

FORT ATKINSON FIRE DEPARTMENT Annual Report



2025



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF PETERSON



I am proud to present the 2025 Annual Report. This report summarizes services delivered to the City of Fort Atkinson and surrounding townships (see pg. 8). This year, the department focused on improving our service level while preparing for continued growth in emergency demand.

Call volume **increased 5.3 percent**, largely driven by EMS responses related to an aging population and the number of assisted and independent living facilities within our service area. Despite the increase, response performance remained consistent through adjustments to staffing, modernized training, and long term agreements supporting responsible planning. The department classification was upgraded to an **ISO Class 2**, which now ranks us within the **top 5% of all fire departments in the nation**.

2025 Accomplishments

Staffing & Organization (pg. 4) –

We strengthened daily operations by integrating new personnel. A key improvement was expanding the daily duty crew with part time members alongside the five full time staff. We also created an internship program for young adults entering fire and EMS careers.

Two major agreements were finalized during the year. A new ten year combined Fire and EMS agreement with partner townships established long term cost predictability, clarified service expectations, and supports future capital planning. A four year labor agreement with IAFF Local 580 supports recruitment, retention, and workforce consistency.

Training & Professional Development (pg. 9) –

Under the direction of Captain Nate Lawrence, the department rebuilt its training program and implemented Vector Solutions software. Training now follows consistent national standards with improved documentation and accountability. We also hosted a yearlong Leadership Development series featuring outside instructors and regional leaders.

Operations & Equipment (pg. 9) –

Several projects focused on readiness and efficient use of tax payer resources. We ordered our next Pierce fire engine as part of the Capital Improvement Plan and implemented a Facilities Fee for assisted living lift assist calls to preserve emergency availability.

An online self-reporting ordinance now allows businesses to report corrected inspection items and annual service requirements.

We also placed ambulance ultrasound units into service through a Mercy Hospital pilot program. Participation in this early program allows paramedics to make more informed treatment decisions.

Community Engagement (pg. 10) –

Prevention and community outreach continued to expand with the annual Open House, public CPR training, fall prevention outreach coordinated by FF/PM Mikaela Jergens, expanded safety messaging through social media, and Public Officials Day providing hands on experience with fire and rescue operations.

Looking Ahead to 2026

The department continues preparing for future service demands by investing in personnel development and succession planning while evaluating how services are delivered. Upcoming projects include placing a new rescue boat and battalion command vehicle into service and beginning an internal strategic vision process to guide the department in the coming years.

Our goal remains steady: provide excellent service, remain fiscally responsible, and prepare for growing community needs.

Bruce W. Peterson

Fire Chief, Fort Atkinson Fire Department

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to a future safe from fire and to provide for life and property safety from the threat of fires, natural or man-made disasters. This will be accomplished through planning, prevention, education and incident mitigation and appropriate application of technology.

The Fort Atkinson Fire Department provides emergency services to the City of Fort Atkinson and portions of the Townships of Hebron, Jefferson, Koshkonong, Sumner, and Oakland. In total, we serve more than **18,000 residents across 104.3 square miles in Jefferson County, Wisconsin** and protect property with a total equalized value of **\$2,533,801,953**.

Our department operates **24 hours a day** delivering essential services including Emergency Medical Services, fire suppression, technical rescue, and fire prevention and inspections.

To effectively respond to emergencies, the department operates from a single station located at 124 Milwaukee Ave West in Fort Atkinson. Daily staffing typically includes **five to six personnel with at least two paramedics** on duty along with a **Division Chief, Captain, and firefighter paramedics** or EMT Advanced providers.

Personnel & Staffing

This combination fire department is staffed by **15 full time** cross trained career firefighters and **22 part time** firefighters in addition to a full time **Fire Chief**. Personnel are trained to handle fire suppression, emergency medical care, hazardous materials, and technical rescue operations..

Apparatus & Equipment

The department maintains a modern fleet of emergency response vehicles including three advanced life support ambulances, three fire engines, one aerial tower, one heavy rescue unit, two water tenders, two light rescue units, one rescue boat and one portable boat, one all-terrain vehicle, and two staff vehicles.

