



Seattle Fire Department Annual Report

2023

HERE TO SERVE SINCE 1889

INTEGRITY

TEAMWORK

COMPASSION

COURAGE

DIVERSITY

Photo by John Odegard

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Photo by John Odegard

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



"THE MOST DIFFICULT THING IS THE DECISION TO ACT;
THE REST IS MERELY TENACITY. THE FEARS ARE PAPER TIGERS.
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU DECIDE TO DO."

- AMELIA EARHART

This past year has kept the Seattle Fire Department extremely busy with a rising call load. We have seen an increase in calls across many areas, including vacant building fires, scenes of violence, automatic fire alarms, suspected overdoses and responses to those who are unhoused.

A concerning trend we have begun to see is an increase in cardiac arrests, which appears to be correlated with the rise in suspected overdoses.

In all, we sent resources on a record-setting 111,319 responses in 2023 – a nearly five percent increase over the prior year.

We know the rapid pace of change in the firefighting landscape is having a significant impact on our personnel, mentally and physically. With the support of various partners, we are making significant investments in our behavioral health program to ensure our personnel have the resources to productively handle the stressors that come along with this profession. Our deepest appreciation to the Seattle Fire Foundation, Gary Sinise Foundation, Amazon and Seattle's Bravest Charity for supporting these efforts in 2023.



Despite the challenges, we made considerable strides forward in 2023:

- We transitioned one of our Health One units into Health 99 to respond specifically to overdoses
- City Council added 26 new full-time uniformed positions to the department to staff Ladder 13 and Medic 26 in West Seattle as well as two other much-needed positions
- Partnering with FAS, we selected a bidder to build a new Fire Station 31 in the Northgate area
- We celebrated the second full year of the Nurse Navigation program and launched an AI component to our dispatch system to route calls for service more quickly
- The Fire Prevention Division greatly reduced the permit turnaround times
- We welcomed many new professional staff members and graduated 59 recruits from the training academy

None of this would be possible without the efforts of so many incredible personnel at the Seattle Fire Department and support of the Seattle community. We thank each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Fire Chief Harold D. Scoggins

ABOUT US

OUR VISION

The vision for the Seattle Fire Department is to be a national leader in responding to and preventing emergencies with a commitment to excellence and teamwork.

The Seattle Fire Department strives to provide the best service possible by putting the community and its needs first. It is the department's goal to actively engage Seattle's residents. The Seattle Fire Department values and respects diverse internal and external cultures, constantly working to improve service delivery to all community members. Through feedback and other cooperative communication processes, the department works to ensure the community is informed of and able to access programs and services.

The Seattle Fire Department was established by Seattle Ordinance No. 1212 on Oct. 17, 1889. The services provided by the Seattle Fire Department include:

- Critical fire suppression and emergency medical care
- Technical teams, including technical and heavy rescue, dive rescue, tunnel rescue, marine fire response and hazardous materials (HazMat) response
- Fire prevention and public education
- Fire investigation
- Mutual aid response to neighboring jurisdictions

Integrity: We are honest, trustworthy and accountable. Honor guides our actions.

Teamwork: We each bring our own skills and experience, yet we recognize that we are better together. We support and depend on each other to achieve our goals.

Compassion: Caring is part of our job. We could not do what we do without a deep and motivating empathy for those we serve.

Courage: We show fortitude and determination in a crisis.

Diversity: We respect the different identities, experiences and perspectives of those that we work with and the community we serve.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Seattle Fire Department is to save lives and protect property through emergency medical service, fire and rescue response and fire prevention. We respond immediately when any member of our community needs help with professional, effective and compassionate service.



HIGHLIGHTS

SEATTLE FIRE GIVES BACK

In March, Seattle Fire's Team Tristan climbed the Columbia Tower to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. They were the top fundraising team in 2023 (\$138,000) and were also recognized for raising more than \$1 million over the history of Seattle Fire's participation.

Firefighters and professional staff volunteered in May to build a tiny home for the Sound Foundation's NW Hope Factory. These small units provide a transitional shelter until permanent housing is available for those experiencing homelessness. Together with a few other friends, the team turned a pile of lumber into a home – the 362nd one constructed at the Hope Factory.

Our members also took to the streets with their boots in their hands to collect funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association between Sept. 9 and 11. This was the first year we have helped raise funds since the pandemic began.



WILDLAND AND USAR DEPLOYMENTS

Twenty-two specially-trained members of Seattle Fire were sent to Maui in August to perform search and rescue operations after the devastating wildfire that leveled much of historic Lahaina. Our personnel joined others from Washington Task Force 1, coordinated by Pierce County Dept. of Emergency Management, to form an 80-person team that spent nearly two weeks assisting in the search for and recovery of missing people.

One member also deployed to New England in July to provide haz mat expertise in the flooding that occurred there.

Our wildfire trained members were deployed to several incidents throughout the region: The Lookout, Pete's Lake, Bedrock, Gray and Oregon Road, Sourdough, Winona, Margarita, Wawawai, Tunnel 5, Baird Springs and Boulder fires.

DESTINATION CITY

The City of Seattle was a popular destination for major events and activities in 2023. From sold out concerts by Taylor Swift to the 2023 Major League Baseball All-Star Game Week and the NHL Winter Classic, and events of all sizes in between, Seattle Fire played a significant role in protecting the health and safety of everyone involved.

Large special events can require months and even years-long coordination and planning before the first fan, athlete or performer steps in the venue. Our personnel have a hand in the action plans, logistics, hazardous materials detection, fire prevention, incident command and emergency operations center staffing in addition to regular in-venue event staffing.

Each event helps us prepare for the next. We're looking forward to the next major event when we welcome the world to Seattle for a series of World Cup qualifying matches in 2026.

SFD ANNUAL AWARDS

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We are grateful for the support of several foundations that provided new equipment, training and program funding:

The Medic One Foundation provided funding for CPR manikins, PulsePoint application and 19 video laryngoscopes used by paramedics to intubate patients in the field. They also provided scholarships for all paramedic program students who graduated in July 2023.

