

2020 Bluffton Township Fire District

Annual Report





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Dear Bluffton Township Fire District Citizens,

The District has had no other year like 2020; it was a historic year. I could not be more proud of the men and women of the District and how they persevered through these historical events. Indeed, the Covid 19 pandemic was an incredible challenge the District had to overcome, not to mention an ill-timed ransomware attack.

While the pandemic tested the resolve of the District personnel, the District had to change its typical day-to-day- patient care methodology to adjust to the pandemic. Working with other government agencies, the District successfully adapted to the nature of the Covid-19 virus protocols. Unfortunately, at the same time, the District suspended its CPR, car seat, and other public programs to help mitigate the spread of the Covid 19 virus. Though these changes have occurred, the District returned to normal and provided the same public service before the pandemic.

Despite the pandemic and the ransomware attack, the District did have good news, and it was a historic achievement too! On October 27, 2020, the District, with a unanimous vote, became a nationally recognized accreditated agency through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). There are only 290 accredited agencies globally, and the Bluffton Township Fire District became the 281st. The achievement of accredited status was a historical milestone for the District. It took the District almost four years to achieve this goal. I could not be more proud of the accreditation team and the thoughtful citizen input we received from those we serve.

2020 was a tumultuous year; however, the lessons learned, the perseverance, and the resiliency of the men and women of the District have proven how dedicated they are to serving the citizens of Bluffton.

Respectfully,

John W. Thompson, Jr.

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John W. Thompson, Jr. Fire Chief

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Bluffton Township Fire District Guiding Documents for 2021

Vision Statement

Bluffton Township Fire District's 2023 Vision is to be widely known as an internationally accredited fire district that protects the lives and property of our community in a kind and professional manner.

Because we care, we will prove our leadership through bolstered work in community risk reduction and emergency management, reducing hazards and building protections within the district. We will always strive to show we are progressive through our enhancements in EMS and special operations for the betterment of those we serve.

 \mathbf{T} o personify respect and dedication, we will invest in our great assets, our members. By strengthening our workforce planning, we will be ever ready now and, in the future, to answer the call. We will communicate more effectively to ensure the continuity of our messages to unify us further. This will be rounded out by our research and investment into technology that will help us all perform more efficiently.

Furthering our desire to demonstrate that we value trust internally and externally, we will strive to maintain our current infrastructure, while developing strategies for growth that are performance-based and fiscally responsible.

Dedicated to continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence organizationally and personally, we will always remember our past and embrace our futurity by holding each other accountable for fulfilling our mission, living our values, accomplishing our goals, and bringing this vision to fruition

Mission Statement

The Bluffton Township Fire District's mission is to efficiently protect the lives and property of our community in a kind and professional manner.

Goals and Objectives

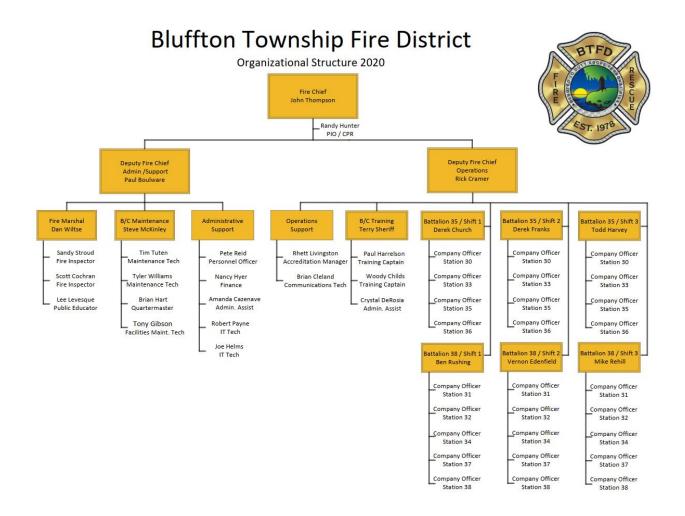
To continuously achieve the mission of the Bluffton Township Fire District, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the concerns of the community. These should become a focus of the district's efforts, as they will direct the organization to its desired future while having reduced the obstacles and distractions along the way. Leadership-established work groups should meet and manage progress toward accomplishing these goals and objectives and adjust timelines as needs and the environment change. Regular reports of progress and changes should be shared with the Bluffton Township Fire District's leadership.

