



Village Fire Department

Newsletter, December 2017

The Village Fire Department provides fire, rescue and advanced life support ambulance transport services to the residents and visitors of the cities of Bunker Hill Village, Hedwig Village, Hilshire Village, Hunters Creek Village, Piney Point Village and Spring Valley Village.

Department Statistics:

Response Numbers and Types through November 2017:

Fire Type calls:	1302	60% of total calls
EMS calls:	852	40% of total calls
Total Calls:	2154	

Response Times:

Average Dispatch Time:	54 Seconds
Average Turnout Time:	34 Seconds
Average Travel Time:	4:03

2017 Budget: \$5,312,202

of Patients Transported to the Hospital: 621

Spent YTD: \$4,796,042

\$69,935 under budget

Definitions: **Dispatch Time**, the time it takes the department dispatcher to notify the firefighters/paramedics of the incident (National Standard is 60 Seconds).

Turnout Time, the time it takes the firefighters/paramedics to go in route to the incident after being notified (National Standard is 60 seconds).

Travel Time, the time it takes to travel from the fire station to the incident location.

Fire Type Calls, this fire department responds to many different type of calls, these include, but are not limited to, structure fires, grass fires, vehicle fires, trees in the roadway, wires down, natural gas leaks, lift assists, vehicle collisions, fire alarms etc.

EMS Type Calls, these calls include sudden illness, trauma and medical alarms.

Ambulance Service

Before joining the Village Fire Department as fire chief, I was the fire chief of a large metro fire department in the Atlanta Georgia area. At that department, as we do here, in addition to fire services, we provided EMS ambulance services. In Georgia, we were the largest EMS provider in the State. I offer this information only because it provides some context in my experience for the next statement. **In addition to being a Class 1 Fire Department, the Village Fire Department provides the most outstanding EMS care I have ever seen.**

Several months ago, a leader in the Villages had an extremely serious medical incident, I will call him Tom (not his or her real name). As the chief, I received a call and was told Tom's heart had stopped and our crews worked to revive him/her. Village Fire Department crews were able to regain a heart beat before arriving at the hospital, but from that point on, I had not really heard anything.

This week, I received a phone call from Tom and honestly, I almost dropped the phone. We chatted for several minutes and Tom said he wanted to come by to thank the firefighters that saved his life. It is an

amazing thing for responders to receive a visit from a patient who was in such grave condition. In addition, of course for saving his life, Tom also thanked them for caring for his family.

Time and time again I have seen our personnel performing at the top of their skills. Assessing medical conditions, calculating drug dosages, administering these drugs without hesitation and saving lives. We also ensure we take care of the family. We realize that this is often the most traumatic day in their lives. Its important care is provided to all.

Tom didn't receive special care because he was a leader in the community. Several weeks ago, a man fell off a roof. The care he received in the back of our ambulance was breath taking. This morning a woman fell unconscious at a doctor's office in Spring Valley. Again, the care provided was outstanding.

I mentioned at the beginning of this story that we are a fire department based EMS service. This means that each of our firefighters are also trained in emergency medical care. So, when you see a fire truck, those men and women are also medics. When you see the ambulance those men and women are also firefighters. Fiscally it is an outstanding model for fire and EMS service. There is no extra cost for hiring only firefighters or only EMS personnel.

About costs, if you are a resident of any of the Cities served by the Village Fire Department, the cost of the Village Fire Department is a part of your property tax bill. I received a call from a resident the other day. She asked me if the fire department had a separate amount on the property tax bill. I told her no, we receive funding from each city according to the amount established by the Interlocal Agreement. The Village Fire Department does not bill for any fire services. If you have health insurance or Medicare, we will send a bill for ambulance services. We accept only the amount the health insurance company or Medicare will pay. The remainder is written off. The money received by the Village Fire Department from insurance companies or Medicare is returned to the cities. To date, we have returned \$231,167 to the cities for ambulance bills.

We hope you never need the services of our ambulance service, but if you do rest assured you will receive outstanding care by outstanding firefighter/medics!

FEMA Storm Funding

As you may know, during the hurricane the fire station suffered from severe hydration. There was barely an area which didn't have a leak. Luckily, we purchased several blue buckets from Lowes before the storm to catch some of the water. A roofer mentioned the weight of fifty inches of water on the roof spread out the rubber bladder causing the water to leak, so we filed a claim with our insurance company. Our insurance company denied the claim saying the leak was due to wear and tear. We have appealed that decision.

In the meantime, we filed with FEMA for funding to fix our roof and the windows (the windows were leaking also). We also filed for reimbursement for the cost of having extra personnel during the storm. I am confident we will receive funding for personnel and operational costs (about \$70k) but I've got my fingers crossed about funding for the roof.

As you may have heard, during the storm, our vehicles got wet. Each of them were inspected and had filters and oils changed. Our insurance company paid about \$40k for the service.

Cold Weather

The cold weather is here. The snow was perfect, just a little bit to enjoy and then it melted away. I am hearing that we may have some colder weather this winter. If this gets mixed in with some precipitation, we might see another ice storm.

While we have the time, now is a good time to look at your trees. If they are close to power lines, when they are covered in ice, they will likely droop into the lines or snap off pulling the lines down. Time for tree trimmers. In addition, it's always a good idea to have your chimney cleaned if you are burning wood. While we don't see many chimney fires, we have had a few. The most common cause of fires in the Villages are swimming pool pumps. Be sure your equipment has been serviced to keep water flowing. Several times, residents have covered their pumps with tarps to keep them warm, then the pumps overheat and catch the tarp and pumps on fire.

If we do have an ice event. Please stay home. You may know how to drive on ice covered roadways, but the guy sliding into you undoubtedly doesn't. It's always nice to stay home on a cold icy day, sipping hot cocoa. Especially if your fire place has been cleaned and the power is on because your trees were trimmed.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you again this year as your Fire Chief. I have been here now for 7 years! Anytime you are by the station, please stop in a pay me a visit. There is always coffee in the fire house.

David Foster