR was initiated onboard while transporting him to shore, where fire and AMR medical crews awaited. He was taken to the hospital and later pronounced dead. Water 3 also assisted the dive team in positioning a diver above the submerged vehicle in swift currents to confirm it was empty.

• **May 8, 2024** — Riverfront Park: Four children jumped into the river. Three made it out safely,

but one struggled and eventually sank. Despite crews' efforts, the victim was pulled into a grate at the dam. Firefighters and workers collaborated to retrieve the teenager, who was later pronounced dead.

• **May 10, 2024** — Nine Mile Dam: A kayaker reported spotting a body floating down the river. Using the what3words app, crews pinpointed the location. The body became caught in trees about half a mile upstream from Nine Mile Dam. The scene was handed over to the Sheriff.

• **July 10, 2024** — River Rescue: Two women lost a tube while floating down the river and became stranded on rocks. One woman swam to shore and was assisted by fire crews. The other was rescued by the SFD water team, who brought her downstream via kayak to a public boat launch, where medical personnel were on standby.

LOGISTICS DIVISION

The Spokane Fire Department Facilities and Logistics Division is led by an Administrative Battalion Chief, who oversees the maintenance and repair of all SFD facilities. Responsibilities for facility upkeep, repairs, and upgrades are shared between the Logistics Chief and an assigned Logistics Captain. Additionally, the Logistics Chief manages the SFD Maintenance Facility, supervising its staff, which includes a Shop Foreman and five Heavy Equipment Mechanics. This dedicated team works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that Spokane's emergency response infrastructure remains in optimal condition, directly supporting the Department's mission of protecting life and property.

FLEET MAINTENANCE

The Spokane Fire Department fleet consists of nearly 125 pieces of rolling stock, including 14 frontline pumpers, five aerial trucks, four rescue vehicles, and nine Type 6 brush trucks. Additionally, the reserve fleet includes nine pumpers and two aerial trucks. The fleet is rounded out by a variety of staff vehicles, specialty units, trailers, and a swift-water-capable jet boat. A key highlight in 2024 is the commissioning of four new Pierce pumpers and three new response vehicles. These additions have lowered the average age of frontline apparatus to 10 years. However, continued

investment in heavy apparatus remains a top priority, as the reserve fleet's average age exceeds 20 years, with some units surpassing 200,000 miles after two decades of service to Spokane. As new vehicles are commissioned, legacy units with remaining service life are reassigned as ready spares or for secondary roles. The oldest units are either sent to surplus or donated to other public safety agencies. Beyond daily preventative maintenance and repairs, the SFD Maintenance Facility completed an in-frame engine rebuild and an out-of-frame Detroit diesel engine rebuild on two reserve pumpers in 2024. The team also conducts annual pump testing for all pump-equipped apparatus and aerial testing for units with aerial devices, ensuring operational readiness across the fleet.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

The Spokane Fire Department operates a total of 21 facilities, including 16 fire stations strategically located across the City of Spokane and five additional buildings at the SFD Training Campus. These include the Maintenance Facility, Training Administration, Training Field House, Burn Tower, and Combined Dispatch building that Spokane Regional Emergency Communications occupies. In 2024, significant challenges in the Capital Budget limited major facility upgrades and improvements. However, progress was made with the continued

integration of the Water Wise Spokane program. This partnership with the Water Department has optimized irrigation for landscaping, reduced unnecessary water consumption at all SFD facilities, and helped ease demand on the Spokane aquifer during the peak summer months.

Another key highlight of 2024 was the installation of an additional electric vehicle (EV) charging station at Fire Station 11, bringing the department's total EV charging capacity to 13 stations. These chargers are available for use by any City department EV. Currently, SFD has incorporated five electric vehicles within the Prevention and EMS Divisions and plans to expand its EV fleet where operational needs align with sustainability goals. The Logistics Division remains essential in maintaining SFD operations, handling routine maintenance and repair requests. Logistics personnel, along with a trusted network of contractors and service providers, completed more than 500 service requests in 2024, ensuring that SFD facilities remain functional and efficient. Through strategic planning and preventative maintenance programs, the Division continues to maximize the lifespan of critical infrastructure while minimizing operational disruptions, allowing Spokane's firefighters to focus on their primary mission of emergency response and community service.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The SFD Information Technology Department provides hardware and software support to 364 employees located at 16 fire stations, the Fire Training Center, the MSO Office, and the vehicle maintenance shop. We assist via chat, email, phone, on-site, and remote connectivity. Our hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 0700 to 1700.

Our team of three focuses on four categories: executive projects and requests, hardware support, software support, and station support. We partner with I.T. departments located at the city including Data Center, Database Management, Enterprise Administration, Help Desk, and I.T. networking. In addition, we maintain a strong relationship with SREC, who supports CAD and some of our dashboards and reports.

