

Appleton Fire Department 2024 Annual Report



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Our Mission

With our partners, the Appleton Fire Department protects the community with exceptional service.

Our Vision

Pursuing excellence and enhancing the quality of life in Appleton and our regional community.

Message From The Fire Chief

It is my pleasure to present the 2024 Appleton Fire Department Annual Report. This report provides history, activities, and the resulting statistical data for the year. This data is continuously examined throughout the year and is utilized to enhance our service delivery to the community. We are privileged to serve each citizen and visitor in our community, and we are exceptionally proud to provide the highest level of fire, emergency medical, hazardous materials, water rescue, and technical rescue emergency response. In conjunction with our fire inspection, prevention, and public education programming, we strive each day to meet our mission of protecting the community with exceptional service.



The men and women of the Fire Department responded to 7,365 calls for service. In 2024, a total of 5,434 were for medical emergencies. Emergency medical services response accounts for 73.8% of the fire department's calls for service. In the past five years, there was a 19.8% increase in total call volume, which includes a 20.6% increase in medical emergencies. As our community continues to grow and our environment changes, our responsibility to provide the highest level of service is un-yielding. The Appleton Fire Department, and the services we provide, will continue to adapt, and improve to effectively meet the challenges found within our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Hansen".

Jeremy J. Hansen
Fire Chief



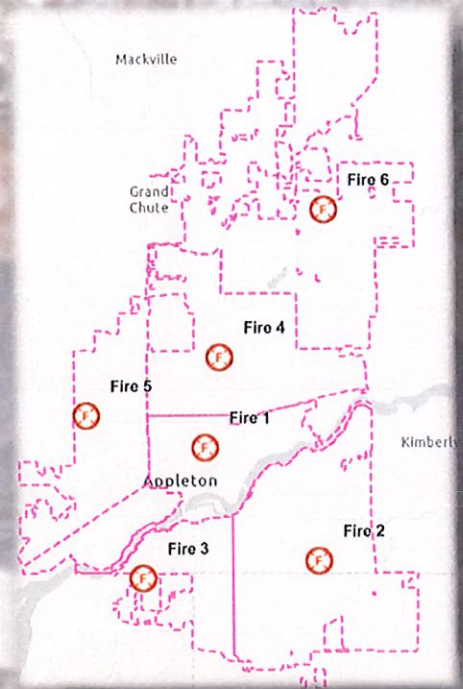
Partnership | Respect | Integrity | Diversity | Excellence

Department Information

The Appleton Fire Department provides 24-hour emergency services to the City of Appleton residents, along with regional partnerships for automatic aid for fire response with Fox Crossing Fire Department, Grand Chute Fire Department, Kimberly Fire Department, Little Chute Fire Department, and Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue. Additionally, we provide mutual aid support to agencies in Outagamie, Winnebago, and Calumet Counties. All emergency calls are dispatched through the Outagamie County Sheriff's Department.

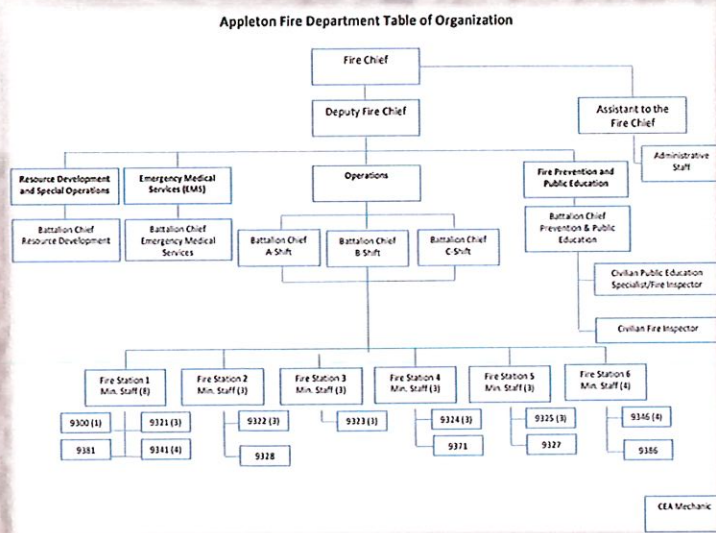
We operate out of six strategically located fire stations throughout the city. Each of these stations has a designated fire district. The department is organized into five engine companies, one ladder company, one quint company, and one command vehicle.

Personnel cross-staff a technical rescue unit, two water rescue boats, a rapid response light rescue unit, and a regional hazardous materials unit. The Appleton Fire Department also utilizes management staff to serve additional command roles during emergency incidents.



Employee Breakdown

We are staffed by 92 sworn personnel and 6 civilian employees, ensuring a well-balanced workforce capable of delivering emergency response and fire prevention services. Sworn positions include firefighters, engineers, lieutenants, captains, and command staff, maintaining a structured and efficient chain of command. Civilian employees support essential non-emergency functions in administration, prevention, and fleet services. Together, this workforce allows us to provide around-the-clock emergency response, fire prevention, and community outreach efforts to the City of Appleton.