Core Values

Respect	We respect our customers and strive to protect their		
1	dignity, choice, and modesty.		
Cost	We administer necessary fire protection and rescue services		
	without unnecessary cost to the citizens.		
Continuous	We strive to continuously improve by seeking feedback		
Improvement	from our customers, providing fire prevention education,		
1	and improving our delivery system through training and		
	professional development.		
Leadership	We believe that we must be the leaders in guiding the		
-	community toward a fire-free environment.		
Service	We maintain an attitude and a commitment of going		
	"above and beyond" in serving our customers.		
Trust	We develop a synergistic environment by fostering a		
	climate of trust and cooperation with all team members.		
Loyalty	We are loyal to our District and community by word and		
	attitude.		

Organizational Structure

The Bluffton Township Fire District is divided into two Divisions, Administration/Support, and Operations. The Administration/Support Division provides internal and external services to make certain the members, equipment, and facilities of the fire department are prepared to respond to emergencies any time a call for help is received. The Operations Division provides for the daily response to emergencies and other calls for service as needed.



Fire Board

The Fire Board is responsible for the general oversight policy of the Fire District. The Fire Board works closely with the Fire Chief. It makes recommendations to the County Council on annual operating budgets, expenditures for equipment, personnel, facilities, and other business-related matters of the Fire District. The Fire Board consists of seven (7) members who are appointed to four (4) year terms by the County Council. There is one member for each of the five (5) County Council Districts within the protection area of the Fire District, one (1) member representing the Town of Bluffton, and one (1) member serving at large.

Bluffton Township Fire District Board Members and Contact Information

Mr. Mike Raymond, Chairman Representing the Town of Bluffton Contact: <u>raymond@blufftonfd.com</u> Phone: 843-757-2800

Mr. Joseph Paolo, Vice Chairman Representing County Council District 7 Contact: paolo@blufftonfd.com Phone: 843-757-2800

Mr. Thomas Mike, Secretary Representing County Council District 5 Contact: mike@blufftonfd.com Phone: 843-757-2800

Ms. Elaine Lust, Treasurer Representing County Council District 8 Contact: <u>lust@blufftonfd.com</u> Phone: 843-757-2800









Mr. Edwin Olsen, Board Member Representing: Entire district Contact: <u>olsen@blufftonfd.com</u> Phone: 843-757-2800



Reverend Paul Hamilton, Board Member Representing County Council District 9 Contact: <u>hamilton@blufftonfd.com</u> Phone: 843-757-2800

Mr. Louis Poindexter, Board Member Representing County Council District 6 Contact: <u>poindexter@blufftonfd.com</u> Phone: 843-757-2800





Administrative and Operational Support

Division Review

Deputy Fire Chief Paul Boulware

- --Finance
- --Vehicle and Facility Maintenance
- --Fire Prevention and Community Risk Reduction
- --Information Technology
- --Personnel Services



The Deputy Fire Chief of Administration and Support (DC Admin/Support) is Paul Boulware (<u>boulware@blufftonfd.com</u>). The DC Admin/Support provides direct coordination and support to the functions of finance, vehicle and facility maintenance, fire prevention and investigation, information technology, and employee services. These functions all support the fire department's mission by providing ancillary services required to keep operations personnel, facilities, and equipment prepared to provide emergency services 24 hours a day to the citizens of the Fire District.

During 2020 the Administrative and Operational Support Division (AOSD) completed several key projects, including:

- The District received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Excellence for its 2020 CAFR. This is the tenth consecutive year the District has received this honor.
- Fire Station #38 on Hampton Parkway, the District's 9th fire station, was completed.
- Fire Station #32 renovation at Callawassie Island was completed.
- The process for relocating Fire Station #31 to New River Side was started. The projected grand opening date is set for September 2021.
- Supported program development and data delivery services for the District's ongoing work to complete the international accreditation process through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).
- Completed and implemented the findings of a comprehensive compensation, benefits, and position description study for 2019.



