



ANNUAL REPORT

MISSOULA FIRE DEPARTMENT



P R E F A C E

The Missoula Fire Department (MFD) Fire Chiefs have approved this annual report. Statistics given throughout this annual report reflect the calendar year, January 1 - December 31, 2021. MFD's fiscal year runs July 1- June 30, annually, therefore any budget numbers and/or statistics reflect the fiscal year and not the calendar year.

Stay connected with us!

Follow us on social media or visit our website regularly to stay connected and up to date with important and relevant information!



City of Missoula Fire Department



<http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/240/Fire-Department>

Learn about our Local 271 IAFF union by following their social media pages.



Missoula Firefighters



@missoulafirefighters



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Fire Chief ----- PG 4

Message from IAFF 271 Union President - PG 5

Fire Department Overview ----- PG 6

2021 Year In Review

- Accomplishments ----- PG 9
- Station Response ----- PG 10
- Budget & Finance ----- PG 13
- Wildland Response ----- PG 14
- Crisis Intervention Team ----- PG 15

Division Reports:

- Operations ----- PG 17
- Training & EMS ----- PG 20
- Maintenance ----- PG 22
- Fire Prevention Bureau ----- PG 24
- Health & Wellness ----- PG 26
 - Mobile Support Team
 - Peer Fitness & Peer Support Team

Priorities ----- PG 29

Transition ----- PG 30



A message from **FIRE CHIEF JEFF BRANDT**

The COVID pandemic has pushed our Department to limits never experienced in our history. Although this year tested our resiliency, our ability to adapt, and our ability to continually provide the level of services our community expects, we met these challenges with perseverance and grit.

In order to continue to best meet the changing need of Missoula, we enhanced and adapted our services as necessary; all while setting a new record in overall call volume. Missoula City Fire ran on over 10,000 calls this year- up over 600 calls from last year.

Although we saw a large increase in call volumes, we were also able to assist with various mobile and mass vaccination clinics throughout Missoula County.

During an unprecedented and lengthy fire season, Missoula Fire personnel were able to respond and assist with multiple wildland fires throughout Montana and the western region.

In addition, Missoula Fire has continued to grow the Missoula Mobile Support Team which assists citizens experiencing mental health issues or crises; a program that has been well received by the community.

We have enhanced our local Crisis Intervention Team which was initiated to support our first responders in navigating the stresses inherent in emergency service careers; and we continue to provide trainings and professional development opportunities that ensure our Department is successful in meeting challenges in the future.

As Missoula continues to grow, and as our calls for service continue to increase, we are committed to maintaining our level of service to the community and will continue to be proactive in meeting the changing needs of the city.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and devotion demonstrated by the men and women of Missoula City Fire. They have tirelessly done what has been needed and they have persevered through an unprecedented time.

It has truly been an honor and privilege to be able to contribute and be included in such an outstanding organization.

Thank you





A message from

LOCAL 271 UNION PRESIDENT TAVIS CAMPBELL

Fundraising and programs were limited this year due to COVID, however, we were still able to pursue and accomplish many great things. Nearly all our fundraising came from Missoula Firefighters, who graciously gave over \$13,152 of their own money in 2021. One of the things MFBA has been focused on and improving is our community relations. In 2021 we starting expanding those relations by focusing on kids type events around each holiday. Last Easter we did an Easter basket giveaway and this year plan to do some type of Easter egg drop/hunt. Our Summer event was a free community night for kids at Splash Montana. We had a trick or treat event at the stations during Halloween and at Christmas we finished out the year with a Santa in the Ladder truck event. Our hope is to solidify these events and continue to expand on them in the future.

Thankfully Fill the Boot was able to happen this year. MDA is really suffering after COVID shut down nearly all their fundraising revenue and we were excited to hit the streets again in 2021. We brought in over \$11,000. We were also extremely fortunate this year to help out MDA with their Magic Wheelchair program. Through that program, a boy in Missoula named Mason was able to transform his electric wheelchair into a skidsteer. The joy Mason emanated upon receiving his gift was something that brought us all joy and was an experience that we likely won't get to partake in again for a long time.

Through a partnership with United Way and the Dolly Parton Imagination library we were also able to put in place a book program at MFD. Our engines now carry children's books age 0-5 and crews are encouraged to read to a child on a call, distribute them to kids who might not have access to books, and use them as a tool to ease the stress of a difficult call.

MFBA continued its ongoing partnership with Youth Homes to provide a Christmas party with the boys and girls at Youth Homes.



One of the biggest projects we've been working on is the proposed Jack's Army Footbridge. This footbridge will replace an existing structure at the bottom of Pattee Canyon Road near the ASUM gardens. The intent of the bridge is to provide Missoulians with an improvement and be a place where people can go to remember how this community rallied around a boy in Missoula with cancer. This will additionally provide a place of hope for people struggling to overcome life's difficult situations. MFBA has partnered with local professionals and the University of Montana to complete this project. Fundraising is ongoing and roughly 1/3 of the funds this year have been raised.

FROM THE UNION



History



The first Fire Department facility was built in 1887 at the intersection of (what was then) Stevens and West Main Streets. That building was constructed as a City Hall (housing for a period city offices, the fire and police departments, and the city jail). It was turned over to the Fire Department for its sole use in 1912 when a new City Hall was completed.

The first Missoula Fire Department Fireman's Ball, put on by the department's volunteers, was held in 1889.

Volunteers served until 1911, when a fully-paid department was established.

Records of Department officers start with the election of Chief Robert S. Mentrum in 1891. Those serving as Missoula Fire Department Chief or Assistant Chief since that time are listed on our website.



Mission

To save lives, protect property, ease pain and suffering.



Vision

To be recognized as the premier public safety organization, respected and admired by our peers and our community as the most effective, innovative, and efficient fire department in the state of Montana and the region.



Motto

Courage, Commitment, Compassion

Today

The Missoula Fire Department (MFD) covers a service area of 34.66 square miles, serving a population of 73,710 and a diverse response territory that includes urban, suburban and rural areas within the City Limits of Missoula. The service area is broken down into five districts, with a total of 5 fire stations and one river rescue boathouse.