Fire Prevention & Community Risk Reduction

The Fire Prevention Bureau coordinates company level inspections for **more than 650 businesses**, conducts **education programs** in seven elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school, and **reviews building plans** to ensure code compliance and safety.

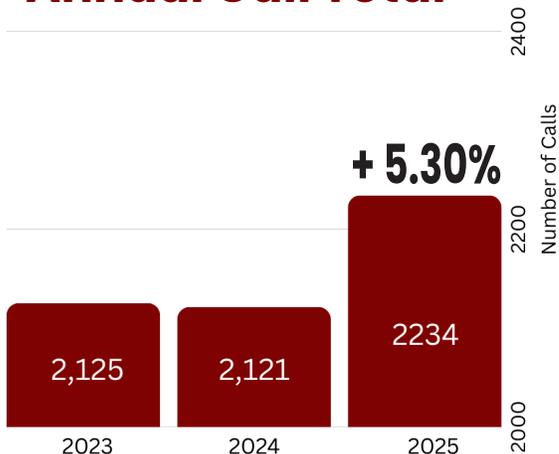
Community Outreach

The department remains active in community outreach including **elderly fall prevention programs, CPR and Stop the Bleed training, Fire Prevention Week** open house events, and numerous community activities.

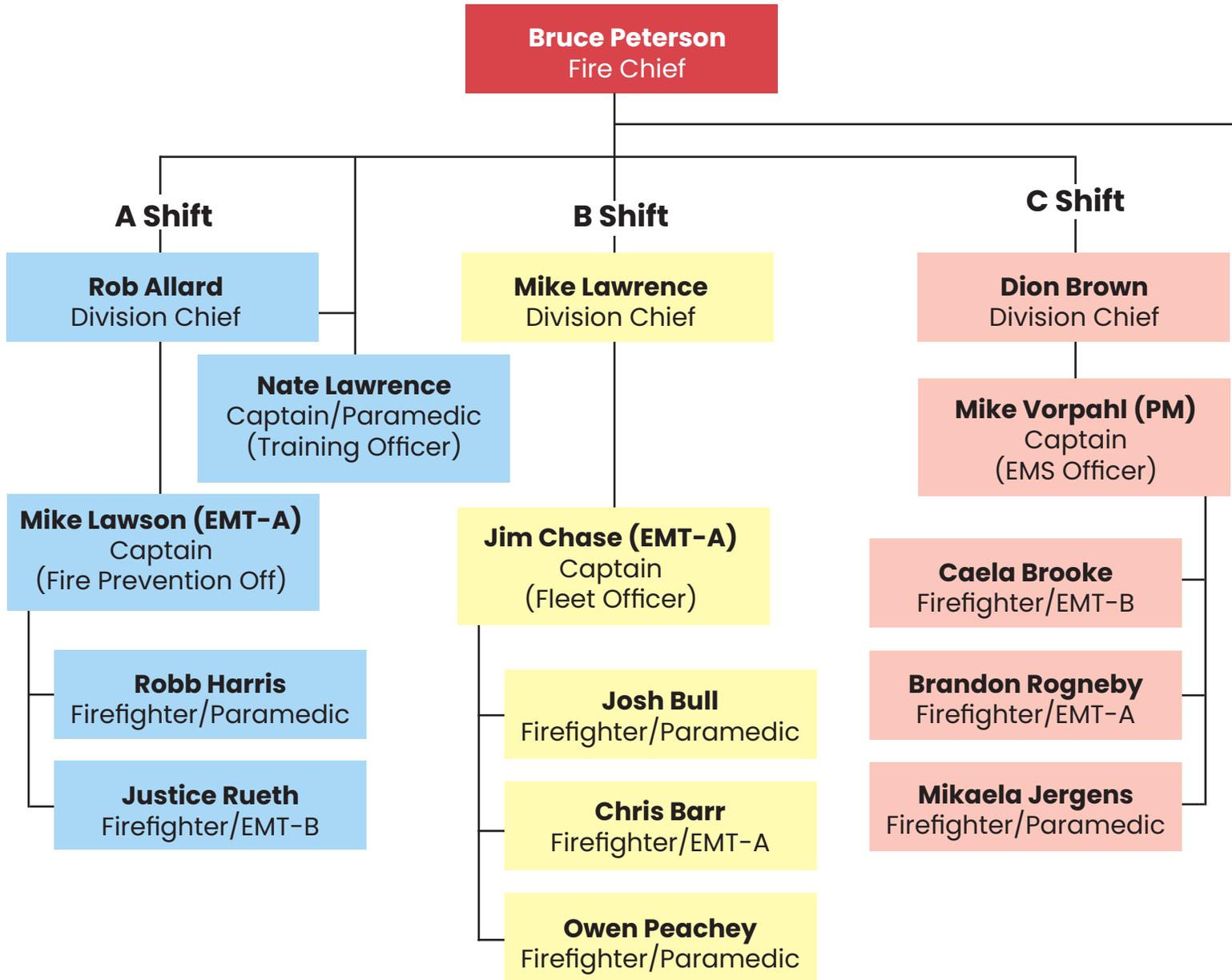
Mutual Aid & Regional Partnerships

As a member of **MABAS Division 118** in Jefferson County, the department works closely with neighboring agencies to provide mutual aid response. The department also participates in **regional water response** on Lake Koshkonong, the Bark River, and the Rock River, and provides **Tactical Emergency Medical Support** to the Jefferson County Sheriff's SWAT team.

Annual Call Total



DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP & PERSONNEL



Fort Atkinson Fire Department at a Glance

Fire Department Staff

Total Full Time Staff: 15 + 1 Chief
 Total Part Time Staff: 22
 Total Staff: 38

EMS

Paramedics
 Full Time: 6
 Part Time: 3
 Total Paramedics: 9

EMS

EMT's
 Advanced: 6
 Basic: 10
 Total EMT's: 16

New Hires

The Fire Department hired two new full time and four new part time members to fill vacancies and retirements:

