



Billings
FIRE
DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

2023

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Message from the Fire Chief

As we all know, our city is growing steadily and consistently. The latest statistics show Billings' population has grown by approximately 1.2 to 1.5% yearly since 1990, to nearly 120,000 residents today. The Fire Department's role is to provide fire suppression, emergency medical services, and rescue services for our community. We have tried to keep pace and strategically grow while maintaining the outstanding service our citizens have come to expect. Our current strength is 179 dedicated professionals strategically located throughout the city in seven fire stations, soon to be eight, along with our combination city and county 911 center. 2023 was a significant leap forward in our continuous endeavor to evolve and adapt to our community's increasing demands for service. In general, fires continue to stagnate, but other areas of concern, such as mental health, substance abuse, homelessness, and other calls that are labor intensive, continue to grab our attention. Luckily, and with our community's and elected officials' support, we addressed some of these pressing issues with new and innovative ways to our jurisdiction in the form of new resource deployment models and a transformation in how we dispatch. The full implementation of our mobile response teams has dramatically helped to relieve pressure off our engine crews so that they may remain in a high state of readiness and focus on large incidents. In only four months, our partnership with the Rimrock Foundation and the implementation of our crisis response unit have proven their worth in short order. Focusing its attention on a specific demographic within our jurisdiction has given great relief to our brothers and sisters in blue, the Billings Police Department. Finally, our 911 center has been busy through the calendar year 2023, completely reinventing itself. With great eagerness and excitement, by installing new and sorely needed software and hardware systems, learning new ways to dispatch, and enhancing training standards, we are deploying more appropriate response units and decreasing response times. Once again, on behalf of the men and women of the BFD and the 911 Communications Center, I am pleased and privileged to present the 2023 Annual Report. Thank you for being supportive, and as always, stay safe.

Respectfully,

Pepper Valdez
Fire Chief



Billings Fire Department

We are... The City of Billings organized the first Billings Fire Department in 1883. Billings Fire has 179 personnel, including firefighters, paramedics, EMT's, dispatchers, administrative staff and fire prevention staff.

We proudly serve... All residents, businesses, and organizations within our response area including the Billings Urban Fire Service Area (BUFSA).

Mission Statement

The Billings Fire Department is dedicated to utilizing the latest education, methods, and technology in providing outstanding emergency services.

Vision Statement

The Billings Fire Department aspires to be the finest provider of emergency services.



Department Overview

Administration — Department oversight by the Fire Chief, Asst. Chiefs, Senior Admin Coordinator, and Administrative Support staff.

Operations & EMS — Firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics, respond to diverse fire, rescue, hazardous materials, and medical emergencies.

Fire Prevention Bureau — Fire Marshal, Asst. Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshals, and Administrative Support staff are committed to education, fire and life safety, code enforcement, fire investigations, and community risk reduction programs.

Maintenance — The City of Billings Fleet Maintenance Department conducts all maintenance for Fire Department vehicles.

Training — Training Chief & Assistant Training Chiefs ensure personnel at all levels have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to respond to emergency calls.

9-1-1 Communications Center — Dispatchers, Shift Supervisors, Asst. Manager, and Manager of the 911 center field calls from the public to dispatch safety agencies of Yellowstone County.



