



Staff Report

Administration – Fire Department

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: March 17, 2025
Report Number: ADM.25.013
Title: 2024 Annual Fire Department Report
Prepared by: Stephen Conn, Fire Chief

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report ADM.25.013, entitled “2024 Annual Fire Department Report” for information;

B. Overview

This report presents the Town of The Blue Mountains Fire Department 2024 Annual Report.

C. Background

The Fire Chief provides regular update reporting of Fire Service activities to Council. As per Section 7.3(k) of the Fire Dept. Establishing and Regulating By-Law 2020-10.

D. Analysis

The 2024 Blue Mountains Fire Department Annual Report is attached. The report contains statistics and an analysis of key fire service performance indicators. Highlights include:

- An increase of 30% emergency calls for service, and a total fire loss of \$6,954,500 between fifteen (15) fire events.
- Chief Fire Prevention Officer leaving in 2nd quarter to take the position of Fire Chief in another municipality.
- Grant funding application submitted to the province for cancer prevention.
- Fire prevention staff continue to work with building owners to ensure fire prevention compliance is achieved with inspection orders. Prevention staff also seeing success with our alarm for life program by visiting residential homes. By scheduling a visit to audit smoke and carbon monoxide alarms ensuring compliance with fire code while ensuring our residents are safe.
- Paid Per Call firefighters PPC’s recruitment for 2024 was successful with six (6) firefighters to help bolster the number at both fire hall locations. Three (3) firefighters resigned from the department for personal reasons.

- The replacement aerial apparatus was anticipated in 2024, is now being scheduled to be received in Q2 of 2025. Delays from the vendor on parts and labour.
- The 2022 Fire Master Plan identified 38 recommendations within it. Staff have completed 16 recommendations and continue to work toward more in the future.
- The Emergency Management program requirements for 2024 has submitted compliance documents through Emergency Management Ontario, as required by the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. The annual exercise with the Water Department saw Town Staff work together to mitigate the exercise with lessons learned.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

The Blue Mountains Fire Department implements best practices to ensure limiting environmental impacts as much as possible.

G. Financial Impacts

None at this time.

H. In Consultation With

Fire Department Staff – All Divisions

Adam Smith, Acting CAO

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required.

However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Stephen Conn, Fire Chief firechief@thebluemountains.ca .

J. Attached

1. The Blue Mountains Fire Department 2024 Annual Report

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Conn
Fire Chief

Adam Smith
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:
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The Blue Mountains Fire Department 2024 Annual Report

The Vision of The Town of The Blue Mountains Fire Department is:

To provide the citizens of The Blue Mountains with pro-active, effective and efficient delivery of fire, rescue, public education and fire prevention services through a unified, forward-thinking organization with good morale and with the highest standards of safety, fairness and professionalism for personnel.



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Highlights

The Blue Mountains Fire Department emergency call volume, calls continue to increase each year. In 2024 there was an increase of 30% over 2023, and this percentage increase is higher by 22.8% from 2023.

- 332 calls for service in 2022
- 356 calls for service in 2023
- 463 calls for service in 2024
- The total of fire loss for the Town was at total of \$6,954,500 between fifteen (15) fire events.

The Fire Department administration team changed through 2024 with the Chief Fire Prevention Officer leaving in the end of the Q2 to take the position of Fire Chief in another municipality. We are currently advertising and interviewing candidates in Q1 of 2025 to fill the revised role of Division Chief.

Staffing for our Paid Per Call (PPC) firefighters was good throughout 2024, there were three (3) firefighters that left for personal reasons. At the end of June six (6) firefighters successfully finished the recruitment process out of a class of eight (8) that started. Currently, the Fire Hall in Thornbury has one (1) position open and the Fire Hall in the Craigeleith area has five (5) spots to bring us back to full complement. We will do another recruitment to fill these positions in 2025. A promotional competition seen two (2) firefighters become lieutenant rank firefighters. Additional competition will be done in 2025 to increase our ranks for supervisory roles.

A grant application was submitted to the province to apply for cancer prevention funding. The grant will be active over the next three (3) years for other fire related items. The province has committed thirty million dollars over three (3) years. We have been successful with this grant application and plan on using the generous funding to purchase a bunker gear extractor (washer) to remove/reduce the number of carcinogens in bunker gear post fire events.

Within the 2023 annual report we anticipated delivery of the replacement aerial truck in Q4. Due to delays from the vendor in parts and labour, the truck is now expected to be delivered by the end of Q2 2025. The vendor has been in contact with staff and will be including some items onto the apparatus that was not originally included in the purchase as value added, as a gesture of goodwill for the delay. The replacement for the rescue pumper is well underway with the good news that it may be available in Q4 of 2025 or Q1 of 2026.

