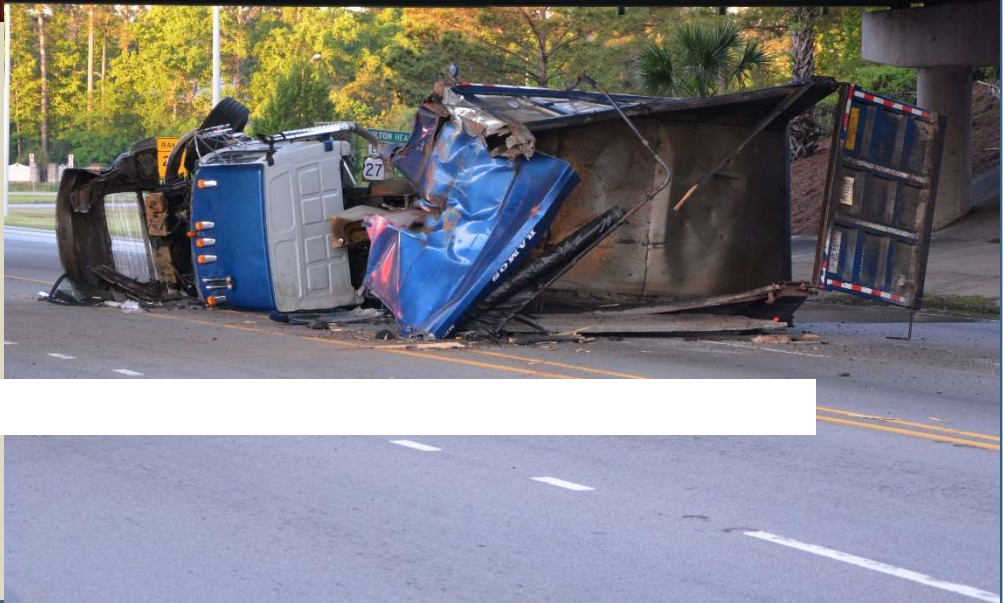


Annual Report 2018



Bluffton Township Fire District

2018



BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT

357 FORDING ISLAND ROAD
BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29909
843-757-2800 • FAX 843-757-7305

Dear Citizens of the Bluffton Township Fire District,

2018 was another productive and busy year for the Bluffton Fire District. Growth in the area continues in full force and your fire department is working to remain ahead of the curve in providing the services you require. The organization has grown over the last few years to have eight fire stations, a full-service vehicle maintenance facility and modern training area. A ninth fire station in the Hampton Lakes area is scheduled to begin construction in late 2019. The District now employs 149 persons to provide the daily response service as well as the behind the scenes support functions to keep the trucks and responders on the road for you.

The District's annual operating budget for the period ending June 30, 2018 was \$13,663,186. Growth in the area has allowed the Fire District to increase its services while maintaining tax rates without increases over the last three years. It is our intent to grow the organization responsibly and only to the point that we can meet the citizens requests and needs.

This report highlights the work the men and women of your fire department completed over the last twelve months. I believe you will find a great deal of good information as you read through our report. The Bluffton community has always been very supportive of the fire department and we truly appreciate the support. We are here to serve you and look forward to continued improvement and growth in our abilities to provide the best level of service to our citizens.

Respectfully,



John W. Thompson, Jr.
Fire Chief

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Bluffton Township Fire District Guiding Documents for 2018

Vision Statement

Our vision is to create a model of excellence in fire protection and rescue delivery, to be the leaders in fire protection and rescue for the District and support a customer-directed system to the citizens of our district. We will pursue our vision in partnership with our associates, citizens, and suppliers. We will develop innovative programs and services to benefit our citizens and enhance the overall quality of life in our community.

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Bluffton Township Fire District is to plan, evaluate, and implement a range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of the inhabitants and visitors of the Bluffton Township Fire District from the adverse effects of fires, life threatening medical emergencies, or dangerous conditions created by either man or nature. At Bluffton Township Fire District, we are committed to providing emergency services and rescue for our District in a courteous, cost-effective, and professional manner.

Goals and Objectives

Fire protection and rescue is a dynamic, vital service. It is, therefore, essential that as a fire protection and rescue provider, Bluffton Township Fire District become involved in and committed to planning for the future. As a fire protection and rescue provider, the District must continually be prepared to respond to new regulations, changing technology, and consumer trends.

The following goals and objectives have been identified:

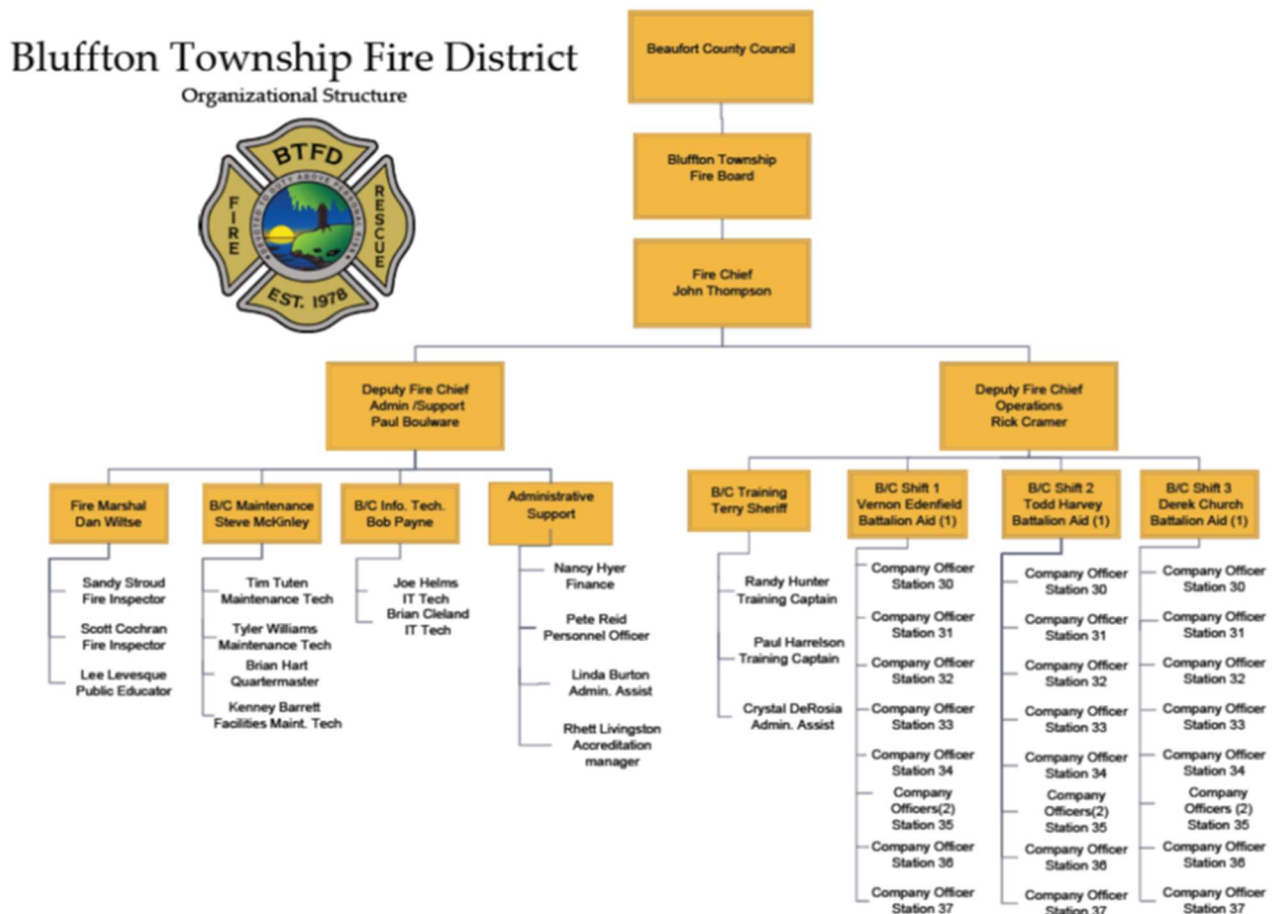
- To provide high quality fire protection and rescue service at a reasonable cost.
- To maintain a reputation for excellence in the fire protection and rescue field.
- To provide a leadership role for fire protection and rescue needs of the community and identify opportunities for growth and service.
- To provide a work environment that offers employees the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution to fire protection and rescue while earning a fair and equitable wage.
- To provide the staff with an atmosphere, facilities, and services that will stimulate experience in the rendering of fire protection and rescue.
- To seek employees of highest quality and select for employment on the basis of skill, training, ability, attitude, and character.

Core Values

Respect	We respect our customers and strive to protect their dignity, choice, and modesty.
Cost	We administer necessary fire protection and rescue services without unnecessary cost to the citizens.
Continuous Improvement	We strive to continuously improve by seeking feedback from our customers, providing fire prevention education, 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 the service as needed.



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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 and makes recommendations to the County Council on matters such as annual operating budgets, expenditures for equipment, personnel, and 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: raymond@blufftonfd.com
Phone: 843-757-2800



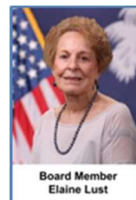
Mr. Thomas Mike, Vice Chairman
Representing County Council District 5
Contact: mike@blufftonfd.com
Phone: 843-757-2800



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



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



Mr. Edwin Olsen, Board Member
Representing: Member at Large
Contact: olsen@blufftonfd.com
Phone: 843-757-2800



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



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



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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 (boulware@blufftonfd.com). 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 mission of the fire department by providing ancillary services that are 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 2018 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 2017 CAFR. This is the eighth consecutive year the District has received this honor.
- The construction and opening of the permanent fire station for the Colleton River area (Station 36).
- Completed the implementation of new processes that streamlined the District's accruals for benefits while remaining mindful of the sensitivities of all personnel.
- Began the process of programming the District's payroll time keeping system to track accruals digitally. This replaced an outdated hand calculation method and increased accuracy of the records while better refining human resource and finance processes. This also provides instant data to all employees regarding their accrued time totals.
- Worked on securing County approval and funding for a fire station in the Hampton Lake area as well as the equipment and personnel for that station. The new station location will reduce response times to many of the areas along the west end of the Bluffton Parkway, Buckwalter Parkway, and portions of the Highway 170 corridor.
- Worked on securing County approval and funding for significant renovations to the Callawassie fire station. The station was designed and built in 1997 to accommodate two to three firefighters at the most. The renovation will bring the station up to current national standards for fire stations and provide for an additional 30 – 40 years of life for the building.
- Increased participation of the Community Risk Reduction Officer in local neighborhoods.
- Completed a comprehensive community risk reduction analysis.

- Continued to support the community through enhanced CPR and AED programs. Worked with the non-profit Arrhythmia Alliance to place 30 public access AED's throughout the community.
- Continued to support the efforts of technical education in the local high schools by developing and implementing an intern program within the vehicle and facility maintenance department. The program provides a part-time job opportunity in which students engaged in motor vehicle repair in the high schools can apply their skills in a monitored shop environment. The program pays dividends for the students in that they learn in a real time environment. The Fire District prospers with qualified candidates to fill positions in the future.
- Continued to further develop training for all personnel that meets local, state, and national requirements especially providing emphasis on medical training and the re-certification process.
- Upgraded information technology assets within the District in preparation of implementing a new video conferencing system to replace the aging and unsupported Poly-Com system.
- Designed, installed, and implemented a state-of-the-art interactive classroom projection and display system in the new Training Facility.
- Developed a crystal report-based Occupancy Hazard Index program and calculation methodology in order to determine an objective based risk and hazard index associated with all the occupancies in the District.
- 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).
- Planned for the contracting of a comprehensive compensation, benefits, and position description study for 2019.