Our goal is to deliver reliable, secure, and innovative technology solutions that support and enhance Spokane Fire Department's operational and strategic objectives.



| EXECUTIVE PROJECTS | HARDWARE SUPPORT | SOFTWARE SUPPORT | STATION SUPPORT |
|---|---|---|--|
| <i>Executive Projects consists of directives/requests that support SFD Leadership.</i> | <i>Hardware Support consists of deploying, replacing, troubleshooting hardware.</i> | <i>Software Support consists of customer support, software updates & troubleshooting.</i> | <i>Station Support consists of email/phone support, on-site support, and remote support.</i> |
| >CODE-STAT <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Computer Server Update-Database Update-Reviewer Access | >Apple <ul style="list-style-type: none">-iPad Deployments-iPhone Deployments-Screen Cases + Protectors | >Apple Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">-iOS Updates-Software Install (iTune)-Troubleshooting/Support | >Apple Products <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Apple TV Support-iPad support-iPhone support |
| >ESO <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Data Exporter + Insights-OD MAP Integration (api)-MDC/ESO Tablet Maintenance | >PC <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Computer Deployments-Monitor Deployments-System Updates | >Microsoft Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Microsoft Office-Windows 10/11-Windows Servers-Troubleshooting/Support | >Computer Products <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Dell computers + laptops-Computer Peripherals-ToughBooks |
| >SharePoint <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Cup and Flower-Fire Training Academy-Internal Media Requests-Quarter Master Updates | >Galaxy System <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Badge Printer-Door and Gate Support | >On-Base (Forms/Workflows) <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Fire Training Academy-PER forms-Probationary Report-Quarter Master Updates | >Enterprise Software <ul style="list-style-type: none">-ESO-En Route Mobile/Infor (via SREC)-Telestaff |
| >Telestaff <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Apparatus Updates-Roster Updates-Payroll Export-Tablet Command-Version Update (7.5.9) | >Printers <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Copiers NW (Vendor)-Fuel Log-QR Codes-Royal Business Systems (Vendor) | >Telestaff <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Custom Reports-Monthly Meetings-Payroll Support-Test Instance | >Internet Connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none">-City Fiber Support-Comcast Support-Networking |
| | >Knox Box -Hardware Support | | >Multi-Factor Authentication <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Via Phone or Text Message |
| | -System Update | | |





TRAINING & FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

In 2024, the Training Division had a highly productive year, successfully meeting its objectives in realistic training, compliance, and innovation—all while prioritizing firefighter safety both on incidents and in the stations.

TRAINING CONDUCTED

- Firefighter Fire Ground Survival & SCBA Confidence Training
- Wildland Urban Interface Training in the Sunset Hill Neighborhood
- High-Rise Firefighting Training at the Peyton Building (Acquired Structure)
- Live Fire Training
- Truck Company Large Area Search Training at the Jensen Byrd Building
- Heavy & Complex Vehicle Extrication Training
- Mass Casualty Incident Training
- Electric Vehicle Fire Training
- Job-Wide Driver Operator & Pump Operations Training
- Origin and Cause Investigation Training

KEY INITIATIVES

- **Safety Inspections:** Every station and department facility underwent a detailed safety inspection by Risk Management, with all recommendations either implemented or in progress.
- **Specialty Team Compliance:** A new system was created and implemented to evaluate WAC compliance for specialty teams, including Swiftwater, Technical Rescue, and Hazardous Materials.
- **Expanded Use of Training Sites:** Remote training locations were fully utilized, and a streamlined process was developed for securing contracts with building donors, maximizing training opportunities before demolition.
- **Target Safety Adjustments:** Modifications were made to ensure proper documentation of training requirements, supporting SFD's goal of achieving an ISO Class 2 rating with the WSRB.
- **Structural Abandonment Enhancements:** A proposal to improve the initiation of abandonment tones—reducing response time and increasing firefighter survivability—was approved and adopted by the Spokane County Operations Group.
- **Contract Improvements:** Agreements with PST and Vector Solutions were reviewed, enhanced, and renewed.

PROGRAMS SUPPORTED

- Acquired Structure Acquisition & Training Program
- Spokane-Specific Building Construction Educational Video Series
- Truck Company Training Group
- Engine Company Training Group
- New Thermal Imaging Camera Evaluation & Deployment
- High-Rise Standpipe Equipment Implementation
- Wildland PPE Replacement Across the Department
- Peer Support Program
- Safety Committee



PREVENTION

Throughout 2024, the Prevention Division experienced an exceptionally high volume of activity, particularly around Multi-Family and Commercial building inspections. This remarkable level of productivity was made possible in large part by the City’s strategic investment in 2022, which added five new inspector positions to our team. As a result, we successfully achieved a record number of inspections, despite the challenge of operating with one fewer inspector for the majority of 2024.

In June 2024, we encountered a significant staffing challenge when our Community Risk Reduction Specialist departed, a decision driven by uncertainties surrounding the City’s budget situation. Nevertheless, we are pleased to report that we were able to recruit an outstanding candidate to fill this critical role. Kathleen O’Donnell officially joined our team in January 2025 and has already made substantial contributions to advancing our community risk reduction initiatives.

The Fire Marshal’s Office similarly faced staffing difficulties, operating with one fewer team member following a retirement in August 2024. Due to an ongoing budget shortfall later that year, we were unable to immediately fill the Deputy Fire Marshal position. However, through careful planning and continued advocacy, we anticipate completing the hiring process and restoring full staffing levels by the second quarter of 2025.

In addition to these staffing developments, we are preparing to undertake important updates to sections of the Spokane Municipal Code. These revisions are necessary to maintain alignment with Washington State’s adoption of the 2021 edition of the International Fire Code. Some of the proposed changes will involve the relaxation of select fire code requirements, thereby harmonizing Spokane’s regulations with state-adopted standards. It is anticipated that these updates will ease regulatory burdens on many local businesses, ultimately promoting economic vitality while continuing to uphold high standards of public safety.

As we move further into 2025, our division remains committed to maintaining excellence in inspection services, adapting to evolving standards, and supporting the safety and success of the Spokane community.