Fire Prevention inspections for commercial occupancies and migrant worker bunkhouses are ongoing. Staff are working with commercial building owners to ensure they are ready for their annual fire and life safety inspection(s). Short Term Accommodation (STA) inspections for license renewals continue. The Alarm for Life Program continues to gain traction as more residents reach out to staff to have a home audit completed to ensure that smoke and carbon monoxide devices

are within date and are in the appropriate location within the dwelling to reduce non-emergency activation and callouts.

Training for all staff continues diligently as we move closer to our legislated certification requirements in 2026. We continue to train all staff on a weekly basis. We had opportunities throughout the year to send staff on external training opportunities as well as provide enhanced in-house training. 2024 was a great year and we will be building on those successes in 2025 and beyond.

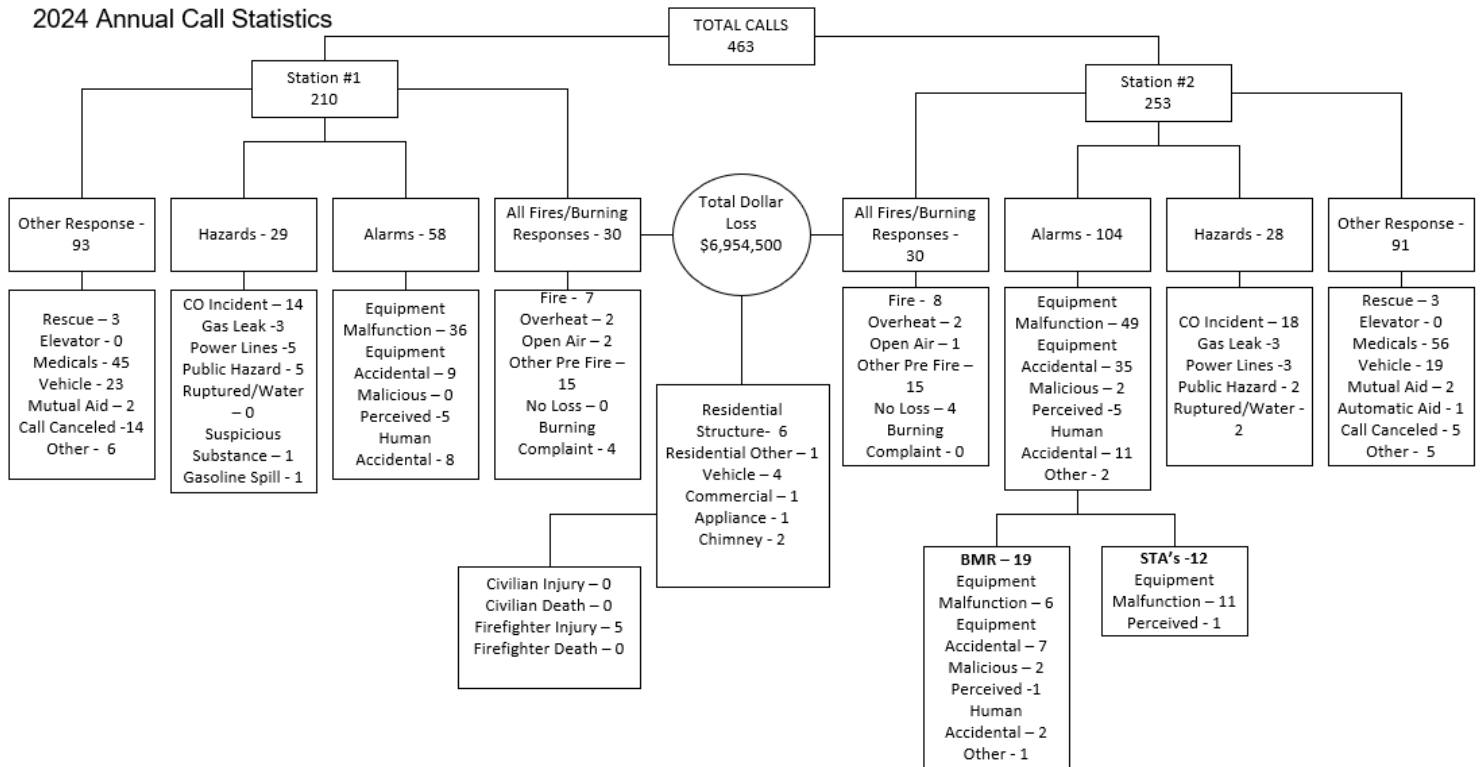
In 2022, Council endorsed the Fire Master Plan that has 38 recommendations within it. To date, staff have completed sixteen (16) recommendations and will be working on more in the future towards the next Fire Master Plan in 2032. Many of the recommendations are operational in nature, meaning that little to no cost is associated with that recommendation. Most of these imply the effort of staff time; however, there are recommendations that are strategic in nature because of the cost involved and/or the level of involvement by internal or external stakeholders.