The Missoula Fire Department's infrastructure includes 102 highly trained individuals that serve in one of six divisions: Administration, Operations, Fire Prevention, Training & EMS, Maintenance, and Health & Wellness.

Infrastructure



102

Total
Personnel



79

Operations
Personnel



48

Apparatus



5

Stations



6

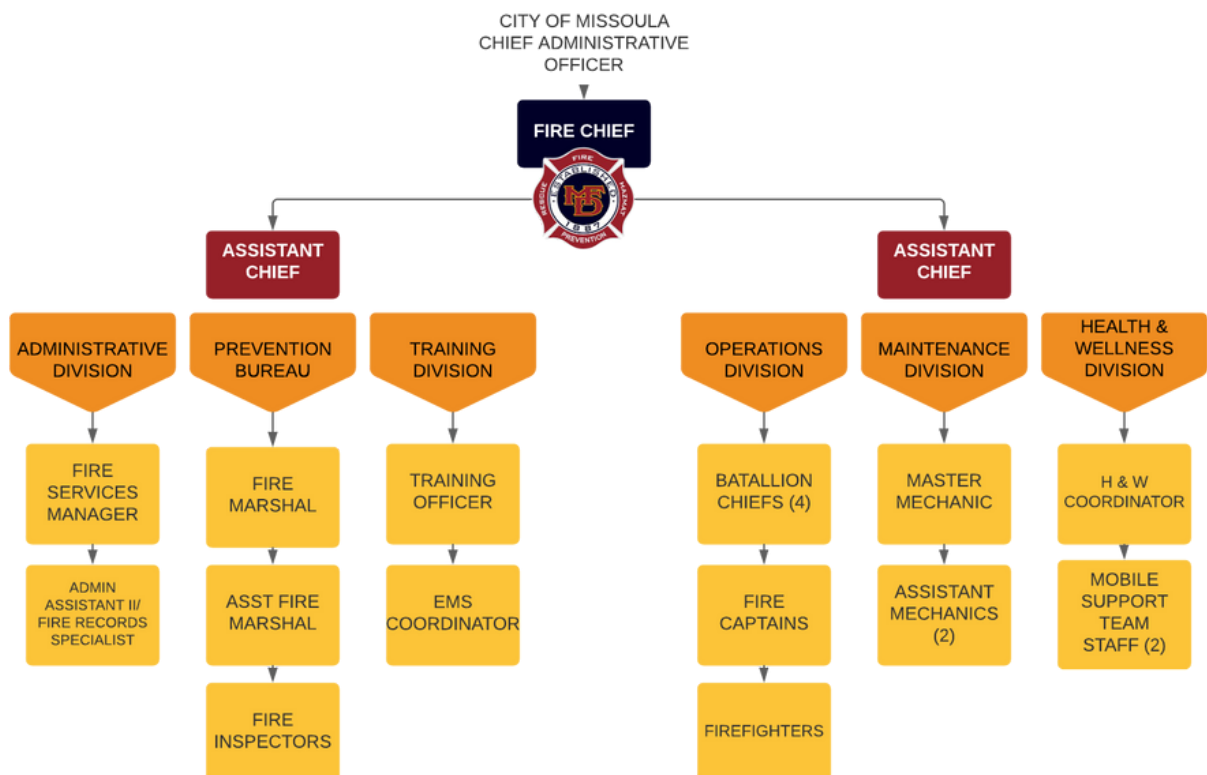
Divisions

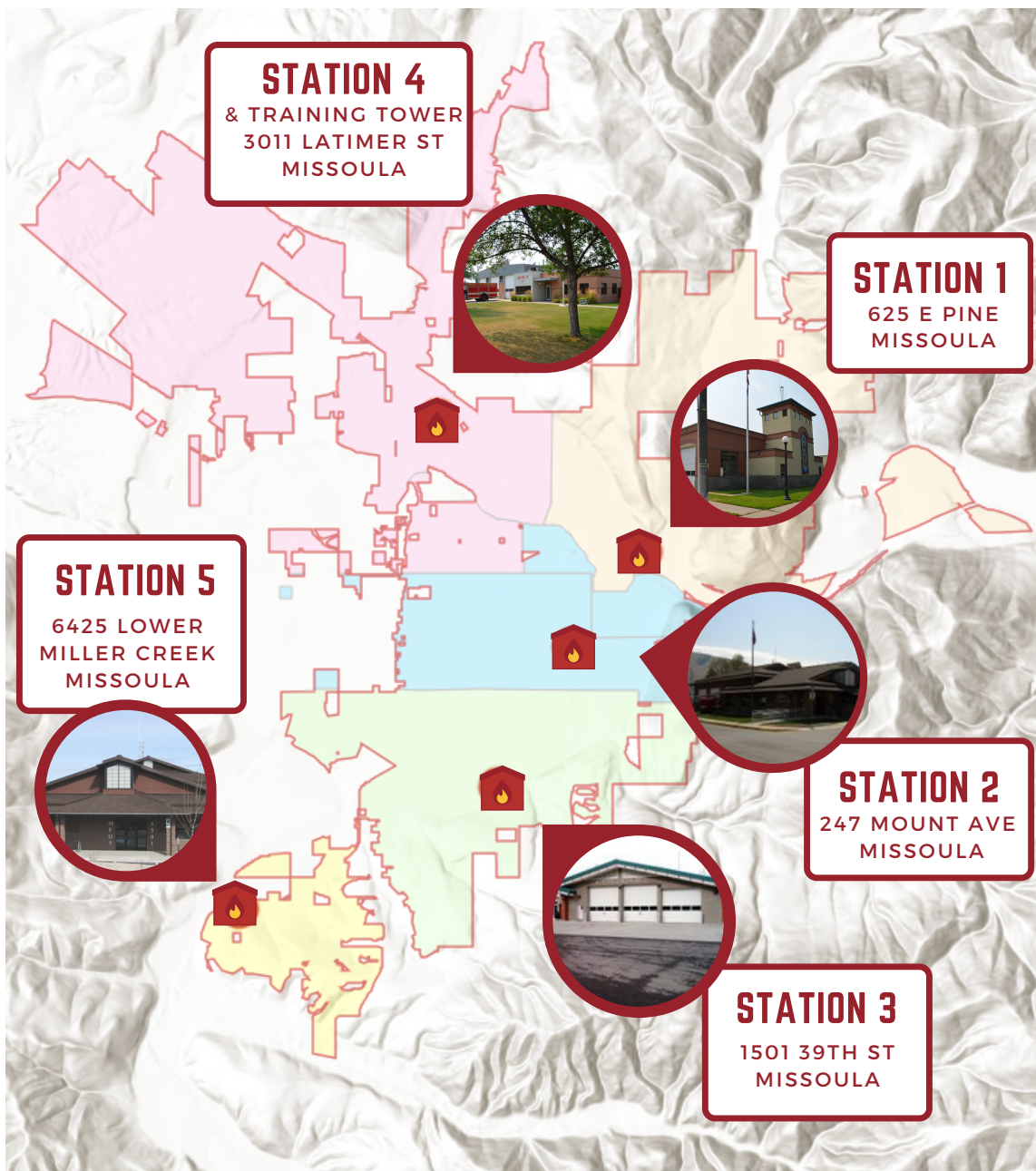
Personnel by the Numbers

1 Fire Chief | 2 Assistant Chiefs | 1 Fire Marshal | 1 Assistant Fire Marshal
3 Fire Inspectors | 1 Training Officer | 1 EMS Coordinator | 1 Health & Wellness Coordinator
3 Mobile Support EMTs | 3 Maintenance Staff
1 Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator & 1 Data Analyst | 3 Administrative Support Staff

Operations Personnel by the Numbers

4 Battalion Chiefs | 20 Fire Captains | 56 Fire Fighters





Stations & Response Areas

In an effort to maximize coverage and minimize response time, Missoula Fire Department (MFD) has five stations strategically placed throughout the City of Missoula. Each station's crew members are tasked with providing first response within the city limits and to surrounding areas as mutual/automatic aid.

Each station is staffed by an on-shift crew and houses multiple apparatus. Each crew includes firefighters to provide fire and rescue service and emergency medical services (EMS) delivered by trained EMTs (Basic Life Support - BLS) or Paramedics (Advanced Life Support- ALS). It is MFD's goal to increase the number of trained paramedics to provide a minimum of one paramedic per station 24/7.

Our headquarters station (Station 1) includes our administrative staff, Battalion Chiefs (shift commanders), Mobile Support Team (MST) personnel, and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) personnel, Fire Prevention Bureau and Training/EMS staff. Station 4 includes the Maintenance Division and the Training Tower. The MFD boathouse is located near McCormick park and houses our river rescue watercraft apparatus.

Retirements