19,232
Total Inspections

| | |
|---|--------|
| Consultations & Complaints..... | 1,793 |
| Life Safety Construction Permit Inspections..... | 933 |
| Compliance Report Approvals & Reviews..... | 10,124 |
| Operating Permit Inspections..... | 1,995 |
| Special Event Permit Inspections..... | 250 |
| Tank Construction Permit Inspection..... | 59 |
| Tank Operating Permit Inspections..... | 561 |
| Multi-Family & Commercial Building Inspections..... | 3,517 |



484

**Acres of fuel
reduction
completed in
2024**

FUEL REDUCTION

2024 was a highly productive year for wildland fuel reduction. We completed many projects while conserving grant funding by strategically partnering with Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR) crews. In need of work assignments, these crews were deployed alongside multiple masticators and hand teams to carry out fuel reduction efforts on and around city-owned properties.

One of our early-season treatments was put to the test by an actual wildfire. The prior fuel reduction work allowed firefighters to stop the fire’s spread safely. The treatment enhanced firefighter safety and helped preserve the forest by moderating the fire’s behavior and preventing widespread destruction.

We also secured a \$20,000 IAFC Chiefs Grant, which was matched by an additional \$20,000 from the Eagle Ridge Homeowners Association. This combined funding enabled us to treat over 20 acres of HOA-owned land.

We completed 484 acres of fuel reduction and began work on another 609 acres, scheduled for completion in Q1 and Q2 of 2025. Project costs varied depending on terrain and treatment methods, ranging from \$1,200 to \$2,200 per acre.



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

In 2024, SFD's Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Team continued to enhance our community and educational programs. Key accomplishments included:

- **Smoke Alarm Installation Initiatives:** We revamped our station-based smoke alarm installation kits and continued installations through the CRR office, supported by FEMA funding. Two large-scale smoke alarm installation blitz events took place in April and October in high-fire-risk areas in partnership with the American Red Cross, State Farm, Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington State University, and dedicated community volunteers.
- **Expanded Fire Safety Education:** We launched an updated 3rd and 4th-grade curriculum featuring our new custom tiny home, The Children's Fire Safety House. This mobile learning experience includes updated technology, simulated 911 calls, a nationally recognized curriculum, and hands-on evacuation drills where children practice exiting through a bedroom window with firefighter guidance.
- **Community Engagement & Events:** Our team played a vital role in strengthening SFD's presence at significant community events, including the Bloomsday, Tradeshow (where attendees practiced hands-only CPR), Homeless Connect, local school career fairs, World Refugee Day, National Night Out, and more.
- **SFD Jr. Fire Academy:** In September, we hosted another successful Jr. Fire Academy in collaboration with Downtown Spokane, River Park Square, SAFE Kids Spokane, and NomNom, providing youth with hands-on fire safety education.

We are honored to continue serving the Spokane community and remain committed to enhancing fire and life safety programs for all.





SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT



The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) had another busy year in 2024, staffed by three full-time and four supplemental investigators. SIU responded to many of the Spokane Fire Department's significant incidents, including numerous residential and multi-alarm commercial fires.

Tragically, investigators responded to four fatal fires within the city that resulted in seven deaths. The SIU also supported two additional fatal fire investigations in neighboring fire districts. In total, the SIU conducted 227 incident investigations throughout the year.

Fire Fatalities Within City Limits

03/05/2024 – 3720 W Elmhurst Ave

A 32-year-old man was found deceased in the bathroom of a heavily involved house fire. Investigators believe he set the fire for unknown reasons before retreating inside.

04/20/2024 – 1717 N Howard St

A family of four (man 40, woman 32, boy 7, girl 2) was rescued within seven minutes of arrival from a burning home but all later died—one on scene, the rest within a week. The fire originated from an overheated extension cord. No working smoke alarms, and an open bedroom door worsened the outcome.

05/21/2024 – 7723 W Hwy 2

A 62-year-old man died following a cooking fire. He was found on the bedroom floor and later died at the hospital.

07/10/2024 – 5216 N Bemis St

A 61-year-old man was found dead in an RV fire. The cause was traced to an overheated shoreline power cord. No working smoke detector was present.

In addition to their fieldwork, investigators prioritized professional development, completing over 300 hours of in-person training. Courses attended included Electrical Fire Investigation, Evidence Collection, and Interview Training. Notably, four investigators also completed a 40-hour Wildland Fire Investigation course, enhancing the team's capabilities in addressing fires within our community's wildland-urban interface.

Beyond receiving training, SIU members also contributed as instructors. The team provided department-wide training in basic fire investigation, delivered a presentation at the Battalion Chief Academy, and helped teach the 40-hour Basic Investigator Course held this past fall.

Current Full-Time Investigators:

- Capt. Lee Venning
- Lt. Shane Sanders
- Lt. Ed Miller

Current Supplemental Investigators:

- Lt. Ethan Verduin
- Lt. John Goodman
- Lt. Jesse Ayotte
- DFM Frank Sandall

| YEAR | TOTAL INCIDENTS | INCENDIARY | ACCIDENTAL | UNDETERMINED | NATURAL | SPECIALS |
|------|-----------------|------------|------------|--------------|---------|----------|
| 2020 | 254 | 84 | 56 | 79 | 0 | 35 |
| 2021 | 240 | 61 | 62 | 70 | 0 | 47 |
| 2022 | 165 | 26 | 61 | 45 | 0 | 33 |
| 2023 | 155 | 42 | 56 | 22 | 0 | 35 |
| 2024 | 227 | 84 | 69 | 41 | 1 | 33 |

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



The Emergency Medical Services Division is a cornerstone of the Spokane Fire Department's operations, consisting of an Administrative Battalion Chief, two Medical Service Officers, and our Physician Advisor. Spokane Fire Department Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics continue to provide quality care to people suffering from life-threatening conditions. This includes caring for people who suffer sudden cardiac arrest, heart attack, stroke, and major trauma. The Spokane Fire Department works collaboratively with local hospital systems (Providence and MultiCare) to provide patients experiencing these conditions with the best possible, evidence-based care.

SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

This year has brought significant changes to Spokane Fire Department's Emergency Medical Services (EMS), introducing new elements to our delivery model—starting at the first point of contact with the 911 system. Not every call to 911 requires an emergency response from a fire engine or ladder truck. In many cases, callers simply don't know how else to access medical care when faced with an unexpected situation. To better connect people with the right resources, we introduced Nurse Navigation at the 911 access point.

Now, when someone calls 911, dispatchers assess whether the situation is appropriate for Nurse Navigation. If so, a licensed nurse—well-versed in local medical resources—can provide medical advice, connect the caller to a telehealth provider, schedule an appointment at a primary care office, urgent care, or express care, and even arrange for in-home medical visits. If needed, they can also coordinate transportation, such as a Lyft ride, to ensure the patient reaches their appointment.

For calls that require an emergency medical response, the traditional 911 dispatch process remains in place. However, recognizing that paramedics are a limited resource, we

have adjusted our model to maximize the availability of Advanced Life Support (ALS) resources for high-acuity medical emergencies. This includes adding medic units to the system—smaller, more agile vehicles that require fewer personnel than fire engines or ladder trucks. These units allow us to respond more efficiently while keeping fire apparatus available for fire-related emergencies. Reducing the number of large fire trucks responding at emergency speeds also enhances overall community safety.

Additionally, this year, our EMS training program incorporated SALT triage criteria, enhancing our response to mass casualty incidents. Our Medical Service Officers (MSOs), in collaboration with the Training Division, led a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) exercise where Spokane Fire trained alongside our 911 dispatch center, Disaster Medical Coordination Center (DMCC), and American Medical Response (AMR) Ambulance to strengthen coordination in large-scale emergencies.

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSE UNIT (BRU)

The Spokane Fire Department has implemented an integrated co-response program through our Behavioral Response Unit (BRU) that brings together first responders, mental health professionals, and social services. The aim is to provide a more comprehensive approach to care for individuals with behavioral health concerns than what traditional 911 services typically offer.

When individuals contact 911 regarding behavioral health issues, they receive assistance from the regular emergency responder team and the BRU, consisting of a paramedic and a licensed mental health professional provided through a partnership with Frontier Behavioral Health. The BRU responds to various types of 911 calls, including well-being checks, opioid overdoses, suicide attempts, ideation, and other behavioral and psychiatric emergencies.

This year, the BRU has expanded its scope to include all overdose calls. This is a critical step, as we are now able to offer Suboxone (Buprenorphine) to patients experiencing moderate to severe withdrawal symptoms. With expanded training and protocols, BRU paramedics can administer Suboxone to patients who have been revived with Naloxone after an overdose and exhibit withdrawal symptoms, scoring greater than seven on the Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS), and consent to Suboxone through the Spokane Paramedic Intervention and Referral into Treatment (SPIRIT) Study. As the first fire-based program of its kind in Washington State, this initiative has garnered significant media attention and recognition at the state level.

The BRU is equipped with Advanced Life Support (ALS) drugs and emergency medical equipment, a breathalyzer, and an i-STAT device for point-of-care laboratory testing. This allows the team to obtain critical lab values and determine if the patient can bypass the Emergency Department and be directly admitted into definitive mental health and substance abuse disorder care when appropriate.

We have established agreements with several local crisis and substance use disorder providers. Patients assessed by our Licensed Mental Health Counselor from Frontier Behavioral Health and our Firefighter Paramedic can now be diverted directly into specialized care—bypassing the emergency department when appropriate. Our Medical Program Director Delegate and MSOs continue collaborating with local agencies to expand direct admission pathways to treatment facilities.

For ongoing support, patients seen by the BRU are referred to our CARES department, ensuring they receive necessary follow-up and connections to services.



EMS STATISTICS

| |
|----------------------------------|
| ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT CALLS |
| 26,149 |
| BASIC LIFE SUPPORT CALLS |
| 21,696 |
| MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS |
| 2,979 |
| CARDIAC ARRESTS (911 DISPATCHES) |
| 2,100 |
| SUCCESSFUL RESUSCITATIONS |
| 40% of workable cardiac arrests |
| OPIOID OVERDOSE INCIDENTS |
| 2,785 |
| #OF NARCAN DOSES ADMINISTERED |
| 4,083 |