The Emergency Management program undertook normal regulatory requirements for 2024. The town submitted the compliance for the fifteen (15) requirements of Regulation 380/04 (O Reg 380/04) and has not received confirmation of compliance. The Town Municipal Emergency Control Group participated in a joint emergency exercise with the Water Department town staff.

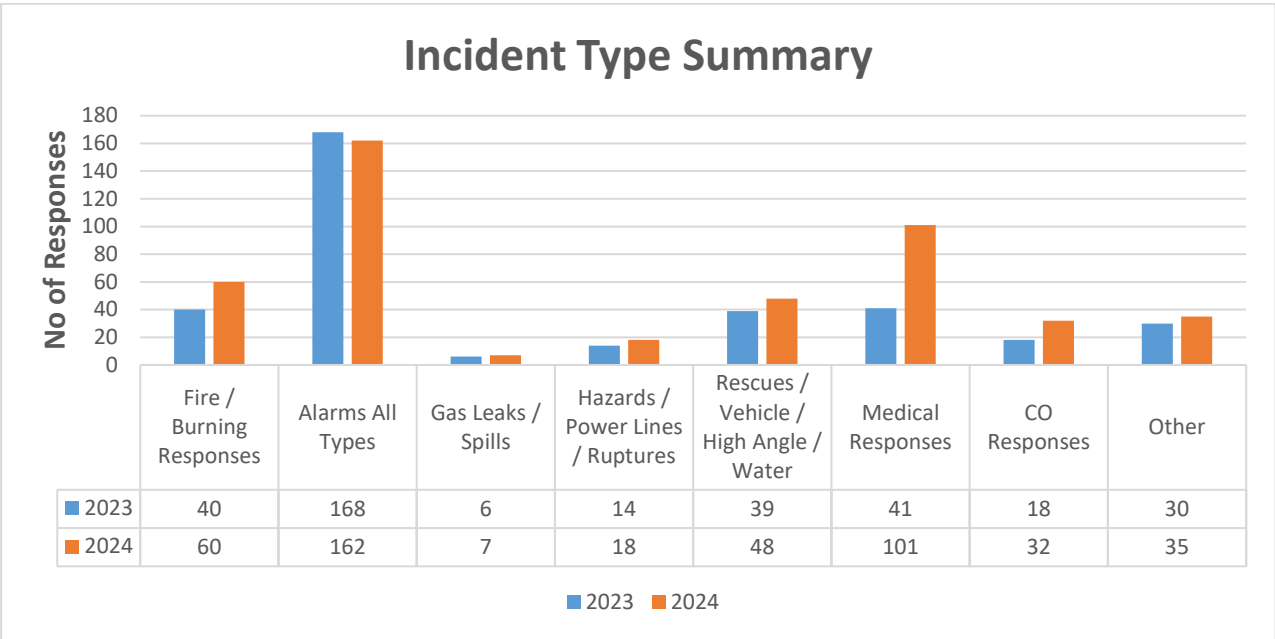
The balance of this report contains detailed statistics and program details for 2024.