Through donations, sponsorships and its first large-scale dinner auction, the Seattle Fire Foundation (SFF) provided financial support for the USAR and Peer Support Therapy Dog teams; two Seattle Colleges Fire Science Degree scholarships; preservation of Seattle Fire's history through the Last Resort Fire Department; weight racks in 10 fire station gyms; and two rescue watercraft.

Amazon and the Gary Sinise Foundation selected Seattle Fire as beneficiary of their First Responder Outreach grant. Working through the SFF, they purchased 900 pairs of rescue extrication gloves and invested \$60,000 to enhance behavioral health and wellness programs.

The One Roof Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Seattle Kraken, also donated \$32,000 to the SFF through its Heroes of the Deep recognition to benefit the Health One program.

The James D. and Sherry Raisbeck Foundation donated \$73,000 to the SFF to purchase 78 new thermal imaging cameras.



In October, the department held its annual awards ceremony at the Embassy Suites in Pioneer Square. The department wishes to thank the Seattle Fire Foundation and generous event sponsors. Their financial support allowed all Seattle Fire employees to attend at no cost. More than 350 employees, winners' guests and community members celebrated all of the recipients across multiple categories. The department is proud of each winner for their contributions and service to the community.



Lori Chan
Civilian of the Year



Firefighter Aaron McCandless
Firefighter of the Year



Captain Jon Goins
Officer of the Year



Battalion Chief Jared Fields
Chief of the Year



Battalion Chief Smokey Simpson
Lifetime Achievement



Barbara Breit
Lifetime Achievement



Traci Bunker
Customer Service Award



Lieutenant Toby Graves
Lifetime Achievement



Firefighter Scott Houle
Lifetime Achievement





Photo by Russ Read

EVERY SECOND COUNTS

CASCADE OF EVENTS

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) has defined response time elements as a cascade of events. This cascade is similar to that used by the medical community to describe the events leading up to the initiation, mitigation and ultimate outcome of a cardiac arrest. It is imperative to keep in mind that certain intervals described, such as turnout and travel time, can

be directly influenced by the fire service via station locations and design, staffing levels as well as local rules and procedures for response. Other factors, such as the alarm interval, can be influenced indirectly through public education and engineering initiatives. The fire service can also influence the call-processing interval through its ability to define standards and compel performance by its dispatch centers.

TIME TEMPERATURE STANDARD

The “time-temperature curve” standard is based on data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Insurance Services Organization (ISO), which have established that a typical point source of ignition in a residential house will “flashover” at some time between five and 10 minutes after ignition, turning a typical “room and contents” fire into a structural fire of some magnitude.

The utility of the time-temperature curve for fire station placement is limited to a number of factors including:

- It does not account for the time required for the existence of a fire to be “discovered” and reported to the fire department via the 911 system.
- The time from ignition to flashover varies widely (five to 30 minutes depending on building characteristics); thus it cannot provide a valid basis for the allocation of resources.
- The curve is constantly shifting, given the numerous changes in building construction, built in suppression systems, the increased use of fire resistive materials for furniture and other items typically found in the interior of occupied buildings.

In communities where the fire service is the principal provider of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) first response, the goal is for basic life support (CPR and defibrillation) to be available to the victim of a cardiac arrest within four minutes of the event, and that advanced life support (paramedic service) should be available within eight minutes or less of the event. Early notification, distribution and concentration of emergency response services are thus paramount to successful resuscitation efforts.

THE GOLDEN HOUR STANDARD

In trauma events, the golden hour is the historic benchmark applied to victims with significant critical traumatic injuries. The golden hour reflects the concept that survivability decreases significantly if the patient isn’t in the operating room within one hour of receiving a critical traumatic injury.

RESPONSE STANDARDS

These response standards measure the delivery of fire suppression, technical rescue response and emergency medical services. Guided by National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 1710, the standards protect the community and occupational health and safety of Seattle Fire employees. The call processing standard is guided by NFPA 1225 (2022).

RESPONSE TOTALS	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Responses	93,233	106,453	111,319
Basic Life Support	56,208	64,127	66,336
Advanced Life Support	12,356	14,681	16,407
Fire	24,255	27,180	28,107
Special Operations	361	407	385
Mutual Aid	53	58	84

The "Fire" category includes any incident where firefighters don turnout gear (eg: fires, vehicle collisions, etc.) These response standards measure the delivery of fire suppression, technical rescue response and emergency medical services.

CALL VOLUME	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Calls	186,571	202,344	206,482
Emergency Calls	158,664	172,568	176,513
Admin Calls	27,907	29,776	29,969

The Fire Alarm Center is staffed 24/7 by firefighter/EMTs who have completed more than 1,000 hours of additional training to become certified dispatchers.

CALL PROCESSING	2021	2022	2023
Calls processed within 60 seconds	59%	60%	51%

NFPA 1225 (2022) states that 90% of the time dispatch centers should process high acuity fire and EMS calls within 60 seconds. This is the time from when the phone is first picked up to a unit assigned.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL	2021	2022	2023
EMS turnout time is within 60 seconds	59%	55%	57%

SFD turnout time standard is 60 seconds, 90% of the time. This is the time span between a unit being assigned to being en route.

First BLS unit arrival is within 4 minutes	73%	75%	74%
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SFD response time standard for the arrival of the first Basic Life Support unit (aid car, fire engine, ladder truck) is four minutes, 90% of the time. This is the time span between a unit being en route to on-scene.

First ALS unit arrival is within 8 minutes	81%	82%	78%
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SFD response time standard for the arrival of an Advanced Life Support unit (medic unit with two firefighter/paramedics) is eight minutes, 90% of the time. This is the time span between a unit being en route to on-scene.

Average number of EMS responses per paramedic unit per day	4.72	5.74	5.04
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2022 number does not include Medic 44.

Total Advanced Life Support transports	5,936	6,154	5,050
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Includes total transports by medic and aid units.

FIREFIGHTING	2021	2022	2023
Fire turnout time is within 80 seconds	58%	60%	67%

SFD turnout time standard is 80 seconds, 90% of the time. This is the time span between a unit being assigned to being en route.

First engine arrival is within 4 minutes	75%	76%	77%
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SFD response time standard for the arrival of the first fire engine is four minutes, 90% of the time. This is the time span between a unit being en route to on-scene.

