

# **Alsip Fire Department**



**Annual Report  
For  
2019**

First and foremost, I am honored to serve as the Fire Chief for the Village of Alsip. I have lived in Alsip essentially all of my life and have been a part of the Alsip Fire Department since 1971 when my father became a volunteer with the fire department. It is a great honor to serve the people that we protect.

I would also like to thank Mayor Ryan and the board of Trustees for their 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. The constant challenge is how to continue to provide those levels of service with the resources we have. Due to budget constraints, labor costs always going up, the cost of equipment and materials always going up, it makes it difficult sometimes.

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 everything else that comes our way to all of our residents, businesses, and travelers that come through our great village. This is due to the majority of our village being commercial/ industrial based rather than all residential.

The Alsip Fire Department is made of up of very dedicated and highly trained personnel to provide the services. We strive to have the most current and state-of-the-art equipment, offer the most up-to-date training programs and practices, and great 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 process is ongoing throughout the year. We have made several modifications over the past years to keep our effectiveness and efficiency.

We also research alternative funding for the fire department throughout the year. Grants are very competitive and far and few between.

**This report is a summation of the activities, incidents, and accomplishments that the Alsip Fire Department either responded to or participated in in 2019. This report also contains some objectives planned for 2020.**

### **Summary of the year**

2019 was another busy for the fire department. In 2019, we had a lieutenant retire and 2 firefighters leave for another department. We hired 3 replacement firefighters to fill their spots and promoted of 1 lieutenant. In 2019 the fire department responded to over 3600 calls for service. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in row that we responded to over 3600 incidents.



In 2019, the Alsip Fire Department was re-graded by the ISO (Insurance Services Office). The Alsip Fire Department went from a grade of 3 to a grade of 2. This is a significant change. The ISO rating determines your insurance costs. The rating scale is from 1 to 9. This change was due to some changes with responses, staffing of equipment and in large part due to the Village contracting with Oak Lawn for dispatching services.

In 2019, The Alsip Fire Department received a very generous donation from Serve Pro of distributor nozzles. These nozzles give us another dimension to fighting fires in small or concealed areas.



In 2020, the Alsip Fire Department will be applying for various grants as they come up.

In 2019 we had several improvements completed to the fire stations which included finishing replacing the original windows from 1974 (completion Feb. 2020), replacing the rear overhead doors to both stations and the operator motors. Several of the station's bathrooms have been remodeled and upgraded. With the help of the Firefighter's foreign fire board, the bathrooms were able to be remodeled. The tile was the original yellow small squared tile from 1974. At the time of this report, the last bathroom at fire station is being planned for its remodel with hopes to be completed by April of 2020.

During 2020, the stations will be evaluated to determine what other projects are going to be needed in the future including, remodeling of the kitchens (last done in 1999), finishing the large bathroom at Station 1, possibly parking lots, some concrete and brick work. We are also budgeting to install security cameras on the exterior of fire station 1 to keep our facility and staff safe.

In 2020, we will continue to remain focused on our external customers (residents and businesses) and internal customers (Officers and Firefighters) by evaluating all current programs and making necessary adjustments when necessary.

### **Fire Prevention**

The Fire Prevention Bureau is led by two part-time Fire Prevention Officers in which each have specific duties. This is supplemented by 12 firefighters who perform the annual inspections while off-duty.

2019 was also a very busy and productive year for Fire Prevention Bureau. The inspectors utilize an I-Pad for annual inspections. This has proved to be an invaluable tool for inspections. The fire inspector can track the current inspection, search the past inspection, and insure that the business' fire alarm system, sprinkler system, and any other protective systems are inspected on an annual basis. During the annual inspections our inspectors have consistently find numerous businesses which do not have a current business license and report it to the building department for resolution. The I-Pad also allows the inspector to take a picture of any violations and upon completion of the inspection, the

representative then signs on the I-Pad and the report is then e-mailed. Any pictures of violations are included in the e-mailed report.

In 2018, the fire department had hired a part-time Fire Prevention secretary. This position was created due to the amount of clerical work that is needed to be performed for the efficiency of the bureau. This is also to bridge the gap between the Fire Prevention Officers and the inspectors. In 2019, we continue to bill for annual fire inspections to recoup the costs of the inspections. In January 2019, we began maintaining the billing of our Keltron System (Radio fire alarm). Danielle has been kept very busy with tracking and maintaining the billing of both services along with her other duties of the bureau.