2024 CARES Team Impact:

628 referrals from Spokane Fire Department EMS providers

1,010 home visits completed

6,772 Volunteer hours contributed by students

57 Individuals referred by The BRU

356 Individuals or families connected to services or resources

CARES TEAM

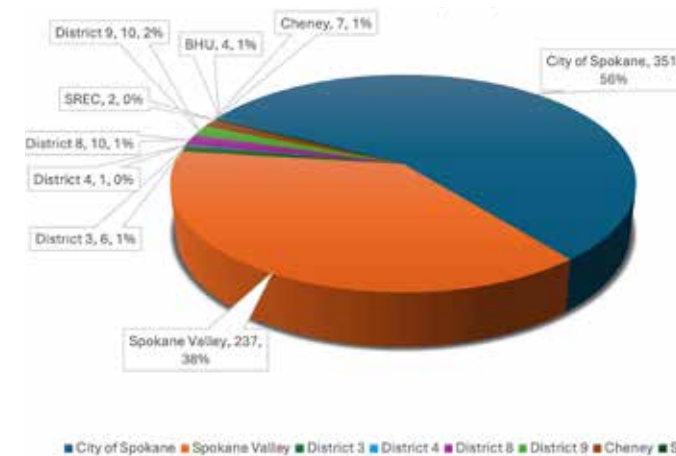
The CARES Team serves as the Fire Department's social response unit, providing a vital bridge between emergency response and community support. As first responders encounter individuals with significant needs beyond physical health, they refer these cases to the CARES Team for follow-up visits. The team advocates for clients by ensuring connections are in place to improve quality of life and reduce unnecessary use of the emergency healthcare system by addressing social determinants of health.

Referrals to the CARES Team have steadily increased, rising 3% in 2024 compared to the previous year and 34% over the past three years. Most referrals relate to aging concerns, including declining health, decreased mobility, chronic disease management, and difficulties with daily living activities. The team works with some of the most vulnerable populations in the City and County of Spokane.

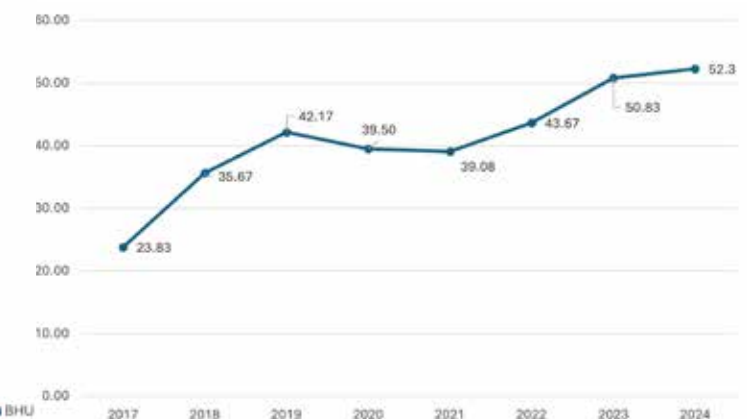
When the CARES Team receives a referral, they conduct outreach to each individual, complete a needs assessment, and ensure sufficient services are in place or connect clients to appropriate resources. These wrap-around services include connections to primary care, mental health or substance use treatment, temporary shelter, housing applications, and essential resources.

A significant development in 2024 was the expansion of the team with three new social positions. Two employees were hired in November and December, with the third expected in early 2025. Previously, the team operated with just one paid employee, supported by social work and nursing students completing practicum placements who contribute hundreds of volunteer hours. Funding from the Opioid Settlement has enabled this expansion, allowing the CARES Team to enhance its outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness and substance use disorders.

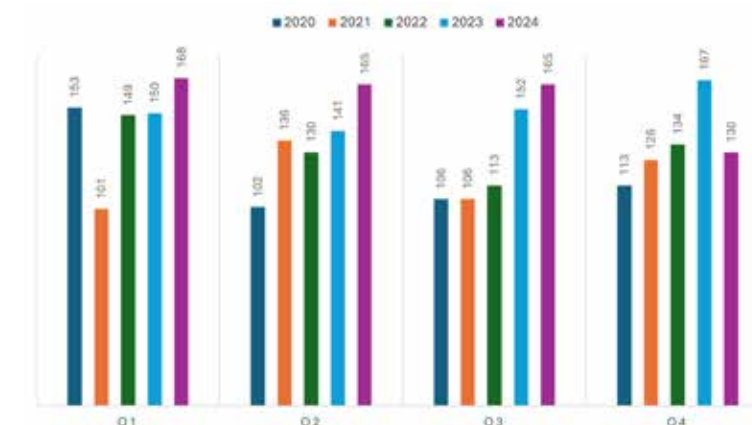
CARES REFERRALS BY AGENCY



AVERAGE MONTHLY REFERRAL OF CARES BY YEAR



NUMBER OF CARES REFERRALS



SPOKANE FIRE DEPARTMENT
CARES
COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE RESPONSE TEAM

SFD HISTORY

August 24, 1884- SFD was first organized as a volunteer department with the first reading of the ordinance creating the fire department for the City of Spokane Falls presented on October 1, 1884. The first companies were hose carts that weighed nearly 1500 pounds and were pushed by hand through the streets by the firefighters, Rescue Hose No. 1 and Spokane Hose No. 2.

1887- The Tiger Hook and Ladder Company was added to the volunteer fire department.

September 14, 1888- As the town's population neared 12,000, a fire destroyed 22 businesses in the town center at Howard and Main.

1888- The first fire company on the north side of the river was formed, the Washington Hose Company

August 4, 1889- The Great Fire of 1889 burned the entire business district, including two of the three hose companies' firehouses.

December 18, 1889- An ordinance establishes a full-time paid fire department, creating a force of 26 firefighters, two chief officers, and an annual budget of \$33,000. The first firefighters worked 24 hours a day, six days a week, and were allowed to be with their families on the seventh day.

December 1896- All the apparatus in the city was now horse-drawn.

1897- The first overhead and underground signal systems for both fire and police were installed, and by 1899, there were 42 fire alarm boxes in the city.

January 24, 1898- The most devastating fire in PNW history at that time occurred at the Great Eastern Building in downtown Spokane. Over 150 people were asleep in the building when the fast-moving fire erupted, killing one man, four women, and three young girls.