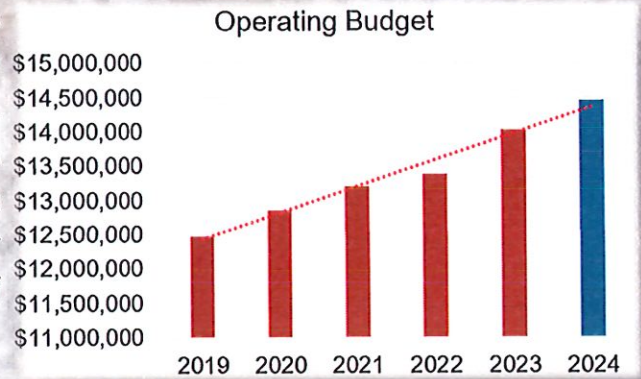
Years of Service Distribution

Our department benefits from a range of experience levels among personnel. 26% of employees have 1-5 years of service, reflecting the continuous growth of our organization, while 45% of personnel have more than 10 years of experience, bringing leadership and operational expertise to the team. This blend of new and veteran firefighters ensures a strong foundation for mentorship, department continuity, and overall operational readiness as we serve the community.



Operating Budget

The Appleton Fire Department's operating budget has steadily increased over the past five years. This upward trend reflects strategic investments in personnel, training, apparatus, and emergency response capabilities. A well-funded department ensures we can maintain high service levels, upgrade equipment, and enhance firefighter safety, allowing us to meet the growing demands of emergency services within the community.



The Appleton Fire Department's operating budget for Fiscal Year 2024 totaled \$14,454,610, strategically distributed across all divisions to support daily operations, emergency response, and community risk reduction.

Fire Suppression accounted for the largest share of the budget at 74.17%, or \$10.7 million, reflecting the personnel, apparatus, and equipment needed to respond to a growing volume of fire and emergency calls.

Fire Prevention received \$1.32 million (9.13%) to support inspections, plan review, code enforcement, and fire investigations, helping mitigate risk before emergencies occur.

Emergency Medical Services, a vital and expanding component of our department, represented 6.62% of the budget at \$957,110, supporting medical supplies, EMS equipment, and related training.

Administration operations totaled \$622,317 (4.31%), while Technical Services received \$456,322 (3.16%) to support fleet and facility maintenance and logistical support functions.

Resource Development, responsible for recruitment, onboarding, and staff development, accounted for 1.30% of the budget, or \$187,938. Special Operations, including technical rescue, water rescue, and hazardous materials response, made up 1.32%, or \$190,975, reflecting ongoing investment in high-risk incident readiness.

This breakdown demonstrates our continued focus on aligning fiscal resources with operational priorities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the community.

Operating Budget FY 2024		
Program Area	Cost (\$)	% of Budget
Fire Suppression	\$10,720,402	74.17%
Fire Prevention	\$1,319,546	9.13%
Emergency Medical Services	\$957,110	6.62%
Administration	\$622,317	4.31%
Technical Services	\$456,322	3.16%
Resource Development	\$187,938	1.30%
Special Operations	\$190,975	1.32%
Total	\$14,454,610	100%

FIRE PROTECTION
COST PER CAPITA

193

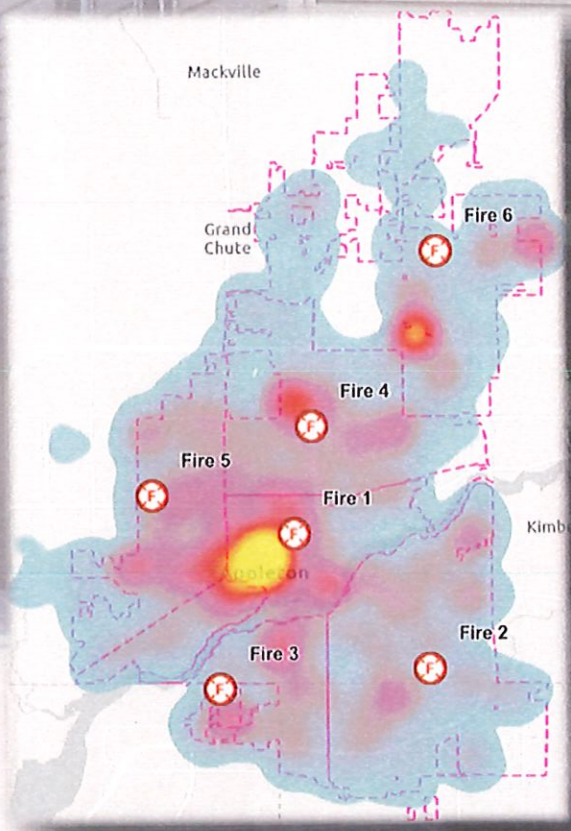
Call Volume

Total Calls

In 2024, we responded to 7,365 total incidents, continuing the steady increase in call volume over the past decade. EMS calls accounted for 5,434 responses, representing 74% of all incidents. This trend highlights the growing demand for medical services and reinforces the importance of maintaining a well-trained EMS response system.