Total Calls for Service
18,810



EMS/Rescues
53.34%



Fires/Service/Other
46.66%



BFD and 9-1-1
Employees
179



Apparatus & Vehicles
50



Billings Population
119,980 people
10,000 in BUFSA



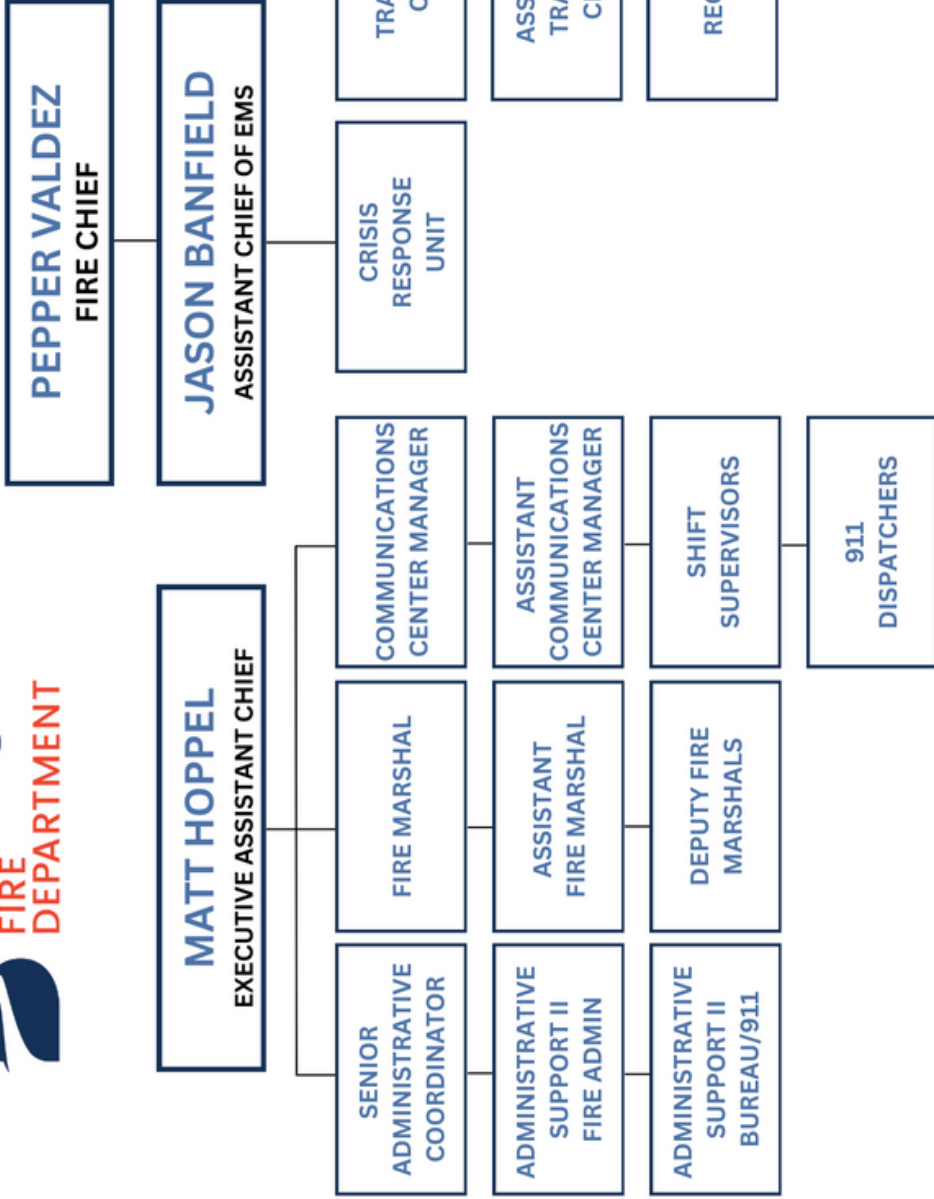
Service Area ISO
Rating 2/10



Response Area - 91.46 sq miles
45.57 sq miles (city limits)
44.60 sq miles (BUFSA)
1.29 sq miles (landfill)



2023



Administration

The Administrative Office is considered the business side of the Fire Department. The Fire Chief, Executive Assistant Chief, Assistant Chief of Operations, Assistant Chief of EMS, EMS Coordinator, Senior Administrative Coordinator, and Administrative Support staff help maintain a budget overview, all internal and external correspondence, policy distribution, health and risk management, fleet management, facilities maintenance, and guidance for personnel matters. This division is also responsible for grants and procurement of new revenue resources and is directly accountable to the City and Assistant City Administrators.



Pepper Valdez
Fire Chief



Matt Hoppel
Executive
Asst. Fire Chief



Kevin Johnson
Asst. Fire Chief
of Operations



Jason Banfield
Asst. Fire Chief
of EMS



**Cameron
McCamley**
EMS Coordinator



Kathy Gibson
Senior Admin.
Coordinator



Sara Naylor
Admin. Support II
Fire

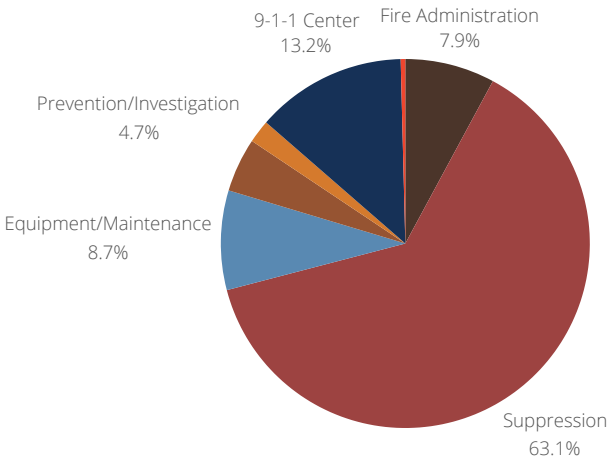
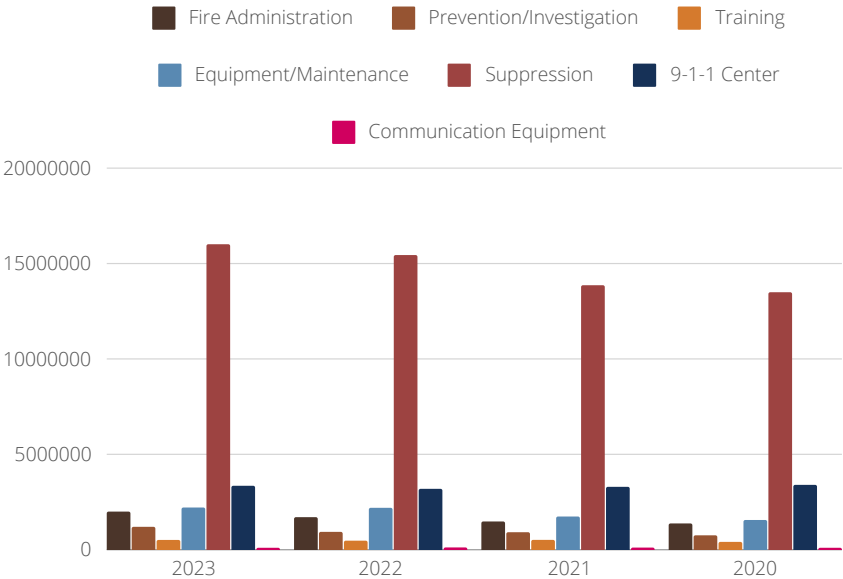


Travis Hunt
Admin. Support II
911 Center/Bureau

Fiscal Year 2023 Budget

The Administration's goal is to secure appropriate financial resources to ensure department personnel can provide the best public safety services to our community. Billings Fire's FY 2023 approved budget totaled \$25.3 million. Suppression costs, including wages, overtime, and fringe benefits accounted for 49.7% of the expenditure of FY 2023. The remaining 50.3% contributes to fuel, equipment, maintenance, the Fire Prevention Bureau, training, and the 911 Call Center.