June 1910- The department purchases six pieces of motorized apparatus, the first of their type in the region and the first fire trucks introduced to the department.

1914- The two-platoon staffing model was developed, increasing the department's size to 192. The system was repealed by voters later that year, forcing the firefighters back to a single-platoon system in 1915.

1916-1917- Local No. 29 is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and the International Association of Firefighters, established to represent Spokane firefighters.

July 10, 1917- The end of the horse-drawn era was over, as the last horse was retired from service at Station 6. Over half of the fire autos in service during this time were hand-built by Spokane Firefighters.

1918- The firefighter's work week was changed to seven days on and two days off.

1927- A second shift platoon was established, allowing firefighters to work one day on and off.

1933 to 1940- Monthly efficiency tests for firefighters were mandated. New fire codes authorized mandatory fire drills for downtown businesses, schools, and factories that employed people who worked above two levels or in basements.



1936- The department's Inhalator Squad saved 27 lives. Fire inspections number 22,795 buildings this year.

1948- The Inhalator Squad responded to 292 calls for service and was responsible for saving the lives of 47 children under 15. The department also began to focus on teaching fire prevention.

1955 to 1971- The department grows from 14 stations with 230 firefighters to 17 stations and 320 firefighters. The training and fire prevention programs during this time were considered top-notch.

1958- A three-platoon shift schedule is implemented.

1971 to 1981—Key achievements include an accelerated training program, fire prevention efforts, a company survey, involvement in the national EMS program with paramedics, a Class 2 Fire Insurance Rating, upgraded apparatus and safety equipment, a new headquarters station and administrative office, county-wide hazardous materials plans, and the promotion of the 911 telephone system.

July 1981- The department consisted of 337 firefighters.

1989- Voters approved the largest fire bond in the city's history, totaling \$14.95 million, which provided essential funding for upgrading fire apparatus and modernizing the city's 14 fire stations. As a result, nine stations were rebuilt, eight relocated, and five remodeled. The new fire apparatus were ordered in a red and white color scheme, replacing the previous yellow. Additionally, the bond enabled the purchase of the fire training grounds and the city's first Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

September 1989- History was made when Sherryl Dodge, Tammy Tibbles, and Andrea Walters became the first women to become permanent firefighters in the department, leading the way for many others to follow.

October 1992- The Children's Fire Safety House is dedicated to teaching children basic fire safety skills.

January 1993- A four-platoon shift schedule is implemented.

January 1, 1998- The Combined Communications Center (CCC) began providing service from the SFD dispatch center for all county fire agencies.

1999- With the expiration of the 1989 bond, voters approved a new \$21.4 million measure, enabling SFD to acquire eleven fire engines, a 100' aerial ladder truck, a rescue unit, a HAZMAT unit, and several brush trucks. The funding also covered new personal protective equipment and thermal imaging cameras. To address rising call volumes, Station 18 was relocated further north, while Station 4 was moved to the entrance of Browne's Addition for better access to I-90 and to accommodate a new tillered ladder and expanding technical rescue resources.

April 1, 2000- Spokane's Insurance Rating has been downgraded from a Class 2 to a Class 3, ending 20 years with a higher rating. This change resulted from reductions in fire stations, staffed apparatus, and on-duty personnel.

Late 2003- A 16,000 sq ft training center is built for firefighters.

2004- The new Combined Communications Building (CCB) was opened as SFD took on its new role of providing fire and EMS dispatch services throughout the county. The building combined the CCC, Spokane Police dispatch, SCSO dispatch, and 9-1-1 call takers.

2004- With the previous six-year EMS levy expiring, citizens passed another levy again, saving 60 positions.

2005- Budget cuts force the layoffs of 29 firefighters, one year after losing 12 positions.

2012- Fire Station 6, which serves the West Plains, opens.

2015 - Fire and EMS service to the Latah Valley is enhanced with the opening of Station 5.

2020 - The COVID-19 pandemic presents significant challenges to the department.

2024- Julie O'Berg, who had previously served for four years as the Operations Chief, was promoted as the first woman to lead the SFD.

LINE OF DUTY DEATHS



Captain George T. Chapman
Hired: January 1, 1890
Capt. Chapman tragically lost his life in a training accident at Station 2. While practicing various climbing angles on the aerial ladder, he reached the top with the ladder set at a low angle. He fell 63 feet, suffering an instantaneous fatal neck fracture. At the time of his passing, Capt. Chapman had served for four years with the SFD.

Badge No. N/A
Died: May 25, 1894
Age: 27



Fireman John F. Lynch
Hired: June 30, 1897
Fireman Lynch, a member of the Spokane Fire Brigade, took part in a demonstration at the Fire Chiefs Convention in Victoria, BC. During the exercise, he was secured alongside another firefighter as they attempted to pass a pompier ladder to a window on the building's second floor. Tragically, they slipped, and Fireman Lynch was crushed upon impact, dying instantly, while the other firefighter sustained only minor injuries. He was a man of some means but liked the life of the fireman and was known for giving half his salary to charity. At the time of his passing, Fireman Lynch had served for five years with the SFD and was assigned to Wagon 3. He was unmarried and had no children.

Badge No. 29
Died: October 3, 1902
Age: 33



Fireman Herman A. "Bud" Mero
Hired: July 26, 1894
Fireman Mero, serving as the Assistant Department Electrician, assisted the Lead Electrician with removing motors from a water tank on Cooks Hill when a chain they were using became stuck. As he bent down to free it, he slipped and fell 45 feet, landing on his head. Though he remained conscious for several hours, he later passed away at Sacred Heart Hospital. At the time of his death, Fireman Mero had served the department for eleven years and was survived by his wife and their three-year-old son.