Newly completed Fire Station #38 on Hampton Parkway

Operations Division Review

Deputy Fire Chief Richard Cramer

--Battalion Chief 35 & 38 Shift 1

- --Battalion Chief 35, & 38 Shift 2
- --Battalion Chief 35, & 38 Shift 3

The Operations Division's primary function is to carry out the fire district's mission by protecting our community's lives and property in a kind and professional manner. The Operations Division consists of a staff



of 134 highly trained firefighting professionals. The Operations Division is managed by one Deputy Chief and six-line Battalion Chiefs. The Battalion Chiefs are assigned to one of three shifts, which operate on a 24-hour-365-days a year schedule. The shift's schedule follows a 24 hours on and 48 hours off rotation. There are numerous tasks carried out each day by the Operations Division to include but are not limited to: responding to EMS emergencies, responding to structure fire emergencies, responding to special operation incidents (Haz-mat, Technical Rescue, wild-land fires), handling non-emergencies, conducting training, and attending community events.

Call Volume by Station (see Appendix A for more information)

In 2020, the Operations Division responded to 7,589 calls for service. This is an increase of 15.17% from 2019. Fire Station 34 (Sun City) was the most active of all stations running 2,254 or 29.70% of the calls. Fire Station 30 (Old Town Bluffton) was close behind, responding to 1,707 or 22.49% of the calls. Though stations, 30 and 34 responded as the first-due to over 52% of the calls for service; their reliability did not drop below 90% for the year. When the reliability factor of a station drops below 75%, the District will consider placing a second unit in service for the additional call volume.

Station and Location	Total Responses in 2020
30 – Old Town Bluffton	1576
31 – Pritchardville	750
32 – Callawassie	252
33 – Moss Creek	484
34 – Sun City	1961
35 – Indian Hill	1232
36 – Colleton River	177
37 – Palmetto Bluff	157
38- Hampton Parkway	336

Analysis by Incident Type (see Appendix B for more information)

The District tracks incidents by call type. There are eight call types represented in the incident response data in 2020. Rescue and Emergency Medical Service (Rescue and EMS) responses make up the most significant percentage of the District's responses at 62.02% or 4,707 calls. And like most fire departments in the country, rescue and EMS calls are typically at the top.

Good intent calls make up the second-largest group of responses at 15.55% or 1,180 calls, followed by service calls at 10.74% or 815 calls, and false alarms rounding out in third place at 8.38% or 636 calls. Good intent calls include dispatched and canceled en-route, wrong location, controlled burning, vicinity alarm, steam other gas mistaken for smoke, EMS call where the patient has already been transported, and hazmat release investigation with no hazmat incident. Service calls include situations where a citizen needs some type of assistance such as lift and assists, containing a serious pipe leak that is actively damaging property, animal problems or rescues, smoke or odor removal, and assisting other agencies such as the police. False alarms are those instances when a fire or medical alarm system activates, and crews respond to find no fire or emergency.

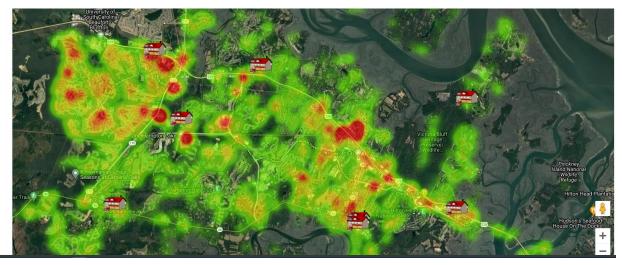
Incident Type	2019 Number of Responses	2020 Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses	Percent of Change+/-
Rescue and EMS	3934	4707	62.02%	+19.64%
Good Intent	1200	1180	15.55%	-1.66%
Service Calls	708	815	10.74%	+15.11%
False Alarms	502	636	8.38%	+26.69%
Fires (all types)	150	142	1.87%	-5.33%
Hazardous Conditions	94	96	1.26%	+2.12%
Overpressure, Ruptures	7	5	0.07%	-28.57%
Severe Weather	20	9	0.12%	-55.00%