Firefighter/EMT-B
Caela Brooke

Captain/Paramedic
Nate Lawrence

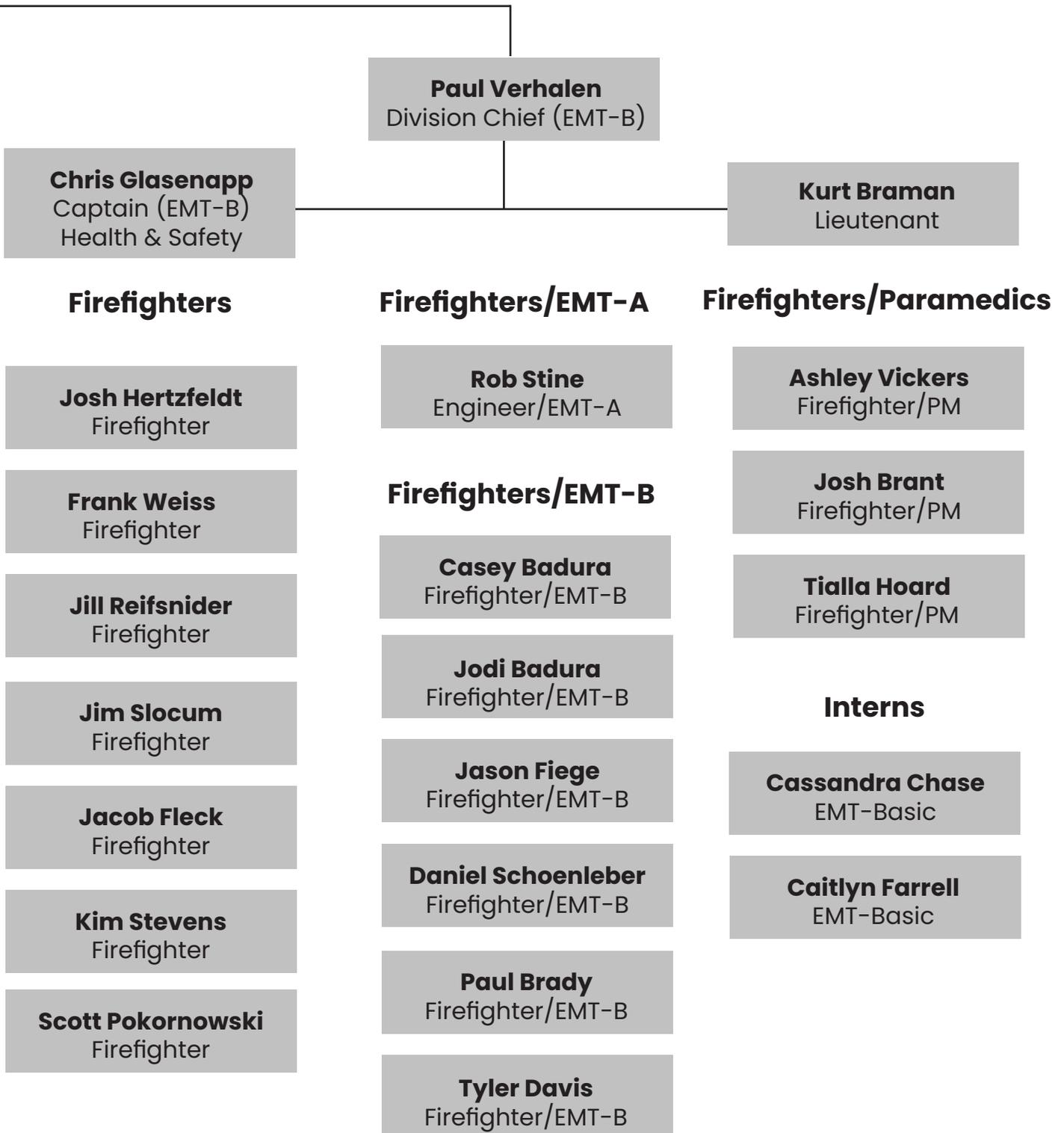
EMT-B
Cassandra Chase

EMT-B
Caitlyn Farrell

EMT-B
Jodi Badura

Firefighter/Paramedic
Tailla Hoard

Part Time Staff



OVERVIEW OF SERVICE DEMAND

2233 Total Calls

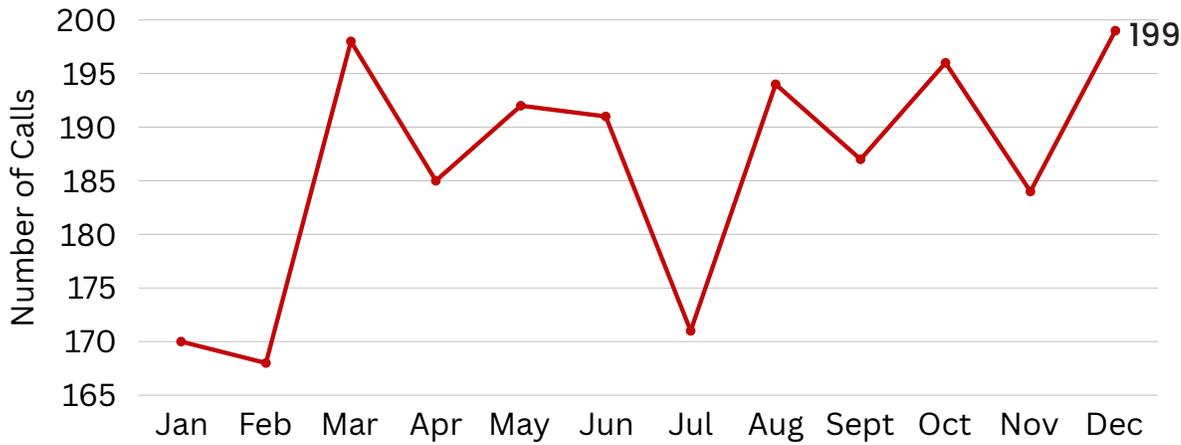
Here's How They Breakdown

EMS Incidents: 1828 Fire Incidents: 463

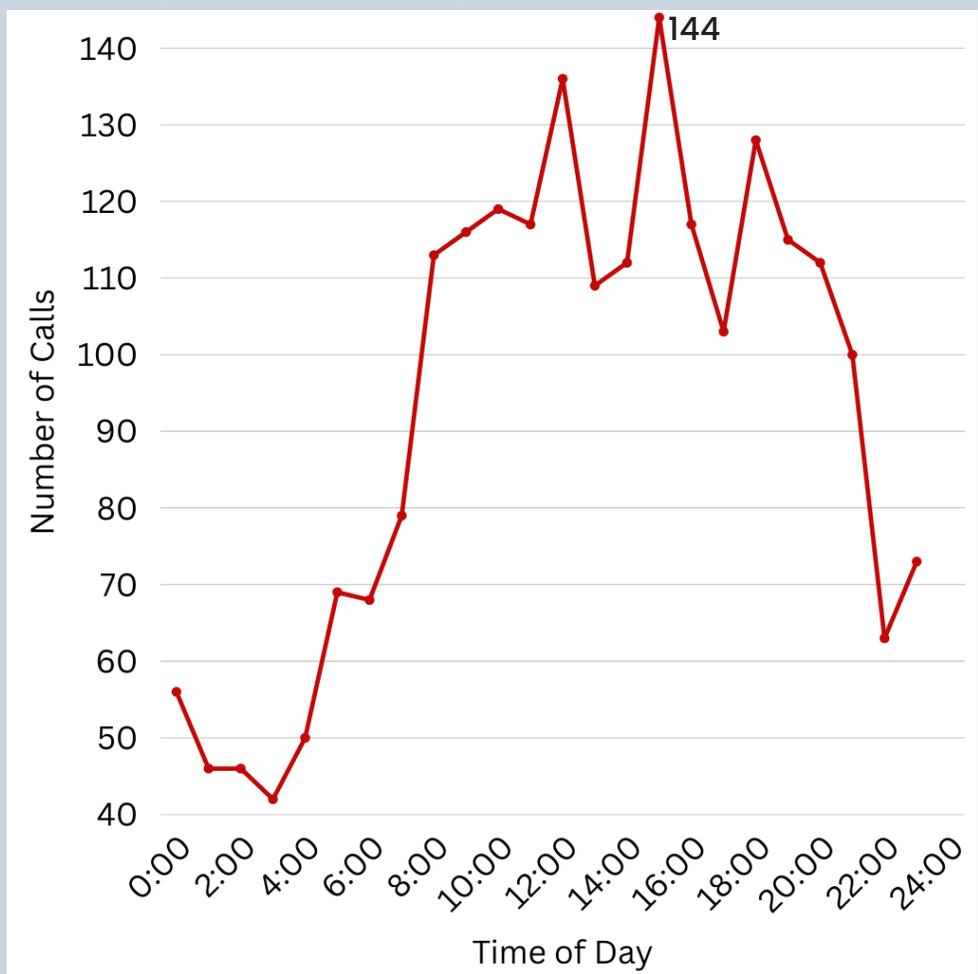
Category of Call

EMS Call	1615
Assist Invalid	156
Alarm Activation	77
Dispatched & Cancelled	70
No Incident Found	
Fire Incident, Other	63
Motor Vehicle Accident	57
Carbon Monoxide Incident	40
Hazardous Material Incident	33
Power Line / Electrical	32
Building Fire	30
Grass / Bush Fire	20
Smoke / Water Leak Incident	16
Rescue	11
Person or Animal	
Vehicle / Equipment Fire	8
Water / Ice Rescue	6