Badge No. 20
Died: March 6, 1905
Age: 35



Fireman Henry J. Maynard
Hired: April 1909
Fireman Maynard had been with the department for just three months when he was tragically killed while responding to a fire alarm at the Gandy Hotel, located at Sprague and Washington. On the way to the scene, Hose Wagon 5, where Maynard was assigned, followed closely behind Hook and Ladder 1. As they reached the corner of First and Lincoln, the horses pulling Ladder 1 slipped and fell. The driver of Hose Wagon 5 attempted to swerve, but there was no time or space to avoid a collision, and the wagon struck the back of Ladder 1. Maynard, riding on the side of the Hose Wagon, was crushed against the ladders. He suffered a severe gash to his side and a crushed pelvis. Despite his injuries, he remained conscious until his death an hour and a half later at the hospital. At the time of his passing, Maynard's wife was pregnant with their first child.

Badge No. N/A
Died: July 25, 1909
Age: 28



Truckman Everett G. Deardorf
Hired: January 1914
Truckman Deardorf had been with the department for just nine months and was assigned to Truck 9 when he lost his life during a ladder training exercise at the Auditorium Building, located at Post and Main. While practicing with a pompier ladder alongside another firefighter, they descended the building and reached about twenty feet above the ground when the ladder suddenly tipped sideways. Unable to steady it, the other firefighter watched helplessly as Deardorf fell, striking his head on the sidewalk. He was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to a skull fracture about an hour later. His wife and their five-year-old child survived him.

Badge No. N/A
Died: September 21, 1914
Age: 32



Lieutenant Warren S. Willis
Hired: 1909 or 1910
Warren Willis, a Lieutenant at Station 5 in the "new" City Hall, was on duty when Alarm Operator Thomas O'Rourke heard a loud thud around 12:30 a.m. on the apparatus floor. Upon investigating, O'Rourke discovered Lieutenant Willis lying at the bottom of the sliding pole. He was quickly rushed to the hospital located on the fourth floor of City Hall but tragically passed away just ten minutes later. Reports indicated that Willis had walked to the lavatory and accidentally stepped through the pole hole, unable to see it in the darkness. He was survived by his wife.

Badge No. N/A
Died: January 11, 1920
Age: 34



Fireman William A. Hutchinson
Hired: 1920
William Hutchinson, a four-year department veteran, was assigned to Station 4. Unmarried and living with his parents, he was called into action for the largest fire since the Great Fire of 1889, burning at the McGoldrick Lumber Yard on 903 East Broadway. The fire had escalated to a general alarm, requiring all available pumpers. Hutchinson was sent with a crew to Station 1 to retrieve an old steam pumper and bring it to the scene. Steering the steamer, which was being towed by another fire truck, Hutchinson turned onto Trent at the Schade Brewery. As they turned, the steamer's iron wheels skidded and struck the curb. The steamer wobbled for about forty feet before tipping over. Hutchinson was thrown ten feet and hit his head. He never regained consciousness and later died at Sacred Heart Hospital.

Badge No. N/A
Died: May 3, 1924
Age: 26



Alarm Operator Charles O. Bunnell
Hired: 1918
Charles Bunnell had worked on the Alarm Board before moving to Station 5. Truckman Phil Lohrey discovered Operator Bunnell in the Alarm Room in what appeared to be a dying condition. He was quickly rushed to the hospital, where he passed away. The cause of death was later determined to be a heart attack. Alarm Operator Bunnell had twelve years of service with the SFD and was survived by his wife and three children- two boys and a girl.

Badge No. N/A
Died: October 6, 1930
Age: 44



Fireman Thomas E. Sparrow
Hired: July 23, 1920
Thomas Sparrow was assigned as a Hoseman on Engine 16, which had responded to a house fire at 3918 North Howard. While the crew was at the scene, Fireman Sparrow was sent a block away to make a hose connection. Upon returning, he collapsed. Despite efforts by the inhalator crew, who worked on him for half an hour, he could not be revived. It was reported that he had been exposed to heavy smoke before performing his work outside. The cause of death was later determined to be heart failure. At the time of his death, Fireman Sparrow had 19 years of service with the Spokane Fire Department and lived with his wife and two sons in North Spokane.

Badge No. 93
Died: July 13, 1939
Age: 54



Alarm Operator Jesse L. Booher
Hired: December 26, 1917
In 1938, Fireman Booher, having been overcome by smoke during a fire, developed severe heart complications and was reassigned to the Alarm Board. On the day of his passing, four years later, he reported feeling unwell earlier in the day. Tragically, he was found deceased at his post that afternoon. He was dedicated to the department for 25 years and was survived by his wife in North Spokane and one son.

Badge No. 58
Died: February 25, 1942
Age: 53



Captain Walter F. Gustafson
Hired: November 17, 1919
Captain Gustafson of Fire Station 7 responded with his crew to a second alarm at the Grimmer-Lomax Warehouse, located at Wall and Railroad Avenue. Amid heavy smoke, he was last seen alongside his team, advancing a hose line to the fifth floor. When the smoke finally cleared, Captain Gustafson was found near the top of the fifth-floor stairwell. He tragically succumbed to smoke inhalation. Captain Gustafson had dedicated 25 years of service to the SFD when he passed away. He was survived by his wife, who resided in Northwest Spokane, and their two sons.