First full alarm arrival is within 8 minutes	91%	95%	99%
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SFD response time standard for the arrival of a first full alarm assignment is eight minutes, 90% of the time. This is the time span between a unit being en route to on-scene.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

The Behavioral Health and Peer Support programs serve to support Seattle Fire's uniformed and professional staff in the face of potentially challenging and stressful situations on a day-to-day basis.

The mental and emotional stress of the job require active strategies to combat mental health struggles, substance abuse, empathy fatigue and burnout.

In 2023, we focused on expanding our capacity to not only support people after a stressful event, but to equip our people with the tools and habits that can both enhance their ability to perform their duties and limit the potential negative impacts on mental, emotional and relational health.

The Peer Support team is always inventing new ways of ensuring support is at the ready. We ensured all members understand the resources available by upgrading our intranet resources, sharing information on the monthly all-hands meetings and internal newsletter, and developing a monthly drill that detailed how to use Peer resources and when to call for support. Peers also conducted two Applied Suicide Intervention Skills courses to help participants feel ready, willing and able to help someone that may be feeling suicidal.

We also expanded our offerings to include courses and coaching that focus on building habits that boost resilience under challenging circumstances. Our team's skill set is expanding to certify thirteen members as proactive resilience coaches through the UC-SD Center for Mindfulness - thanks to the generosity of the Seattle Fire Foundation, Seattle's Bravest Charity and Amazon/the Gary Sinise Foundation.



Accomplishments include:

- Enhancing the Peer Support team by five to 53 peers available to provide confidential help for any employee encountering professional or personal stress
- Providing hundreds of peer support interventions to support colleagues post-incident and during challenging personal circumstance
- Supporting the workforce with visits from the extremely popular Peer Support "Firedogs" Therapy Dog teams after challenging shifts or to boost morale
- Conducting Resiliency workshops on trauma, growth mindset and cognitive flexibility/self-regulation
- Offering a screening and facilitated discussion of the film "The Call We Carry" to destigmatize the conversation about mental health and the trials of the job
- Partnering with other organizations to strategize implementation of wellness best practices
- Supporting our Peer Support team by offering ongoing educational and restorative opportunities



MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTH PROGRAM



The Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program has a dual mandate: to reduce the impact of frequent or lower-priority calls on the Operations division and to serve clients referred by firefighters and partners. These clients are often highly vulnerable or needy. In 2023, the program grew and adapted to new challenges.

MIH onboarded 16 new firefighters and one case manager in 2023. All incoming firefighters completed a new full-time training program that combines time on the rigs, classes, self-study and ride-alongs.

The additional team members joined at a time of continued referral growth: 2,968 over the course of the year, encompassing direct Operations requests, Vulnerable Adult reports and EMS records referrals. These referrals originated from every SFD unit and a majority of firefighters. Of these, the team accepted 835 for outreach and case management and an additional 1,064 for other services such as referral to fall prevention and care coordination.

In the face of the ongoing fentanyl crisis, Mayor Harrell issued an executive order in the spring mandating the department to join mitigation efforts. These efforts became the Post-Overdose Response Team, or HEALTH99. Launched in July with a small cadre of case managers and firefighters, the team quickly embarked on a plan of study to learn about overdose, opioid use disorders, treatment options, referral sources and more.

At the same time it began forging relationships with clinical, outreach, academic and other partners in the field. At the end of the year, HEALTH99 had responded to over 200 overdoses with plans for further growth and specialization in 2024.

For its efforts with Health One and on behalf of its clients, the MIH team received an award in November from the Seattle Management Association.



OPERATIONS

NEW FULL-TIME POSITIONS APPROVED

City Council and the Mayor approved in the 2024 budget 26 new positions for uniformed firefighters to be assigned to Medic 26, Ladder 13 and serve as Paramedic Training captain with the Medic One Program. Previously, council members and the Mayor acted to support the permanent operation of the ladder and medic units to provide more fire and emergency medical services in West Seattle.

FIRE SIMULATION LABS

In November, Seattle Fire introduced simulation training for officers. The department is the first in the U.S. to conduct decentralized simulation training for company officers. Sim Labs provide opportunities for company officers to employ their decision making and, afterwards, discuss the impacts of these decisions with fellow officers. This training seeks to provide officers a jump start in their problem solving when on scene. When the time comes to make a decision under pressure, the repetition and breadth of knowledge reinforced in simulation labs will strengthen officers' decisions.



Photo by John Odegard



HONING OUR PERFORMANCE

In the last several years, the Operations division has built out several programs that reinforce and instill how firefighters perform on the fireground.

Standard Operating Guidelines – or SOGs – give firefighter strategic and tactical guidance for responding to emergency incidents such as low-rise buildings and single-family residences. A team creates draft guidelines, which are vetted throughout the department and when finalized, coordinated with the Training division for ongoing training. Even after development, the SOGs are reviewed and updated. In 2023, the department created three new SOGs and revised two others:

- Fire in Building with Barricaded Suspect
- Multiple Casualty Incident
- Rope Rescue
- Single-Family Residence (revised)
- General Fire Operations (revised)

Deputy 1 Significant Incident Reports (D1SIRs) allow us to reflect on how our performance compared to what the SOGs say we should be doing at incident scenes. Incidents are chosen for review then company officers are asked to facilitate discussion with their companies. These reports capture vital learning outcomes, recognize operational excellence and serve as opportunities for additional training. Operations completed 95 of these reports in 2023.

Similarly, the department collects, analyzes and documents lessons learned and effective actions taken in its Post Incident Analysis (PIA) program. Seattle Fire published three PIAs in 2023.

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

Feb. 11

Two-alarm fire in South Delridge: Upon arrival, firefighters saw flames from the exterior of the building and found one patient who had self-evacuated but sustained injuries from the fire. The 35-year-old male was treated and transported by paramedics to Harborview Medical Center in serious condition. The fire had spread to all three floors but crews had the fire under control within 10 minutes of arriving on scene. Total estimated loss was \$1,300,000.