Operations Division Review

Deputy Fire Chief Richard Cramer

- Battalion Chief 35, Shift 1
- Battalion Chief 35, Shift 2
- Battalion Chief 35, Shift 3



The primary function of the Operations Division is to carry out the mission of the fire district by delivering outstanding customer service to our citizens in a cost effective and professional manner. This process is systematically executed with a staff of 127 highly trained firefighting professionals. The Operations Division is managed by one Deputy Chief and three-line Battalion Chiefs. The Battalion Chiefs are assigned to one of three shifts, which operate on a 24-hour basis. The shift's schedule follows a 24 hour on and 48 hours off rotation. There are numerous tasks carried out each day by the Operations Division members, but some of the primary responsibilities are: responding to normal emergencies, responding to special operation incidents (Haz-mat, Technical Rescue), handling non-emergent situations, conducting training, and attending community events. When the operations staff isn't mitigating emergency calls, they are carrying out required administrative duties, as well as performing general maintenance and upkeep on the district's expansive list of equipment.

Calls for Service Analysis (see Appendix A for more information)

During 2018 the Operations Division was kept extremely busy responding to emergency calls. As a whole, the fire district responded to 6160 calls for service. Fire Station 34 (Sun City) was the busiest of all stations running 1,760 or 28.60% of the calls. Fire Station 30 (Old Town Bluffton) was close behind responding 1,570 or 25.57% of the calls. Even though these two stations responded as the first due unit to over 50% of the calls for service in the District, their reliability, which is the ability of the unit to be available to take a call first due in its response area, did not drop below 90% for the year. When the reliability factor of a station drops below 75% the District considers placing a second unit in service to handle the additional call volume.

Station and Location	Total Responses in 2018
30 – Old Town Bluffton	1575
31 – Pritchardville	664
32 – Callawassie	228
33 – Moss Creek	541
34 – Sun City	1762
35 – Indian Hill	1112
36 – Colleton River	148
37 – Palmetto Bluff	124

Incident Type Analysis (see Appendix B for more information)

The District tracks the incidents it responds to by call type. There are nine call types represented by the incident responses in 2018. Rescue and emergency medical service responses make up the largest percentage of the District’s responses at 46.90% (2890 calls). This is common in all fire response agencies in the country. In Beaufort County the fire district serves as the first line of medical response in support of the County’s EMS transport agency. There are considerably more fire stations and units placed strategically around the County. This allows trained personnel to quickly reach a patient in need and begin treatment while awaiting an EMS unit.

Good intent calls make up the second largest group at 30.36% (1870 calls) followed by service calls at 9.30% (573 calls) and false alarms at 8.88% (547 calls). Good intent calls include such things as units are dispatched but cancelled before they arrive, reports of smoke in the area and no incident found, and steam or fog in area mistaken for smoke. Service calls include situations where a citizen needs some type of assistance such as lift and assists, containing a serious pipe leak, 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. On rare occasions a false alarm also occurs when someone calls in an emergency when one does not exist.

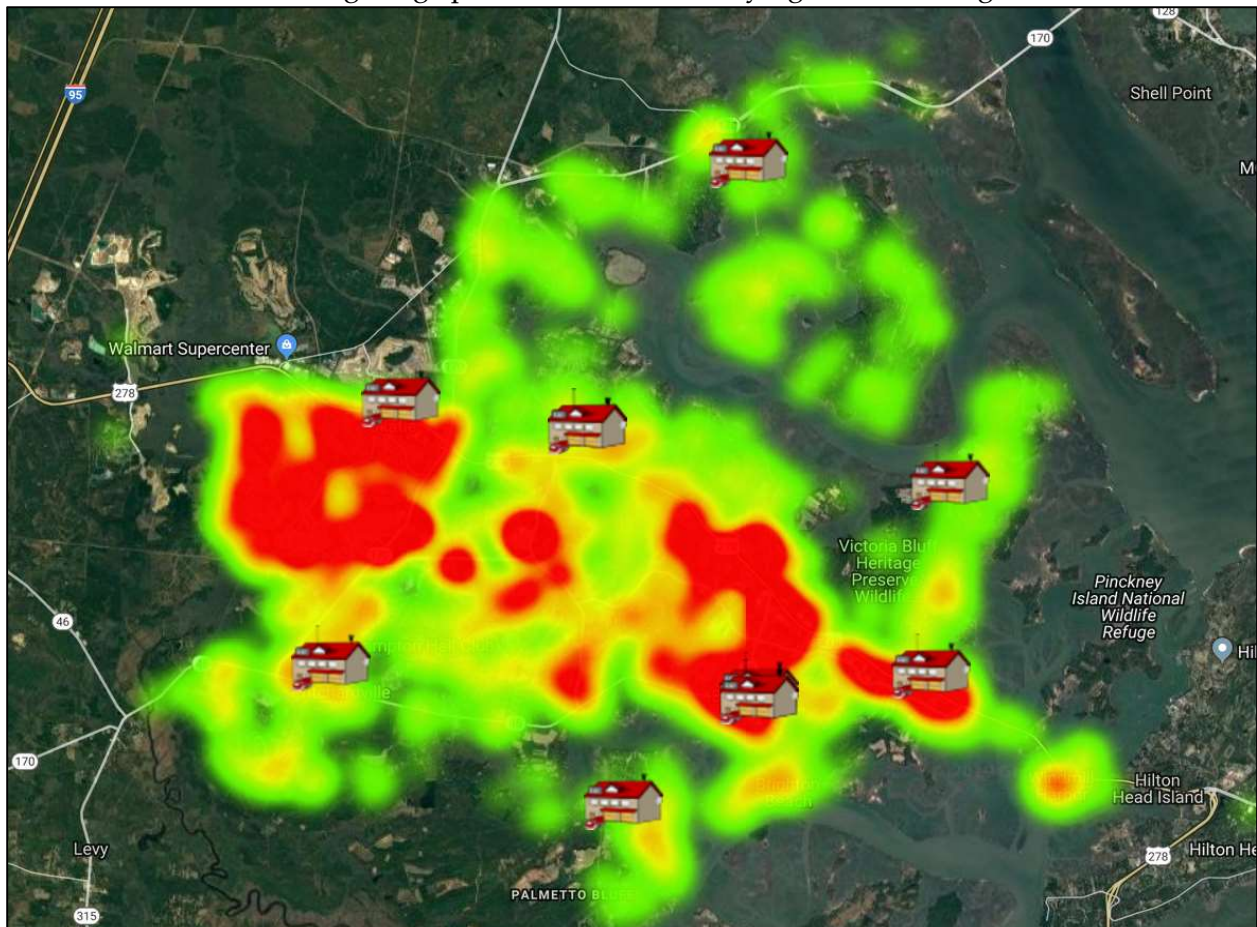
Incident Type	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Rescue and EMS	2890	46.90%
Good Intent	1870	30.36%
Service Calls	573	9.30%
False Alarms	547	8.88%
Fires (all types)	155	2.52%
Hazardous Conditions	108	1.75%
Overpressure, Ruptures	13	0.21%
Severe Weather	3	0.05%

