

**BILOXI FIRE DEPARTMENT
2020 ANNUAL REPORT
OVERVIEW**

To say that 2020 was not a memorable year would be an understatement, but as I have said in the past, the Biloxi Fire Department loves a challenge. Even with such a challenging year we have made significant strides of which we are very proud.

Beginning early in the year we were challenged with COVID-19 and all of its ensuing issues such as how do we address the hazards it poses to our members on a daily basis; what are the best practices for protecting our members and the public; how to maintain proper decontamination procedures in a building which houses ever-changing shift personnel 24/7; and what happens when the staffing shortages occur. Although these were just a few of the many challenges, I am proud to say that we met each issue, did the research, and implemented the best practices available.

Aside from dealing with COVID, who could have also predicted the wild hurricane season we have had. After dodging six or seven near misses, we finally were hit with Hurricane Zeta in late October. Though we pride ourselves on being storm-ready, it is still difficult to plan for and respond to a hurricane during a pandemic. Although our plan worked, suffice it to say I would prefer not to repeat that challenge.

On a brighter note in 2020, we placed Unit-82 in service, thus allowing the department to immediately swap out dirty or contaminated turn-out gear for clean ones on a fire scene. The behind the scene story began with the City Council's approval of purchasing an additional set of turn-outs for each firefighter. We in the department then came up with the radical idea of refurbishing one of our old vehicles and outfitting it with 50 sets of gear that could be placed at the scene of a fire. After mitigation of the incident, each firefighter could then swap clean gear before returning to the station.

Although it took a year in the making, this project was finally completed this past summer when the unit was officially placed into service. I am not aware of any other department in the United States currently using this system; however, it has proven to be a game changer in our efforts to mitigate firefighter exposure to cancer agents. In addition, the cost saving was huge because we were now purchasing 50 sets of gear instead of 160 sets. At a cost of \$3000.00 per set, the savings went from \$495,000.00 to \$150,000.00.

We also purchased two new pumpers now in operation at stations 1 and 5. While they may not look like our other apparatus, I can also say that they do not operate like our other apparatus. With the new clean technology, they are specifically designed to reduce carcinogenic intake to our members, thus reducing cancer risk. The new cab

design also allows us to reduce the risk of COVID because all interior surfaces are made so that they can be easily wiped down. The apparatuses' smaller size also equates to a smaller motor, tires, and turn radius which will, in the long term, reduce fuel consumption, less emissions, and lower maintenance costs.

To conclude the year, we received news from the State Rating Bureau in November that our fire insurance rating had been reduced from a 3 to a 2. This means that the Biloxi Fire Department ranks among the top two percent of all fire departments in the nation with the capability to provide emergency services to our citizens and visitors. With this accomplishment, we are one of only two departments in the state who have achieved a Class 2 rating.

It has been said that 2020 was a dumpster fire of a year, and I am inclined to agree. However, with all that has happened not all the news is bad. In fact your Biloxi Fire Department has experienced a fairly good year despite the setbacks. It is all our hope that great things are coming for 2021, and as this information is being compiled, I am happy to report that the first Coronavirus vaccines are reaching the arms of any City of Biloxi firefighter who wishes to receive it!

**BILOXI FIRE DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONS DIVISION**

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The Biloxi Fire Department responded to 7,026 emergency calls during this past year compared to 7,705 calls in 2019. Of the 7,026 emergency calls, 4,490 were rescue and medical incidents which represents 63.9% of our overall calls. The decrease in calls is due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on AMR's recommendation, we initially limited our medical response to COVID-19 related calls from the end of February to the end of April, with AMR responding to those calls while the Fire Department remained on standby.

There was also a significant decrease this past year in the amount of good intent or service calls that were non-emergency related, as well as hazardous conditions and false alarm calls. There was an increase, however, in the number of fire-related calls, including structures, vehicles, boats, motorhomes, and wood fires, with an overall total of 306 compared to 225 in 2019. Some of this increase can be attributed to Hurricane Zeta with several fires being directly or indirectly caused by the storm.

In 2020 the Biloxi Fire Department provided fire, rescue, and medical protection for several special events in the City, including Mardi Gras, Scrapin' the Coast, and Cruisin' the Coast. Designated specialty teams were implemented for these events that were placed in strategic locations to ensure the safety needs of our citizens and visitors.