March 27

Harbor Island confined space rescue: Crews responded to Harbor Island for a patient who was trapped deep inside a barge undergoing maintenance and was unable to self-extricate. Rescue crews worked quickly to remove the patient from below deck. The patient was evaluated by paramedics and transported to the hospital.



June 5

Wind-driven two alarm fire: A fire on the 300 block of NE 133rd St. quickly extended from an outdoor deck into the primary residence, an adjacent residence and detached garage. Crews worked together to knock down the fires in both homes while searching for anyone inside. Fortunately, both homes were all clear and no injuries were reported. Total estimated loss was \$550,000.

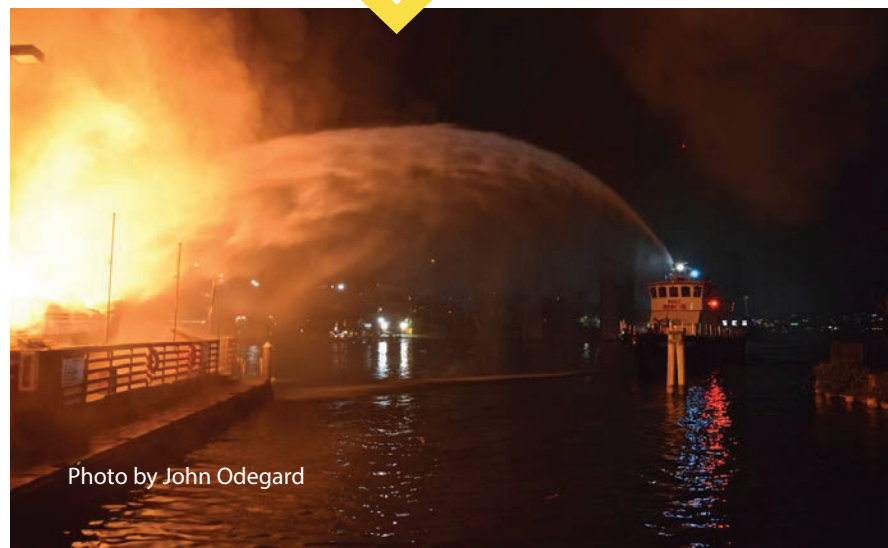
Feb. 26

Discovery Park rope rescue: Crews rescued a patient who had fallen off the trails on Magnolia Bluffs. A high angle rope rescue was initiated to safely bring the patient up the cliff to the awaiting medic unit.



March 22

Two-alarm fire in high-rise boat storage: Crews responded to an intentionally set fire at a boat storage facility on the 700 block of NE Northlake Way. With flames visible from several blocks out, the first arriving Battalion Chief requested a second alarm. Seattle Fire and Seattle Police water-based resources responded, applying water and foam. A fire watch was maintained into the following evening to ensure complete extinguishment. Total estimated loss was \$8,500,000.



May 16

HazMat Response in Holly Park Neighborhood: An unknown odor caused respiratory issues for residents on the third floor of a seven-story apartment building in the 6900 block of Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. Firefighters encountered several residents experiencing symptoms related to the unknown substance, evacuated the third floor and prohibited entrance to the building as a safety precaution. A total of ten people were treated at the scene: seven residents and staff and three firefighters.



June 16

Water rescue with patient extrication: A water rescue response was sent to the Montlake Cut for a drowning victim who was 30-feet below the surface. Rescue swimmers found the patient and removed them to the shore where they were transported to the hospital. The two witnesses who called 911 were able to provide information to rescue swimmers.



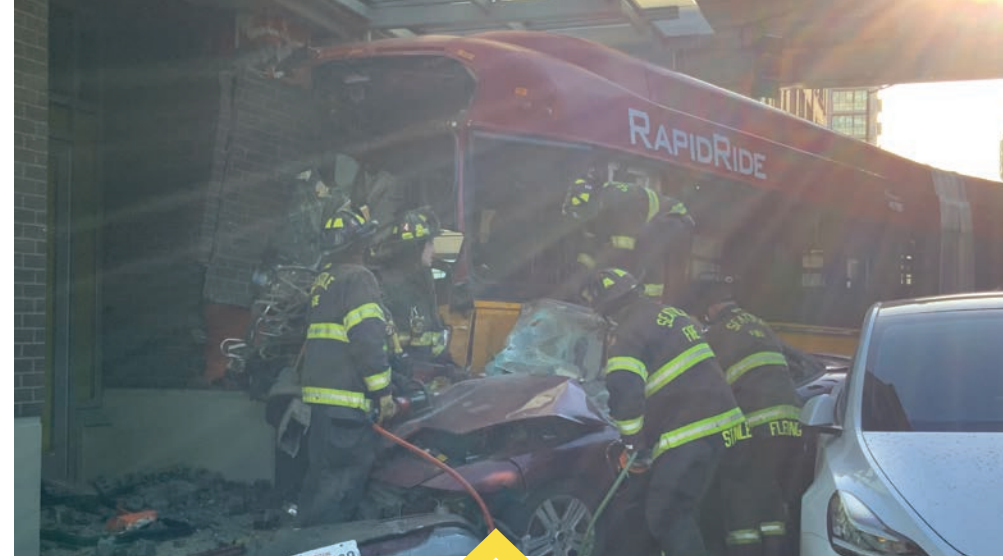
Photo by Alabhya_Spurs on Twitter

July 12

Two-alarm vacant apartment building fire: Crews arrived within four minutes to smoke and flames coming from the top floor of a four-story vacant apartment building in the 1000 block of 9th Ave. Firefighters conducted a search and rescued an approximately 26-year-old male found on the top floor of the building. With flames breaching through the roof, firefighters were ordered to evacuate due to concerns of a structural collapse and transitioned to a defensive fire attack. Total estimated loss was \$0 as the building was vacant.

July 24

Vacant building fire in the University District: Initial arriving units confirmed heavy smoke and flames breaching through the roof of a structure in the 5500 block of University Way NE. Crews opened the main entrance and immediately encountered flames at the doorway, forcing firefighters into a defensive strategy. There were reports from bystanders that a missing person was last seen on the roof of the building – a search of the roof and perimeter was conducted but firefighters were unable to locate anyone.