Approved FY 2023 Operating Budget	
Administration	\$1,998,658
Prevention/Investigation	\$1,200,658
Training	\$513,158
Equipment/Maintenance	\$2,212,378
Suppression	\$16,011,223
9-1-1 Center	\$3,351,752
Communication Equipment	\$102,318



Emergency Responses

BFD measures success by never losing sight of working towards a 4-minute response time for all our First Arriving Units to arrive on the scene. This industry standard is established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710.

	Average Response Time	Incidents per Station
Station 1	5:24	2,905
Station 2	5:01	2,216
Station 3	6:25	2,606
Station 4	6:42	2,212
Station 5	6:08	3,376
Station 6	6:19	2,979
Station 7	7:46	1,552



Billings Fire Department
Fire Station Response Zones
September 2020

The map displays the following response zones and their assigned fire stations:

- Zone 1 (Orange):** Assigned to Fire Station 1.
- Zone 2 (Green):** Assigned to Fire Station 2.
- Zone 3 (Pink):** Assigned to Fire Station 3.
- Zone 4 (Light Green):** Assigned to Fire Station 4.
- Zone 5 (Yellow):** Assigned to Fire Station 5.
- Zone 6 (Blue):** Assigned to Fire Station 6.
- Zone 7 (Light Yellow):** Assigned to Fire Station 7.
- Zone 8 (Dark Blue):** Assigned to Fire Station 8.

Surrounding areas and fire departments include:

- Laurel:** Blue Creek VFD, Laurel AFB.
- Lockwood:** Lockwood VFD.
- Other:** Shepherd VFD, Fuego VFD, Molt VFD.

Legend:

- Response Time:**
 - 1-5 minutes
 - 6-10 minutes
 - 11-15 minutes
 - 16-20 minutes
 - 21-25 minutes
 - 26-30 minutes
 - 31-35 minutes
 - 36-40 minutes
 - 41-45 minutes
 - 46-50 minutes
 - 51-55 minutes
 - 56-60 minutes
 - 61-65 minutes
 - 66-70 minutes
 - 71-75 minutes
 - 76-80 minutes
 - 81-85 minutes
 - 86-90 minutes
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 - 936-940 minutes
 - 941-945 minutes
 - 946-950 minutes
 - 951-955 minutes
 - 956-960 minutes
 - 961-965 minutes
 - 966-970 minutes
 - 971-975 minutes
 - 976-980 minutes
 - 981-985 minutes
 - 986-990 minutes
 - 991-995 minutes
 - 996-1000 minutes

Call Volume

Call volume experienced a 69.6% increase since 2012, showing an average 4.94% increase each year. However, in 2023, call volume was reduced 1.97% from 2022. This was in direct correlation with AMR only incidents.

Billings Fire documents each call for service in an incident report held at the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) standards. Through NFIRS, fire departments can assess local, state, and national level trends of fire service and resource use. Calls for Service include fire, emergency medical, rescues, and good intent calls for the public. The Fire Prevention Bureau contributes to fire investigations, public education, smoke alarm installations, and business inspections.



18,810 Total Calls for Service



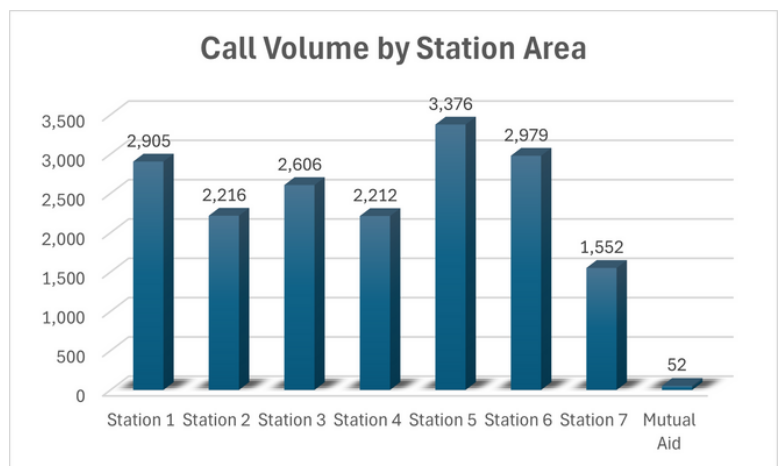
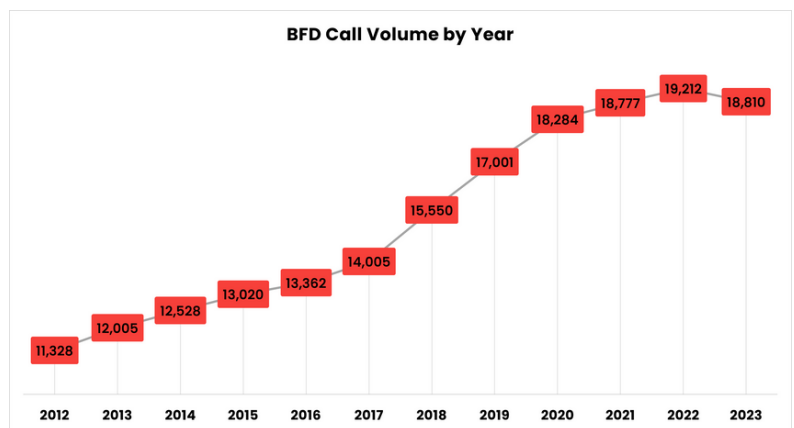
10,033 EMS/Rescue