Fire Chief Jeff Brandt and Battalion Chief Kip Knapstad retired as of 12/31/2021.

Both gentlemen have had a significant impact on the Missoula Fire Department and the Missoula Community. Their legacy will be carried out in the culture they created along with their accomplishments during their service. They will be greatly missed!

Promotions



Gordy Hughes was confirmed as MFD's newest Fire Chief by Mayor Engen and City council in January 2021.



Chad Kidd was promoted to fill Kip Knapstad's (ret.) seat as Battalion Chief of B Shift.

Accomplishments

- First four medics to graduate from Missoula College's Paramedic Sciences program; four more enrolled
- City and L271 (union) signed contract MOU for EMS certs
- Successful Wildland/IMT Season
- COVID Delta surge, supported by the Incident Management Team (IMT)
- Officer Development-Westfall Leadership Class completed by 25 MFD personnel
- Covered shelter at Station 4
- Station 1 and 4 dorm room remodels
- Office space creation at Station 1
- Data Analyst position for the CIT program
- 8 New MFD employees were hired
- New dual-band radios ordered
- First Mental Health First Aid program and training conducted
- WARD No-smoke installed on all front-line apparatus
- Energy audit completed for all stations
- One new type 1, type 6, cataraft tubes
- Acquired new side-by-side with grant awarded by Firehouse Subs
- Backfill for Missoula Emergency Services Inc. (MESI)





11,245

TOTAL EMERGENCY CALLS

The Missoula Fire Department (MFD) collects and reports data to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). NFIRS collects data based on the following nine categories: Fire, Overpressure Rupture/Explosion/Overheat (No Fire), Rescue and Emergency Medical Service Incidents, Hazardous Condition (No Fire), Service Call, Good Intent Call, False Alarm and False Call, Severe Weather and Natural Disaster, and Special Incident Type.

211
FIRE

7,170
EMS

322
HAZARD

2,035
GOOD INTENT

3
EXPLOSION/
PRESSURE

977
SERVICE CALL

3
WEATHER/
DISASTER

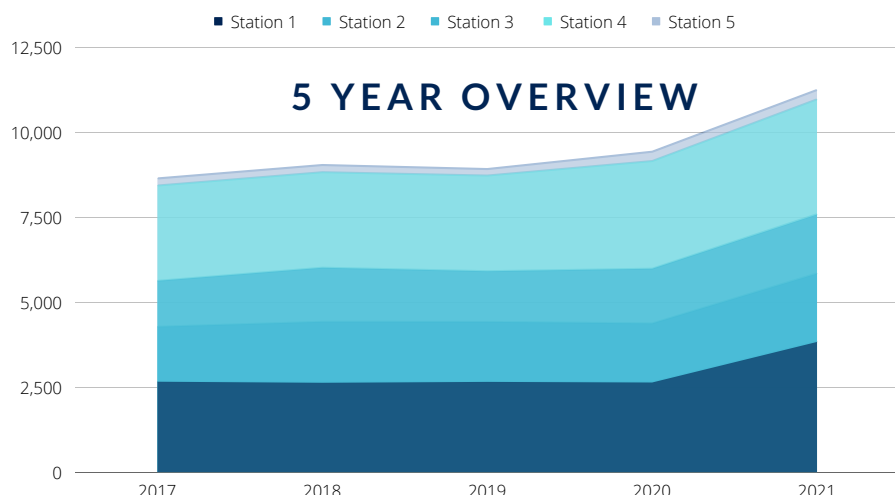
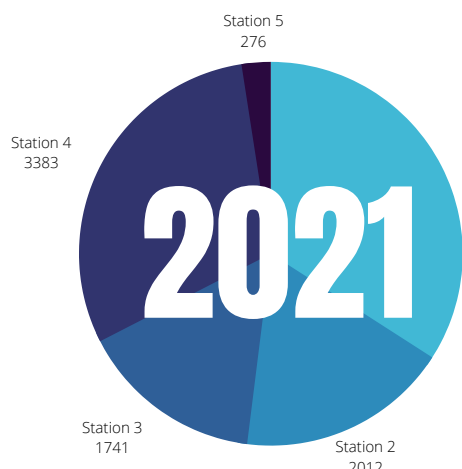
4
SPECIAL INCIDENT