Several years ago, the fire department enacted a compliance engine. This is a third party database that tracks all of the businesses, and multi-family buildings to make sure they are compliant in providing the annual testing documentation of all fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, exhaust hood systems, spray booths and fire doors.

In 2019, the Alsip Fire Department switched vendors for maintaining the Keltron System after the previous vendor undermined the village's system by undercutting the cost to gain a profit to their company. The Village now uses Fox Valley Fire & Safety for maintaining the Keltron System. Fox Valley is inspecting every radio box and had found several deficiencies in installation from the previous vendor and are correcting them.

In June of 2019, Fire Prevention Officer Doug Daniels had resigned from the department due to medical issues. Doug was one of the original Fire Prevention Officers when the program began in 2013. Unfortunately, Doug passed away in July. Doug brought a great deal of knowledge and experience to the Fire Prevention Bureau and was instrumental in updating our fire codes and ordinances. To replace Doug's position, we hired Tom Lia in September. Tom brings over 30 years of experience in fire prevention and residential sprinkler information.

In the fall of 2019, the Village board of Trustees passed an ordinance upgrading the Life Safety Code to the 2015 version in conjunction with the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal.

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

The following report represents the activities of the Fire Prevention Bureau from January 1 thru December 31, 2019.

Annual Inspections (Commercial and multi-family)- 2148

Plan reviews (new construction, remodeling, fire alarms, sprinkler systems)-1470

Testing (sprinkler systems, fire alarms, water flow, pump tests)- 230

Court tickets/ complaint investigations- 80

## **Plans for 2020**

1. Continue to add all pertinent data to the I-Pads for tracking and reference.
2. Review and update current fire prevention ordinances.
3. Continue to provide additional training to all fire inspectors.
4. Review the effectiveness of the compliance engine.
5. Continuation of a strong relationship with the building department.
6. Finalize the village ordinance to reflect the passes of the state's smoke detector requirements for 10 year smoke detectors.
7. Beginning annual inspections in February and completing by December so the annual inspection reflect a calendar year, not a fiscal year.

## **Public Education Programs**

The Alsip Fire Department recognizes the importance of solid public education programs. These programs exist to help in the reduction of fires and to promote fire safety, instruct classes for CPR and instruct our businesses employees how to operate a fire extinguisher. The Public Education Bureau is an extension of the Fire Prevention Bureau. The Public Education Bureau is managed by two coordinators. This is further assisted by several firefighters who assist in delivering the programs.

Some of the Public Education Programs include; the annual Open House, the annual Fire Prevention Week poster contest, where the overall grade winners receive a ride to school on the fire engine, the fire safety trailer to all 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, the severe weather program for all 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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, babysitter certification program and the "adopt –a-hydrant" program.



The Alsip Fire Department continues offering CPR to all businesses at a reduced cost (still covering our expenses). This is to promote the importance for everyone to know CPR and maybe save a life. This program has increased its popularity over the past several years. We still offer a monthly CPR class for residents (as seen on the village website).

During the annual Open House in 2019, we estimated an attendance of over 650 participants. Besides our firefighters staffing the events, we had volunteers from the village's ESDA program and the Chicago Christian High School's baseball team to help fill the needed spots.





At the Open House a raffle was held for smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and for one family to have breakfast at the fire station.



In 2019, the Alsip Fire Department continued its “Safe Babysitter” class. This class is based on a national curriculum for providing a certification for children and young adults who want to become babysitters.

The Public Education Bureau also participated in several events, including Holiday on Pulaski, and several church and company picnics, the Alsip Chamber Expo and other activities.

The Alsip Fire Department maintains a Facebook page for social media which is constantly being updated.