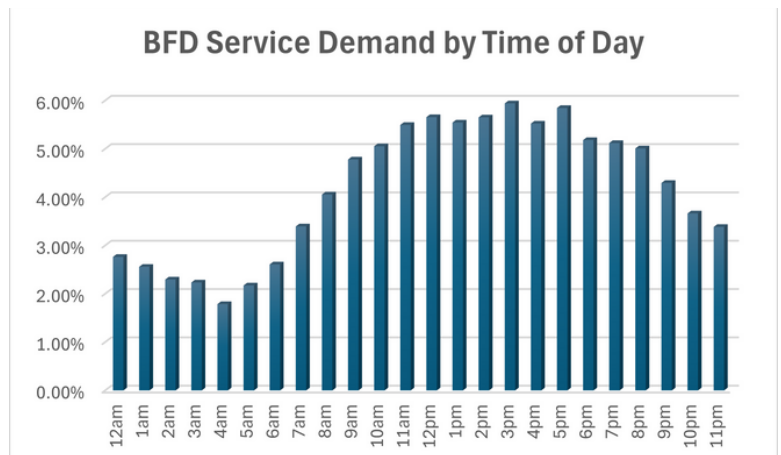
384 Fires



8,393 "Other" Service



This page's graphs indicate Billings Fire Department's 2023 trends in total call volume, call volume in each fire station response area, and the percentage of calls per hour of the day.



Total Apparatus Runs

2018 - 18,044
 2019 - 20,152
 2020 - 22,122
 2021 - 23,155
 2022 - 23,312
 2023 - 23,289

Aside from fighting fires, the Operations Division oversees the training division, logistics, and specialized teams to handle all other emergencies. These teams include Rescue, Hazardous Materials, and Air Teams. The geographical locations of Billings challenge the technicians on every call, from the Yellowstone River to the Rimrocks.



Suppression Personnel

4 Battalion Chiefs
 39 Captains
 33 Engineers
 43 Firefighters

Rescue Team

32 Technicians

Air Team

10 Technicians

Hazmat Team

23 Technicians

Billings Fire Vehicles/Equipment

6 Engines + 3 Reserve
 1 Ladder Truck + 1 Reserve
 1 Quint (Ladder/Engine Combo)
 2 Water Tenders
 5 Wildland Trucks
 4 Water Rescue Crafts
 1 Rescue Truck + Response Trailer
 1 Hazmat Regional Response Unit
 1 Mobile Air Unit and Trailer
 1 Hose Van
 1 Shuttle Bus
 1 Fire Investigation Truck
 2 Battalion Chief Response Units
 3 Training/Safety Vehicles
 10 Bureau and Staff Vehicles
 3 Unmanned Aircraft Systems
 2 Squads
 1 Crisis Response Unit

Billings Fire EMS



Billings Fire's Emergency Medical Services offer a large range of professional care, from Basic to Advanced Life Support, including medical care after rescues. With increased demands on EMS, firefighters often ride in ambulances to aid critical patient care. As medicine perpetually evolves, the men and women stay up to date with the latest trends in patient care, such as advanced simulation-based training and integrating the latest recommendations in pre-hospital care. In 2023, the Billings Fire Department welcomed Dr. Whitney Gum as the department and dispatch medical director. Dr. Gum is a practicing Emergency Medicine physician at Billings Clinic, a native of Billings, and provides the department with over a decade of emergency care experience. In 2023, the department also added comprehensive pain management to our service delivery model. This enables our paramedics to provide comfort to injured patients in their time of need. Billings Fire responded to 10,033 total EMS calls.



Notable Events

Childbirth/Field Deliveries -
2 babies were delivered
successfully prior to arrival to the
hospital by BFD firefighters and
AMR.

CPR Saves

Of the 112 reported CPRs performed at EMS incidents, 42 patients returned spontaneous circulation; 6 were discharged from hospital care with "good functional status," showing a 14% success rate, above the national average. (Good functional status means one's ability to perform daily activities required to meet basic needs, and maintain their health and well-being).



10,033 Total EMS Calls



≈ 28 EMS Calls/Day



388 Firefighter Ride-Ins



410 Medications Given
24 Narcan Doses



1,061 Interventions



Crisis Response Unit

The Crisis Response Unit (CRU) is a partnership between Billings Fire Department and Rimrock Foundation for responding to emergent behavioral health incidents within the BFD's response area, dispatched through the 9-1-1 Center. The CRU team may also respond to non-emergency calls (e.g. welfare checks) as directed. The CRU team will also offer timely follow-up and connection to community resources, usually within 48 hours of the initial call. The team provides assessments, stabilization, and referrals for behavioral health-related continuum of care. The purpose of the CRU is to rapidly respond, effectively screen, and provide early intervention to individuals experiencing mental health crisis.