Appendices B.1 through B.5 located at the end of the report provide an even deeper look into what the District is running. For example, one of the questions we often receive is how many motor vehicle collisions are there on our local roads. In 2018 the District ran 198 (6.85% of all rescue and EMS responses) motor vehicle accidents in which there were no injuries reported. The District also ran 60 (2.08% of all rescue and EMS responses) collisions in which someone was injured in the accident.

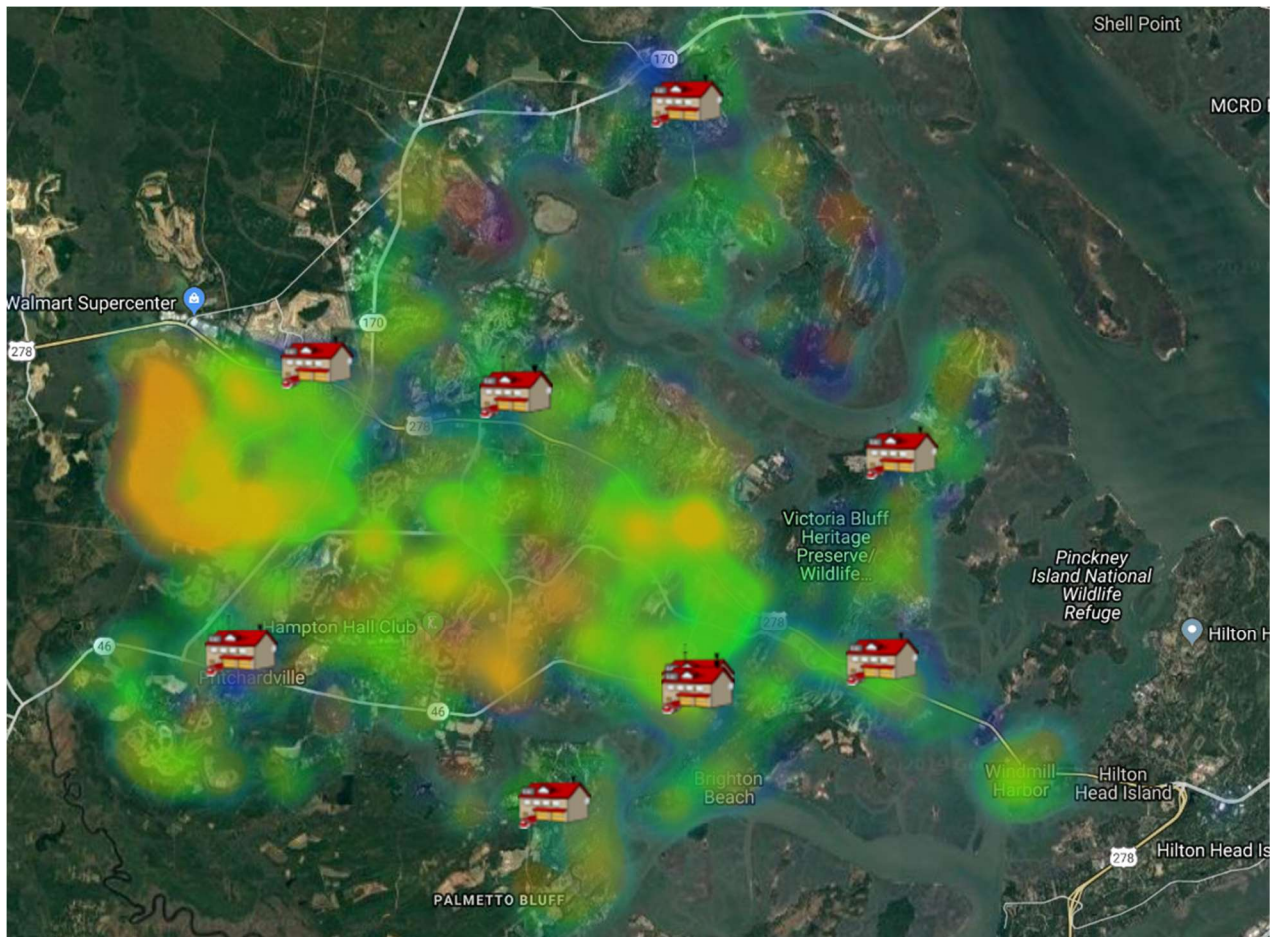
As for fires brush and grass fires were the most prevalent in the District at 33 occurrences or 21.29% of all fires encountered. Building fires were close behind at 31 (20.00% of the total fires), followed by vehicle fires at 23 (14.84%), cooking fires at 18 (11.61%), and outside trash and rubbish fires at 11 (7.10%).

Calls for Service Location Analysis

The District utilizes GIS mapping technology to plot all of its responses. This information is then compiled and provides us a graphic interpretation of where emergencies are occurring. The technology can also plot the responses by incident type and total response time for the fire department to arrive on the scene. We refer to these maps as “heat” maps. Utilizing color on the maps we can see the concentration of incidents or the amount of time to arrive. The color red is utilized to indicate more incidents or longer times. The color 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 some day 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.



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.



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.

The analysis of the 2018 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 designated for the Hampton Parkway at River Ridge Academy should alleviate the elongating response time issues. Volume is expected to continue to increase as the District grows and new facilities are designed to accommodate additional units and personnel should they be needed into the future.