521
FALSE ALARM





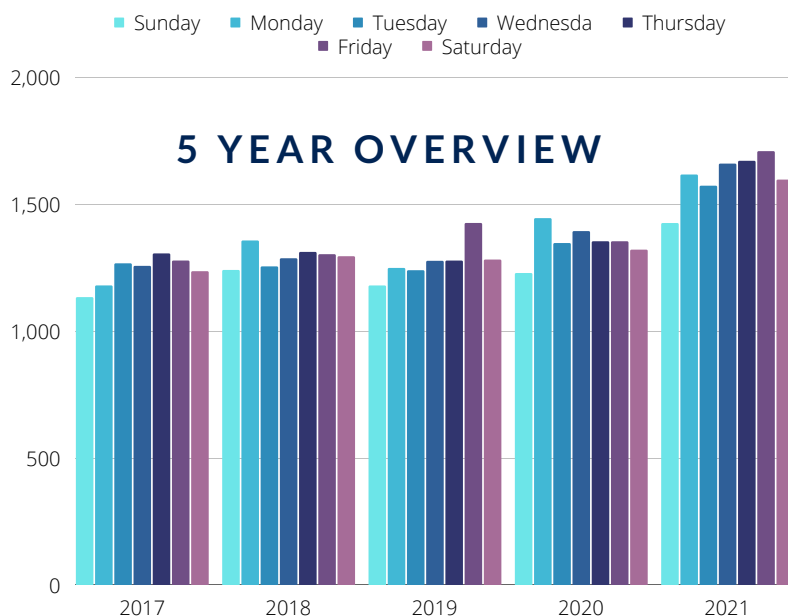
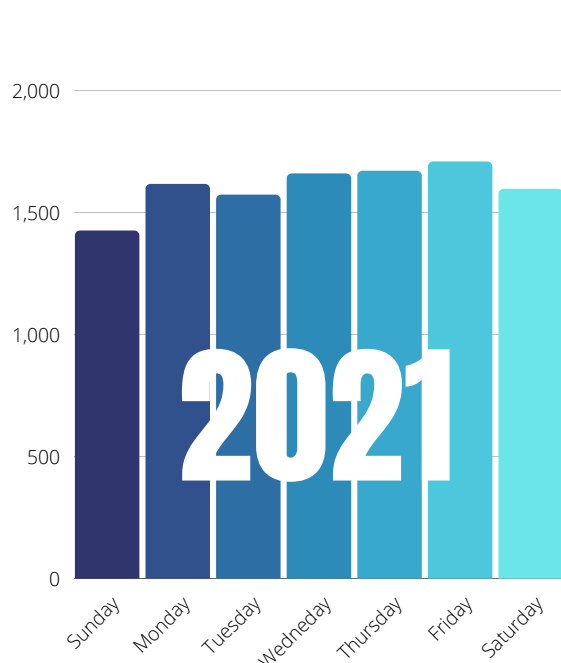
CALLS PER STATION



The Missoula Fire Department (MFD) uses statistics and in-house response data to help maneuver, schedule, and facilitate best practices for the department. In examining responses by district, MFD can determine where additional crew resources may be needed. Additionally, by examining times when call volume trends high, MFD can seek to add additional staff during peak times when responses trend upwards.

52.46%
INCREASE
TOTAL CALLS FROM 2017-2021

AVERAGE CALLS PER DAY



The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) creates a standard by which all fire departments are measured. The NFPA 1710 standard is applied to the Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. NFPA standards are developed to be a guideline in which to measure the efficiency of a fire department.

The NFPA 1710 Standard measures the moment a call is received by a dispatcher to the time responders arrive on-scene. To meet standard, a department must meet the goal time 90% of the time.



9-1-1 DISPATCH RESPONSIBILITY

MISSOULA FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITY



AVERAGE RESPONSE TIMES

90TH PERCENTILE

Station	Turnout Time	Travel Time	Response Time	Turnout time	Travel time	Response time
MFD - Station 1	0:01:16	0:04:04	0:05:21	0:02:14	0:07:00	0:08:20
MFD - Station 2	0:01:13	0:04:15	0:05:28	0:02:04	0:06:33	0:07:59
MFD - Station 3	0:01:17	0:03:56	0:05:13	0:02:09	0:06:18	0:07:39
MFD - Station 4	0:01:13	0:04:24	0:05:37	0:02:06	0:07:09	0:08:40
MFD - Station 5	0:01:22	0:06:27	0:07:49	0:02:11	0:10:03	0:11:11



The City of Missoula’s General Fund supplies the vast majority of the MFD’s annual budget. Levied taxes, and especially property taxes provide for this Fund.

Salaries of MFD’s personnel account for 96% of the budget. The remaining budget is allocated to operational costs associated with carrying out our mission. MFD is responsible for ensuring that our firefighters have the necessary equipment, training, transportation, facilities, and protective clothing to safely complete their assigned duties.