Incidents by NFIRS Category

Category	Incidents
300 - Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident	5,434
700 - False Alarm & False Call	693
600 - Good Intent Call	479
500 - Service Call	311
400 - Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	289
100 - Fire	101
200 - Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire)	44
800 - Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	8
900 - Special Incident Type	6
Total	7,365



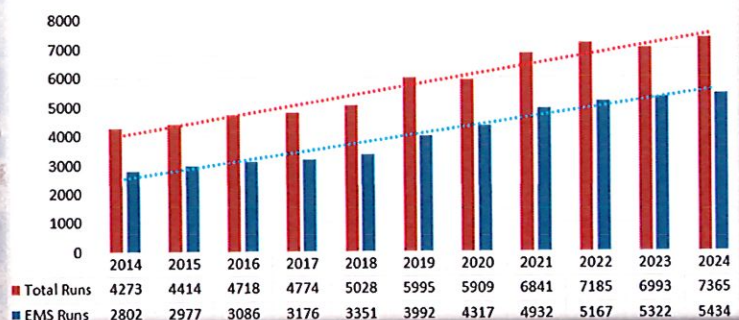
Incident Heat Map

This map visually represents the distribution of emergency responses throughout Appleton. High-activity areas indicate where incidents are most concentrated, guiding decisions on resource allocation, station placement, and response strategies. Ensuring coverage in these high-demand zones remains a priority to maintain swift response times and community safety.

10-Year Call Volume

This chart illustrates a consistent rise in both total incidents and EMS-specific calls, demonstrating the increasing needs of our community. As population density, healthcare access, and emergency medical needs evolve, we remain committed to adapting our operations to meet these demands efficiently.

10 Year Call Volume



Fire Stations

Fire Station 1

700 N Drew St.

Staffing: 2 Apparatus, 8 Firefighters



Fire Station 2

1801 S Matthias St.

Staffing: 1 Apparatus, 3 Firefighters



Fire Station 3

801 W Grove St.

Staffing: 1 Apparatus, 3 Firefighters



Fire Station 4

724 E Greenfield St.

Staffing: 1 Apparatus, 3 Firefighters



Fire Station 5

1701 W Brewster St.

Staffing: 1 Apparatus, 3 Firefighters



Fire Station 6

4930 N Lightning Dr.

Staffing: 1 Apparatus, 4 Firefighters



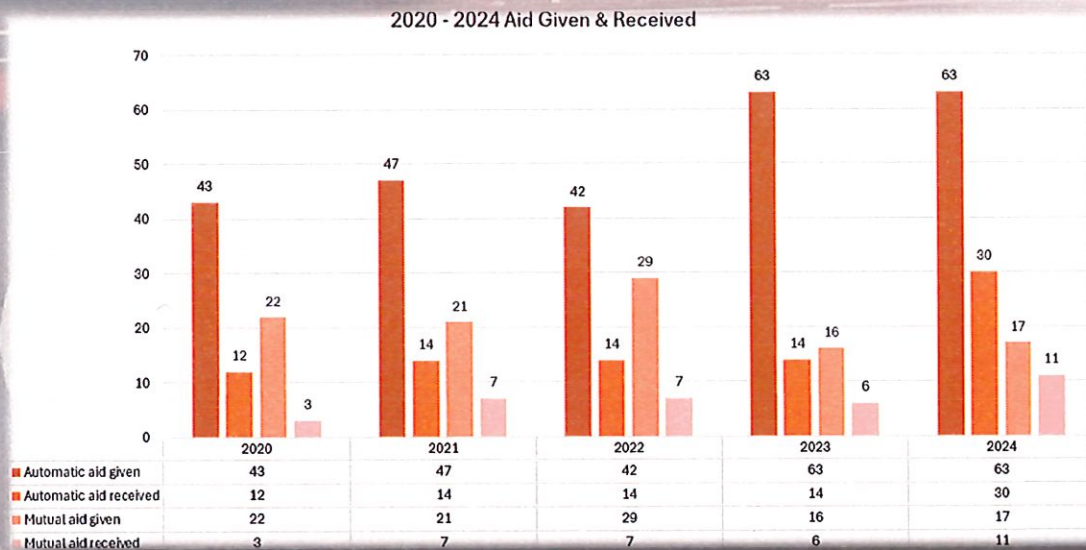
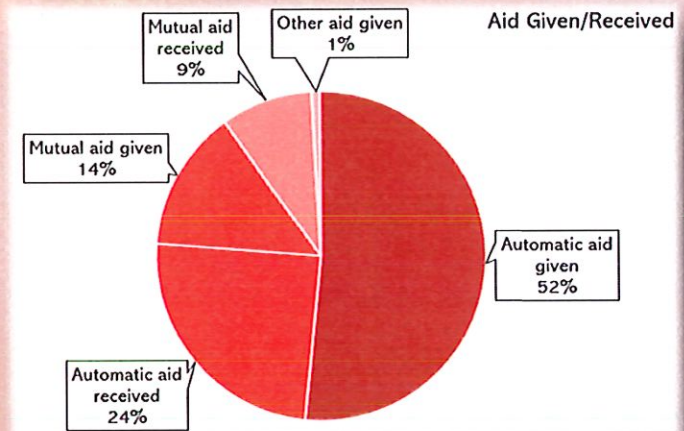
Fire Suppression



