

Alsip Fire Department



**Annual Report
For
2014**

First and foremost, I would like to thank Mayor Kitching and the entire board of Trustees for their continued support of the Alsip Fire Department. I believe that all of you share the same vision as I do as what type of service the fire department should provide and how to provide it with the resources we have.

As the Fire Chief, I am charged with leading the Alsip Fire Department in providing; fire protection, EMS, Technical Rescue, Hazardous Materials, fire prevention, public education, fire investigation, water rescue, and anything else that comes our way to all of our residents, businesses, and travelers that come through our town.

The Alsip Fire Department is made up of very dedicated and highly trained personnel to provide the service listed above. We have the state-of-the-art equipment, and great training facilities to maintain our level of competency and proficiency.

We are constantly evaluating ways to improve our service and training by monitoring current trends in the fire service, looking at new equipment, and evaluating our responses.

This report is a summation of the activities, incidents, and accomplishments that the Alsip Fire Department either responded to or participated in in 2014. This report also contains some objectives planned for 2015.

Summary of the year

2014 was a huge year for the fire department for several reasons. Starting off with there was a decrease in the number of firefighters and lieutenants that were off either on injury or medical. In 2013, we needed to promote a temporary lieutenant to fill the void space that was created by having 3 lieutenants off at the same time between injury and medical. In May of 2014 there were two lieutenants off due to injury and medical. This led to the experimental trial of promoting a floating lieutenant to fill the void space of multiple lieutenants being off for various reasons, thus maintaining an adequate number of officers for command and control.

2014 was also where we were able to provide a complete year to evaluate the Shift Commander program. This has been a very successful program. In 2014 there were 2 incidents which began as a full fire alarm was escalated to a still which requires the response of auto-aid departments and chief officers. Both incidents went very smoothly and the responding chief officer(s) provided support to the Shift commander which acted as the Incident Commander for each incident.

In 2014 our focus was placed on the reinforcement of both our external customers (residents and businesses) and internal customers (firefighters and officers). This was piggybacked on the areas that we identified as areas of weakness in 2013 as well as constant evaluations of incident responses and constant communication with the Fire Prevention Bureau, Public Education Coordinators and the Training Support Team.

Many of the accomplishments and overviews will be covered in the appropriate sections of this report.

Fire Prevention

In 2014 we had a full year of evaluating the reorganization of the Fire Prevention Bureau. The two (2) part-time Fire Prevention Officers that were hired have proved to be invaluable with their knowledge and experience. The Fire Prevention

Officers have split the duties of the position which allows us to accomplish all aspects of fire prevention but without any duplications of effort. Both of these gentlemen also work closely with the Building Department and Water Department. Additionally, by utilizing the 7G rate with firefighters that are certified as state fire inspectors, we have been able to successfully complete the annual inspections of all commercial and multi-family residential buildings (100%). This is a first in several years. In 2014, the inspectors completed a more detailed inspection which including; updating all business owner and emergency contact information, checking the keys in the Knox Boxes, and alarm company information. There are currently six (6) firefighters who perform inspection while they are “off-duty”. This is up from three (3) inspectors in 2013. 2014 will be the last year that the fire inspectors will use paper reports. During the winter months, the inspectors will be adding all of the necessary data into the Firehouse Software program. This will allow us to confirm that all inspections were completed plus have the capabilities into looking at the building’s or business’ history. Beginning in 2015 all inspections will be done on I-pads (we are applying for a fire prevention grant). The goal is to move to paperless to eliminate the current 4- 4 drawer file cabinets that have been in place since the 1970’s.

Summary of the Fire Prevention Bureau

The following report represents the activities of the Fire Prevention Bureau from January 1st thru December 31st;

Annual Inspections (commercial and multi-family)- 1250

Re-inspections- 215

Plans review (new constructions, remodeling, fire alarms, sprinkler systems)- 1133

Testing (sprinkler systems, fire alarm, water flow, pump tests)-168

Court tickets/ complaint investigations- 82

Plans for 2015

In 2015, the Fire Prevention Bureau will be working on completing the following objectives;

1. Continue to work on updating all fire prevention codes as necessary.
2. Additional training for the fire inspectors which includes the obtaining the certification of Fire Inspector II, and Illinois School Inspector.
3. Converting all past inspection reports to the Firehouse software program.

