

Alsip Fire Department



**Annual Report
For
2021**

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 continued support to 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.

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.

We also research alternative funding for the fire department throughout the year to help offset our operating costs.

2021 remained very challenging to us due to the Pandemic carryover of 2020. We constantly monitored the situation and made adjustments as necessary.

This report is a summation of the activities, incidents, and accomplishments that the Alsip Fire Department either responded to or participated in 2021. This report also contains some goals planned for 2022.

Summary of the year

2021 was another unique year for everyone. We continued to fight the struggles and many challenges in every aspect of our world due to the continuation of the pandemic. In 2021 we have saw our world get better for a few months then drastically drop back into a darker era of the virus greater than initial impact. In 2020 the Alsip Fire Department saw a decrease of about 30% call volume, we made that up in 2021 and plus some. In 2021 the Alsip Fire Department set a record for the most calls ever. We had to continue with planning for coping with the virus, protecting our personnel by educating them about the virus, providing the necessary protective equipment to keep them safe and adjusting plans as necessary as conditions change. In 2021 we hired a new firefighter to replace one of our firefighters who was going off on medical issues.

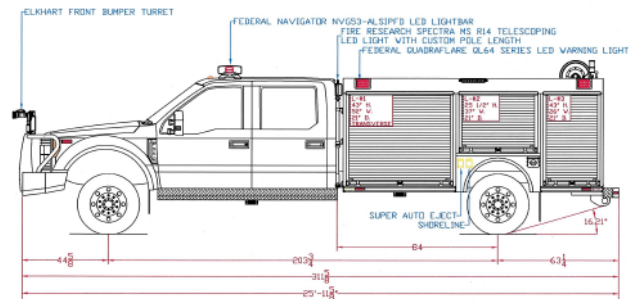
To help combat the virus and other communicable diseases we had air purifiers installed in both of the front line ambulances and will be installed in all other future equipment.

In 2021 the fire department responded to 3724 calls for service. 2021 started off slow with the virus keeping most people isolated and businesses with limited access but from late spring to the end of the year extremely busy.

In 2021, the Alsip Fire Department applied for 2 FEMA Assistance to Firefighter's Grants; one for replacement SCBA equipment (breathing apparatus nearing the end of usable life due to standards) and one for a replacement ladder truck (2002 ladder truck). The FEMA grants are very competitive but hoping we can be successful.

In 2021, the village board approved the purchase of a replacement ambulance, and a mini-squad that was postponed from the previous year. The ambulance will be manufactured by Road Rescue which is the same manufacturer as our other ambulances for consistency. The new ambulance will be replacing our oldest ambulance which was our last re-chassised ambulance. The chassis is from 2011

but the box was manufactured in 2001. The mini-squad will be used to follow the ambulance on all EMS calls, respond to vehicle accidents, brush fires and possibly other types of incidents. The concept is to use a quick response vehicle and reduce our wear & tear, maintenance and fuel costs of our larger fire apparatus. The mini-squad concept is not new to our department. A mini-squad was used from 1978 until 1994 by the Alsip Fire Department. We are also seeing other departments using this concept or one similar for the same reasons. However, due to the current supply chain issues and the micro-chip both vehicles have extended delivery dates. As of this writing, the ambulance is expected in September and the mini-squad is slated for June (keeping our fingers crossed).



In the fall of 2021, the village board also approved the purchase of a replacement fire engine. This purchase was scheduled for 2022. However, due to the length of time for manufacturing it was decided to authorize its purchase and ordering earlier. The expected delivery is from December of 2022 to February of 2023. This replacement engine will be replacing our oldest engine in the fleet which is a 2001 Seagrave Fire Engine. The new fire engine will also be manufactured by Seagrave to keep with the same manufacturer as with all of our fire apparatus.

2021 saw a dramatic increase in vehicle repairs and maintenance costs. This is mostly due to the aging of vehicles and an increase in calls plus road conditions. We are confident when the new vehicles arrive and are placed in service that will decrease our maintenance costs.

In the budget approved for 2021 the Alsip Fire Department had 3 projects slated for the year. The kitchen was scheduled to be remodeled. This was on hold from the year before. The kitchen was last remodeled in 1999 and the project will be completed by the end of February of 2022. A security camera system for Fire Station #2 is slated to be installed this fiscal year. Due to the supply chain as with

everything else here has been a delay. This project is expected to be completed by March of 2022.