Nov. 4

Rescue extrication: A collision involving one vehicle and a King County Metro bus at the intersection of 5th Ave and Battery St. caused the bus to leave the roadway, strike a pedestrian and crash into a building. The pedestrian was pronounced deceased on scene. With multiple patients needing care, the incident was upgraded to a multiple casualty incident. Rescue crews evaluated the building due to the strong impact caused by the bus.

Nov. 28

Columbia City vacant commercial building fire: As firefighters approached the scene, they reported flames showing through the roof of a vacant building located on the 4200 block of Rainier Ave. S. Incident command upgraded the response to a 2-alarm fire for a total of over 80 firefighters on scene. Boarded windows and doors were opened up to gain access to the fire, but the heavy smoke, high heat and collapsing roof led incident command to transition to a defensive strategy.

July 20

Vacant Chinatown-International District warehouse fire: Arriving firefighters confirmed smoke and flames breaching through the roof of the vacant warehouse. Crews transitioned to a defensive strategy and put water on the fire from a safe distance away. The incident was upgraded to a 2-alarm response to request additional units to protect an adjacent building from the fire. Firefighters searched the adjacent building to confirm no one was inside.



Photo by John Odegard

July 20

Brush fire on greenspace adjacent to I-5: A brush fire near the 3100 block of 12th Ave. S. quickly upgraded to a brush fire major due to warm and dry conditions, which pushed the fire up the hill. One patient with burns to their hands and feet was rescued and treated by paramedics and then transported to a hospital.

Aug. 20

Vacant building fire on Aurora Ave. N.: Firefighters were dispatched to a fire in a vacant structure in the Bitter Lake neighborhood and arrived to find flames visible from the exterior with heavy fire and high heat conditions throughout the building. The fire had reached the void space and the building quickly became well-involved in fire. Crews fought the fire defensively and put water on the fire via ladder pipe operations and by deploying hand lines.



Photo by John Odegard



Photo by John Odegard

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

NEW PARAMEDICS

Six Seattle firefighters graduated from the rigorous Michael K. Copass MD Paramedic Training program in 2023. Along with their cohorts in Paramedic Class 49, they completed 2,750 hours of classroom training, clinical rotations and field training in 10 months to earn this credential. Congratulations to Thomas Applegate, James Bowman, Timothy Douglas III, Chris Gutierrez, Jordan Hoffman and Aaron Mainer.

Seattle Fire is proud to provide ongoing support for the UW's paramedic training program by allowing students to ride on Seattle Medic One units and be trained and mentored by our paramedics. Our appreciation to the Medic One Foundation for their financial support.

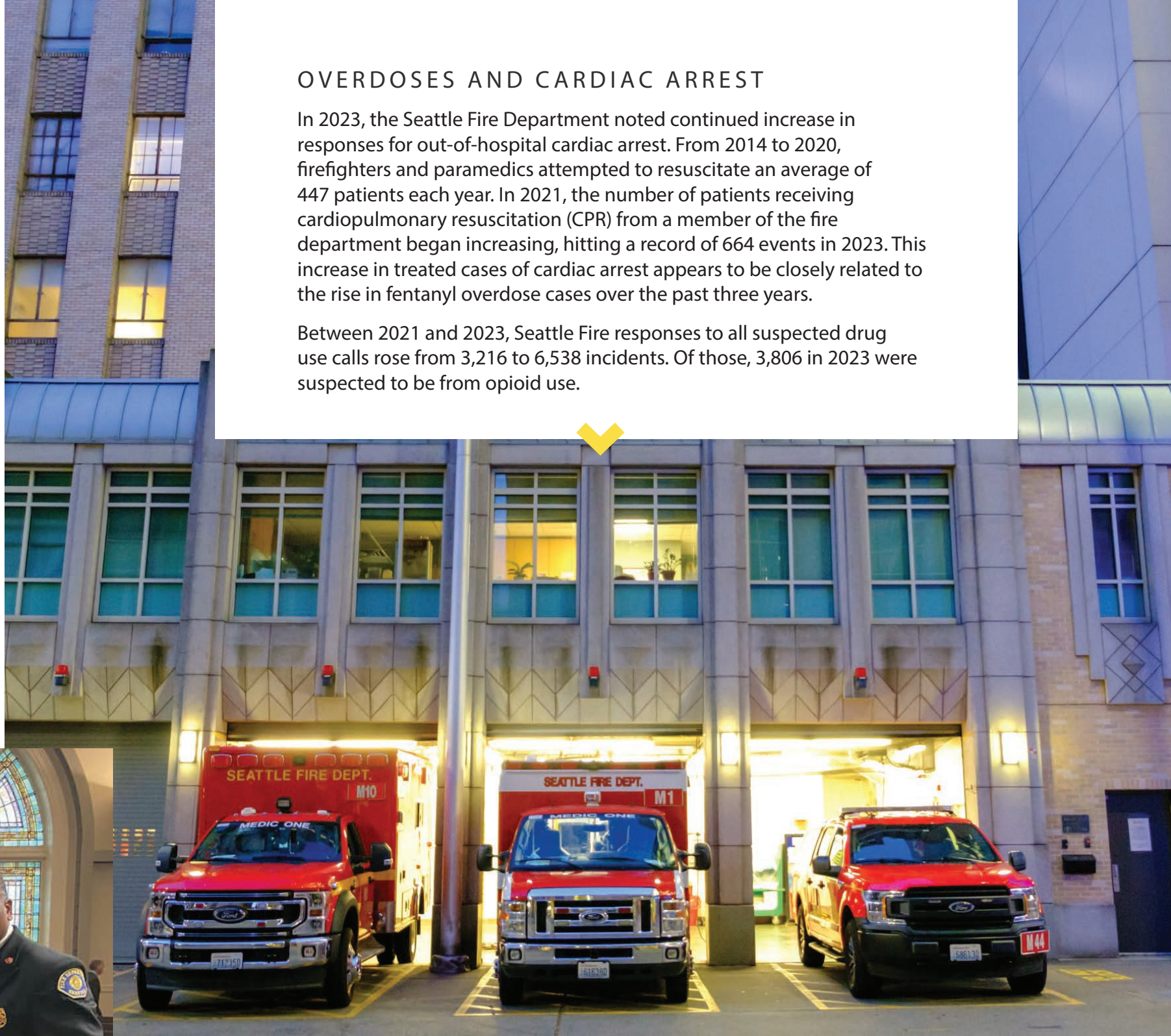
NEW PARAMEDIC CAPTAIN

The Michael K. Copass MD Paramedic Training Program and the Medic One Foundation have together developed a strategic plan with three major goals: modernizing and strengthening the training program, expanding its impact, and scaling to meet the staffing needs of the region. To help accomplish these goals and bring Paramedic Training and its host agency into even closer alignment, an MSO Captain position with Seattle Fire was created and funded by the Medic One Foundation. This position addresses the long-standing need for a cultural and operational liaison between the agencies and is intended to facilitate communication and collaboration through the strategic planning period and beyond.