On January 11, 2020, the Biloxi Fire Department opened a new station replacing the previous Fire Station #7. The new state-of-the art Phil McCabe Fire Station #7 is approximately 13,076 square feet. The station also houses a new training tower which was dedicated on March 5, 2020 to Firefighter III Darren Endris who passed away to cancer.

The year 2020 as we all know, was a busy season for hurricanes. In September the department prepared for and initiated hurricane operations for Hurricane Sally and again for Hurricane Zeta in late October. Designated teams, including specialty teams, were created to ensure the safety of our citizens and visitors for each storm. When Hurricane Zeta made landfall, it interrupted the annual Cruisin' the Coast event and prompted our response to 322 calls for service. Disaster relief efforts were also provided by the City, in conjunction with the West End Hose Company Fire Museum, to southern Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura's devastation and to Hurricane Sally's damage in Alabama.

Over the past year, the department promoted several personnel, including a new Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention, one Battalion Chief, and two Captains. Eleven new

recruits were hired in March with an additional eight hired in September, all greatly enhancing our staffing needs.

Due to COVID-19, the Biloxi Fire Department was unable to participate in numerous conferences and other events because of cancellations such as the Elks Lodge Christmas Parade for children with disabilities, the American Heart Association Boot Drive, the Muscular Dystrophy Association “Fill the Boot” drive, Salvation Army ring the bell, Christmas Toy Run, and the Mississippi Burn Camp. We were also unable to participate in such community outreach programs as our annual smoke detector program. Typically during the month of October, Operations personnel along with the Fire Prevention Division, partner with the American Red Cross to distribute and install smoke detectors throughout designated areas of the city. Such activities are instrumental in our efforts to educate, save lives and protect property.

In 2020 the Biloxi Fire Department had a total of 116 absences due to COVID-19 with 39 personnel testing positive for the virus. Extra precautionary measures were implemented in the department in efforts to provide a safe and healthy work environment for our employees, including temperature checks, twice daily station sanitizations, and station closures to the public. Strict Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) usage was also required for personnel when dispatched to emergency medical calls and motor vehicle accidents to name a few. Since February, 221 Tyvek suits, 891 N95 masks, 22 bio bags, and approximately 256 gallons of halt concentrate have been utilized for station decontamination.

In the upcoming year, the Biloxi Fire Department plans to continue “hands on” refresher training such as High Rise Response for fires to include scene accountability, rapid intervention team deployment, and Mayday procedures. Additionally, our goal is to continue to plan, train, and implement definitive emergency response for both active shooter and lost person incidents with our Police Department with the intention of both departments working seamlessly together on low-frequency, high-risk emergency incidents and huge potential media events.