The largest project for 2021 was the replacement of the parking lots and driveways at both fire stations. The village board approved the replacement of all parking lots for all village properties. Both of our parking lots were in very bad shape mainly from the weather and driving our apparatus over the asphalt drives. During this project, the driveways were replaced with concrete and the parking lots remain asphalt. This will extend the lifespan of the driveways considerably.



During 2021, the stations will be evaluated to determine what other projects are going to be needed in the future. Our goal is to keep up both facilities which in turn cuts down on the the overall expenses by having a proactive approach.

In 2021, 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 consists of 2 part-time Fire Prevention Officers, 1 part-time administrative assistant and 12 firefighters to perform the annual inspections while off-duty.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, 2021 was challenging for the fire prevention bureau but not as bad as 2020. We began inspections in March and continued through the year. The Fire Prevention Bureau made specific plans for inspections, the continued use of personal protective clothing, the use of hand sanitizer and cleaning the car(s) at the end of the day. The inspectors have been utilizing an iPad for the past 7 years for annual inspections. This has proven to be an invaluable tool for inspections. The fire inspector can track the current inspection, search the past inspection, and ensure 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 consistently find numerous businesses which do not have a current business license and report it to the building department for resolution. The iPad also allows the inspector to take a picture of any violations and upon completion of the inspection, the representative then signs on the iPad and the report is then e-mailed. Any pictures of violations are included in the e-mailed report.

We continue to bill for annual fire inspections to recoup the costs of the inspections. Danielle, our Fire Prevention Administrative Assistant also takes care of the billing of our Keltron System (Radio fire alarm). This has proven to be very successful. Under the previous contractor the village was owed quite a bit of money. With our current system we have checks and balances in place to insure we collect what is owed. If any business falls behind, we start the process by sending letters reminding them of the balance. If the issue is not resolved, they are sent a municipal violation ticket and finally if no resolution they are given 30 days to obtain another monitoring system and we drop them from Keltron. At no time is any business behind more than 1 cycle (\$165).

Several years ago, the fire department enacted The 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 and exhaust hood systems. It gives the fire department the ability to make sure the businesses are having these important inspections completed and by people who are certified to complete the

tests. The Alsip Water Department also uses this system for tracking backflow devices.

Summary of the Fire Prevention Bureau

The following report represents the activities of the Fire Prevention Bureau from January 1 thru December 31, 2021.

Annual Inspections and re-inspections (Commercial and multi-family) - 2065

Plan reviews (new construction, remodeling, fire alarms, sprinkler systems) -1086

Testing (sprinkler systems, fire alarms, water flow, pump tests) - 584

Court tickets/complaint investigations - 281

Plans for 2021

1. Continue to add all pertinent data to the iPad for tracking and reference.
2. Upgrading the fire inspection software. The current system is being shutdown in 2022.
3. Review and update current fire prevention ordinances.
4. Updating an ordinance for the storage of lithium-ion batteries.
5. Continue to provide additional training to all fire inspectors.
6. Continue to review the effectiveness of the compliance engine.
7. Continuation of a strong relationship with the building department.

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. The goal of the Public Education Bureau is for Community Risk Reduction (CRR). Both of our Public Education Coordinators have attended National Fire Academy class for CRR and are currently participating in a national program that we hope to institute to our village.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 world we moved into, it prevented the fire department from providing some of our traditional presentation of programs. This included our annual visits to the schools. We were happy to return to our in-person open house, the poster contest and the rides to school on the fire engine.

Our open house brought a record number of visitors for 2020. An estimated 700 people attended the open house.



The Alsip Fire Department continues offering CPR to all businesses at a reduced cost (still covering our expenses). This is to promote the importance of everyone knowing CPR and maybe save a life. Although the pandemic slowed if not stopped other programs, the fire department was still able to provide a CPR classes and fire extinguisher classes to several businesses in a safe way.

In 2021, thanks to Arkema (12840 Pulaski), they provided a very generous donation of a virtual reality fire extinguisher training prop. This prop will enhance our current fire extinguisher training program.



In December of 2021, the Alsip Fire Department parted ways with the Fire Safety trailer. The safety trailer has been part of our school programs since 2005. The trailer was purchased with a FEMA grant. During the past several years it became more difficult to utilize the safety trailer due to the increase demand of school curriculums, the pandemic, the amount of time and personnel to operate the trailer and most importantly, the way children learn now. Much more technology now than ever before. The trailer was donated to the Amboy Fire Protection District. The Alsip Fire Department is working on alternative and newer ways to provide the safety education to our school aged children based on current learning techniques.