Calls for Service Location Analysis

The GIS map below is a heat map that plots all responses. Utilizing color on the maps we can see the concentration of incidents or the amount of time to arrive. Red is utilized to indicate more incidents or longer times. Green or no color at all indicates few if any calls or faster response times. This information is very valuable as it allows us to better plan for future stations and the number of personnel that may someday be required to alleviate the hazards around the District. Information from these analyses is utilized in the District's medium and long-range plans to assist us in staying ahead of the growth curve. Response Heat Map Incidents From 01/01/2020 To 12/31/2020



Response Time Heat Map: Deep red indicates response times greater than 11:40, yellow indicates response times between 8:20 and 11:40, green indicates response times between 5:00 and 8:20 and blue, indicates response times less than 5:00.



Call Volume Heat Map: Deep red indicates the highest call volumes, yellow and green indicate lower call volumes respectively. Areas not colored indicate no calls occurred in those locations.

The analysis of 2020 data indicates there are high call volumes along the Highway 278 corridor, in the Old Town Bluffton area and the Sun City area. Response times are elongated in the Buckwalter area and West Bluffton Parkway (Hampton Lake) areas. The new station recently completed on Hampton Parkway at River Ridge Academy should alleviate the elongating response time issues. Volume is expected to continue to increase as the District grows. Additional facilities will be needed to accommodate additional units and personnel to address the growth into the future.

Supporting Services

Within the two major Divisions of the District, there are also specialized departments and services. Under the Administration and Operational Support Division falls the Maintenance Division the Information Technology Department, and the Community Risk Reduction Department. Under the Operations Division falls the Special and Technical Rescue Department, the Hazardous Materials Response Service, and the Wildfire Response Service.

Vehicle and Facilities Maintenance Division



Steve McKinley Battalion Chief Maintenance

The Vehicle and Facility Maintenance department is responsible for maintaining the service and repairs of the districts emergency fleet, administrative vehicles, nine (9) district fire stations, emergency standby generators, and small engine equipment. This keeps the District's fleet and facilities maintained in a state of readiness second to none, and the Firefighters are outfitted with exceptional equipment and gear. This combination ensures a quick response for the citizens of our Fire District with reliable apparatus, equipment, and highly trained and outfitted personnel. The VFM also contracts to provide periodic vehicle maintenance services and repairs for vehicles & equipment belonging to the Town of Bluffton, Bluffton Police Department, Technical College of the Lowcountry, University of South Carolina: New River and the Beaufort Fire Department.



Bluffton Township Fire District Maintenance and Training building.

2020 Work Orders			
Entity	Work Order Quantity		
Bluffton Fire District	558		
Town of Bluffton			
Town Vehicles	59		
Police Vehicles	239		
Town of Bluffton Total	238		
Technical College of the Lowcountry	9		
University of South Carolina, New River	26		
Other	4		
Beaufort City Fire Department	33		
Total Work Orders	1166		

Training Division



Terry Sheriff Battalion Chief of Training

Training Department Mission Statement

The mission of the Bluffton Township Fire District's Training Division is to consistently enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of all fire department personnel through standardized and progressive educational programs, as well as to support the organization's mission by providing outstanding customer service.

The Training Department personnel consist of a Battalion Chief of Training, Two (2) Assistant Training Officers and an Administrative Assistant. The Training Division, under the direction of the Training Battalion Chief, conducts and coordinates organizational development in areas of:

1. Recruit Training

- Provides new recruits with an in-house, 10 week recruit school program and is responsible for conducting and administering all training requirements and programs.
- Manages recruit school which enables over 360 hours of training in a variety of courses.
- In conjunction with the South Carolina Fire Academy (SCFA), instructs new recruits in the NREMT-Basic curriculum.
- 2. Fire Suppression Training
 - Ensures all Fire/EMS personnel are properly certified by maintaining employee training/certification files and provides quarterly reports to the Deputy Chief of Operations and Shift Battalion Chiefs.
 - Provides a continued annual training plan for yearly training.
 - Supports individual and company training every shift.
- 3. Emergency Medical Services Training and Re-Certification
 - Provides EMTs and Paramedics with training courses and assisting them in preparing for certification and re-certification requirements.
- 4. Technical Rescue Training
 - Regional Response Team and Special Rescue Training.
 - Hazardous Material Incidents Response Training.
- 5. Company Officer and Firefighter Development Programs
 - Hosting and delivering developmental classes for our personnel.
 - Developing a continuing education plan for all personnel.