Call Statistics

2024 Annual Call Statistics



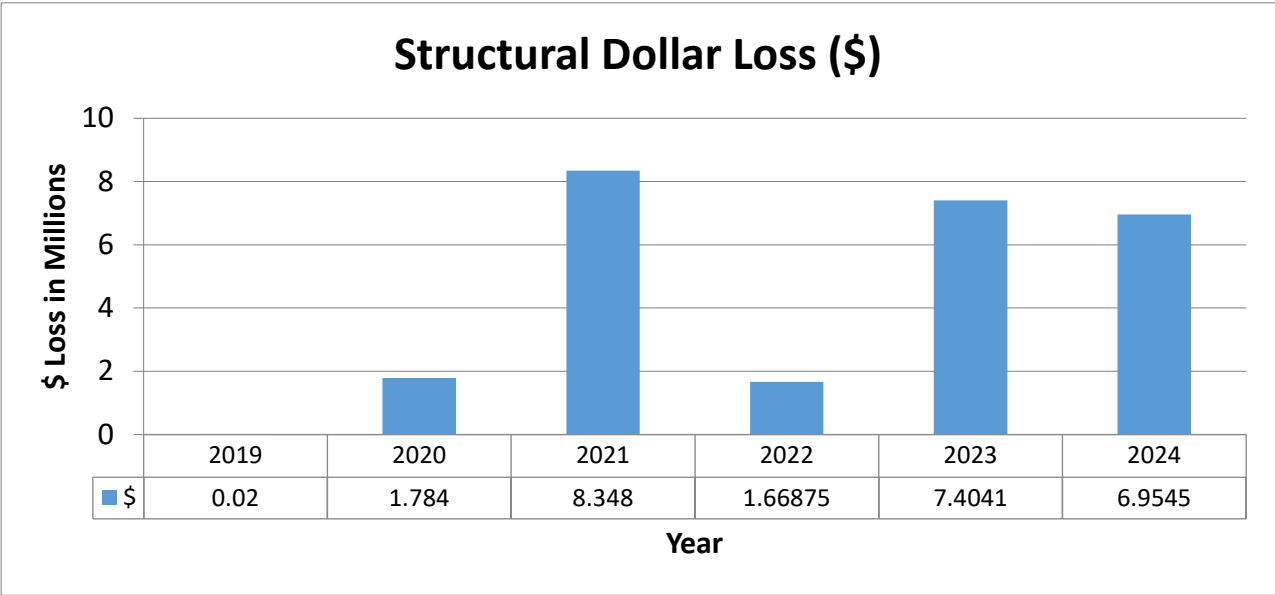
Response Type Comparison Chart



There was an increase of responses to all fires in 2024. There was a decrease of six (6) in alarms all types. All other categories including gas leaks/spills, hazards/power lines/ruptures, rescues/vehicle/high angle/water, medical responses, CO responses and other there was an increase to calls. These represent the overall increase in call volume.

Dollar Loss Comparison Chart

The following chart demonstrates quarterly dollar loss comparisons in million dollars.



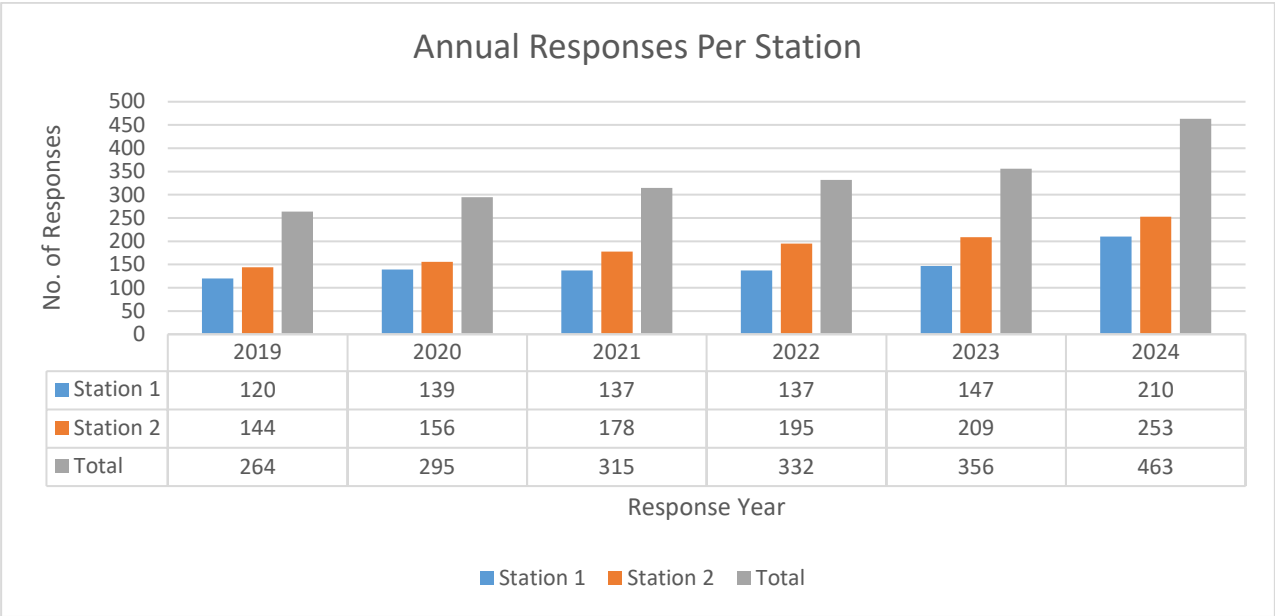
A total of \$6,954,500 in dollar loss was reported in 2024 with fifteen (15) fires and four (4) no loss outdoor fire events.