## **Summary of 2019's Public Education Events & Programs**

Home Escape classroom presentation- >500 students

Home Escape Practical (safety trailer)- >500 students

Patches Program- 145 students

CPR- 150 students

Open House- >650 attendees

Poster contest participants- 870

Station tours >135 participants

Block Parties- 8

Fire extinguisher classes- 165 students

Car Seat checks/ Installations- >50

## **Plans for 2020**

The Public Education Bureau is planning on the following for 2020;

1. The continuing promotion of CPR for the businesses and residents. We saw an increase of students in 2018
2. The continuation of the Vision 20/20 program for community hazard reduction which includes voluntary home inspections. This is becoming a nation-wide initiative. Our Pub-Ed Coordinators are attending a National Fire Academy course in January for this initiative.
3. Application for a FEMA grant to enhance our programs.
4. Continued Safety visits at the Heritage I & II complexes.
5. Continued Participation in the Office of the State Fire Marshal's & Illinois Fire Safety Alliance's "Be Alarmed Smoke Detector" installation program.
6. The initiating of the home inspection program.
7. Conducting the Safe Sitter babysitter's class.
8. Offering bleeding control classes to businesses.

## **2019 Incident Statistics**

In 2019, the Alsip Fire Department responded to 3,618 incidents. The administration constantly monitors our responses and modifies them as needed to either increase our efficiency or reduce our liability. The majority of our incidents continue to be EMS related (65-70%) which is normal for the majority of fire departments that provide EMS.

The number of incidents that we respond to still reflect that 9 out of every 10 calls for service are within the village. In 2019, the Alsip Fire Department provided assistance to other departments a total of 163 times. The summary of incidents are as follows;

### **Fires**

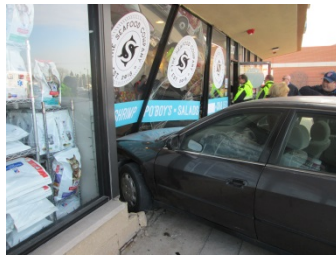
Structure Fires- 13

Vehicle Fires- 17

Other (grass, rubbish, etc.)- 28



### **Emergency Medical Calls & Rescue (including vehicle accidents)- 2412**



### **Hazardous Condition Calls (including gas leaks, carbon monoxide alarms)- 110**

**Service calls & good intent calls (cancelled while enroute to responding towns for automatic and mutual-aid responses, citizen assists)- 268**

**False calls (fire alarms, smoke detector sounding)- 380**

**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 a specialized generator and lighttower for these types of incidents. 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.



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.

The Alsip Fire Department 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.

The Alsip Fire Department also has two members that are part of the Illinois USaR team (Urban Search and Rescue).

### **Responses to incidents**

In 2019, the administration continued to evaluate our responses that were modified over the past several years. 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. With the number of shift personnel and automatic-aid, we have between 25 And 27 people responding to structure fires in our town. If necessary, we can increase those numbers by using our box alarm system and for calling mutual-aid. This is a structured response that brings in resources based on our needs. This includes fires, technical rescue, hazardous materials, EMS, firefighting foam, water rescue, and water tenders.

### **Staffing levels**

In 2019, again we experienced fewer injuries, than in the past. We are bound by the collective bargaining agreement to provide 8 personnel on shift every day. Even though we have newer, younger firefighters, we still have quite a few firefighters in their mid to late 40s and above which are more susceptible to injury and longer recovery times.

We continue to struggle occasionally when all three ambulances are out in which leaves only 2 personnel to cover the village until an ambulance is available. With the amount of personnel living out of town, the number of call-backs have all but disappeared. Call-backs are primarily used when there is a structure fire in our town.

### **Plans for 2020**

In the spring of 2020 we will have 2 firefighters retiring. We will fill these positions as needed. We will also continue to evaluate our responses within the Village of Alsip and with the towns that we provide automatic-aid and mutual-aid with. We continually review our staffing levels at each station to remain efficient in our responses and utilization of our manpower. We occasionally move vehicles around for increased efficiency.

## **Training**

The Alsip Fire Department uses a Training Support Team concept in lieu of a training officer. The committee consists of 5 different personnel who has some type of responsibility related to training. This team concept has proven to be an invaluable tool and allows us to accomplish the many needs within the realms of training. Some of the features of the Training Support Team include; developing and maintaining training schedules, evaluating the training needs of the department, lesson plan development, obtaining off-site locations for training, training tower maintenance, developing and the construction of training props, maintaining the current props, arranging building walk thrus , pre-plans, and providing consistent delivery of the training program for the department.