- Providing higher levels of classes for continued education, to teach new skills, and to assist each employee with career development.
- Conducting Promotional processes for competitive rank positions.

6. CATE/Explorer Program

• Works closely with the Bluffton High School to provide training and the development of high school students in the area of Emergency and Firefighting Services.

7. Strategic Planning

• Works with all members to plan, implement and evaluate the Strategic Plan.

The Training Department provides and creates training programs as necessary to meet established state and federal mandates each year. The Department is responsible for ensuring that all District members meet the requirements set forth by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Insurance Services Office (ISO), Occupational Safety Health Association (OSHA) and the internal requirements by the Fire District.

The Training Department is responsible for organizing, designing, implementing, and managing training and employee programs for the Bluffton Township Fire District. The Training Department will strive to provide our members with the highest quality training, instruction, and educational support. This is intended to prepare our fire department to serve our community in the most efficient and effective means possible, and to ensure the safety of our personnel and citizens.

The Training Department works closely with the Mission Statement of the Fire District. The BTFD Mission Statement is to "*efficiently protect the lives and property of our community in a kind and professional manner.*" The Training Division attempts to deliver the most meaningful and realistic training possible while ensuring personal safety.



Bluffton Township Fire District Training Tower and burn building.

2020 Accomplishments

- 271 classes confirmed/rescheduled
- Shift 1 had 1360 hours of in-house training
- Shift 2 had 1439 hours of in-house training
- Shift 3 had 1650 hours of in-house training

COVID-19 Impacts in 2020

- 66 classes cancelled due to Covid
- 51 SCFA classes cancelled due to Covid
- 49 Classes withdrawn from due to Covid



Bluffton Township Fire District Training Tower and burn building.

Community Risk Reduction Division



Dan Wiltse Fire Marshal



An example of a violation; Blocking access to the electrical panel.

Fire Inspections/Code Enforcement

The main objective of this task is to gain voluntary compliance with the associated fire codes as adopted by the State of South Carolina. The District employs two (2) Fire Inspectors who complete annual inspections of all existing commercial properties along with needed follow up inspections. In 2020, the Community Risk Reduction Department (CRR) conducted 3,069 fire and life safety inspections. In addition to these annual inspections, CRR also has other duties it is responsible for such as:

- Review of site plans, new construction plans, fire protection system plans and the like.
- Business license inspections as requested by Beaufort County
- Acceptance testing of new fire protection systems
- Biannual Click2Enter automated gate opener inspections
- Special Events inspections
- Burn permit issuance (inside the Town of Bluffton)

In addition to these duties, the Fire Inspectors must be certified through the State of South Carolina as Certified Fire Marshals. This also requires annual continuing education through authorized training agencies.

Fire Investigation

The Fire District is authorized by South Carolina State law to investigate all fires to determine the origin and cause of the fire. The Fire District's Investigation Team consists of the CRR department. All CRR members are Certified Fire and Explosion Investigators through the National Association of Fire Investigators. The team works with local law enforcement such as the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Bluffton as well as South Carolina State Agencies such as the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division's Arson Investigators in the event of incendiary fires. The Fire Investigation Team completes 40 hours of training per year in accordance with ISO standards.