Notable Events

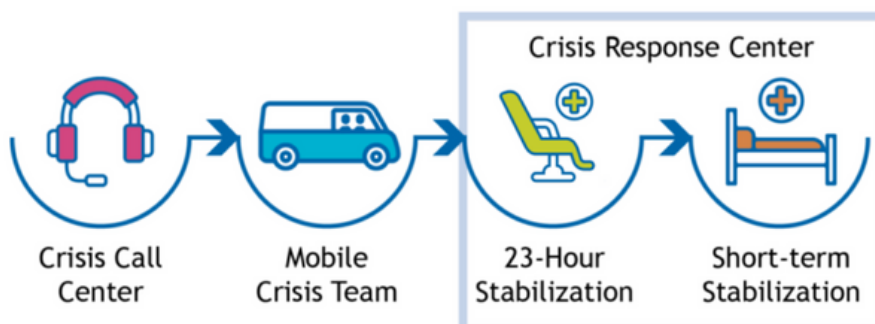
- Successfully moved several families that were unhoused, into stable housing.
- Successfully reunited several unhoused individuals with family and resources located in other states.
- Successfully moved patients' in acute crisis to the Montana State Hospital
- Successfully connected veterans in the community with VA and Veteran Resources

Total Number of Calls

473

What is the Crisis Now Framework?

Someone to Talk to, Someone to Respond and a Place to Go

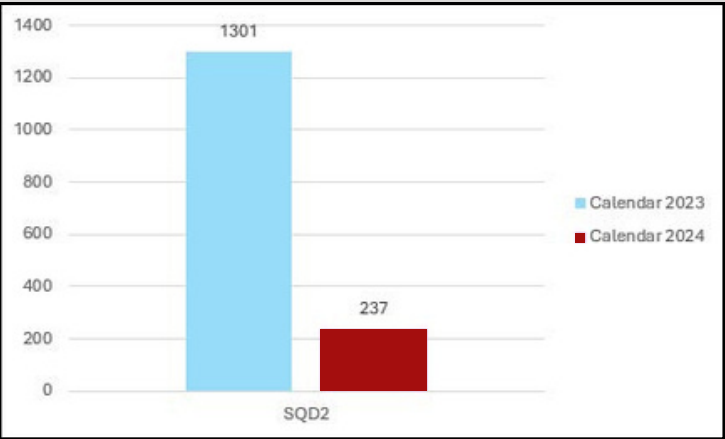
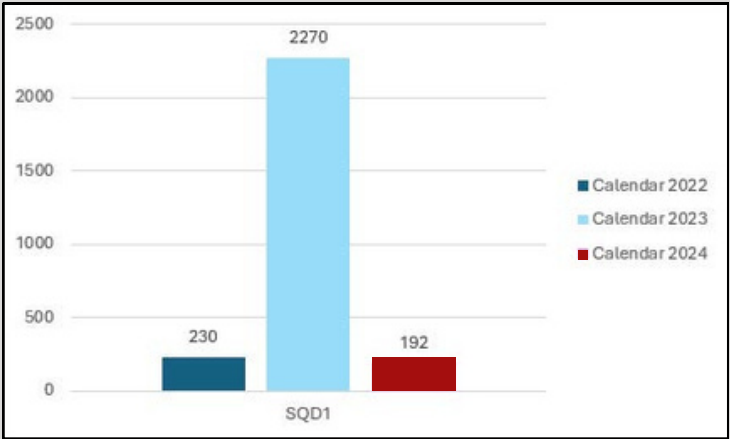


Mobile Response Teams



The Mobile Response Team consists of two squad units. Squad One was implemented on December 1, 2022, and Squad Two was implemented on July 10, 2023.

Since the implementation of the squad units, the engine companies have been out of their assigned areas less often. Each squad consists of a two-person team, using a Captain and a Paramedic. Because of the high call volume, there is no skills degradation. In fact, it benefits our younger Captains as this assignment provides for sharpening their critical thinking skills without the responsibilities of a full engine crew.



Fire Suppression

All seven fire stations staff a minimum of three firefighters, trained to perform fire suppression. Structure fires happen on permanent constructed buildings, fences, detached garages, or storage sheds. Trash, grass, and other fires include any fire outside a structure or vehicle. Exposures include another object ignited or damaged because of an initial fire; an example is a vehicle fire setting a fence on fire, or a grass fire setting a structure on fire.



All Billings Fire personnel are trained at a minimum in basic wildland firefighting, and several personnel are trained as national wildfire coordinating group engine bosses and single resources. BFD participates in the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation county co-op program. DNRC provided assistance during the Airshow and provided air and ground resources for the Water Tower fire that occurred on August 15, 2023. Because this winter has been warmer and dryer than past years, BFD responded to 9 wildland fires in November and December.



Technical Rescue & Extrication Team

The Billings Fire Department Technical Rescue Team is comprised of 32 members trained in advanced skills for technical rope rescue, swift water, ice rescue, watercraft rescue, vehicle extrication and stabilization, structural collapse, confined space, trench rescue, animal rescue, and heavy lifting(Airbag) techniques.



74 Total Rescues



60 Extrications



5 Search & Rescues



4 Water Rescues



5 High-Angle Rescues

2023 Training Opportunities outside of BFD

With the support of the administration, a number of our members sought outside training opportunities this past year with the intent of bringing that knowledge back to the team and training our members.