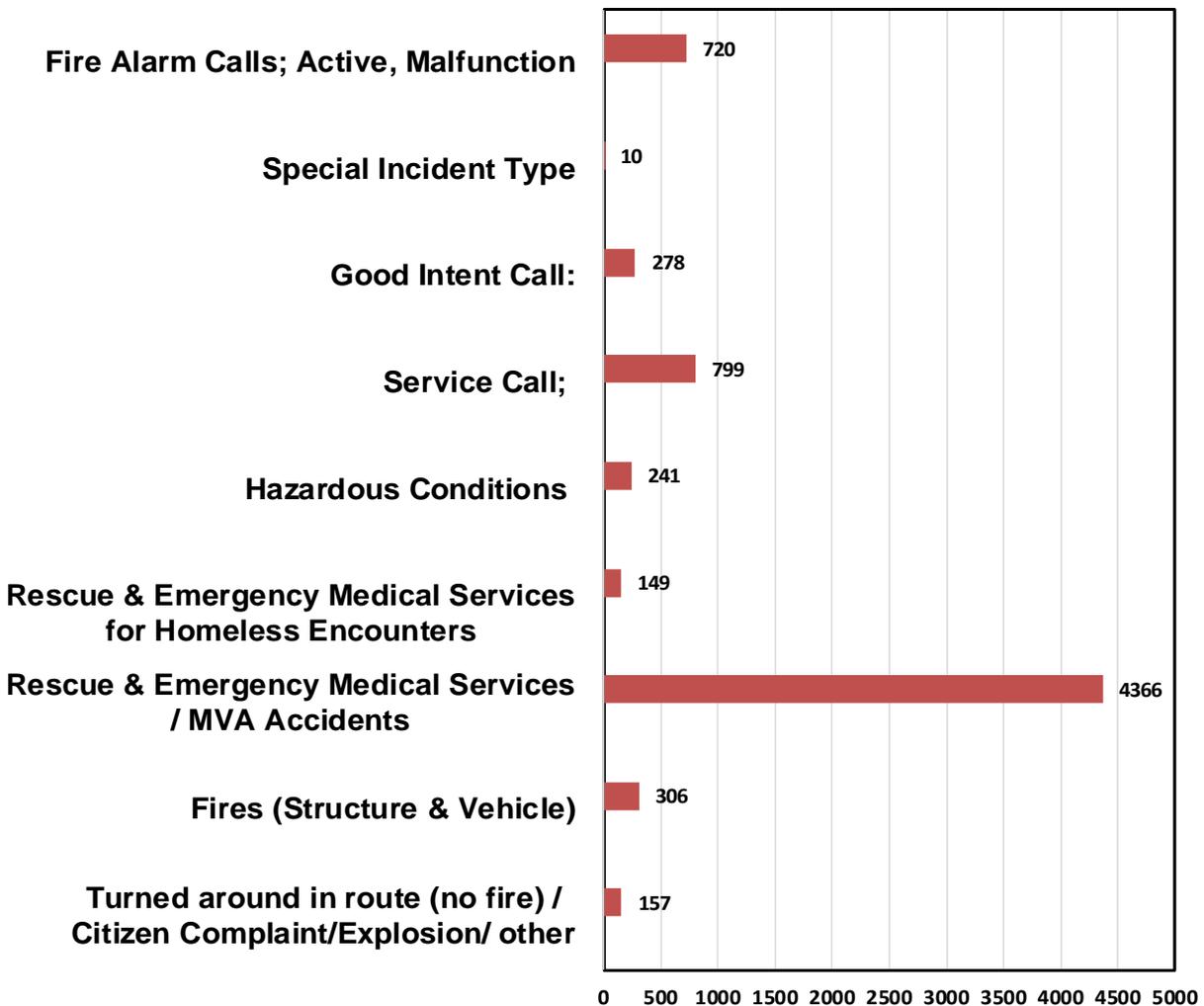
The attached graph details the Fire Department’s incident type averages for the past year.



BILOXI FIRE DEPARTMENT INCIDENT SUMMARY REPORT FOR January - December 2020

<i>Turned around in route (no fire) / Citizen Complaint/Explosion/ other</i>	157
<i>Fires (Structure & Vehicle)</i>	306
<i>Rescue & Emergency Medical Services / MVA Accidents</i>	4366
<i>Rescue & Emergency Medical Services for Homeless Encounters</i>	149
<i>Hazardous Conditions</i>	241
<i>Service Call;</i>	799
<i>Good Intent Call:</i>	278
<i>Special Incident Type</i>	10
<i>Fire Alarm Calls; Active, Malfunction</i>	720
Total	7026

Weekly Count of Incident Type



**Biloxi Fire Department
Fire Prevention Division
2020 Annual Report**

In 2020, the Fire Prevention Division conducted 1,030 fire inspections—a decrease from the previous year due to Covid-19 precautions. Of the yearly total, 122 inspections were performed by truck company firefighters while 908 inspections were performed by Fire Prevention personnel. Additionally, 356 certificates of occupancy inspections were conducted of which 55 were short-term rentals.

Daycare facilities, summer day camps, and after school camps are required by the state of Mississippi to have a Uniform Fire Safety Survey Form completed by local agencies. This form is a detailed fire inspection performed in conjunction with our own fire inspection. These inspections are conducted each year by certified Fire Prevention personnel. There were a total of 21 of these types of inspections performed (19 daycares and two after school/summer day camp programs).

Of the Biloxi Fire Department's overall calls, 563 of these were either some type of fire or hazmat incidents that may require the involvement of fire inspectors. Inspectors are on-call 24/7 to perform systematic investigations to determine the cause and origin of any fire requested by the on-scene Battalion Chief. Fire Prevention investigated a total of 27 of these types of fires in the past year, with one reported fire death.

The number of development plans reviewed by Fire Prevention include commercial construction and fire protection system plans. There were 30 commercial plans and 68 residential single family dwelling home plans reviewed in 2020. Plans were also reviewed on 11 automatic hood extinguishing systems, 13 automatic sprinkler systems, 12 fire alarm systems, 2 clean agent systems, and 1 stand pipe system this year. All together a total of 137 blue prints were reviewed by Fire Prevention for approval.

After approval, most projects are then permitted and built, with the inspection/testing process subsequently completed. Some of the pre-existing fire protection systems that are tested are also required to be recertified each year by Fire Prevention personnel.