Ryan Weyers
Deputy Chief

The Fire Suppression Division of the Appleton Fire Department is the largest division of the department and is under the direct supervision of the Deputy Fire Chief. This division is charged with enhancing the quality of life to our community by providing a safe and healthy environment through our response. We respond to structure fires and vehicle fires, employing modern fire suppression tactics, including interior attack, defensive operations, and specialized suppression techniques.

In 2024, we finalized the contract for additional automatic aid for fire responses in the City of Appleton to include Fox Crossing Fire Department, Little Chute Fire Department, and Kimberly Fire Department. The addition of this automatic aid will help provide much needed staffing to provide a more robust fire response in the City of Appleton.



Significant Events

1912 North Clark Street (June)

Estimated \$500,000 loss of property and contents.

4101 South Woodendale Way (July)

Estimated \$360,300 loss of property and contents.

3518 North Juanita Lane (October)

Estimated \$267,500 loss of property and contents.

825 East Wisconsin Avenue (May)

Estimated \$260,000 of property and contents.

1426 West Franklin Street (July)

Estimated \$250,000 loss of property and contents.

4925 North Applebend Drive (July)

Estimated \$160,000 loss of property and contents.

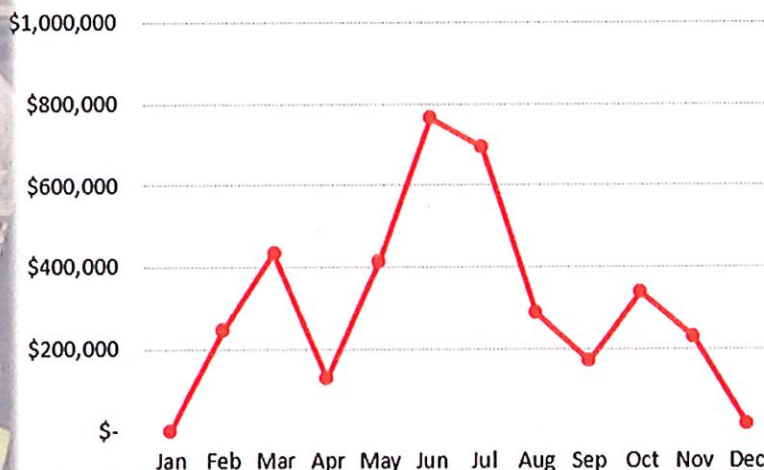
630 East Frances Street (March)

Estimated \$150,000 loss of property and contents.

3400 East Canary Street (May)

Estimated \$150,000 loss of property and contents.

Fire Loss



Resource Development



Joe Kozikowski
Battalion Chief

In 2024, the Appleton Fire Department continued its commitment to developing highly trained personnel through rigorous training, resource development, and specialized operational readiness. Firefighter safety, technical proficiency, and interagency collaboration remained key priorities throughout the year.

Firefighter Recruit Schools

Two Firefighter Recruit Schools were held, successfully preparing six new firefighters to serve our community. Each school spanned six weeks, covering the fundamentals of firefighting, emergency response, and department procedures to ensure recruits were well-equipped to handle the demands of the profession.

Relief Driver School

Five members successfully completed our demanding Relief Driver School. This two-week training program is designed to ensure they are proficient in all facets of fireground operations and prepared for engine and truck company operations.