Public Education Programs

The Alsip Fire Department has recognized that a solid public education program must exist to help reduce fires and promote fire safety. This is an extension of the Fire Prevention Bureau. The Public Education Bureau is managed by two (2) coordinators. The bureau is further assisted by several firefighters who assist in delivering the programs “off-duty” and is compensated by the 7G rate. The public education programs include; the annual Fire Prevention Week annual poster contest, the fire safety trailer for 2nd & 4th grade students, severe weather program for all 3rd & 5th grade students, “Patches”, our robot fire engine to all kindergarten and pre-school children, attending block parties, company picnics, CPR, first-aid, fire extinguisher training, car seat installations/ inspections, and our annual “Open House”.

In 2014, the Alsip Fire Department re-established a monthly CPR class which is held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

This is our 3rd year where we have given the overall grade winners of the poster contest a ride to school in the fire engine “parade style”.



Summary of 2014's Public Education Events & Programs

Home Escape classroom presentation- 285 students

Home Escape Practical (safety trailer)- 485 students

Patches program- Kindergarten & Pre-school- 310

Open House estimated attendance >300

Poster contest participants- 970

Chamber Luncheon attendance- 88

Station tours- >100

Block parties- 8

Car seat check/ installations- 135

Company picnics- 5

Other events that were attended or presentations were made at; the Haunted Trails, Home Depot Safety Days, Crown, Cork & Seal Health Fair, Holiday on Pulaski (safety trailer & MABAS tent), the Street Fair (fire pole), Chamber of Commerce's Spring Fair, and the Park District's "Touch-A-Truck".



Plans for 2015

The Public Education Bureau is planning the following new programs in 2015;

1. Presentation of "Senior's Safety" (tentative for April).
2. Continued development of a "Babysitter's" program.
3. Working with the businesses to promote CPR training for their employees along with the residents.
4. Application of a FEMA grant to enhance our programs.
5. Additional props for the delivery of our programs.



2014 Incident Statistics

In 2014, the Alsip Fire Department responded to 3,378 incidents. This is a record number for us. The next closest was 3,269 responses in 2011. Between 2012 and 2013 we revised some of our responses, streamlined some, reduced some of the auto-aid, and stopped the use of callbacks with the exception for working structure fires. With that being said, the fire department still responded to an additional 357 calls over 2013. The majority of incidents still stem from EMS calls. In 2014, EMS calls represented 67% of the overall call volume (which is about average for fire departments).

The number of incidents in 2014 truly reflect the amount of incidents within the village compared to providing automatic and mutual-aid. 7 out of every 8 calls for service are in the village. In 2014, the Alsip Fire Department provided assistance to other fire departments a total of 401 times, a slight increase over 2013. The summary of incidents for 2014 are as follows;