OVERDOSES AND CARDIAC ARREST

In 2023, the Seattle Fire Department noted continued increase in responses for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. From 2014 to 2020, firefighters and paramedics attempted to resuscitate an average of 447 patients each year. In 2021, the number of patients receiving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from a member of the fire department began increasing, hitting a record of 664 events in 2023. This increase in treated cases of cardiac arrest appears to be closely related to the rise in fentanyl overdose cases over the past three years.

Between 2021 and 2023, Seattle Fire responses to all suspected drug use calls rose from 3,216 to 6,538 incidents. Of those, 3,806 in 2023 were suspected to be from opioid use.



VIDEO LARYNGOSCOPES

All paramedics are now trained and using video laryngoscopes for patient intubations. These new devices enable a better overall first-attempt success rate at intubation.



CPR PATIENT THANKS RESPONDERS

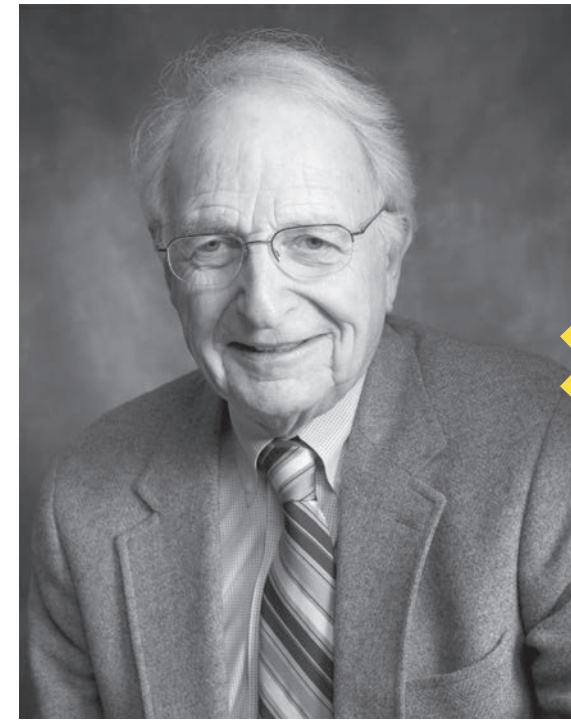
Last September, Randall Berg suffered a heart attack on greens at the West Seattle Golf Course. Fellow golfers rushed to help until firefighter/EMTs and paramedics could arrive. Those precious minutes of hands-only CPR gave Randall the best shot at survival.

After his recovery, Randall and a few of the golf course's "first responders" came by Fire Station 32 to thank crews. His experience is also helping others. Because of his experience, more than 70 members signed up to learn CPR from Seattle Fire's Medic 2 program.

We know that CPR given by bystanders saves lives. Every minute that goes by without someone receiving chest compressions, drops their chance of survival by 10 percent.

Seattle is known as the best place to have a heart attack because so many residents know the basics of hands-only CPR. In fact, more than one million community members in Seattle/King County have learned CPR through our Medic 2 program.

Become part of our community's life saving team by learning CPR. Email medic2@seattle.gov to request a class for yourself, a business or organization in Seattle city limits.



TRIBUTE TO MEDIC ONE CO-FOUNDER

Dr. Leonard Cobb, luminary in the field of pre-hospital cardiac care, passed away on Feb. 14, 2023. His accomplishments were many, but one of the most notable was helping establish Seattle's Medic One paramedic program in 1970, and the creation of bystander CPR training for non-medical professionals a year later. Both programs have earned international recognition and inspired other fire and EMS agencies to follow. Dr. Cobb was medical director of Seattle Medic One until 1993, but continued to be influential in paramedic excellence well into his 90s.

Photo from a training exercise



FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION

The Fire Prevention Division (FPD) is responsible for developing and enforcing the City's Fire Code. The Seattle Fire Code provides fire and life safety standards for buildings, activities and hazardous processes. Our work helps protect our communities and workers from fires, explosions and dangerous conditions. The code helps prevent dangerous conditions at home, at work and through the city where people recreate, whether at the movies, a shopping mall, or a large fair or festival. The fire code also helps protect our residents' property and ensure firefighter and emergency responder safety during emergency operations.

Our employees are full-time firefighters, fire officers, professional engineers and administrative personnel. The division is service-oriented and one of our key roles is to provide information to the public, small and large business owners, event promoters, developers, architects and contractors. We coordinate inspections when residents notify us of possible fire code violations they have spotted in their neighborhood. Our team also investigates fires, including fires caused by arson and natural causes.

20,000

fire inspections logged

27,000

fire protection systems tracked

293

fire incidents investigated by FIU



Photo by John Odegard



SPECIAL EVENTS & TEMPORARY ASSEMBLY PERMITS

The FPD Special Events team is a crucial part of the safety for all sorts of large events in Seattle, including SeaFair, PrideFest, New Year's at the Space Needle, major concerts and professional sporting events. Our inspectors review floor plans prior to events and are present during events to help monitor elements of fire safety such as emergency exiting and overcrowding. Fire Prevention officers conducted approximately 2,039 inspections for special events, including tents used by businesses and schools operating outdoors, as well as fairs, festivals and farmers markets. A total of 1,368 permits related to temporary events were issued in 2023, including food trucks and special assemblies (e.g. weddings, conventions and concerts).