- Confined Space Rescue aboard the USS Lexington in Corpus Christi, TX by RNR Rescue - This course was possible through the support of our mutual aid partner at PAR Montana refinery.
- Rescue the Rescuer course by Ronin Rescue - A weeklong course in Las Vegas focusing on advanced rescue and leadership training.
- REMS Remote Rescue workshop by CMC - 3-day course in Red Lodge, MT focusing on the extrication challenges of remote rescue of an injured firefighter in the wildland fire environment.
- Swiftwater rescue by Whitewater Rescue Institute - swift water rescue techniques to aid in our responses to river rescue calls on the Yellowstone River.
- OSHA Trench Safety Stand Down hosted by several businesses in Billings - This was an awareness course and provided an opportunity for our Trench Rescue instructors to interface with entities in the area that regularly place workers in trenches. Instructors developed a training curriculum based on their experience and knowledge gained while attending.
- BFD again hosted the 4-day "Man vs Machine" course sponsored by PAR Montana Refinery and taught by instructors from RNR Rescue and Code 3 Medical. The course covered rescue, extraction, and patient access techniques used when responding to industrial and heavy equipment-related emergencies. The EMS component included patient packaging prehospital medical skills and an introduction to new equipment available.

2023 Department-wide trainings:

- High Angle Rope Rescue refresher for operations level
- Swift water rescue and awareness,
- 3 days of on-site confined space awareness and training thanks to the support of Western Sugar.

Hazardous Materials Team

As a city with three nearby refineries, an extensive railroad presence, and interstate highway crossroads, the extensive presence of hazardous materials is a fact of life in Billings and Yellowstone County. The Billings Fire Department and its personnel are eastern Montana's largest hazardous materials response agency. In addition to protecting the city and county, when activated by Montana Disaster and Emergency Services (MT-DES), the Billings Fire Department's Regional Hazmat Team may be mobilized to support hazmat response across the state.



378 Hazmat Calls



188 Utility/CO calls



27 Chemical Spills



118 Gas Leaks



45 No Hazard

Every member of the Billings Fire Department is trained to the Hazmat Operations level as specified by OSHA and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Approximately 30 Billings firefighters operate at the Hazmat Technician or Specialist level. These dual-roll firefighters are trained and equipped to respond to incidents ranging from tanker and rail car accidents to terrorism involving chemical, biological, or explosive agents. The Billings Fire Department's Regional Hazmat Team is equipped with specialized equipment, once found only in laboratories. It allows them to determine the identity or class of most unknown substances and then develop response plans to protect the community. Additionally, the team's extensive selection of chemical and respiratory protective equipment allows team members to work in toxic environments safely. Eight of the team's technicians are specially trained paramedics with advanced knowledge and diagnostic tools to assess and treat victims of exposure to hazardous materials.

Hazmat technicians at the Billings Fire Department train at least quarterly on the latest techniques in hazmat mitigation. These quarterly trainings range from controlling simulated leaks from various industrial containers to preserving evidence at a crime scene involving narcotics, homemade explosives, and WMD agents and the use of highly accurate plume modeling software. The Billings Fire Department's hazmat team recently added a DJI Matrice 300 Unmanned Aerial System (drone) to its equipment. The drone is equipped with high-resolution optical cameras, and a thermal imager, and can carry radiological and chemical sensors.

In December, the hazmat team executed joint training with the Montana National Guard's 83rd Civil Support Team (CST) at the Metra Pavillion. This 2-day operation involved responding to a (simulated) Weapons of Mass Destruction threat. The team focused on rapid response, product identification, and incident command.

Drone Program

The Billings Fire Department Drone program began in 2020 when a State Homeland Security Grant was awarded to establish Drone Programs at each of the Regional Hazmat Team's host departments across the state. Drones are becoming increasingly common within public safety agencies across the country as a low-cost tool to enhance situational awareness on emergency scenes, like search and rescue missions or structure fires. 2023 has been the BFD Drone Team's busiest year so far, flying nearly 40 missions and over 50 hours of flight time. Two new drones were also added to our fleet in 2023.



The BFD Drone team operates four drones, each suited for a different use case and mission.

- DJI Mavic 2 Enterprise with a thermal camera and display screen for quick deployment from the Battalion Chief Command vehicle.
- Mavic Mini trainer drone. This low-cost drone allows new pilots to become familiar with operating the controls before moving on to more complex drones.
- DJI Avata was purchased in 2023 for interior operations such as entering unstable structures or confined spaces, providing information on the safety of a structure, or locating victims before firefighters enter.
- DJI Matrice 300 was purchased in 2023 with State Homeland Security Grant funds. The M300 has a powerful optical zoom camera, thermal camera, a spotlight, and can carry a payload like a gas monitor or a life vest. This \$30,000 drone also has an extended flight time compared to the other drones and can be used to maintain situational awareness during extended incidents.



Deployments

The BFD Drone Team flew 38 missions in 2023 in support of Billings Fire, Billings Police, Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office, Yellowstone County DES, and other agencies. Incidents responded to include missing persons, water rescues, structure fires, law enforcement mutual aid requests, incident preplans, and public education.

Notable incidents include:

- Search for a missing mountain biker in the Zimmerman Park area.
- During a nighttime river rescue call, a drone was used to locate victims on an island with a thermal camera and guide rescuers to their location with an onboard lighting system. Video of the rescue made regional and industry news. (see left photo)
- The Drone team was called seven times in 2023 for joint agency deployments to support tactical law enforcement operations.
- A drone was flown to assist the Billings Facilities Department in assessing water damage to the Babcock Theater.