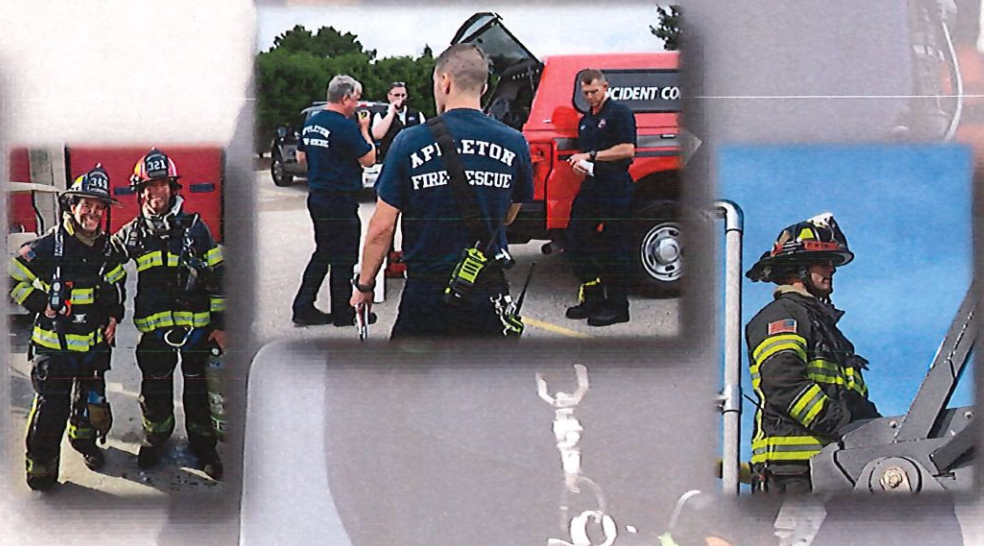
Large-Scale Training Events

High-Rise Drills: We capitalized on a unique training opportunity at the 222 Building, a large structure recently acquired by U.S. Venture. Before renovations commenced, the company granted us access to the building, allowing our fire companies across all three shifts to conduct full scale high-rise firefighting drills. This allowed us to refine essential skills, particularly in managing communication and logistical complexities unique to high-rise fire scenarios.

Rescue Task Force (RTF) Training: Aligning with our commitment to multiagency cooperation, we hosted a comprehensive three-day RTF training event that brought together seven fire/EMS agencies, ten law enforcement agencies, and five volunteer organizations. The training focused on active shooter and mass casualty response, enhancing interagency coordination and ensuring that all participating agencies could work effectively in high-risk environments.

RIT Under Fire Training: Six of our firefighters attended the renowned "RIT Under Fire" course at the Illinois State Fire Institute. This advanced, high-intensity training simulates extreme conditions, allowing participants to practice rapid intervention techniques in a high-heat, high-stress environment. The training strengthens our ability to locate and rescue downed firefighters in real-world scenarios, reinforcing our commitment to firefighter safety and survival.

TRAINING HOURS
IN 2024
13,794
TOTAL HOURS
147
AVERAGE PER PERSON



Special Operations

Technical & Water Rescue

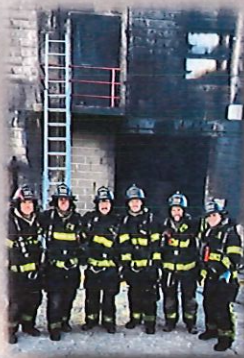
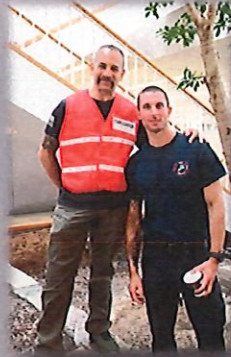
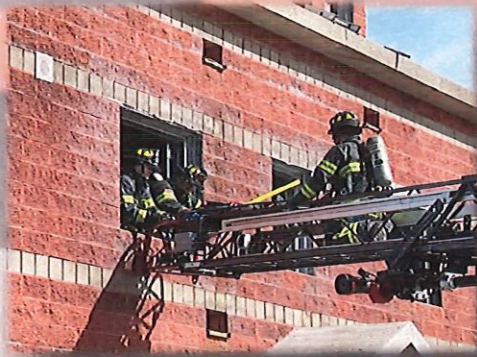
We provide swift water and ice rescue capabilities, responding to emergencies involving the Fox River. Trained personnel use specialized boats, rescue suits, and flotation devices to ensure the safety of individuals in distress. We also provide confined space, trench, rope, high-angle, and structural collapse rescues. These incidents require specialized training and equipment, ensuring safe and effective extrications. Our Technical Rescue and Water Rescue teams remained dedicated to maintaining and enhancing their specialized skills throughout the year. Both teams participated in regular, hands-on training sessions to ensure their proficiency in critical rescue operations, from technical rope rescues to waterborne emergencies.

Hazardous Materials Response

As part of a regional hazmat team, we manage hazardous material leaks, spills, and exposure incidents. The department works closely with state and federal agencies to mitigate risks associated with chemical, biological, radiological, and industrial hazards. Our Hazardous Materials Team remained active throughout the year, both in response efforts and ongoing training. The team acquired new equipment through a state grant, enhancing our operational capabilities. This year, our members played a key role in a statewide initiative to ensure the safe execution of the presidential election, standing by in the event of any chemical threats. Additionally, several team members were selected to join the Vice President's personal protection detail, working alongside the tactical team during the Vice President's visit to our area.

Wisconsin Task Force One (WI-TF1)

Six Appleton firefighters, who are also members of Wisconsin Task Force One (WI-TF1), were deployed to North Carolina to support search and rescue operations following widespread flooding. These team members led numerous boat-based searches and conducted land-based rescue efforts through mountainous terrain to reach citizens who had been isolated by the floodwaters. Their efforts were crucial in ensuring the safety and well-being of those affected by the disaster.