Fires

Structure Fires- 14

Vehicle fires- 19

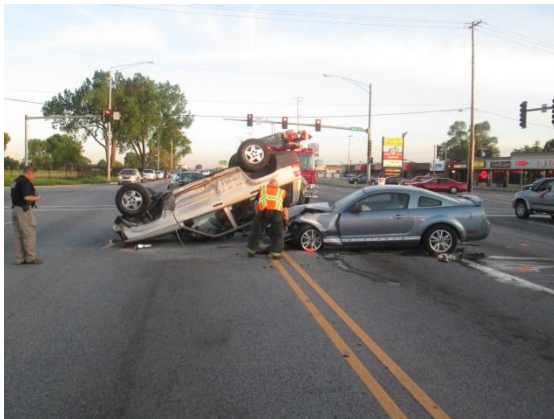
Other fires (grass, rubbish, etc.)- 15

Total Fires- 48

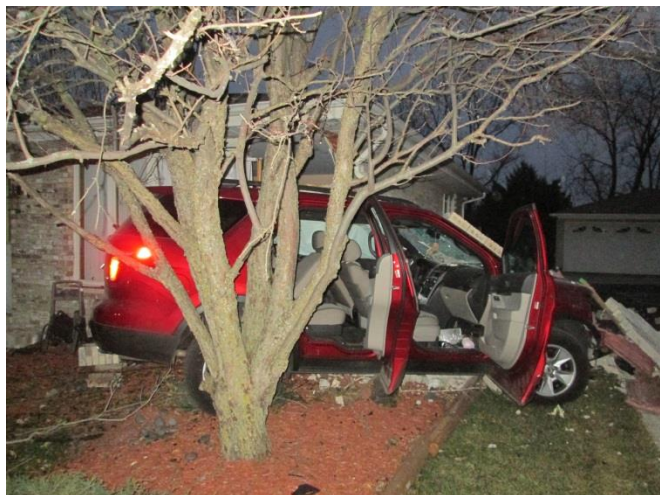




Emergency Medical Calls & Rescue (including vehicle accidents)- 2077



Hazardous Conditions Calls (including gas leaks, carbon monoxide alarms)- 141



Service calls & Good intent calls (cancelled while enroute to responding towns, for automatic and mutual-aid responses, assist citizens)- 281

False calls (fire alarms, smoke detector sounding)- 502

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 4 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.

In the fall of 2014, the fire department made some equipment and response changes to cardiac arrest victims. This is from information based on the City of Chicago, Orland Fire Dist. and Seattle Fire Dept. (Washington State) to increase the chances of survival.

Equipment Change: Using "Stat Pads" for cardiac monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of CPR. The "new" monitoring pads allows the medics to monitor the patient's rhythm while performing compressions and having the ability to determine the compression's effectiveness. In the past, we could not monitor while performing compressions. If the medic is not compressing fully or does not provide enough compressions, the monitor verbally lets the medic know. These pads have been placed on the monitors in all (3) three ambulances and the monitors on the (2) two ALS engines.

Response change- The fire department now responds with a minimum of 6 firefighter/ paramedics to all suspected or confirmed cardiac arrest victims. This provides enough manpower to fill various rolls of providing treatment and to ensure that CPR is not stalled or stopped.

Internal Customers

Firefighter's Safety

Equipment purchased or was donated to the fire department in 2014;

1. A new ambulance, #2032. It's the first new ambulance purchased in 9 years. The two previous ambulance were a re-chassis which at the time was more cost effective.
2. \$14,000 from IPRF towards the purchase of a Styker Powerload system for Ambulance 2032 (cost of the system= \$25,000).
3. \$16,000 from Federal Signal for the emergency lighting and siren for Ambulance 2032.

4. The delivery of 2 (two) AEDs that were donated by Nufarm. These were placed in each of the Chief's vehicles.
5. Replaced the 2000 Ford Explorer that is used by fire prevention with a 2015 Ford Escape.
6. The purchase of 3 Thermal Imaging Cameras. This is a very important piece of equipment used for searching for victims in fires, monitoring heat conditions, and monitoring fire conditions. With the assistance of the 2% fund (foreign fire), the cost was split in half with the department's budget. The fire department did apply for a federal grant to fund this project, but was denied. These thermal imaging cameras have the latest technology for firefighter's safety and locating fire victims. These cameras also include a range finder and a compass built-in which is especially significant for the large buildings in our response district.
7. Arkema donated two "Magna" patches. These patches are designed for stopping leaks and spills from railroad cars. The fire department stores one patch at Station #1, and the other patch was given to the Hazardous Materials Response Team.
8. A trailer was purchased to transport pub-ed and training equipment to needed sites. This was previously done with the pick-up truck, but always proved to be ineffective. With the trailer, the equipment can be left in it until the instructors have completed their program. Additionally, the cap from the pick truck was removed which provides more visibility while plowing snow.