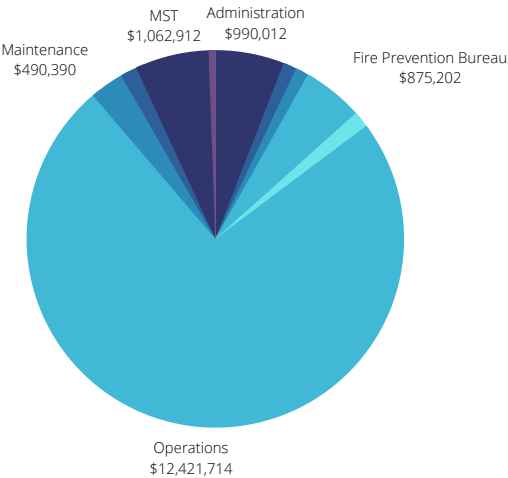
MFD continues to seek additional funding opportunities in our community and nationwide.



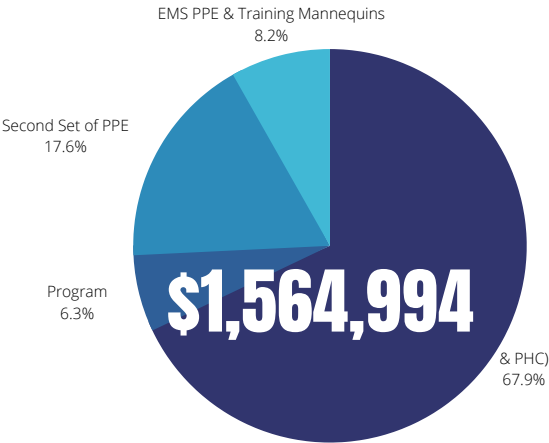
- ARPA funding: Westfall Officer Development Class, 2nd set of turnouts, EMS supplies and training simulators; MST and CIT programs.
- Grants: Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), DHS Hazmat programs, Firehouse Subs.
- Station projects: Dorm remodels Station 1 and 4; pavilion at Station 4, BC office.
- CIP: Type 1, Type 6, Type 3, staff vehicle, SCBAs, communications.



ANNUAL BUDGET



BUDGET BY DIVISION



ARPA FUNDING DISTRIBUTION



Wildfires are uncontrolled fire that burns wildland vegetation such as forests, grassland, brushland, or cropland. They can start through a natural occurrence or a man made cause. MFD can be dispatched to respond to wildfires within the city limits or as mutual aid to surrounding communities. In addition to local response, MFD has build a rapport with other states and are often requested to respond to wildfires occurring throughout the nation.

In 2021, MFD responded to 58 wildland fire calls with 27 being contracted assignments outside of the city limits. Many of the contracted assignments are often in California or neighboring states due to the continued drought and dry conditions in the region. Last year, Montana saw a number of wildfires as well. MFD firefighters along with the Western Montana Incident Management Team responded to those fires around our state.





MFD is proud to support the implementation of Missoula's first Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). The CIT program was developed to be a foundation to promote community and statewide solutions to assist individuals in crisis. CIT is a community partnership of law enforcement, medical and first responders, emergency dispatchers, mental health and substance use treatment providers, hospital systems, consumers of mental health services, attorneys, advocacy groups, homeless service providers, and others. Missoula's CIT Program, guided by Program Manager, Theresa Williams, offers multiple training sessions throughout the year.



PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Established the Wellness and Resource Access Program: Three practicum students will provide 15 hours per week of work following up on referrals, documenting activity, meeting people where they are in the community (housed or unhoused) and assist patients in accessing services, addressing basic needs and seeing to support them in self-sufficiency
- Expanded the CIT Program to include a Data Analyst: this individual will work to identify data points, coordinate with stakeholders to access and collect necessary data and resolve relevant data issues, improve data integration and coordination across crisis service organizations, plan, organize and conduct program analysis and evaluations aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the program, and prepare and present relevant data.

15 Presentations &
In-Service Sessions

20.75 Total
Hours

16 CIT Training
Sessions Conducted

190.5 Total
Hours

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

- Seek continuous funding for the Data Analyst position
- Provide education on the CIT Model Crisis Receiving Facility that provides specialized mental health emergency care
- Implement CIT Program Policies and Procedures Priority Area
- Implement CIT Crisis Protocol





DIVISION REPORTS

OPERATIONS



OPERATIONS

94 line personnel including firefighters and EMTs of all levels who respond to a wide variety of fire, rescue, and medical emergencies.



Troy Ault,
A - Shift



*Kip Knapstadt,
B - Shift

MEET OUR BATTALION CHIEFS

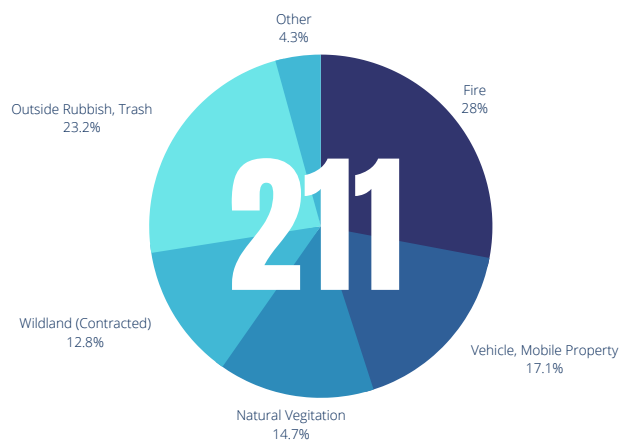


Jeff Kroll,
C - Shift



Dave Wolter,
D - Shift

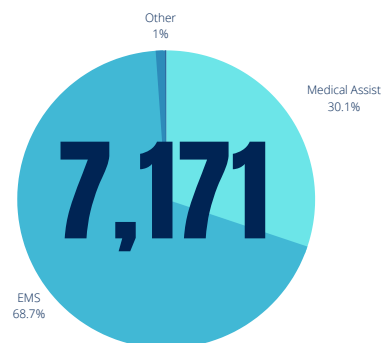
*Kip Knapstadt retired 12/31/2021



Fire

Missoula saw 64 structure fires in 2019. Of those, 84% of the time, the fire was confined to the room of origin - a 4% increase from 2018.