SYSTEMS TESTING

In case of emergency, your life may depend on whether the fire alarm or sprinkler in your building activates. Our division provided oversight to testing and repairs of over 27,000 fire protection systems in approximately 14,000 buildings in Seattle. Nearly 3,000 of those systems were repaired during 2023, which has an important impact on preserving lives and protecting property. At the end of 2023, there were still more than 4,000 systems with deficiencies in Seattle, so a high volume of work remains. We remain understaffed in this program area, with just a single inspector assigned. When possible, SFD seeks to supplement our inspection levels by using modified duty personnel, who completed over 400 inspections, which is a considerable amount but still not enough to handle the high volume in this program area.



FIRE INVESTIGATION UNIT (FIU)

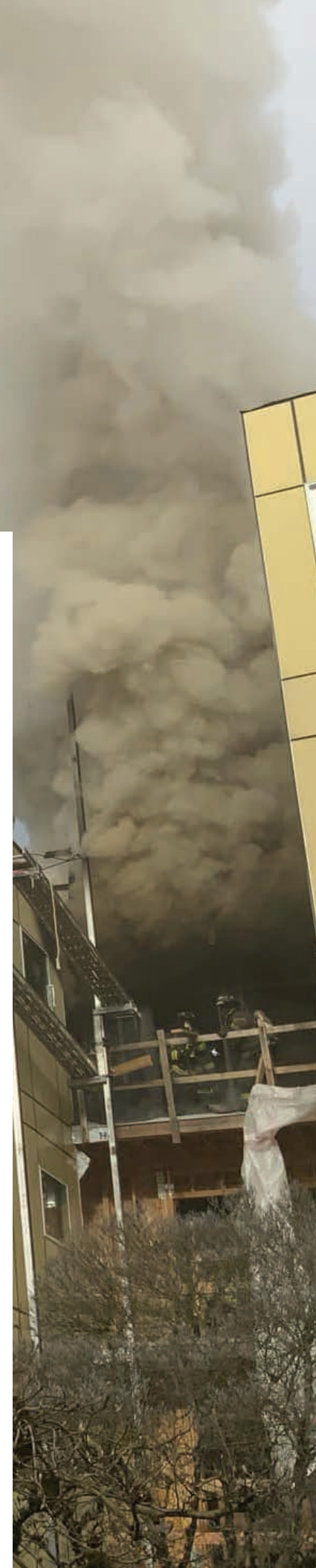
The FIU is dispatched to all structure fires. Generally, the FIU investigates fire incidents involving: (1) serious injuries or fatalities; (2) potential criminal activity; and (3) estimated property loss exceeding \$75,000. In 2023, the FIU investigated the origin and cause of 293 fire incidents. Of these investigations, 84 were determined to be accidental, 127 were intentionally set and 82 were left undetermined. Overall, investigations were lower across the board compared to 2022. In 2023, the estimated real property and vehicle loss was \$17.1 million.



Photo by John Odegard

\$17.1 MILLION

estimated real property and vehicle loss for fire incidents



ANNUAL BUILDING INSPECTIONS & PERMITTING

The Seattle Fire Department provides no-cost fire safety inspections for all commercial and multi-family buildings in Seattle. These inspections are performed by on-duty firefighters. When on-duty firefighters observe fire code violations that are not quickly resolved, the violation is referred to FPD for follow-up, allowing the on-duty firefighters to focus on fire and medical responses. Fire Prevention officers conducted over 1,000 inspections in 2023 related to violations referred by Operations and the public or to support programs such as night club safety and derelict buildings. The FPD also conducted 896 high-rise inspections and issued 872 permits for assembly occupancies like theaters, galleries and restaurants.

NEW CONSTRUCTION & REMODELS

Our New Construction team performed roughly 4,000 inspections for buildings undergoing construction or remodels. SFD construction-related inspections focus on the installation and inspection of fire protection systems like fire alarms, sprinklers, smoke control systems and fire pumps. Although there were staffing challenges throughout the year due to retirements and unanticipated leaves, the team largely managed to maintain an average turnaround time for inspections of roughly two to three weeks.

PLAN REVIEW

In 2023, our Fire Protection Engineers reviewed 1,312 architectural plans and over 168,000 fire alarm or sprinkler devices. After rebuilding to full staffing levels in 2023, the team was able to routinely limit its review queue to under 100 plans, which is much improved from the backlog of over 400 plans at the start of 2022.

SPECIAL HAZARDS

Fire Prevention Division staff issued a total of 5,578 HazMat permits for a variety of hazardous operations ranging from the storage of propane, gasoline, diesel and other fuels; to welding, brazing, flame cutting and other spark-producing activities; to laboratories with numerous chemicals on site.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

FIRE ALARM CENTER

Since 1890, the Fire Alarm Center (FAC) has been steadfastly providing services to the Seattle Fire Department and the residents of Seattle.

Unlike most dispatch centers, every call taker and dispatcher at the Fire Alarm center is a certified firefighter/EMT with at least five years of firefighting experience. When the FAC instructs a caller how to perform CPR on a loved one, that person in need is talking to someone who has performed CPR in what is widely regarded as the best EMS system in the world.

As with most years in one of the Seattle Fire Department's most technological and busiest divisions, 2023 was eventful.

- Total call volume set another record at 206,482 calls. Also, set a new record number of dispatched calls: 111,319.
- Completed two dispatcher training classes with two becoming permanent dispatchers and five others joining the Dispatcher Pool
- As part of a multi-year, county-wide effort, successfully transitioned the department's radio system from analog over to the new digital PSERN radio system
- Implemented an Artificial Intelligence tool for Nurse Navigation that helps dispatchers select the most appropriate resources. In its second full year of operating, firefighter/dispatchers have transferred more than 15,500 non-emergency calls to the Nurse Navigation program to address issues ranging from self-care, TeleHealth, clinic appointments and scheduled ambulance transports. Of those, 4,400 calls were diverted away from requiring an ambulance transport.
- Upgraded to Corti's Triage 2.0 dispatch software
- Implemented new Fire and Rescue Protocols for call taking. Similar to Emergency Medical Dispatch protocols, these have procedures built into the call taking flow.
- Staff began quarterly resilience training to provide give dispatchers the tools to cope with stress, call volume, overtime demands and fatigue from the job in a positive manner.