Badge No. 75
Died: December 27, 1944
Age: 49



Alarm Superintendent George T. Stewart
Hired: June 1, 1943
George Stewart was responsible for maintaining and repairing the fire department's alarm system. During a severe windstorm, a power line fell at 17th and Fisk, landing across the alarm system's wiring. While working to safely reposition the power line and protect those in the area, he accidentally contacted the 2,350-volt line and tragically lost his life. Despite the inhalator crew's swift efforts, they could not revive him.

Badge No. 272
Died: February 2, 1947
Age: 39

Superintendent Stewart served the Spokane Fire Department for five years. He was survived by his wife and their five children, who lived on the South Hill.



Captain Leonard W. Doyle
Hired: December 10, 1941
While serving as the Station 4 Captain, Captain Doyle and his crew responded to a fire at a shoe store on the street level of the Peyton Building — a blaze that eventually escalated to a third alarm. As Captain Doyle and six other firefighters advanced a hose line into the fire, the floor suddenly gave way, sending them plunging into the basement. Tragically, Captain Doyle was crushed beneath a falling safe. Seventeen firefighters were hospitalized, while twenty-five others received treatment at the scene for smoke inhalation.

Badge No. 204
Died: June 2, 1956
Age: 37

Captain Doyle had served 15 years with the department at the time of his death and was survived by his wife and four children, who lived on South Hill.



Firefighter Leroy A. Mackey
Hired: June 13, 1956
Firefighter Mackey, assigned to Station 4, joined the department to fill the position left by Captain Doyle, who had tragically died a decade earlier. During a basement fire at Saad's Shoe Store at Main and Wall, Mackey and his crew descended into the basement, only to be met with a sudden surge of fire. As the flames intensified, two crews attempted to evacuate using ladders. Amid the thick smoke and heat, one firefighter fell, causing a chain reaction that knocked others down and left several disoriented. Despite his fellow firefighters' efforts to rescue him, Mackey could not be revived and was pronounced dead at the hospital. He had served with the department for ten years and was survived by his wife and their four daughters, all residents of Spokane.

Badge No. 489
Died: January 14, 1966
Age: 36



Captain Robert G. Hanna
Hired: January 1, 1958
Captain Hanna, assigned to Ladder 7, was among the many firefighters battling the largest fire Spokane had seen in over 30 years at the Zukor Building. While positioned in the ladder's bucket alongside Firefighter Bob Green, he worked to direct water into the smoldering ruins. Tragically, the front of the building collapsed, sending debris crashing down on both men. Captain Hanna was rushed to Sacred Heart Hospital, accompanied by his son, Firefighter Robert Hanna, but he succumbed to his head injuries. Firefighter Green was also hospitalized for his injuries. Captain Hanna dedicated 22 years of service to the SFD. His wife and three sons survived him. His son, Robert Hanna, later retired as a deputy chief.

Badge No. 538
Died: March 3, 1980
Age: 47



Firefighter Paul J. Heidenreich
Hired: January 19, 1981
On the night of the Tri-State fire, Firefighter Heidenreich was assigned to Snorkel 1 and tasked with cutting roof ventilation holes. After his crew had opened the skylight, they discovered a large fire below them. The roof collapsed beneath them as they tried to return to their ladder. Firefighters Weldon Wolfe and Jim McNamee were able to cling to the wall for a moment before falling into the flames. Simultaneously, Heidenreich fell directly into the fire and was buried under debris. In a remarkable effort, Wolfe and McNamee, along with the assistance of other firefighters on the scene, managed to escape through a window in the wall. Meanwhile, another crew attempted to advance a hoseline into the blaze to locate Paul, but the fire was too intense, and his body remained hidden. He was found several hours later. During this time, eight other firefighters sustained injuries, with Firefighter Wolfe suffering additional burns when he returned to search for Heidenreich. At his death, Firefighter Heidenreich had served with the Spokane Fire Department for just eighteen months. He was unmarried and had no children.

Badge No. 878
Died: September 12, 1982
Age: 27



Firefighter John Knighten
Hired: March 28, 1994
On January 2, 2010, Firefighter John Knighten began experiencing breathing difficulties while on duty and was transported to the hospital. Doctors determined that his airway had closed due to a severe infection known as epiglottitis, leading to a seven-day stay in the ICU. Further tests revealed that John was also battling multiple myeloma, an aggressive form of blood plasma cancer. Despite his challenges, Firefighter Knighten fought courageously against this occupationally related cancer for more than three years before passing away. At the time of his death, he had proudly served the SFD for 19 years and left behind his wife and three daughters.

Badge No. 1046
Died: June 30, 2013
Age: 45





In Memoriam

Firefighter Joshua Rhoads

11/15/1987 - 10/24/2024

Chapter 35.103 RCW: Revised Code of Washington Chapter 35.103 was passed into law during the 2005 legislative session (House Bill 1756). This law mandated certain response criteria be established and measured by fire departments across the State of Washington beginning in 2007 with an analysis of responses in 2006. The requirement was passed and is now the law for all substantially career fire departments. The purpose of this law is to report to the Governing Body of each fire jurisdiction, as well as to the residents of any given area, how the fire department is doing in meeting its established emergency response standards. These standards take into consideration a number of response types: A) Fire Suppression, B) Emergency Medical Services - Basic Life Support (BLS), C) Emergency Medical Services - Advanced Life Support (ALS), D) Special Operations (i.e. Hazardous Materials response and Technical Rescue response), E) Aircraft rescue and firefighting, F) Marine rescue and firefighting, G) Wildland firefighting.

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