Firefighters work quickly to control and extinguish fires in homes, outbuildings, apartments, commercial structures and vehicles.



Rescue

Specially-trained and equipped teams of fire-fighters are prepared for a variety of rescue calls. Twenty MFD firefighters are members of the Rescue Team. They are specifically trained to respond to water and ice rescue calls, as well as technical rescue incidents including confined space rescue, high/low angle (rope) rescue, wilderness rescue, structural collapse, and trench rescue. These team members are spread across the four different battalions.



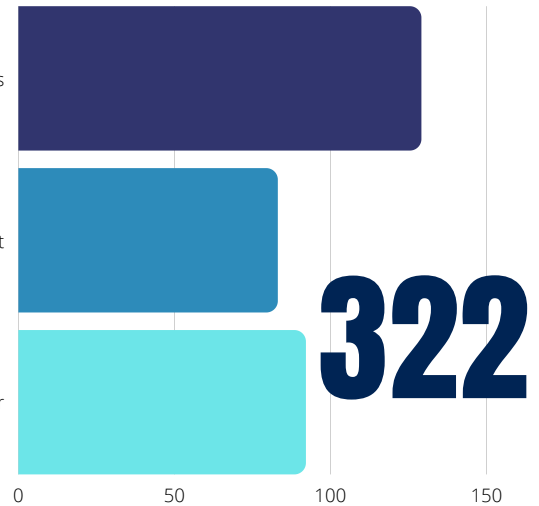
10/14/2021: Overturned tanker on N. Reserve St. Combustibles, Flammable Spills & Leaks



11/18/2021: Garbage truck fire while on route

Accident, Potential Accident

Other



Hazardous Materials

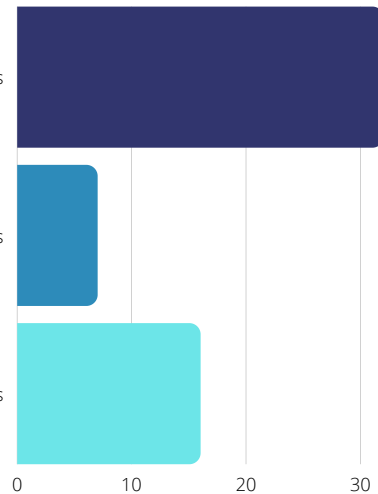
All firefighters are qualified at the hazardous material (HM) operations level and twelve MFD firefighters are hazardous material technician certified. HM incidents dispatch a single engine company to investigate. Other HM incidents (i.e. gas line ruptures, power line response, and vehicle clean ups) involve the assistance of agencies across the county and multiple MFD units.



Engine Visits

Station Tours

CPR Courses



Public Education

While most fire education falls under the responsibility of our Prevention Bureau, Operations provides a joint effort in spreading messages of fire safety, particularly to children. In 2021, we only provided public education for 6 months of the year due to the pandemic.

DIVISION REPORTS

OPERATIONS





APR 7, 2021: SILO RESCUE, WORKER CAUGHT IN A GRAIN SILO. CONFINED SPACE AND HIGH ANGLE RESCUE TECHNIQUES WERE USED



JUNE 29, 2022: GRASS FIRE IN MILLER CREEK



MAY 4, 2021: STODDARD ST STRUCTURE FIRE



MAY 8, 2021: A FRAME STRUCTURE FIRE, MT SENTINEL AREA



JULY 6, 2021: WATERWORKS HILL GRASS FIRE



DEC 20, 2021: OVERTURNED VEHICLE IN RIVER, RESCUE OF DRIVER TRAPPED IN VEHICLE

SIGNIFICANT CALLS IN 2021

OPERATIONS



TRAINING & EMS



TRAINING & EMS

Two cross trained firefighters ensure that personnel at all levels have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to respond to emergency calls.



Mike Thurlow,
Training Officer



Dave Smith,
EMS Coordinator



5

New Firefighters finished Rookie Academy and are on-shift: Cody Edens, Libby Hooper, Cody Warner, Connor Gordon, and Ty Whalen.

4

New paramedics that graduated from the Missoula College's inaugural Paramedic Sciences program: Erin Wilmarth-Klare, Chad Maney, Parker Vaculik and Jack Pickhardt

14

Firefighters earned their 40 hour Acting Capt. Certificate • Donated house on 8th street that provided quality search and rescue drills, first in fire company training, Down FF training, victim removal and ventilation training.

3

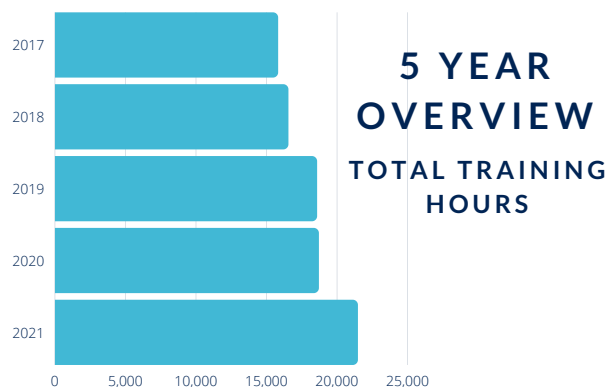
First firefighters to complete the 2021 CIT Academy providing them with training to better manage individuals presenting with mental health and/or co-occurring substance disorders.

4

Peer Fitness Mentors (John Petroff, Andy Drobeck, Joe Waggett and Robert Huus) received training and their Certificate through the IAFF "Fit to Thrive" Program.

25

Personnel completed a 40hr Leadership and Mastering Performance Management Phase I & II course



As the Covid-19 Pandemic continued to impact everyone globally, MFD pressed forward by enforcing substantial changes to response protocols in order to serve the Missoula community.

Additionally, MFD personnel continued to step up in support of filling key roles in county wide response efforts such as testing and vaccine clinics.

