

# Alsip Fire Department



Annual Report  
2013

# **This report is a summation of the activities, incidents, and accomplishments that the Alsip Fire Department either responded to or participated in in 2013. This report also contains objectives for 2014**

## **Summary of the year.**

In 2013 the Alsip Fire Department made some necessary changes to better serve the public (our external customers), protect our firefighters and equipment (internal customers), evaluated how we respond to calls and how we fill-in with manpower when necessary.

## **External Customers**

Two of the areas that we identified as lacking are;

Fire Prevention

Public Education

## **Fire Prevention**

Due to how we were performing annual building inspections in the past, we needed to make a drastic change to accomplish our goal of 100% of buildings being inspected on an annual basis. This was accomplished on several levels. The most drastic move was eliminating the Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention. Although there is a genuine need for a third chief officer to assist in administrative duties and responses to incidents, there was a greater need to insure that the fire prevention program is administered and followed. The Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention position was eliminated effective July 2, 2013. A portion of the administrative duties and responses of incidents were now accomplished by the appointing of three Shift Commanders and three Assistant Shift Commanders. This was in joint cooperation with the IAFF local 3074. The second level was the hiring of a part-time civilian Fire Prevention Officer. When the resumes were received and interviews conducted, it was determined that two of the people interviewed has the extensive knowledge and experience that we needed. A decision was made to hire the 2 people, split the hours, and split the duties based on their experiences. This gave the fire department the ability to have a much more solid Fire Prevention Bureau. In addition to the new Fire Prevention Officers, there are now 6 fire department personnel who are trained to the level of a fire inspector that perform the annual inspections of all multi-family residential buildings and all commercial/ industrial businesses. The inspections are being conducted while they are "off-duty" and are compensated at a special

rate which is lower than their overtime rate. In the past, the inspectors (only 3 at the time) were sent out while on duty on Mondays and Fridays from 9am until 12pm to complete the inspections. This wasn't feasible or conducive. We were taking a person from the duty crew whose main job while on duty is to respond to calls for service. Due to the amount of calls that we respond to, and their allotted time off, the inspections were not being conducted and the department was 2 years behind in inspections.

## **Summary of the Fire Prevention Bureau**

The following report represents the activities of the Fire Prevention Bureau from June of 2013 thru December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2013;

Annual Inspections- 412

Re-inspections- 85

Plans review (new constructions, remodeling, fire alarms, sprinkler systems)/ inspections for occupancy- 478

Testing (sprinkler systems, fire alarms, water flow, pump tests, tickets issued)- 111

## **Plans for 2014**

In 2014, the Fire Prevention Bureau will be completing the following objectives;

1. All inspections will become paperless using the Firehouse Software program.
2. The fire department will be using a fee schedule for all annual inspections, re-inspections, and occupancy inspections so that the Fire Prevention Bureau is funded self-sufficiently.
3. The Fire Prevention Bureau will be updating all of its fire prevention codes.

## **Public-Education programs**

The fire department recognizes the best two sources of preventing fires, and promoting fire safety is either by fire prevention and/or public education programs. In 2013, the fire department expanded its public education programs. The public education programs include; the fire prevention Poster Contest, the presentation of the fire safety trailer for all 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at the elementary schools in the village (during fire prevention month), the presentation of severe weather program to all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in March, presenting "patches" the fire engine robot to all pre-school children in the elementary schools, day care facilities, park district, and at Worth Township. The bureau also coordinates and oversees all CPR classes, fire extinguisher classes, and car seat

inspections. Our biggest presentation is our “Open House”. In 2013, we had the largest attendance in over 20 years.



The Public Education Bureau is made up of 2 Public Education Coordinators. The remainder of the bureau is staffed by personnel who work the programs “off-duty”.

### **Summary of 2013’s Public Education Events & Programs**

Home Escape classroom presentation- 437 students  
Home Escape Practical (safety trailer)- 437 students  
Patches program- 280 Kindergarten and Pre-school students  
Participants in annual poster contest- 1488 students  
Open House attendance- estimated 450 people  
Chamber Luncheon attendance- 96 people  
Station Tours- 90 people  
Block Parties- 7  
Car Seat Checks/ Installations- 150  
Company picnics or special events- 7 with a total estimated attendance of 450  
Other events that were attended or presentations were made; Alsip Park Dist’s Farmer’s Market, Severe Weather presentation and the Haunted Trails; Alsip Library- Severe weather preparedness and the village’s National Night Out.