Emergency Medical Services



Ryan Homman
Battalion Chief

As the Battalion Chief of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for the Appleton Fire Department, I'm proud to reflect on another year of progress and dedication to delivering the highest level of prehospital care. EMS continues to be a core function of our department, accounting for the majority of emergency responses. Of the 7,367 total calls in 2024, 5,452 (74%) were EMS-related, reinforcing the growing need for advanced medical care in our community.

Currently, we operate at the Basic Life Support (BLS) level, providing CPR, airway management, bleeding control, and oxygen therapy. While BLS forms the foundation of prehospital care, it does not support advanced interventions. Transitioning to Advanced Life Support (ALS) Fire Companies strengthens our ability to deliver more advanced care quickly, while increasing the number of ALS resources available to a critically ill or injured patient. ALS-trained paramedics can administer life-saving medications, perform advanced airway procedures, interpret heart rhythms, and provide essential interventions. As firefighters are often the first on the scene, this capability helps reduce time to intervention and enhances survival for severe medical emergencies, including cardiac arrests, strokes, or major trauma incidents.

In 2024, we made significant progress toward the transition to ALS through hands-on training, strong community partnerships, and operational advancements. We strengthened paramedic-level training, emphasizing high-performance CPR, patient assessment, and medical emergencies. Scenario-based simulations and case reviews helped ensure our crews are prepared for complex situations, while data-driven education continues to improve patient care and operational efficiency.

We've also collaborated closely with local hospitals, healthcare providers, and public safety partners to refine patient care and response strategies. Additionally, we've engaged with community organizations to promote CPR and Stop the Bleed training, empowering the public to act in emergencies.





Recognizing Our New Paramedics

Our ALS expansion efforts were further supported by a FEMA grant, which funded tuition and backfill costs for up to six firefighters to complete paramedic training. Due to paramedic programs only being offered in the fall semester, we worked closely with FEMA administrators to ensure our funding was utilized within the two-year grant period, allowing us to enroll four personnel in the Fall 2023 class.

A milestone in this transition was the graduation of four firefighters from paramedic training in May 2024, increasing our total number of paramedics to 26. Their dedication and commitment to professional development will significantly enhance our ability to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) care directly from our fire apparatus. Their expanded skill set ensures faster and more effective interventions, improving patient outcomes across the community.



**Captain
Steve Unruh**



**Lieutenant
Ryan Lee**



**Firefighter
Bryce Sternhagen**



**Firefighter
Luis Acosta**

Fire Prevention



Derek Henson
Battalion Chief

The Fire Prevention and Public Education Division aims to increase the quality of life in the City of Appleton by reducing the community's risk of injury or fire. The division consists of one battalion chief, two Civilian Fire Inspectors, six shift inspectors, and six relief shift inspectors. Following national best practices, the division is structured into three focus areas: engineering, education, and enforcement.

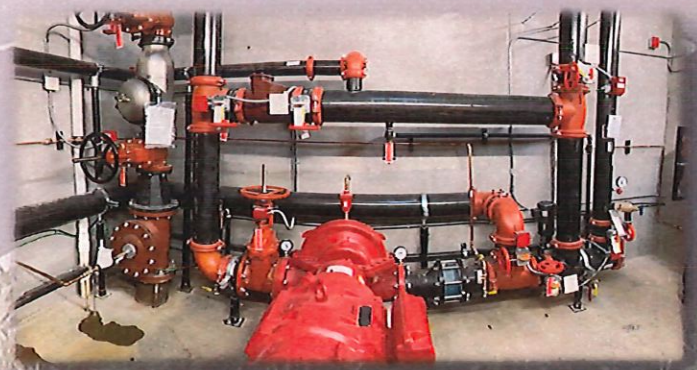
Engineering

Engineering duties are handled by the Battalion Chief of Fire Prevention and Public Education, Derek Henson, with assistance from two civilian fire inspectors. Risk reduction through engineering is achieved through reviewing plans for new developments, reviewing plans for new fire protection systems, and performing commissioning inspections for new fire protection systems.

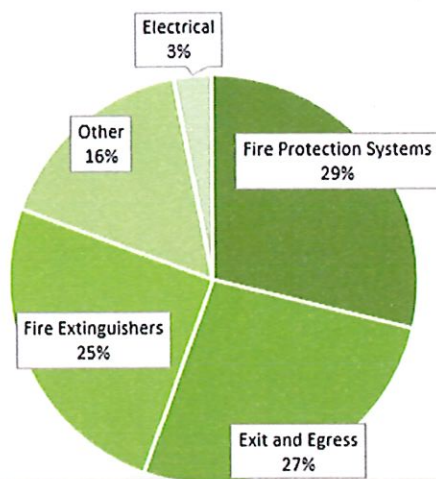
In 2024, 119 fire protection plan reviews were conducted, 34 commercial site plans were reviewed, and eight residential developments. Some significant projects that fire prevention staff were involved in included the Fox Commons remodel, the Appleton Public Library remodel, the Thrivent redevelopment, and the 222 Building remodel.