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

Summary of 2020's Public Education Events & Programs

CPR - 100 students

Fire extinguisher classes - 150 students

Open House - +700 people

Plans for 2021

The Public Education Bureau is hoping to return to more of our previous programs prior to 2020 and planning for in 2022:

1. The continuing promotion of CPR for the businesses and residents.

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.
3. Developing new programs for the schools.
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 (we have been working on this since 2019)
7. Offering bleeding control classes to businesses.

2020 Incident Statistics

In 2021, the Alsip Fire Department responded to 3,724 incidents, a record number for the fire department. The administration constantly monitors our responses and modifies them as needed to either increase our efficiency. The majority of our incidents continue to be EMS related (65-70%) which is normal for the majority of fire departments that provide EMS.

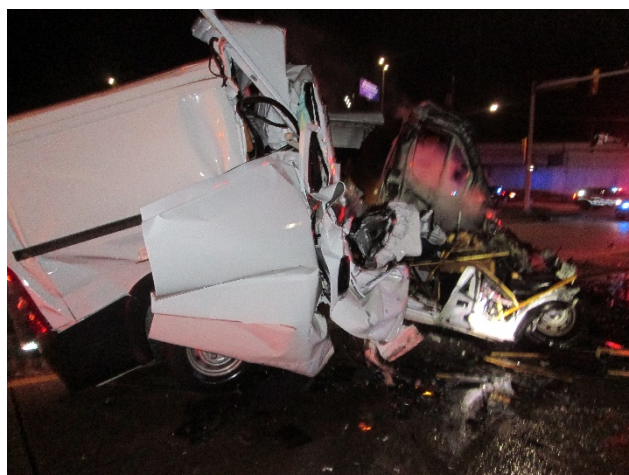
In 2021, the Alsip Fire Department provided assistance to other departments a total of 110 times (a decrease from 2020) and requested assistance 78 times (slight increase from 2020). The summary of incidents are as follows;

Fires

Structure Fires - 20

Vehicle Fires - 23

Other (grass, rubbish, etc.) - 23



Emergency Medical Calls & Rescue (including vehicle accidents) – 2569



Hazardous Condition Calls (including gas leaks, carbon monoxide alarms) - 119

Service calls & good intent calls (cancelled while enroute to responding towns for automatic and mutual-aid responses, citizen assists) - 441

False calls (fire alarms, smoke detector sounding) - 419

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 vehicle.

This vehicle 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.

The Alsip Fire Department has 4 personnel who are part of the area's Origin and Cause team (Fire investigations). These personnel respond investigate fires in our village and also 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 US&R team (Urban Search and Rescue). In 2021, one member was deployed to Louisiana after Hurricane Ida.

Responses to incidents

The administration constantly evaluates our responses and modifies them as needed to provide the best responses and the number of personnel needed for each type of incident. 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 from other fire departments. 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 2021, we faced a rollercoaster of personnel who were off due to COVID-19 and some of their family members who contracted the virus. We also saw another year that was marked high with injuries and several personnel were off for an extended period of time. The Fire Department is bound by the collective bargaining agreement to provide 8 personnel on shift every day.

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.

Training

The Alsip Fire Department uses a Training Support Team concept in lieu of a training officer. The committee consists of 7 different people 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, securing 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 mechanical aptitude and are able to make something work out of nothing (improvise) at a moment’s notice. All of our fire apparatus carry 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 2021, the Alsip Fire Department continued with our training program. We also sent several of our personnel to specialized training between the Illinois Fire Service Institute, Moraine Valley Community College, the National Fire Academy and other institutions. Classes included Fire Apparatus Engineer's class, Vehicle & Machinery Operations, Firefighter Rescue Intervention, Community Risk Reduction strategies and Homeland Security classes.

In 2020 the Alsip Fire Department introduced the Acting Officer Training Program. This program is a 40-hour class designed for firefighters who are designated Acting Officers in Charge (AOIC) in the event that the lieutenant at Fire Station 2 is off for the day. It consists of leadership review, simulations of fires, company officer responsibilities and live fire training with command functions. This program was designed and delivered by Lieutenants Freitag and Kraus. The final practical involved a complicated vehicle extrication scenario. One class was held in 2021. Another class was scheduled, however, due to the number of personnel who were off on injury or medical, it was postponed. That class will be moved to late spring of 2022.