Calls by Month



Calls by Time of Day



Call Totals by Shift

A Shift

751 Calls

B Shift

735 Calls

C Shift

747 Calls

Total # of Training Hours

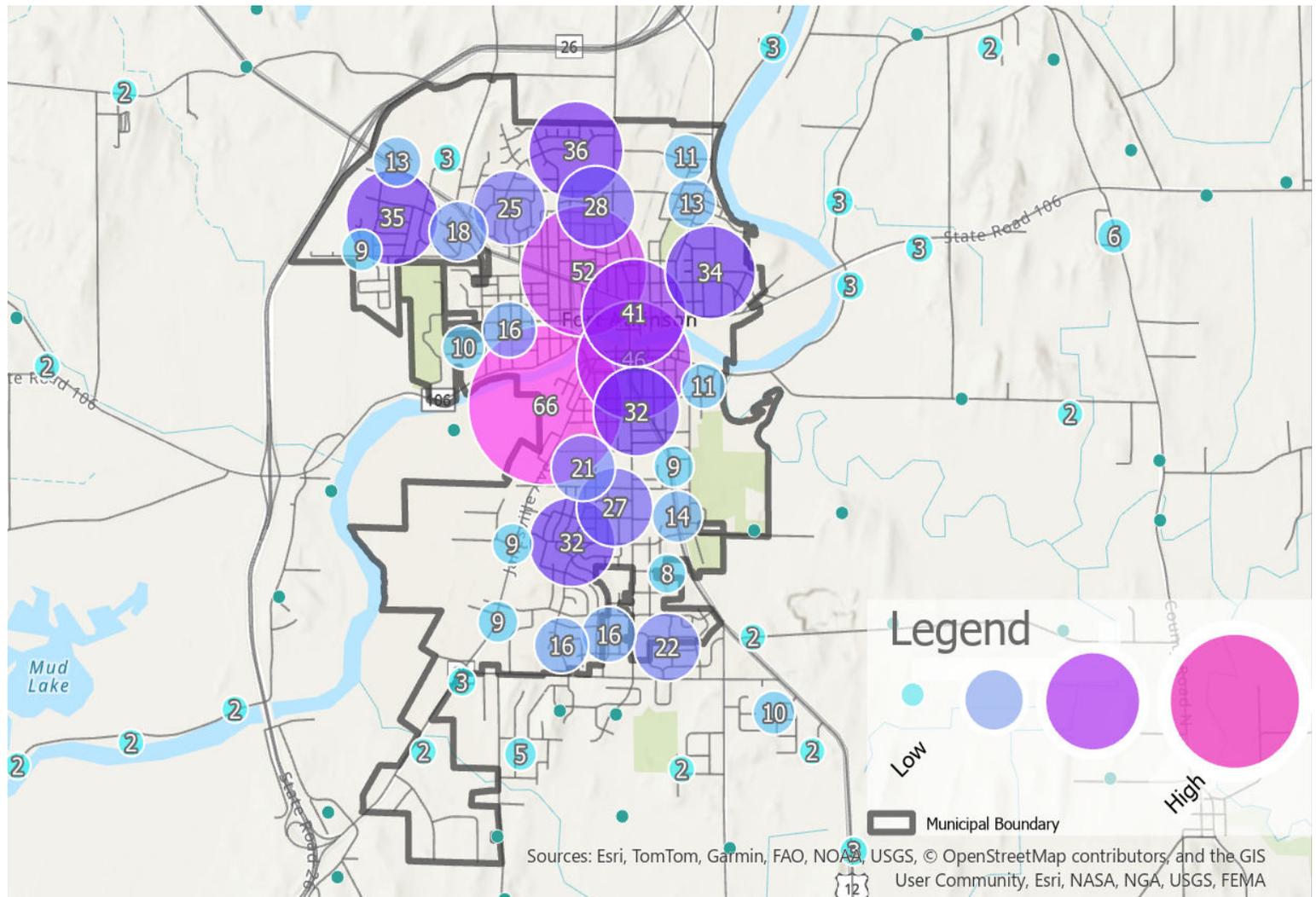
1821
Hours

Calls by Day of Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
317	307	317	325	368	324	275

OVERVIEW OF INCIDENT LOCATION

Calls Within The Jurisdiction of Fort Atkinson Fire Department



Calls by Location

City of Fort Atkinson	1748		
Koshkonong	234	Hebron	50
Oakland	94	Sumner	28
Mutual Aid-Outbound	59	Jefferson	20

Training Overview



Career staff train daily under updated company level standards including onboarding and probationary development, ongoing skills refinement, and realistic scenario based simulations designed to mirror incidents encountered in our community. The goal is consistent performance under pressure.

EMS personnel participate in formal monthly training led by physicians from Mercy Hospital, our medical direction provider. These sessions review patient care, introduce new treatment practices, and reinforce clinical decision making so paramedics can provide advanced care to the residents and visitors we serve.