Fee Structure Increase

In 2024, the Safety and Licensing Committee and Common Council approved a fee structure increase for services rendered by the Appleton Fire Department. These services include false alarm responses, permit issuance, and plan reviews. This fee structure increase was needed as the structure has not been increased in over 25 years. The increase helps ensure the costs of the various services covers the costs incurred by the department.



Violation by Category



Enforcement

Code enforcement is coordinated by Civilian Fire Inspector, Jose Saldivar, with oversight from the Battalion Chief of Fire Prevention and Public Education. The largest portion of enforcement is handled through the conduction of routine inspections of commercial businesses and multi-family residential occupancies. In 2024, the Appleton Fire Department conducted 4,449 routine fire inspections, resulting in 991 of the 2,299 total violations being corrected. Further enforcement activities include 53 health license inspections, 81 special event license reviews, 61 temporary alcohol license reviews, 218 permanent alcohol license reviews, 65 amusement device license reviews, three Christmas tree sales license reviews, two firework sales tent license reviews, and 104 real estate inquiry form completions.

Fire Investigation

The fire investigation program is managed by the Battalion Chief of Fire Prevention and Public Education. Fire investigation duties are carried out by shift inspectors and relief shift inspectors. Every fire in the City of Appleton is investigated for origin and cause at some level. Inspectors investigated 35 fires in 2024. As part of these investigations, investigators took 5,133 pictures, an average of 146 per investigation. The investigation process includes a technical review by Lt. Adam Hansen, a Certified Fire Investigator and past shift inspector. After inspectors complete their reports, they are reviewed by Lt. Hansen before being given a final review by the battalion chief.

In 2024, one member gained certification as a Fire Investigation Technician through the International Association of Arson Investigators, bringing the total with this certification to five. As these investigators gain experience, the goal is for them to progress to the Certified Fire Investigator level of certification. The department maintains three members with the Certified Fire Investigator certification through the International Association of Arson Investigators.



Public Education

Education duties are coordinated by Civilian Fire Inspector and Public Education Specialist Alex Quintana, with oversight from the Battalion Chief of Prevention and Public Education. While every member of the fire department contributes to public education in some manner, the majority of programming is developed and delivered by Public Education Specialist Quintana and operations personnel.

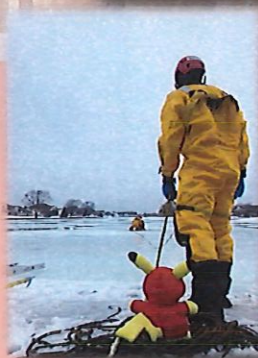
In 2024, we conducted over 150 educational and special events, reaching an estimated audience of 200,000 people. Our department takes pride in being visible, accessible, and actively engaged with our community across a wide variety of formats.

Some of our most visible efforts included participating in three major community parades—Memorial Day, Flag Day, and the Downtown Christmas Parade—as well as the City Celebration & Touch-a-Truck event, which draws families from across the Fox Valley each spring.

During Fire Prevention Month, our staff visited classrooms throughout the city, delivering targeted fire safety presentations to elementary students. The popularity of these school visits has grown so significantly that our former Fire Prevention Week has been extended to a full month in order to accommodate all scheduling requests.

Beyond school programming, we provided fire station tours, attended career fairs, and collaborated with senior living facilities and local organizations to offer fire safety and fall prevention education tailored to older adults.

These public education efforts are an essential part of our mission to reduce the risk of fire and injury through early engagement and consistent messaging. Each interaction represents an opportunity to build trust, strengthen community preparedness, and reinforce life-saving behaviors across every age group.



Media Relations



Our social media engagement included



17,461 reactions and likes



2,214 shares



1,496 comments



19,751 video views

4.7% average post engagement rate



In 2024, the Appleton Fire Department maintained a strong presence across both social media and traditional media platforms, focusing on transparency, engagement, and community education. Our communications team prioritized timely updates, public safety messaging, and meaningful stories that highlighted the dedication and innovation of our personnel.

Across Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), we published 1,021 total posts, generating over 1.24 million impressions and concluding the year with a combined follower count of 29,101—a 3.2% increase from 2023. Through these platforms, we connected with the public in real time, sharing department activities, fire prevention tips, incident updates, behind-the-scenes content, and recognition of our crews' outstanding work.

In addition to social media, our department was featured widely across local and regional television, radio, and online news outlets, with 852 media mentions tracked in 2024. These included coverage of emergency responses, community outreach efforts, and special events.

One of the most widely covered stories of the year was the signing of Senate Bill 829 at Appleton Fire Station #1 by Governor Tony Evers. Championed by Driver/Engineer Adam Paiser and supported by public safety partners, the bill allows Tactical Emergency Medical Services (TEMS) professionals to carry firearms in prohibited areas under law enforcement direction. The event drew significant media attention, highlighting Appleton Fire's leadership in advancing innovative, life-saving public safety policy.