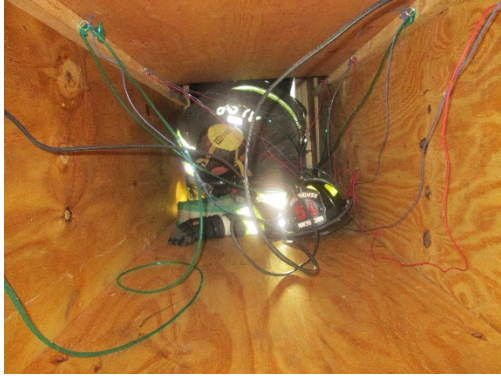
In 2021, our firefighters engaged in a total of 18,903 hours of training. This equates to an average of 540 hours per Officer/ Firefighter. This is above the recommended average of training for firefighters.

In 2021, thanks to Whittingham Meats, the Alsip Fire Department was able to use an old house that Crichton Towing occupied for several decades. Whittingham bought the property and allowed us to use the building for training over a period of 2 months. Training consisted of specialty nozzle training, search and rescue and firefighter rescue.



In 2021, Nu Star Energy on 131st (Now known as Sunoco) provided a generous donation that allowed us to purchase a 45' intermodal container that will be used for our Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus training program. The container will be turned into a maze for confidence training. Thanks to donations from Nu Star (2nd donation), Fox Lumber and the Garden Homes Firefighter's Association, construction began and is about 60% complete. The plan is to complete its construction and have it fully operational by late spring/ early summer of 2022.





Other classes that were held in 2021 included the Illinois Fire Service Institute's driver's training simulator. Each firefighter/ officer participated in this driver's skill evaluation using a virtual simulator.



A 8 hour firefighter rescue class was held in June of 2021. The class was held for each shift and opened up to the neighboring fire departments for an approximate number of 50 students between all of the fire departments.

A 40 hour Rope Rescue Operations class was held at the fire department in March. A total of 40 students were in the class including 3 members of the Alsip Fire department.

The Alsip Fire Department also was able to perform some specialty training on school buses thanks to Illinois School Bus.



Plans for 2022

Fire

1. Continued analysis of the training needs of the department.
2. Provide more scenario-based training.
3. Skills evaluation
4. Delivering the last AOIC class (until more are needed).
5. Hosting cornerstone classes from the Illinois Fire Service Institute (1 a quarter).
6. Continued realistic training through the use of props and actual structures or buildings within the village and other locations.
7. Complete the SCBA training prop with intermodal container.
8. Developing alternative ways for delivery training programs.
9. Continued encouragement of outside training.
10. Continuation of the pre-plan program.
11. Continued joint training with the police, public works and water depts.

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 2020 we continued 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. The overall goal is to provide a second set of turnout gear to all firefighters so theirs can be laundered after a fire and has a clean set to use while still on duty. Each firefighter now has a second protective hood and second set of gloves for the same reason.

In 2021 we started purchasing dual certification gear for wildland firefighting and extrication (rescue). Even though we don't have "Forests", the prairie along the CSX railroad always presents challenges for prairie fires. Since the majority of our prairie fires are usually in the warmer weather and are long in duration, the current structural firefighting gear is too thick due to the several layers of protection meant for structural fires. They can cause the firefighters to overheat and succumb to heat exhaustion or other heat emergencies. The wildland gear provides more mobility to the firefighter and is lighter weight to minimize heat production. This gear is also more effective for vehicle extrication. It is more cut resistant than our normal structural firefighting clothing. The purchase of this equipment 50% provided by a grant from our worker's comp. company and the remaining from the fire department budget.

In 2021, we also continued to focus on behavior health for the fire service. This is another growing trend because of the number of suicides nationwide by firefighters and police officers.

The fire departments nationwide are always facing various challenges on a constant basis. We have seen a decrease in the amount of people testing for

firefighter positions and a sharp decrease in paramedics. The administration will continue to monitor the situation and attempt to make adjustments as necessary and provide “out of the box” thinking to help battle the issue.

**End of the 202 Annual Fire Department Report
Submitted by Fire Chief Thomas Styczynski**