The fire service is driven by training. The fire department is the “One call does all”, all hazards first responder. 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 knowledge of 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

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- 80 hours initially, 24 hours refresher annually (team drills)

Technical Rescue 8 hrs annual 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.

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 2019 we brought in the Illinois Fire Service Institute to provide a Rope Operations class. This is a 40 hour class for rope rescue techniques. The class was attended by 36 students.



In the fall of 2019, we had the Fire Service Institute to return to provide a 4 hour class on fighting propane fires. The class was held three nights in a row (for each shift). Each night we had an attendance of 15 to 20 students.



In 2019, our firefighters engaged in a total of 12,469 hours of training. This equates to an average of 356 hours per Officer/ Firefighter. This is above the recommended average of training for firefighters.

In 2019, we also crosstrained with the Alsip Police Dept with "Rescue Task Force" for active shooter events. The training was held on 2 days at George Washington School.



In 2019, the Alsip Fire Department provided the annual refresher training in confined space to the public works and water departments. Other nearby public works departments also sent a few of their personnel to attend the training.



In September, the public works department provided training to 6 firefighters in the operation of their heavy equipment in the event the fire department personnel might need to use this equipment during a hazardous materials incident or any other incident that requires the operators have specialty training or specialty personal protective equipment.



In 2018, we launched our “Lieutenant Training Program”. This training program has been planned for quite a few years but was never implemented because of timing. The program consists of placing the newly appointed lieutenant on days



for a week (40 hours) for specific training. This training consists of orientation of all documentation that is required by a lieutenant. This includes; the daily log book, paybook, injury reports, scheduling, etc. The program also includes scenario based training of incidents which includes, structure fires, fire alarms as the Shift Commander, hazardous materials and technical rescue responses. To date, we have had 2 lieutenants put through the program. In addition to this training each lieutenant are required to attend the 40 hour Company Officer Class and 40 hour LDDM (Leadership Development and Decision Making course through the Fire Service Institute. All of the lieutenants have to be certified as a Fire Officer I or Basic Company Officer through the Office of the State Fire Marshal. This certification is based on 200 hours of classroom training and at least one year as an acting officer. The Lieutenant Training Program is specific to our polices and operating guidelines. It has proven to be a valuable program.

## **Plans for 2020**

### **Fire**

1. Continued analysis of the training needs of the department.
2. Provide more scenario based training.
3. Skills evaluation
4. Development of Acting Officer training program to be launched in the spring of 2020.
5. Continued realistic training through the use of props and actual structures or buildings within the village.
6. Developing alternative ways for delivery training programs.
7. Continued encouragement of outside training.
8. Continuation of the pre-plan program.
9. Continued joint training with the police, public works and water dept.

### **EMS**

1. Offer specific specialty training classes such as advanced care practices.
2. Providing training on evaluating the skills of our paramedics.

## **Future resources and operational practices**

The administration of the Alsip Fire Department continues to evaluate the trends of the fire services and monitors technology. The advancement of technology continues to advance in the fire service.

In the winter of 2018/ 2019 we replaced our gas powered extrication equipment with battery operated tools.

In 2019 we began implementing our cancer prevention program. This is due to the studies of the past 5 years with the increase of cancer in firefighters. Fire fighters have a 22% higher chance of acquiring cancer then the general public because of the exposure to carcinogenic materials. Firefighters are exposed to over 41 known cancer causing materials at an average fire. In the winter/ spring of 2020 we will be replacing 2 of our staff vehicles with pick-up trucks. This is to keep the fire gear and SCBA equipment out of the passenger compartment. In the fiscal year of 2020/ 2021 we will be replacing our third and last staff vehicle for the same reason.

In 2020 we will continue to launch our cancer prevention program based on our Standard Operating guideline. This will include providing laundry washing equipment to allow our firefighters to wash their contaminated clothing after a fire. This also prevents the clothing from being brought home and contaminating other family members.

In 2020, we will also continue focusing on behavior health for the fire service. This is another growing trend because of the number of suicides nationwide by firefighters and police officers.

**End of the 2019 Annual Fire Department Report**

**Submitted by Fire Chief Thomas Styczynski**