Together, these media channels serve as vital tools for fostering trust, celebrating progress, and keeping our community informed. We remain committed to clear, consistent, and transparent communication with the people we serve.

Awards and Recognition

Department Awards

Employee of the Year



Lt. Ryan Lee



Award of Merit

Ryan Homman
Jeff Nelessen
Tim Damrow
Chad Donnay
Luke Syrjamaki
Troy Carpenter



Meritorious Unit

Jerry Borski
Andrew Dobbe
Troy Carpenter



EMS Life Saving Award

Jake Kirchner
Steve Unruh
Mike Hietpas
Dave Reigles
Michael Wirtz
Kyle Zulegar
Tim Verstegen
Cole Nelson
Jake Laack

Distinguished Service

Adam Paiser



Recognition Award

Steve Jahr



Public Awards

Citizen Award of Merit

Bob Cassioppi
Heath Peters
Randy Rickert
Cassidy Walsh



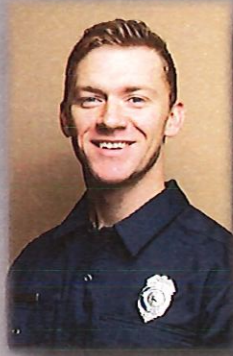
2024 Interns

Michael Becker
Jeret Cliffords
Neal Colling
Jamison Cullen
Cameron Grasee
Sam Green
Johnathan Lemon

New Employees



Firefighter
Jack Scott



Firefighter
Anthony Halloran



Firefighter
Patrick Hart



Firefighter
Steven Hoepfner



Firefighter
Stephan McEssey



Firefighter
Michael Wiltzius



Promotions



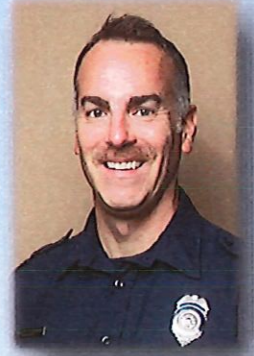
Lieutenant
Andrew Patz



Lieutenant
Todd Hendricks



Driver/Engineer
Kelly Lynch



Driver/Engineer
Timothy Damrow

Retirements



Lieutenant
Todd Bean
1999-2024



Lieutenant
Tim Meyer
2001-2024



Driver/Engineer
Michelle Neeck-Lappen
1998-2024

In Memoriam



Firefighter
Roland Hermes
1958-1988



Captain
David Hemauer
1965-1994

Fire Department Staff

Fire Chief Jeremy Hansen

Deputy Chief Ryan Weyers

Assistant to the Fire Chief Sharon Brochtrup

Support Staff:

Fire Inspector Jose Saldivar

Public Education Specialist/Fire Inspector Alex Quintana

Administrative Assistant Nancy Wilcox

Clerical Assistant Natasha Eversen

Central Equipment Agency Mechanic Jeremy Rycerz

Battalion Chiefs

Joe Scott

Rick James

Doug Vrechek

Joe Kozikowski

Derek Henson

Ryan Homman

Captains

Jeffrey Nelessen

Jason Lee

Scott Pelkin

Jake Kirchner

Steve Unruh

Justin Brown

Lieutenants

Chad Rucynski

Jeremy Hotynski

Bill Calaway

Greg Cullen

Jerry Borski

Corby Henkel

Ben Lee

Andrew Patz

Michael Becker

Adam Galica

Matt Gerrits

Michael Hietpas

Adam Hansen

Ryan Lee

Todd Hendricks

Driver Engineers

Darrin Butry

Bryan Knauer

Brian Cook

Scott Karpinski

Kraig Kasten

Gary Awe

Dave Reigles

Chad Johnson

Mark Deslauriers

Tyler Zunker

Kelly Lynch

Andrew Dobbe

Andrew Lane

Andrew Webb

Troy Kinley

Matt Dercks

Adam Paiser

Chris Britzke

Casey Kostechka

Michael Wirtz

Tim Damrow

Firefighter/ Inspectors

Jeremiah Detert

Nate Milhans

Eric Winger

Travis Nate

Cody Peabody

Tyler Linehan

Firefighters

Mike Wiese

Tyler Mickelson

Riley Kubisiak

Steve Jahr

Bart Rakun

Jordan Ross

David Hammer

Chad Donnay

Cody Walesh

Bryce Sternhagen

Kyle Zuleger

Alex Smith

Tim Verstegen

Cole Nelson

Tyler Rusch

Lukas Syrjamaki

Jake Laack

Ryan Monaghan

Devin Halbach

Troy Carpenter

Cory Asimus

Jordan Augsburger

Lucas Vanden Heuvel

Jason Karpinski

Leighton Myers

Jack Merrill

Griffin Kintopf

Doug Jacobs

Luis Acosta

Ty Davis

Jack Scott

Anthony Halloran

Patrick Hart

Steven Hoepfner

Stephen McEssey

Michael Wiltzius