Challenges for the Training & EMS Division were centered around pandemic. In early 2021, training hours were low and the cancellation of training courses caused delays. Despite many of the training courses being more effective in-person, MFD adapted many of our training sessions to be held online. Training sessions that couldn't be adapted were delayed until in-person events could resume safely for our first responders.



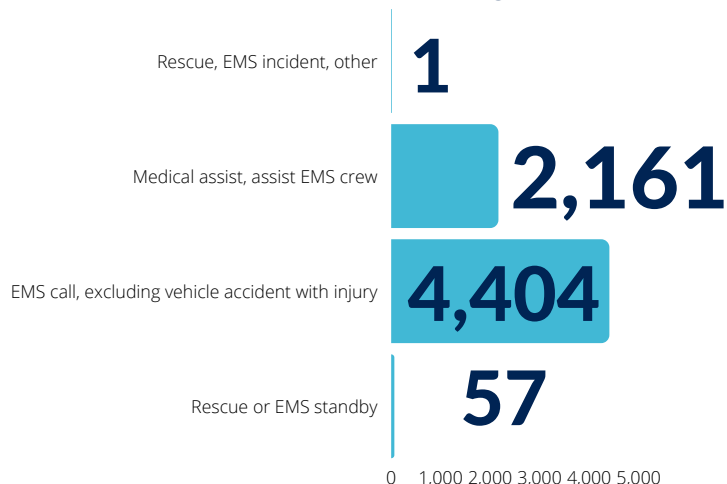
MFD's newest recruits (L to R): Libby Hooper, Cody Edens, Ty Whalen, Connor Gordon, Cody Warner



Missoula College's first Paramedic Sciences graduates (L to R): Erin Wilmarth-Klare, Parker Vaculik, Chad Maney & Jack Pickhardt



2021 EMS INCIDENT CALL BREAKDOWN



Program goals for the Training & EMS division include:

- Seek funding opportunities to build an appropriately located training site that includes a controlled environment to train
- Send additional members to an approved Burn Tower Technician Instructor course
- Seek funding to provide additional mental health first aid training for MFD personnel. (This course specifically focuses on the importance of early intervention and how, as first responders, they can intervene in the field and provide direct assistance to someone who is experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis.)

DIVISION REPORTS

TRAINING & EMS



MAINTENANCE



MAINTENANCE

Three cross-trained firefighters responsible for facilities, apparatus, and equipment maintenance and repairs.



Eric Petroff,
Master Mechanic



Steven Pitman,
Asst. Mechanic



Curt Shields,
Asst. Mechanic

The Maintenance Division is responsible for repair and maintenance of fire department apparatus, equipment and fire facilities. Coordinating warranty and outside repair work, vehicle procurement, firefighter driver and pump training and other responsibilities deemed necessary by administration.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Refurbished a Wildland Type 6 fire engine in house
- Built a new Wildland Type 6 fire engine in house. These are the first rigs we have built in house since 2014
- Put a new Wildland type 3 fire engine in service
- All new front line apparatus are now equipped with Ward No-smoke
- We received a new Type 1 structure Fire Engine the beginning of December.
- With this we were able to purchase a set of battery powered extrication tools and a battery powered ventilation fan. This means all front line fire engines now have battery powered extrication gear and a fan. Not only are these tools more reliable and versatile, they are also one way the Fire Department will be able to contribute toward the City's plan of "Zero by Fifty".



MFD follows NFPA1071, Standard for Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) Professional Qualifications. The Master Mechanic is currently working towards EVT III and Ambulance EVT I certifications and both Assistant Mechanics are working toward these certifications in the near future.

The EVT certification track combines two separate testing agencies, Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) and EVT. To fulfill NFPA standards, both the Master and Assistant Mechanics must take a total of 21 tests and recertify every 5 years to maintain these certifications. Funding to maintain the mechanics' certificate is critical.



Master Mechanic Eric Petroff, Asst. Mechanic Steven Pitman, & Chief Jeff Brandt took a trip to Wisconsin to pick up our new engine.



- Continue to maintain, service and repair our almost 50 apparatus and trailers
- We will be receiving a second Polaris Ranger UTV that we will be outfitting and putting into service.
- We have a new Wildland Type 3 Fire engine on order that we will be taking possession in late 2022 or early 2023
- Draw up plans for a new aerial apparatus and new rescue watercraft
- Install all new radios in all apparatus.
- Work towards replacing one of the aging Fire Prevention Bureau trucks
- Continue to work through the migration of Missoula Fire Departments space needs and future growth



Reserve engine sold to Stevensville Volunteer Fire Department

DIVISION REPORTS

MAINTENANCE



PREVENTION BUREAU



PREVENTION BUREAU

Five cross-trained firefighters dedicated to education, fire and life safety code enforcement, fire investigation, and community risk reduction programs.



Dax Fraser,
Fire Marshal



Adam Sebastian,
Asst. Fire Marshal



Blake Richards,
Fire Inspector



Jamie Porter,
Fire Inspector



Jason Hedahl,
Fire Inspector

The Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) was established for the purpose of ensuring safety practices and fire prevention throughout the City of Missoula. The FPB consists of the Fire Marshal, Assistant Fire Marshal, three Inspectors, and also works closely with the Fire Records Specialist.

FIRE CODE ENFORCEMENT

- Building, Subdivision, and Development Plans Review
- Review and Inspection
- Fire Prevention Inspections
- Operational Permits

PUBLIC FIRE & SAFETY EDUCATION

- Fire Safety and Escape Planning
- Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention
- Prevention Education & Information Dissemination

FIRE CAUSE INVESTIGATION

- Fire Cause and Origin Determination
- Arson Investigation and Prosecution
- Fire inquiry and/or Death Investigation

24

Total number of schools that participated in the annual fall Fire Prevention Puppet Show presentation

1,337

Total number of children that recieved fire safety/fire prevention education



MFD partners with the Missoula County Fire Protection Association to provide annual Match Safety and Fire Prevention puppet shows in schools in and around Missoula.



The Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) provides fire extinguisher and fire prevention safety training to members of our community.