Drone Program



The Drone Team also assisted in monitoring the BBWA Ditch near Burnstead Drive in 2023. Photos were captured weekly by BFD drones and processed through cutting-edge mapping software to create large, high-resolution ortho-mosaic images. These ortho-mosaic photo maps tracked changes and movement in the terrain above the ditch and provided up-to-date information on the status of ditch stability to multiple departments within the City and outside stakeholders. This generated nearly 20 flight missions and 80 hours of data processing.

Planned Initiatives for the Next Year

As the Drone Team has progressed this year, new challenges have been identified that impact an efficient and effective response to all types of incidents. The initiatives listed below will meet the challenges identified in the past year.

- Train additional pilots. The team is down to four pilots, with no pilots currently on “A” shift. There was at least one Drone Team request that went unmet due to a lack of available pilots. With additional personnel, all shifts can have a pilot on duty to respond when needed.
- Video streaming software and network connectivity. Streaming software and onsite network connectivity will allow users to see a live video feed from a drone. This will provide decision-makers with access to information in real-time to better respond to active incidents.
- Create a program budget. Much of the money spent in bringing the Drone Program online was from grants and the Hazmat Team’s budget. These funding sources shouldered most of the large upfront costs for equipment and training but should not be depended on for future program needs. Upkeep and maintenance costs, along with planning for larger costs of drone replacement should be planned for.

The BFD Drone team continues to progress and make meaningful impacts on all aspects of BFD operations. We look forward to more fully integrating into BFD and inter-agency response plans.

SCBA Air Team

The Air Team is made of 10 technicians that are 3M/Scott SCBA Technician II certified and 1 3M/Scott Compressor Technician certified. The Billings Fire Department operates an In-House Repair Center at Fire Station 4 to minimize the downtime and cost when repairs to SCBA equipment are needed, in addition to regular suppression duties. Duties consist of making repairs to air packs, mask-mounted regulators, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) masks, cylinders, and air compressors, as well as filling air and oxygen cylinders. The Air Team fits all Suppression and Fire Prevention Bureau personnel for SCBA masks, half masks, and N95 masks. During fit and flow tests, if any equipment is out of factory specifications, technicians make proper adjustments to bring them into compliance. The Air Team also provides fit testing for Billings Police and Yellowstone County Sheriff Departments and can provide mutual aid to surrounding areas for any major incident.

Vehicles and Equipment

Mobile Air Unit & Trailer

An outfitted van that carries extra air equipment, air cylinders, and tools to make repairs in the field. The van tows a 6000psi portable air compressor that can be used in the field to fill cylinders. The trailer is equipped for supplied air for hazmat and rescue operations.

Equipment

- 1 Bauer Vertheon 7000 psi compressor/fill station
- 90 Air packs
- 170 Mask Mounted Regulators
- 6 Supplied Air Packs w/ 15 minute Escape Cylinder
- 6 RIT III (Rapid Intervention Team) air packs designed to provide air supply to a downed firefighter emergency

Highlights

Cylinders Filled

The Air Team filled over 1,571 SCBA cylinders used during BFD operations, a 10.1% increase from 2022.

- Medical Oxygen Cylinders Filled—267
- SCBA Airpack & Mask Mounted Regulator Flow Tests - 313
- Quantitative Fit Tests (SCBA Mask and Half-Mask Respirators) — 298
- Qualitative Fit Tests (N-95) — 138

On average, a tank of pressurized air will last a firefighter 20-30 minutes, depending on their breathing rate and how active they are during a fire. A firefighter may use 2-3 tanks during a fully involved fire.



Training Division



2023 was a busy year for the Training Division. Our Multi-Company shift training focused on rural water supply and critical fire flows. Fire suppression crews worked to generate max flows utilizing relay pumping from a static water source. In addition to scheduled on-shift training, the Training Division provided three critical development programs to the suppression staff: Officer Development (ODP), Engineer Development (EDP), and Entry Level Firefighter (Recruit Academy). The Officer Development Program (ODP) consists of 160 hours of training to prepare employees to perform as company officers. This training includes leadership, report writing, ICS training, and live fire scenarios. The Engineer Development Program (EDP) consists of 80 hours of training to allow firefighters to drive and pump the fire engines and ladder trucks. Our Recruit academy is the entry-level training provided to new employees to prepare them to serve the citizens of Billings (and Lockwood) as a firefighter.



Program Stats:

Officer Development Program (ODP)

6 Graduates

160 Hours of Officer Training (960 Total)

Guest Speaker Dr. David Griffin, Charleston Fire
South Carolina

Engineer Development Program (EDP)

5 Graduates

80 Hours of Training (400 total)

Spring 2023 Recruit class

10 BFD Candidates

12 Graduates (2 Lockwood)

480 Hours of Training (5,760 Total)

IFSAC/Proboard Firefighter 1 and Hazardous
Materials Operations



Program Training Hours: 7,120

Total On-Shift Training Hours: 22,929

Total Hours: 30,049

Fire Prevention Bureau

The Fire Prevention Bureau's mission is to prevent and control fires, reduce fire-related deaths and injuries, and promote community fire safety through enforcement, education, and investigation.

Fire Origin and Cause Investigations

Part of preventing fires is determining where and how they started by applying scientific methodology.

Business Inspections

The FPB enforces locally adopted fire codes inside the Billings city limits through inspections of buildings and businesses, including educational, institutional, assembly, and business occupancies.

School Inspections

Working with school administrators, these fire and life safety inspections enforce fire code requirements in educational occupancies to ensure a safe environment for learning and development.