Additional District Highlights

International Accreditation and a New Strategic Plan

2018 saw the District continuing to work toward its goal of achieving international accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE). This is the second year of work for the District and it is our intent to complete this process by the spring of 2019. In September of 2018

the District took a large step in the process when it contracted with CPSE's consultants to provide a four-day workshop to assist the District in developing a new community centered strategic plan. The workshop was very successful with 40 plus members of the Bluffton community participating and providing input into what the community wanted from its fire department. The ultimate result was a new strategic plan with eight goals and supporting objectives to lead the District from 2018-2023. At the same time the members of the District also updated the mission and vision statements to more closely align with the needs of the citizens.

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

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.

To 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.

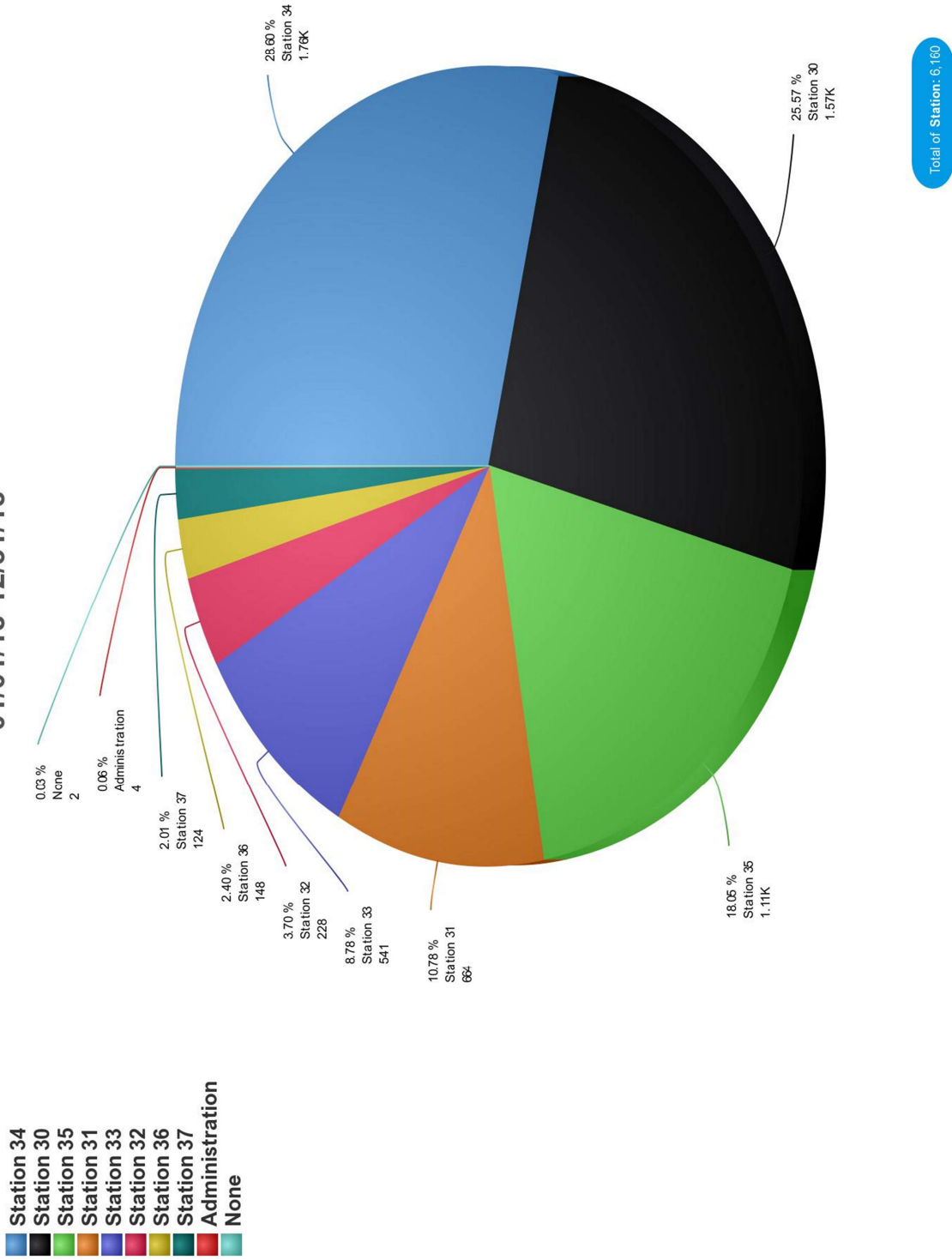
Furthering our desire to demonstrate that we value trust internally and externally, we will strive to maintain our current infrastructure, while developing strategies for growth that are performance-based and fiscally responsible.

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.