The FPB also completes fire and life safety compliance inspections intended to identify breaches in fire code. The FPB begins code enforcement at the plan review stage. The upgraded capability to complete in-house plan reviews was put to task in 2020 when nearly all meetings and communication happened virtually for this portion of the building and inspection process.

1,023

Total Inspections completed

273

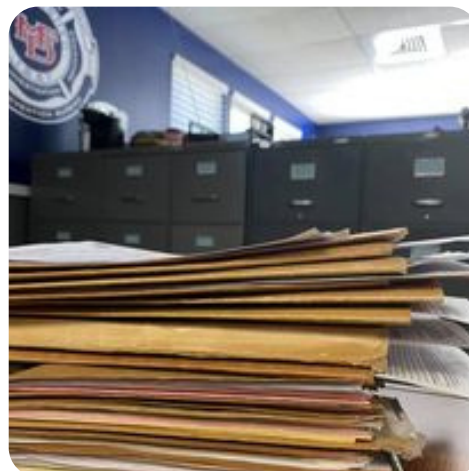
Plans reviewed

657

Violations Noted

53

Fires Investigated



DIVISION REPORTS

PREVENTION BUREAU



HEALTH & WELLNESS



HEALTH & WELLNESS

One cross-trained firefighter that provides guidance and oversight to the Peer Support Team, Peer Fitness Team, & Mobile Support Team



John Petroff,
Health & Wellness Coordinator



Erika Gotcher, Ben Mouser, & Alex Ohman,
Mobile Support Team EMTs

In 2020, Missoula Fire Department established a separate division to address Health and Wellness for both the community and the employees therein.

It is chaired by a coordinator that oversees a number of programs including the Missoula Mobile Support Team, the Peer Support Team, and the Peer Fitness Team. This new role is set to grow with the department and the community and we're excited for the possibilities it holds.



Peer Support Team

MFD's Peer Support Team members are trained MFD/Local 271 individuals who seek out and talk with other peers about behavioral health concerns and connect members with helpful services. When a member or crew is involved in a critical incident, showing signs of PTSD, or has been involved in multiple traumatic dispatches, the Peer Support Team can provide confidential support by a trained Peer Support Leader or Peer Support Team member.



Peer Fitness Team

MFD's Peer Fitness Team members are trained MFD/Local 271 individuals who stay connected and provide support to their peers in an effort to motivate each other to stay safe, healthy and active. The goal of the Peer Fitness team is to prepare each other for life--today, tomorrow, and into retirement.

Mobile Support Team



676

Total number of clients served.

1HR 25MIN

Average time spent per client.

274

Missoula Fire Dept. assisted calls.

1,029

Missoula Police Dept. assisted calls.



1,303

101

2020 2021

The call volume for the Mobile Support Team has increased significantly since its inception in 2020

In coordination with Partnership Health Center (PHC), the Missoula Fire Department and PHC have developed a program aimed at diverting people with low-risk behavioral health issues from jail and hospital emergency departments. The Missoula Mobile Support Team (MST) was implemented in the Fall, 2020 and currently works in collaboration with the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT).

The goal of this program is to provide the right care in the right setting to people experiencing urgent behavioral health needs.

The program also looks to reduce the time and resources Missoula first responders spend addressing situations where behavioral health is a chief concern and to decrease the number of arrests and emergency room visits.

The MST currently responds with law enforcement to behavioral health-related 911 calls. The response units consist of a licensed mental health clinician and an emergency medical technician (EMT). The MST also has a Case Facilitator who follows up with clients to provide resource navigation.



Mobile Support Team
Photo Credit: Gretchen Neal

HEALTH & WELLNESS





PRIORITIES & TRANSITION

Priorities

With recent annexations and consistent population and housing growth, it is imperative that the Missoula Fire Department is able to adequately serve the Missoula community and support our surrounding communities.

Funding

Supporting the Missoula community is MFD's key priority and in order to do so effectively, funding is needed to meet the demands of our growing community. Without adequate funding resources are stretched thin, response times are impacted, and personnel become overwhelmed which in turn impacts the community.

Station Growth

With call volume surpassing 10,000 and both population and areas of the city limits expanding at an incredible rate, MFD recognizes the need to grow our facilities and response areas. Adding a sixth station to serve our community is paramount to our overall success. When we examine the largest and busiest districts, as well as the City's plans for growth, MFD has found one potential space for a sixth station at George Elmer and England Boulevard. This station would serve the airport and industrial park annexation areas along with providing support and coverage for the overburdened district 4.

Personnel Growth

As current personnel transition into other positions throughout the department or plan for retirement, MFD's priority is to maintain a healthy team of first responders to meet the needs of our citizens. Whether it be firefighters, the Mobile Support Team EMTs, or our administrative support staff, we must rise to the challenge of responding to our growing community's needs.



Congratulations!

Following decades of service to the Missoula community, two of MFD's finest retired on 12/31/2021. We will miss them and are grateful for their service.



KIP KNAPSTAD, BATTALION CHIEF

Battalion Chief Kip Knapstad joined MFD in 1988, and served the Missoula community in every position of the operations division. He brought with him an honest perspective and championed for everyone and all those he worked with now retired. The safety and development of those he most closely worked with was always his top priority. We'll miss Kip for his years of experience both MFD and his wildland days, his staunch work ethic, his calm presence, and his friendly nature.

Chad Kidd has been selected to fill Kip's shoes as Battalion Chief.



JEFF BRANDT, FIRE CHIEF

Chief Jeff Brandt joined MFD in 1992. After he served our country in the U.S. Air Force. Jeff rose through the operations division reaching the rank of Captain. He accepted the role of Assistant Chief then Fire Chief in 2018. Jeff will always be known as the Chief who brought single station dispatch tones and which provides better working conditions for all, collectively negotiating several Union contracts (from both sides). We will miss his candor and motivation to get things done.

Gordy Hughes has been selected and confirmed by city council and Mayor Engen to be the new Fire Chief.



TRANSITION



*Thank you for
your support!*