206,482

calls to the fire alarm center

59

new firefighters

253,000

hours of department training
(13,700 increase from 2022)

UNDERWRITERS LIBRARY

Seattle Fire received an Assistance to Firefighters grant from FEMA to deliver Underwriters Library (UL) Boot Camp training to all Operations members. The class summarized the UL Fire Safety Research Institute’s findings regarding fire behavior and tactics. Uniformed members received the training in one-day boot camps, resulting in 8,000 training hours logged. Topics included building construction, water mapping, fire behavior, ventilation, search, along with basement and attic fires.

The class allowed all fire department members to understand the latest fire science and has given them the knowledge and common language to apply the knowledge on the fireground to better serve the city.

ACQUIRED STRUCTURE TRAINING

Seattle Fire Department’s Training division has developed a strong relationship with local builders and community members who donate their structures, prior to demolition, for the Seattle Fire Department to train in. During 2023, Seattle Fire utilized 12 buildings, offering training opportunities to more than 800 uniformed members.

Additionally, the department offered joint training with the departments of Shoreline, Bellevue, Renton, King Co. Fire District 2 and Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority at 557 Roy Street, where the training focus was multi-company drilling and firefighter self-survival. The acquired structure program is essential in offering realistic training opportunities to better prepare Seattle firefighters to assist the residents of the City of Seattle.



NEW FRONTLINE UNITS

The department put in service several new frontline units: Medic 10, Health 2, Air 10, Engine 2 and the Energy Response Unit.

ENERGY RESPONSE UNIT

The Energy Response Unit, which responds as ENERGY1, is one of the nation’s most capable apparatus for fighting electrical fires in substations and underground vaults. The vehicle was made possible through a partnership with Seattle City Light dating back to 2014. At that time, the departments partnered to train firefighters how to use carbon dioxide to extinguish electrical fires. ENERGY1 replaces an older, retrofitted apparatus. The new rig has 600 feet of hose line and stores 11,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, making it capable of accessing every substation and underground vault in the city.

SUPPORTING ELECTRIC VEHICLES

As the city increases the number of electric vehicles in its fleet, Seattle Fire installed nine new L2 chargers to support re-charging administrative vehicles. Additional chargers are scheduled for installation for 2024.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FIRE SAFETY FAIRS

In 2023, the Seattle Fire Department hosted more than 800 community members at three fire safety fairs held at fire stations in the South Mt. Baker/Rainier, Beacon Hill and West Seattle neighborhoods. Friends and neighbors of these fire stations enjoyed story time with Fire Chief Harold Scoggins, met Hera the Fire Doodle, created works of art, learned about home fire safety, watched CPR demonstrations, took fire engine tours, met our local firefighters and SFD cadets and more.

FIRE DAY

On June 17, 2023, in partnership with Museum of History and Industry, we hosted our annual Seattle Fire Day at the South Lake Union MOHAI site. Approximately 1,500 adults and children met our firefighters, toured a fire boat, fire engine and ladder truck; learned about the Great Seattle Fire of 1889, watched a rescue dog demo, learned fire prevention tips and so much more. We have amazing partners in the Museum of History and Industry who collaborate with us each year to hold this special free event for the community.

FIREFIGHTER STORY TIMES

Our public education team and fire crews returned to Seattle Public Library branches in October for Firefighter Story Time. Crews from Stations 39, 26 and 10s read a fire safety story, demonstrated bunking gear and gave tours of a fire engine to more than 150 preschoolers and caregivers. Due to popular demand, Firefighter Story Times will continue in 2024 on a nearly monthly basis.

452

attendees at fire safety presentations

1,955

attendees at Seattle Fire CPR classes



SEATTLE HONORS THEIR FALLEN

Seattle Fire remembered Firefighters Matt Runte and Michele Williams during a city memorial in May, and then again in August, at the state Fallen Firefighter Memorial in North Bend.

Seattle Fire hosts a public memorial each year to call attention to the dangers of the profession and recognize the ultimate sacrifice too often made by firefighters and their families.



SEPT. 11 REMEMBRANCES

Seattle Fire marked the 22nd anniversary of 9/11 with several activities, including raising the flag on the Space Needle and being featured in the pre-game activities at the Mariners game that evening. SFD's employees of the year for 2022 joined the Fire Chief atop the Space Needle. Later, nearly 30 SFD personnel joined Mariners players on the field while the Seattle Firefighter Pipes & Drums band and Walter Kilgore Memorial Honor Guard performed. Chief Scoggins and SPD Chief Diaz threw out the ceremonial first pitch before meeting Julio Rodriguez and Andres Munoz.



GRANT BOLSTERS CPR TRAINING

Seattle Fire's Medic 2 bystander CPR program received a grant from the Medic One Foundation to purchase eight new manikins. These feature an indicator light in the upper shoulder of the manikin to indicate if the student's practice compressions are at least 2" deep and at a cadence of 100-120 beats per minute. Seattle Fire offers low-cost certification and free hands-only CPR courses to any resident, business or organization in city limits.



CAMP EYABSUT

Members of Seattle Fire leadership joined the Seattle Fire Foundation board to give youth and staff at Camp Eyabsut a hearty farewell BBQ dinner in late July. Two of the department's Peer Support Therapy dog teams brought a lot of smiles during dinner as well. The camp gives youth who have experienced burn injuries a week of activities, teambuilding and life-long friendships in a safe, positive setting. Campers focus on fun and building their confidence with others who have experienced similar injuries.

MEDIA RELATIONS

Members of the Public Information Unit within the Division hosted several proactive media events in 2023. A \$150,000 grant from Amazon and the Gary Sinise Foundation was announced, progress on the fire department's Health 99 overdose response team pilot was shared and a new Energy Response Unit located at Fire Station 25 was unveiled. Additionally, the public information team responded more than 90 times to emergency scenes to conduct interviews with news outlets on site and to assist residents who were displaced from fires. The unit also responded to around a thousand media inquiries.



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