Appendix A

Incidents by Stations

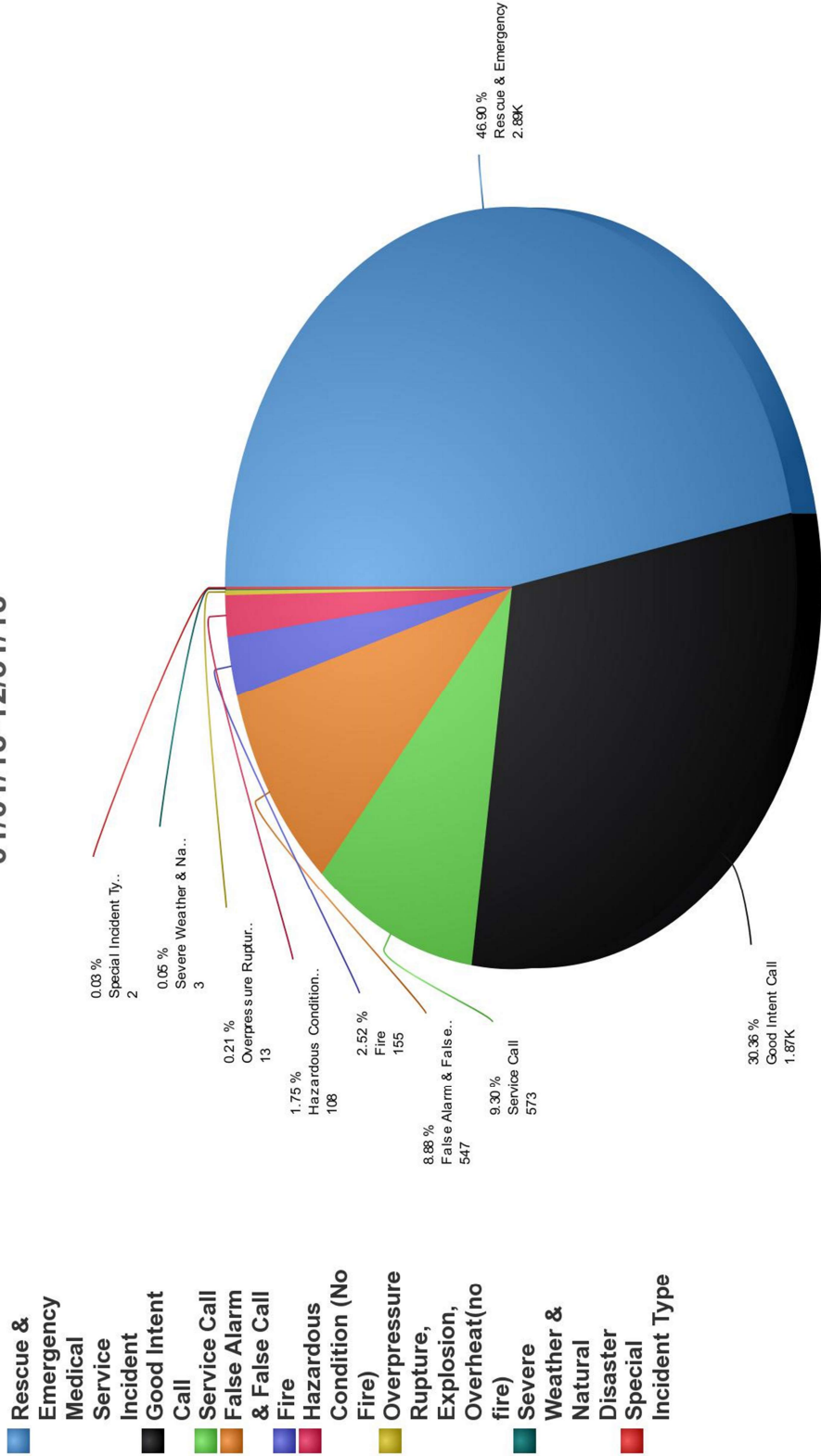
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Appendix B