Public Education:

 Number of Fire Prevention education classes taught: Number of attendees and age groups – 14497 - 55 years and older: 6379 (44%) Under 55 (over 18) - 2754 (10%) 	<u>384</u>			
- Under 55/over 18: 2754 (19%) - Under 18: 5364 (37%)				
 Number of car seat installations and classes 				
- Car seats installations or inspections completed				
Number of school visits				
- School visits in 2020	<u>89</u>			
Number of Post Fire Blitzes conducted				
- "Structure Fires" in 2020	<u>27</u>			
- Post Fire Blitzes	<u>21</u>			
Number of fire extinguisher classes taught				
- Fire Extinguisher Classes taught with prop	<u>14</u>			
- Presentations given about fire extinguishers	<u>33</u>			
Training hours				
- Hours continuing education 2020	<u>104</u>			

Summary of All Work Completed for Calendar Year:

In 2020, the Fire District completed 1,289 annual fire inspections based on the data provided in the FireWorks RMS. A total of 1,998 total inspections (annual fire inspections plus any follow-up inspections that were required) were completed in total. This low number of inspections can be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Fire District not conducting inspections for several months during the 2020 calendar year. A study in compliance with NFPA 1730 has been implemented as of January 4, 2020 to determine if additional staff is needed to accomplish the overall goal of the CRR department as well as the Fire District.

During the months of March, April and May due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Fire District did not complete fire inspections. In that time, the fire inspectors completed pre-plans on the occupancies in the FireWorks RMS.

Fire District Stations

Fire Station 30 -199 Burnt Church Road: "Old Town"



Apparatus in House

- BTFD- Engine
- BCEMS- Ambulance

Fire Station 31–178 May River Road: "Pritchardville"

Apparatus in House

- BTFD- Engine
- BTFD Water Tender



Fire Station 32 - 155 Callawassie Drive: "Callawassie"

Apparatus in House

- BTFD- Engine
- BTFD Water Tender
- BCEMS Quick Response Vehicle (QRV)



<u>Fire Station 33</u> – 12 Buckingham Plantation Drive: "Moss Creek" "Moss Creek"



Apparatus in House

- BTFD- Quint
- BTFD Quick response boat
- BCEMS- Ambulance

Station 34 - 25 William Pope Drive: "Sun City"



Station 35 – 357 Fording Island Road: "Headquarters"



Apparatus in house

BCEMS- Ambulance x 2

BTFD- Engine

Apparatus in house

- BTFD Engine
- BTFD Tower Ladder
- BTFD Heavy Rescue
- BTFD Battalion Chief
- BTFD Brush Truck

Station 36 – 254 Sawmill Creek Road: "Colleton River"

Apparatus in house

• BTFD - Engine



Station 37 – 568 Old Palmetto Bluff Road: "Palmetto Bluff"



- Apparatus in house
- BTFD Engine

Station 38 And Emergency Operation Center (EOC)

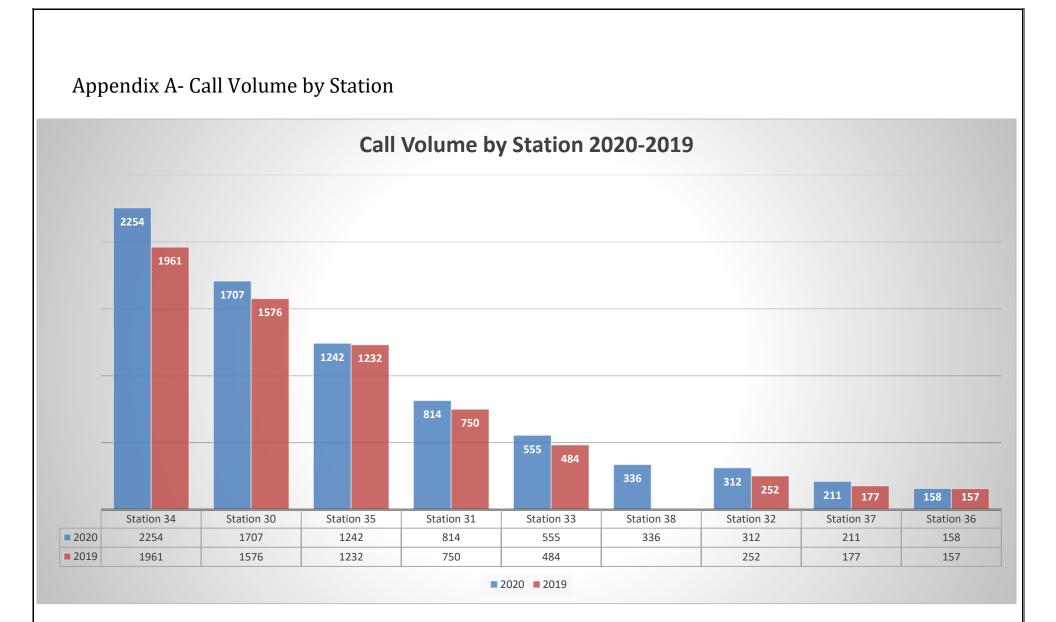
- BTFD Battalion
- BTFD Engine
- Emergency Operations Center
- Beaufort County EMS Quick
 Response Vehicle