Responses to incidents

In 2014, the fire department was able to fully evaluate our changes in responses that were initiated in 2013. The changes have been proven to be effective and efficient with some minor adjustments. On structure fire responses, our primary goal is firefighter safety. We strive to ensure we have enough personnel on the scene in all aspects from command and control to task level personnel. As mentioned above, the Shift Commander program has been proven to be a positive change.

Staffing levels

In 2014, we still experienced some injuries, both on-duty and off-duty. There wasn't as much of an impact compared to 2013. This also created the "experimental" Floating Lieutenant to fill in for any lieutenant that would be off for an extended amount of time due to injury or medical reasons. This position is still being evaluated for its effectiveness. Our average age within the fire department is currently at 42 which means our personnel are more susceptible to injury and longer recovery times.

During multiple periods of time in 2014, all three ambulances were out on incidents at the same time. We staff two (2) front-line ambulances. The third ambulance is designed as a reserve in the event one of the front line ambulances is taken out of service or as a back-up ambulance to respond to a third ambulance call if staffing permits. Unfortunately when this happens, we do not have enough personnel to respond on an engine for a fire call. With the amount of personnel living outside of the village and having other commitments, call backs for other

than structure fires are not beneficial. Our current minimum staffing (agreement through labor-management) is 8 personnel.

Plans for 2015

1. Looking at ways to increase our daily staffing to a minimum of (9) nine personnel.
2. Continue to evaluate our responses and auto-aid and mutual-aid agreements/ responses.

Training

In 2013, the fire department identified one of its weaknesses as consistent training delivery. The need exists by having a dedicated Training Officer (40 hrs./wk.). However, this was not possible with the current financial situation, plus with the other programs that were initiated. The alternative was to establish a “Training Support Team”. This concept was to use 3- 4 personnel to fill in all aspects of what would be needed by a full-time training officer. This includes developing training schedules, lesson plans, obtaining off-site training sites, training tower maintenance and prop development/ maintenance, providing consistent delivery, and arranging building walkthroughs and pre-plans (identified as a weakness and lacking during the last ISO visit). The Training Support Team has had a positive impact on the fire department’s training capabilities and is still developing.

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 must know 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.
Blood borne pathogens review (6-8 hours)
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 100 hours of continuing education every four years (IDPH change in 2014 from 120 hours).

Training is usually handled at the crew or shift level. However, there are certain times that for consistency or special training, specific and specially trained personnel are brought back to instruct for the department. In 2014 some of the specialty training that we provided was:

Hazardous Materials Operations and Technician “B” class (through the Illinois Fire Service Institute).

Vehicle & Machinery Operations Course (40 hours)



In 2014, we converted all of the training reports to the Firehouse Software. With this conversion, the fire department can now track all training from the amount of classes, the types of classes along with individual training records. In 2014, there were a total of 10,300 hours spent on training. The average training per person

(firefighters and Lieutenants) was 313 hours during the year. This is an above average amount of training hours based on the amount of days personnel work.

In 2014, the fire department began joint training with the Public Works and Water Department. This was accomplished through the training with Cook County Department of Homeland Security (Command Post set-up and Operation), attending the Cook County Department of Homeland Security's Open House at their Oak Forest campus and respiratory and confined space training.



In 2014, additional props were developed or acquired including furniture for the training tower to simulate a residential home, a new roof prop on the storage container for ventilation practice, a collapse simulator for firefighter "MAYDAY" training, and purchasing additional manikins.

Plans for 2015

1. Continued development of the Training Support Team.

2. Continued realistic training through the use of props and actual structures or building in the village.
3. Continued encouragement of outside training.
4. The purchase of a "Sim" man. This is a manikin for EMS for skill reviews or to learn new skills. The manikin provides feedback to ensure that the skills were completed satisfactorily. A FEMA grant has been applied for.
5. Continuation of the pre-plan program.
6. Development of "Acting Officer" boot camp.

End of 2014 Annual Fire Department report.

Submitted by Chief Thomas Styczynski