The Fire Prevention Division is also responsible for issuing burn permits within the City of Biloxi that are free to the community. Fire Inspectors check the initial burn site and explain fire safety rules and practices before issuing a permit. In 2020, a total of 54 permits were issued for burning, including both new and renewed permits. Fire Prevention also manages the permit process for pyrotechnic shows displayed within the city limits. There were eight outdoor fireworks displays permitted in 2020.

Public education remains the number one goal of the Fire Prevention Division. The first defense against fighting a fire or surviving a fire incident is education. In 2020, Fire

Prevention personnel were able to reach out to over 3,000 people through our public education programs; but, unfortunately, we were unable to reach as many people as in previous years due to Covid-19. Our personnel connect with citizens such as station tours and fire safety presentation classes to children and senior citizens. Fire Inspectors also provide fire extinguisher classes to businesses and schools, and on many occasions, offer the firefighter's kids challenge. This is a fun and educational obstacle course for children to learn fire prevention safety techniques. Fire Pup, our mascot, makes appearances at many events and is a tremendous hit with the children.

As an important part of our ongoing educational programs, Fire Prevention conducts fire drill training to all schools, daycare facilities, senior citizen facilities, and private businesses as well as participating in career day events for both children and adults. During the past year, Fire Prevention personnel have also been interviewed by various news outlets as a form of public education and as a result, have reached a multitude of people in our area on TV and social media.

Unfortunately, we had to make the difficult decision to cancel our popular two-week fire safety summer camp, the "Fire Academy for Kids Camp", in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The free program, provided to children in the community, is funded by donations from local individuals and businesses and is always a huge success. We are eagerly looking forward to once again offering the camp in 2021!

Last, but not least, Fire Prevention was able to continue providing smoke alarm installation to residents--another service provided free to citizens of the community. A total of 87 smoke alarms in 22 residential dwellings were installed. Due to Covid-19, however, we could not reach more as we were unable to team up with the American Red Cross this year to canvas the neighborhoods as we have done for the last five years. We look forward eagerly in this next year to not only continue our mission but to also expand on providing superior public education to those in our city and surrounding areas.

TRAINING DIVISION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Over the past year, the Training Division led refresher classes for CPR Instructor, Emergency Medical Technician, and NIMS certification. CPR recertification also included all Biloxi Police Officers and Department of Marine Resources Officers. Additionally, eleven recruits that were hired in 2019 became certified firefighters this past year.

In September 2020, eight new firefighters were hired—five recruits and three laterals. The Training Division directed more than 2,404 hours of training to get each of them ready to complete the required Basic FF 1001 I-II course and for shift work.

The Training Division completed 1,076 hours of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training by providing EMT refresher courses to our personnel using our own Paramedics to teach the class. The department currently has five Paramedics, one Advanced EMT, and 94 EMTs. Additionally, we completed 236 hours of Professional Development training with our Officers and 156 hours of training in conjunction with the State Task Force Team.

In the past year, Training created an Incident Action Plan for Live Burn Training and conducted live burns with both crews and recruits at the new Training Tower at Station 7. Training also coordinated participation in an Anthrax vaccine study given by UMMC and free skin cancer screenings given by Pine Belt Dermatology.

Our personnel completed 16,316 hours of “station” training conducted at the fire stations by the crews themselves, while 29 firefighters completed 6,504 hours of training through the Mississippi State Fire Academy and 6 firefighters completed 384 hours of training through the National Fire Academy. The graph below details training areas and hours:

2020 SUMMARY OF TRAINING HOURS

TRAINING TYPE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
INHOUSE TRAINING	1,904	1,600	30						834	946	720	1,001	7,035
RECRUIT INHOUSE	1,680	1,600							64	860	720	760	5,684
STATION TRAINING	1,199	1,199	1,289	1,378	1,332	1,360	1,304	1,293	1,317	1,399	1,342	1,904	16,316
STATE FIRE ACADEMY	2,032	1,672	40			200		200		800	728	832	6,504
NAT'L FIRE ACADEMY	4		80				80	58	162				384
TASK FORCE		128	8							20			156
MISC. TRAINING	57	6		4			102	6	24				199
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT		111										125	236
EMS TRAINING	212						1	174	941	257	96	240	1,921
TOTAL TRAINING HRS.	7,088	6,316	1,447	1,382	1,332	1,560	1,487	1,731	3,342	4,282	3,606	4,862	38,435