### **Plans for 2014**

The Public Education Bureau is planning the following new programs in 2014;

1. Re-establishing the “Senior’s” program.

2. Establishing a Citizen's Fire Academy.
3. Establishing a Babysitter's training program.



### **2013 Incident Statistics**

In 2013, the Alsip Fire Department responded to 3,021 incidents. This number is lower than the 3,168 incidents that we responded to in 2012. The two reasons of the lower responses are from;

1. The elimination of responses to automatic-aid for fire alarms, inside gas leaks, and other non-essential responses. We eliminated this practice in September of 2012, and saw a significant drop in call volume in 2012. 2013 was the first complete year of this practice. It reduces the wear and tear of our vehicles and minimizes our risk exposure while responding to incidents outside of the village that can be handled by their fire department.
2. During the course of when multiple personnel were off on injury and attempting to reduce the overtime ceiling, it was determined to eliminate all callbacks during multiple incidents. This was initiated in July and continues today. By eliminating this practice, it reduced our call volume by approximately 400 calls. Evaluating its effectiveness, it has been determined that it has not impacted the fire department. With the number of personnel who live outside the village, have other commitments while off-duty, and the actual number of personnel who did comeback, this practice will continue. At this time, we only initiate a callback response is for working fires in our town.

The number of incidents in 2013 now reflect the actual amount of calls within the village that we respond to. This number has increased from year to year. The summary of incidents for 2013 are as follows;

## **Fires**

Structure Fires- 14

Vehicle Fires- 13

Other Fires (grass, rubbish, etc.)-15

Total Fires 42



## **Emergency Medical Calls & Rescue (including vehicle accidents)**

1,955



## **Hazardous Conditions Calls (including gas leaks, carbon monoxide alarms)**

106

## **Service calls & Good intent calls (Cancelled while enroute to responding towns for auto-matic aid, mutual-aid responses, assist citizens)**

465

## **False calls (fire alarms, smoke detector sounding)**

452

### **Other external customer services and specialty teams**

The Alsip Fire Department belongs to the Mutual-Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). This is the statewide mutual-aid plan for the fire service. It is a clearing house to provide resources for all-hazards including major fires, natural disasters and man-made events (terrorism). The Alsip Fire Department houses several pieces of specialized equipment for these types of incidents which include the Western Shelter Tent system and a light tower/ generator. These assets could be deployed at anytime that they are needed and anywhere in the state of Illinois or possibly adjacent states through mutual-aid.

We have 4 personnel that are members of the Southwest Hazardous Materials Response Team. They are our local hazardous materials response team. All of the team members are specially trained to mitigate hazardous materials. The fire department also houses the local response team's science and command van. This van contains all of the specialty monitoring equipment for a hazardous materials response as well as functioning as a command post for the team. The value of the monitoring equipments alone is over \$500,000.

We have 5 personnel who are part of the Combined Agency Response Team (C.A.R.T.). This is our local technical rescue team. All of the personnel on the team are specially trained to mitigate specialized rescue such as; Confined Space, High Angle, Trench, and Structural Collapse. Alsip houses one of the trailers for the team which consists of specialized tools and equipment to work within the disciplines listed.

We have 4 personnel who are part of the area's Origin and Cause team (Fire investigations). These personnel respond to the surrounding fire departments to assist with fire cause and point of origin.

All specialty team members are required to attend monthly training sessions to remain proficient in their skills and are required to be certified by the Office of the State Fire marshal.

### **Internal Customers**

### **Firefighter's Safety**

Equipment Purchased or was donated to the fire department in 2013;

A Stryker Power cot for the 3<sup>rd</sup> ambulance. (IPRF funded \$7,000 of \$14,000 cost)

2- Styker Power Loads for front line ambulances. The new ambulance will already have it installed when it arrives. Both of these devices are to promote EMS safety by reducing potential back injuries by using power assisted devices. (IPRF funded \$7,000 of \$25,000 cost)

6- new ergonomic back boards. They have a higher weight capacity, and have retractable handles for reducing back injuries from lifting. They are also contoured to fit the patient better to allow better immobilization of the spine.

3- POK tubes were donated to the department. These tubes use a solid stick based foam to extinguish vehicle fires, dumpster type fires and allows water to penetrate quicker through ordinary combustibles such as paper, wood and cardboard. This allows less exposure to our firefighters.

2- new Gas Trac monitors were donated to the fire department. These meters detect the presence of natural gas in small amounts. They act as “sniffer” to locate natural gas orders and leaks. These are the same meters that are used by Nicor.