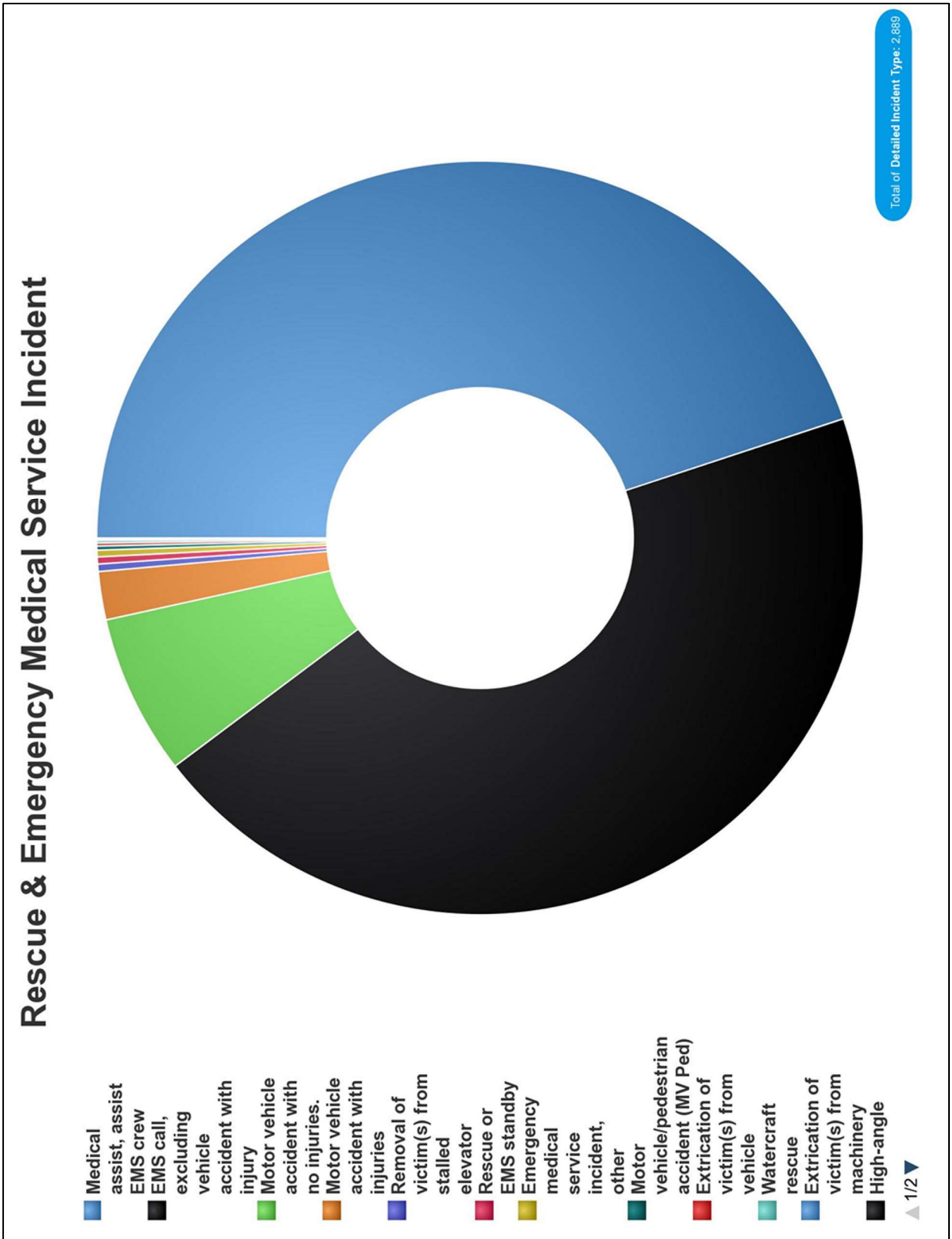
Analysis by Incident Type

01/01/18-12/31/18



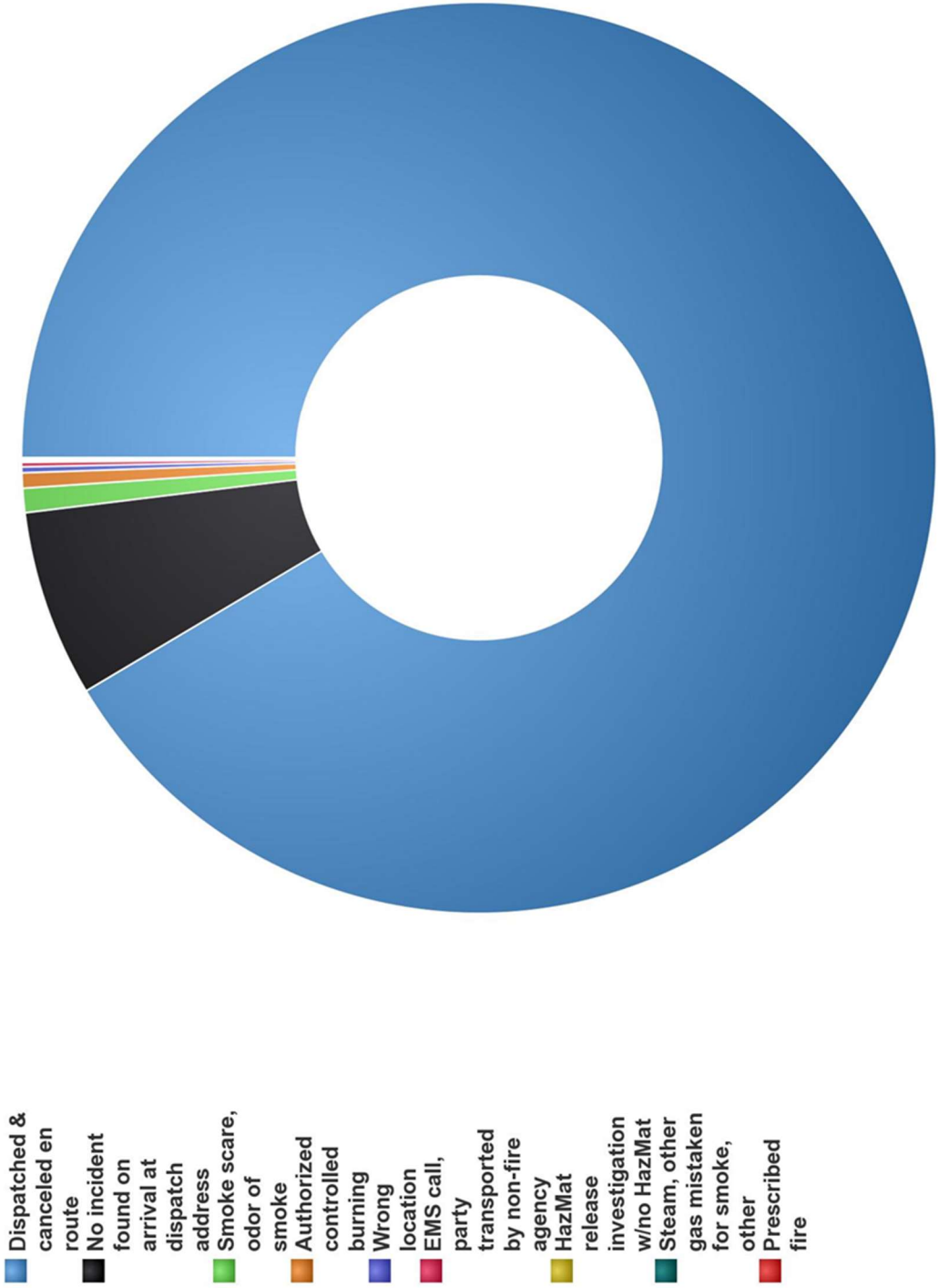
Total of Incident Type: 6,160

Appendix B.1



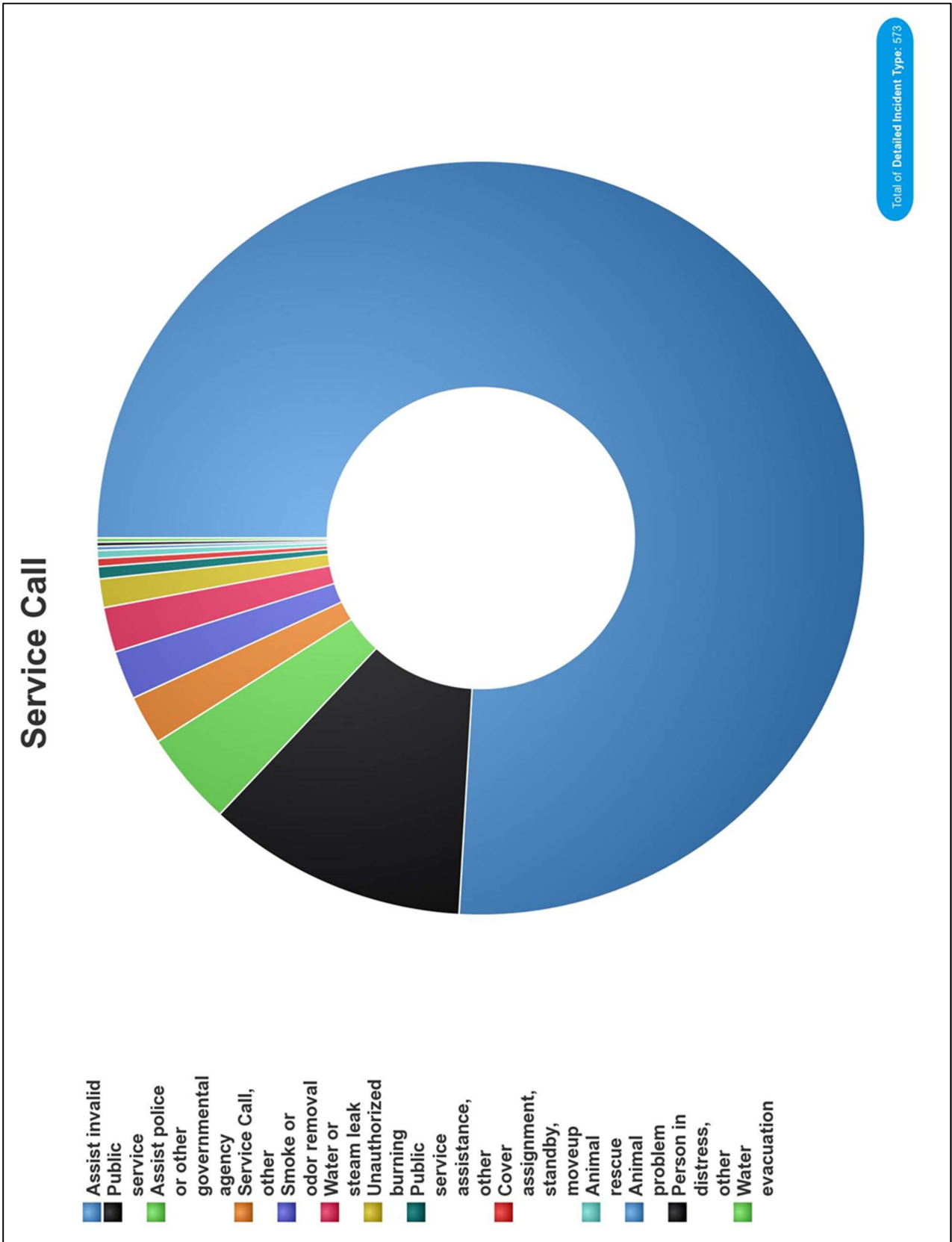