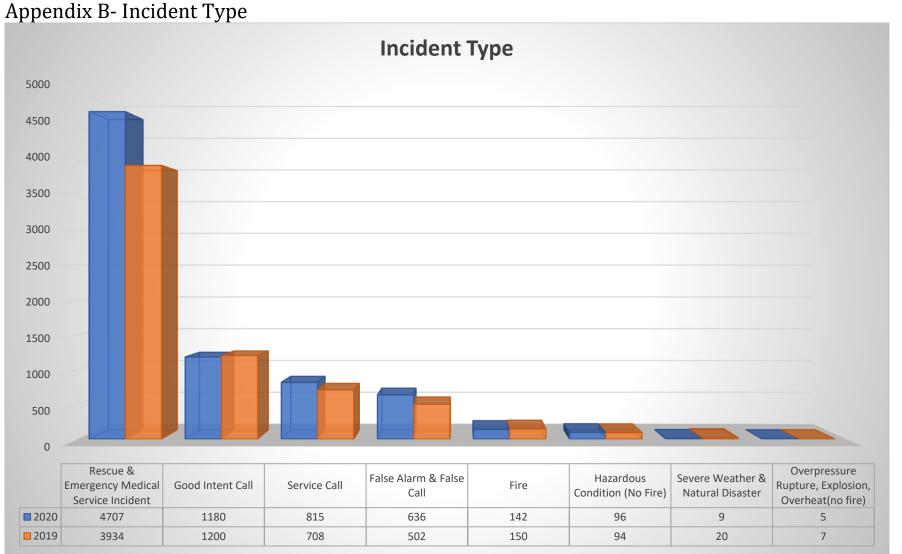


Career Milestones

Bluffton had a busy year when it came to officer promotions. Every year the men and women of Bluffton Township Fire District have a unique opportunity to promote within the department. Promoting an officer is an opportunity that comes on an as-needed basis. The rapid growth in the Bluffton community has provided this opportunity to several deserving personnel. Bluffton would like to Honor those accomplishments by sharing who these persons are.

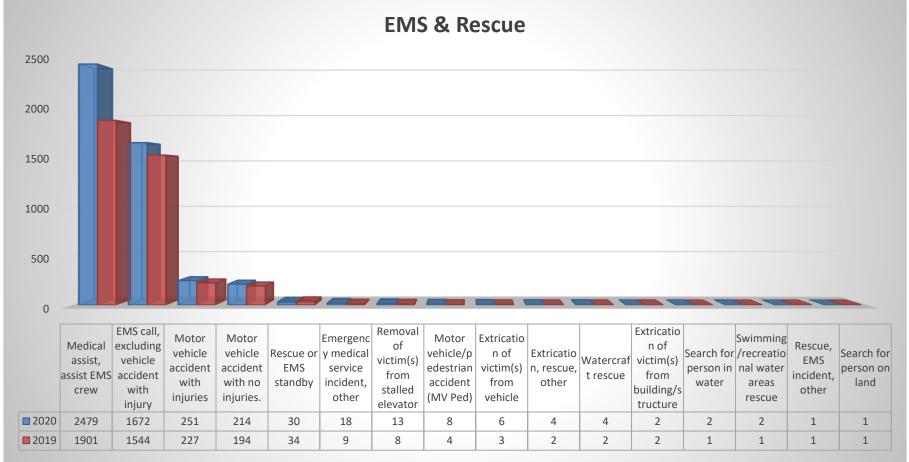
Ben Rushing- Battalion Chief Derek Franks – Battalion Chief Mike Rehill – Battalion Chief Adam Corn – Captain II Tim Walsh – Captain II Derek Beeler – Captain II Jason Brahm – Captain II Tom Lamb – Captain II Brandon Stevenson – Captain II Stephen Arnold – Lieutenant Dustin Brown – Lieutenant Shawn Fitzpatrick – Lieutenant Jim Thomas – Lieutenant Alexander Sanchez - Lieutenant Chris Himes – FF IV Cam Terio – FF IV Andrew De La Cruz – FF IV Alex Elliot – FF IV Vasont Miller – FF IV Joel Martin – FF IV Aaron Angel – FF IV Oylan Taylor – FF IV Missy Keller – FF III Matt Wallett – FF III Mike McComas – FF III Tyler Griffin – FF III Left Blank