2- Automatic External defibrillators were donated and are awaiting their arrival. These AEDs will be placed in each if the chief’s vehicles.

## **Responses to calls**

To help further reduce the risk of our personnel while responding to calls, the following provisions were made;

1. Reduced Auto-Aid responses to fire alarms in Crestwood & Palos Heights to nursing homes, group homes and schools in session only. During these responses, fire apparatus respond with no lights or sirens.
2. Internally changed responses to fire alarms, auto-accidents, and other non-emergency type calls to minimize the risk while responding.
3. Added a response from the Blue Island Fire Department of an engine or a tower ladder and a chief officer to provide adequate manpower and chief officers to all structure fire responses.
4. Streamlined the category of fire calls for the ease of dispatching and responding.
5. Always sending an ambulance immediately for all possible and bonafide structure fires.

## **Staffing levels**

Our staffing level consists of 8 personnel between both fire stations. All of our personnel are State Certified Paramedics. There is a minimum of one Lieutenant on duty at all times.

## **Training**

The fire service is driven by training. The fire department is the “One call does all”, all hazards first responders. We must be the masters of all including fighting fires (both structural and non-structural), emergency medical services, hazardous materials, technical rescue (high angle, confined space, trench, structural collapse), vehicle rescue, specialized rescue such as ice and water, disaster management and planning plus anything else that no one wants. Firefighters must have great mechanical aptitude, and are able to make something work out of nothing (improvise) at a moment’s notice. All of the fire apparatus carries specialized equipment that every firefighter and officer knows how to use proficiently. We are required to complete annual training requirements by several agencies including NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency), Illinois Dept. of Labor (IDOL – OSHA equivalent), ISO (Insurance Services Organization), IDPH (Illinois Dept. of Public Health) and the OSFM (Office of the State Fire Marshal).

### **Breakdown of yearly requirements for ISO;**

240 hours annually of firefighter specific training

16 hours for officer training (chiefs and company officers)

Minimum of 4 hours of driver refresher including practical skills

Pre-planning of all commercial buildings or walkthroughs/ visits

12 hours of multi-company drills

8 hours of night training

4 hours of Radiation Awareness

### **Illinois Dept. of labor requirements;**

16 hours of respiratory protection training (SCBA)

Driver’s training along with ISO (Initial 40 hours plus practical driving for each type of vehicle.

Bloodborne pathogens review

Hazardous materials- 40 hrs for Operations trained (IDOL & NFPA)

12 hour refresher training each year

Hazardous Materials Technician- 92 hours initially, 24 hours refresher annually (team drills)

Technical Rescue 8 hrs annually refresher- Team members initially +400 hours plus minimum of 24 hours refresher training annually (team drills)

### **Specials Hazards/ Training;**

Lockout/ tagout (4 hours annually)

Vehicle Rescue- 12 -20 hours annually (Not a requirement, but must keep up with skills, knowledge of extrication plus new technology of vehicle construction)

Pump Operator Training- 24- 32 hours annually (not a requirement, but must keep up with skills/ knowledge)

Live fire training- varies for time

Policies, SOGs, administrative rules

Traffic Incident management

National Incident Management (NIMS)- required by federal government

### **Illinois Dept. of Public Health**

All of the Firefighters, Lieutenants, and Chief officers are licensed paramedics. Each person is required to attend a minimum of 3 sessions of continuing education annually through South Cook County EMS System (Ingalls hospital, our resource hospital). Each session is approximately 6 hours. Additionally all paramedics are required to have a total of 120 hours of continuing education every four years (30 hrs per year average).

Training is usually handled at the crew or shift level. In 2013 some of the specialty training that we provided was:

Training with auto-aid departments are the BI Equipment building on 127<sup>th</sup> St

Live training at a house on Hamlin Ave

Hazardous Materials Technican "A" & "B" (through the Illinois Fire Service Institute)





## **Plans for 2014**

1. Continue to provide as much realistic training as possible including continuing using buildings in town for the training.
2. Reinststate the pre-planning program. This was stopped several years ago due to time constraints. This is a requirement to help lower our ISO rating, keep our firefighters up to date with the occupancies of the commercial and industrial buildings and gives the ability to have a detailed floor plan of each building In the event we have an incident at a commercial or industrial building.
3. Utilizing Firehouse Software (Training Records) to keep track of our personnel's training activities.
4. Providing a dedicated training officer or Training Support Team.

## **End of 2013 Annual report**