Public Safety Education

Fire safety and education is particularly important at Billings Fire Department. In 2023, the Fire Prevention Bureau's Public Education program reached 4,675 children, 1,921 adults, and 234 professionals through educational sessions and community events.

The education program also provides free fire and carbon monoxide detectors in local residents' homes through a program with the American Red Cross.

Public Records Requests

Requests for copies of reports and audio associated with incidents are fielded by the FPB/911 Administrative Support.

False Fire Alarm Response Ordinance

Approved on December 13, 2021, Ordinance 21-5787 allows the Billings Fire Department to charge businesses where suppression crews respond to numerous false alarms. The fees charged to alarm system owners is intended as a deterrent and mechanism to reduce unwanted false alarms.



Fire Investigations
81



Inspections
924



School Inspections
52



Plans Reviewed
322



Public-Education Events
87



Home Detector Installations
29



Public Records Requests
821

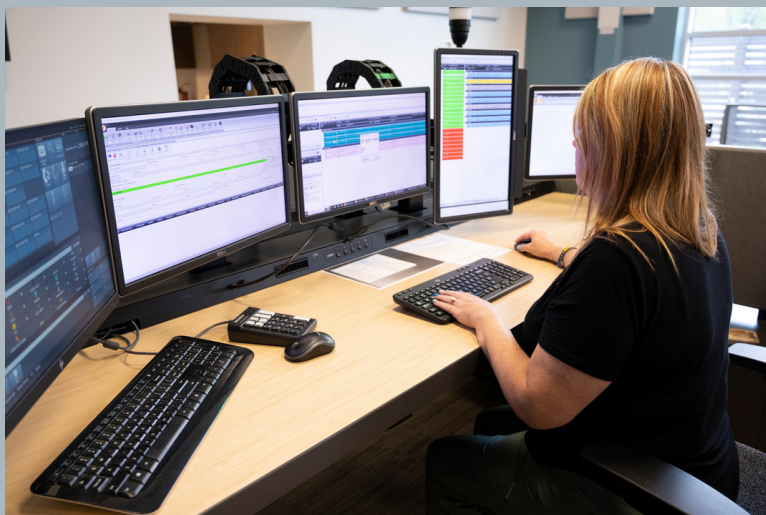


False Alarm Ordinance Violations
567

Joint City/County Communications Center

2023 proved to be a busy, and technically challenging year. The Billings City/County Emergency Communications Center focused this year on facility maintenance, and staff development, and continued to work on the thousands of individual action items involved in implementing the new, state-of-the-art, Astro Communications network. This system will come online for full-time use in May of 2024 and will provide improved responder safety features, as well as full-scope and complete interoperability options between all responder agencies at all levels of government and from all disciplines.

In addition to handling the hundreds of thousands of emergency calls that came from the community, the Communications Center also began researching different resource deployment configurations for all disciplines involved in public safety. These advancements allow the Center to expand triage options for resources that are in high demand but limited supply and doing so further compliments the Center's desire to allocate the right resources at the right times to the right places while also making the most of those types of specialty resources that are becoming more common to law enforcement, as well as fire and medical response. In preparation for the implementation of these protocols, dispatchers and call takers alike will attend hundreds of hours of individual and group training and will spend hundreds more hours achieving certification in protocol criteria that will allow them to function at a high level with expanded skill sets and considerations.



Initiatives and Achievements

Yellowstone International Airshow

The Yellowstone International Airshow was held August 11-13. The airshow was a multi-organizational event with Billings Fire Dept., Billings Police Dept., AMR, Yellowstone County Sheriff's Dept., Montana Highway Patrol, ARFF, and the Montana National Guard. A year and a half of pre-planning made this event a success. Crews received daily briefings on safety procedures for specific aircraft and pyrotechnics.

BFD provided 862 man-hours from August 11th through August 13th and there were 16 incidents at the airshow not including grass fires.

Not only did the airshow bring in a large influx of people into Billings, but the Montana State Fair was also held the same weekend, which added to the large increase in population.

2023 Promotions

Captain Chris Moore

Captain Cameron McCamley

Engineer Christian Helland

Engineer Chad Landon



2023 Retirements

Captain Doug Koffler 23 years

Captain Todd Kinkead 24 years

2023 New Hires

Headquarters Admin Support II Sara Naylor

Firefighter Matt Knight

Firefighter Mark Miller

Firefighter Jacob Moore

Firefighter Zachary Proffitt

Firefighter Cole Pursell

Firefighter Ryan Sedgley

Firefighter Chris Surace

Firefighter Ashley Swassing

Firefighter Levi Vandersloot

Strategic Goals

Fire

- Complete Station 8 renovation and in time pursue funding for staffing.
- Begin the process of building Station 9 while pursuing funding for staffing.
- Continue to develop an automatic aid agreement with the Lockwood Fire District
- Continue monitoring data to determine the proper number of MRTs to maximize service efficiency.



EMS

- Rewrite the EMS ordinance to ensure a high level of care for our community
- Continue monitoring data to determine the proper number of CRU units to maximize service efficiency
- Design and implement a mobile integrated health and community paramedicine program



911

- Implementation of priority, proximity dispatching as well as new dispatch protocols for modernized emergency resource deployment.
- Upgrade station alerting system to reduce dispatch processing and response times for deployed resources.
- Complete implementation of the new core radio system.





FACILITIES





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2023



Annual Report

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