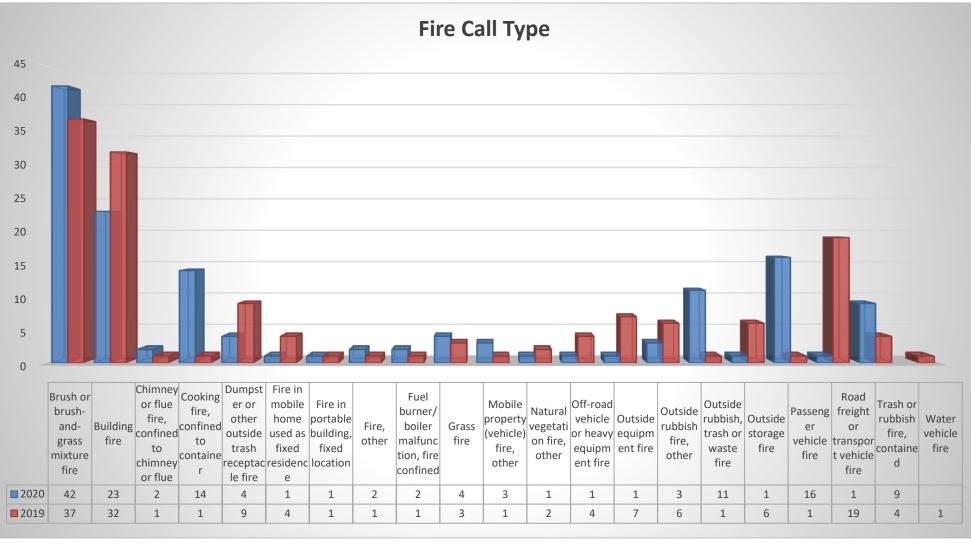


Appendix B- Incident Type

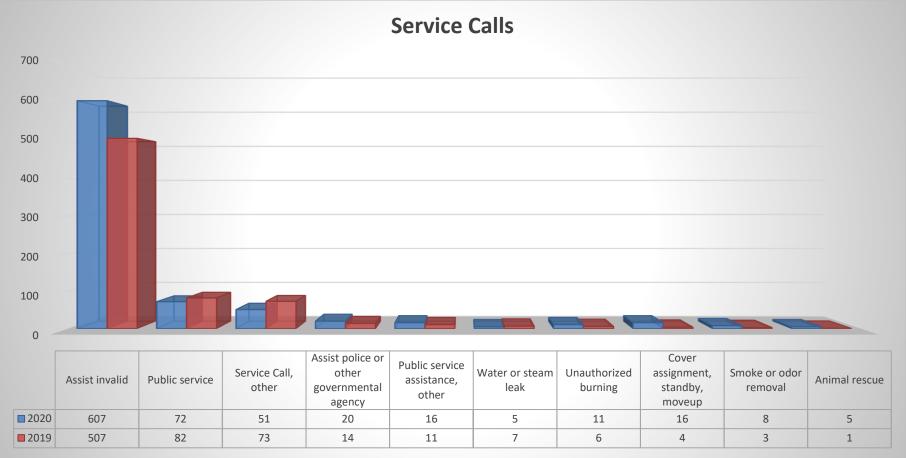
Appendix C- EMS and Rescue Call types



Appendix D- Fire Call type



Appendix E- Service Call Detail



Appendix F- Incidents by Day of Week

Incidents By Day Of The Week

Year 2020