Training remains the foundation of reliable emergency response. Our program is coordinated by **Captain Nate Lawrence** for fire operations and **Captain Mike Vorpahl** for EMS education.

The entire department conducts structured training twice each month including hands on drills, incident debriefs, updates to best practices, and alignment with

current NFPA standards. Through consistent and practical training, the department works to ensure each response is handled safely, professionally, and effectively.



Fleet Updates



The department operates a fleet of **16 emergency vehicles** supporting fire suppression, technical rescue, EMS response, and fire prevention activities. Oversight of the fleet is handled by **Division Chief Rob Allard** and **Captain Jim Chase**. With full time coverage for both fire and EMS, apparatus operate daily and experience significantly higher utilization than in a traditional response model.

The department follows an aggressive preventative maintenance schedule along with daily inspections, minor repairs, and in house upkeep performed by personnel. Larger mechanical issues are handled by the City of Fort Atkinson Public Works Department mechanics. This consistent care ensures each vehicle remains reliable and ready for immediate response. Fire apparatus represents a substantial public investment, and extending their service life through proper maintenance is essential to responsible fiscal management.

As part of the ten year capital equipment replacement plan, the department spent considerable time evaluating designs, manufacturers, and operational needs before ordering a new **Pierce PUC engine** scheduled for delivery in 2028. A PUC integrates the pump panel and controls into a safer and more accessible layout while improving compartment space and operational efficiency on emergency scenes.

Assisting D/C Allard and Captain Chase in the specification process were **Captain Mike Lawson**, **D/C Dion Brown**, **FF Jim Slocum**, **FF Josh Hertzfeldt**, and **FF Jill Reifsnider**. Their combined operational experience helped ensure the apparatus meets both current and future service demands.

Community Outreach

Community outreach remains a core component of the department's mission. While emergency response is our most visible role, preventing emergencies and reducing injury has an equal impact on community safety.

Education begins early through school field days and classroom visits where firefighters provide age appropriate fire safety instruction including home escape planning, smoke alarm awareness, and emergency response actions.

Fall prevention remains a major focus due to its direct connection to EMS call volume and serious injury in older adults. Personnel partnered with the senior center, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes to improve prevention strategies, response procedures, and post fall care with the goal of reducing injury and supporting independent living.

The department also presented at the **Strong Foundations conference** and works with local hospice providers to support coordinated patient care.

Public CPR training, the annual Christmas drive, and the Adopt A Family program continue to strengthen community preparedness and support local families.



By reducing risk and improving preparedness, outreach efforts directly improve outcomes when emergencies occur and help ensure resources remain available for those who need them most.

2025 Leadership Series

Chief Aaron Lipsky Milwaukee Fire Department



March 25, 2025

In 2025 the department launched a yearlong Leadership Development Series to **prepare current and future officers for the demands of modern fire and EMS service.**

The series was led off by **Phillip Jones, President of Jones Dairy Farm**, who shared leadership philosophy, accountability expectations, and organizational culture principles.

Milwaukee Fire Department Chief Aaron Lipski joined us to discuss his experience and the similarities and differences between large urban and smaller community departments.

Additional sessions covered labor relations, personnel management, legal responsibilities, officer development, and updated incident command practices.

The program improved command consistency and supports succession planning by preparing members for supervisory roles and clarifying expectations as personnel advance in their careers.

Strong leadership, consistent training, and informed partnerships remain essential as the department continues adapting to the community's needs.

HONORS NIGHT AWARD RECIPIENTS

Department Commendation Distinguished Service Award



Firefighter
Jill Reifsnider



Firefighter / EMT
Brandon Rogneby



Firefighter / EMT
Justice Rueth



Captain
Michael Vorpahl



Firefighter
Frank Weiss

Firefighters of the Year

Officer of the Year



Captain Jim Chase

Officer of the Year



Captain Mike Lawson

Part Time Firefighter of the Year



Firefighter / EMT
Casey Badura

Full Time Firefighter of the Year



Firefighter / EMT
Chris Barr



FORT ATKINSON FIRE DEPARTMENT

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