Appendix B.2

Good Intent Call



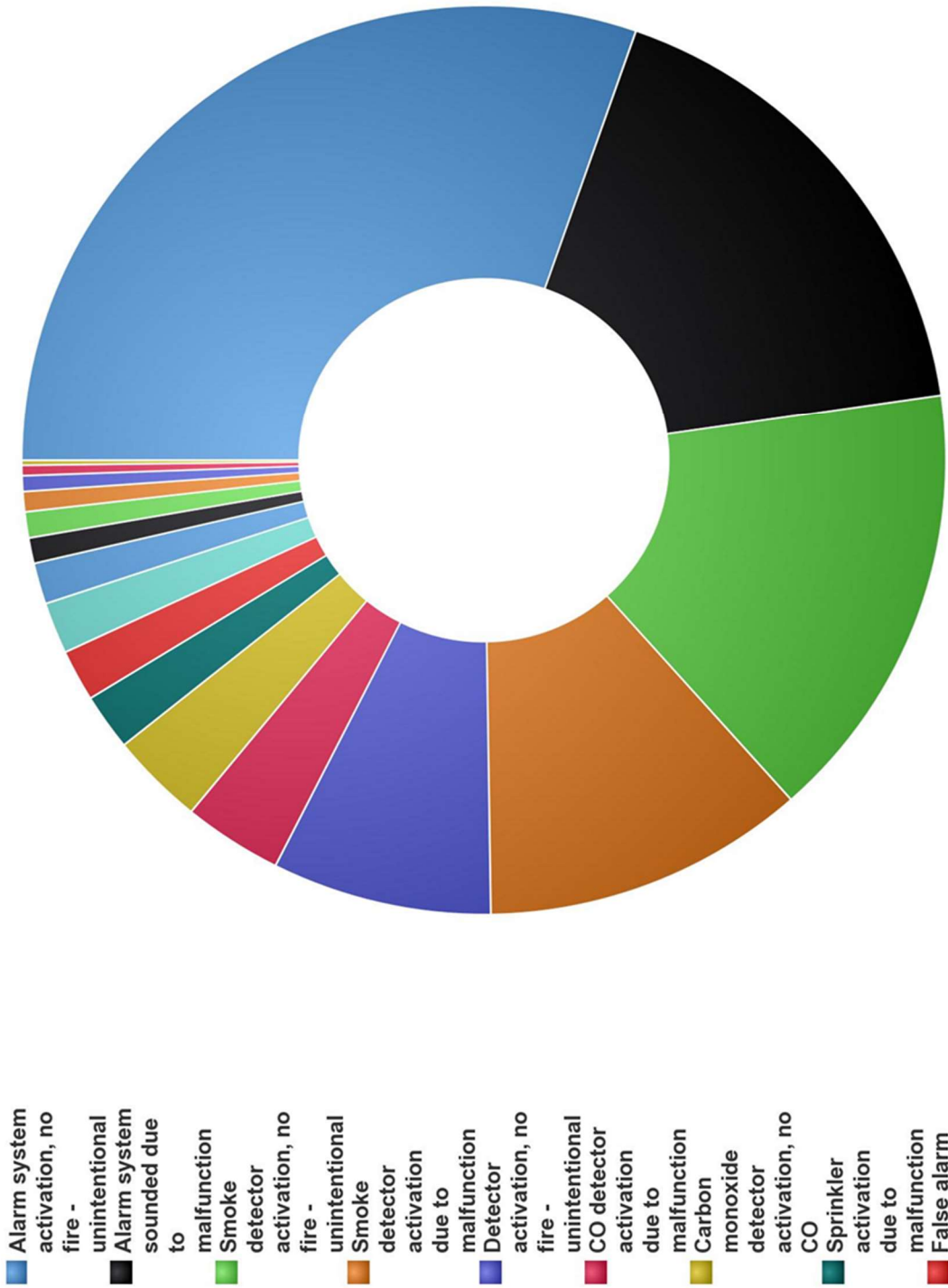
Total of Detailed Incident Type: 1,870

Appendix B.3



Appendix B.4

False Alarm & False Call



Total of Detailed Incident Type: 547

1/2 ▼

Appendix B.5