Structure Type	Loss Type	Location/Possible Source of Ignition	Dollar Loss
Vehicle	Vehicle Fire	105 Arthur St/Undetermined	\$5,000
Vehicle	Snowmobile Fire	150 Jozo Weider/Undetermined	\$10,000
Commercial	Structure Fire	81 King St East/Appliance Overheat	\$200,000
Residential	Garage & Vehicle	589945 Grey Road 19 /Engine Fire	\$86,000
Residential	Structure Fire	217 Bay St E/Lithium Ion Battery	\$835,000
Residential	Structure Fire	127 Alfred St W/Human Unintentional	\$575,000
Vehicle	Vehicle Fire	417230 10th Line/Undetermined	\$2,000
Residential	Structure Fire	145 National Drive/Open Fire BBQ	\$2,350,000

Structure Type	Loss Type	Location/Possible Source of Ignition	Dollar Loss
Residential	Appliance Fire	105 Alpine Crescent/Human Accidental	\$1,000
Residential	Structure	135 Margaret Drive/Electrical	\$2,267,000
Residential	Structure	108 Clippers Lane/Appliance Overheat	\$150,000
Residential	Pool House	110 Carmichael Crescent/Appliance Overheat	\$16,000
Residential	Chimney	117 Fieldcrest Court/Chimney Flue Pipe	\$7,500
Residential	Structure	795522 The Blue Mountains-Clearview Townline/Chimney Flue Pipe	\$450,000
Residential	Chimney	108 Innsbruck Lane/Chimney Flue Pipe	\$0
No Loss Outdoor Fires	Various	4 Responses	\$0

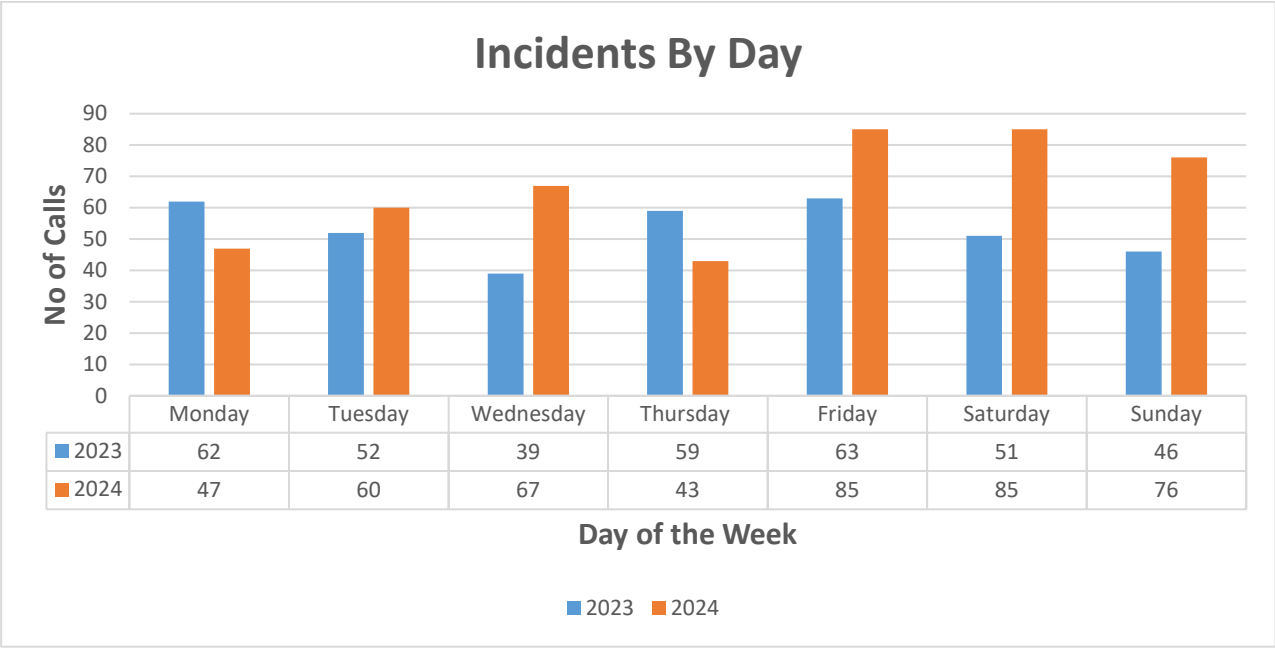
Response Volume Comparison Chart

The following chart demonstrates total annual responses.

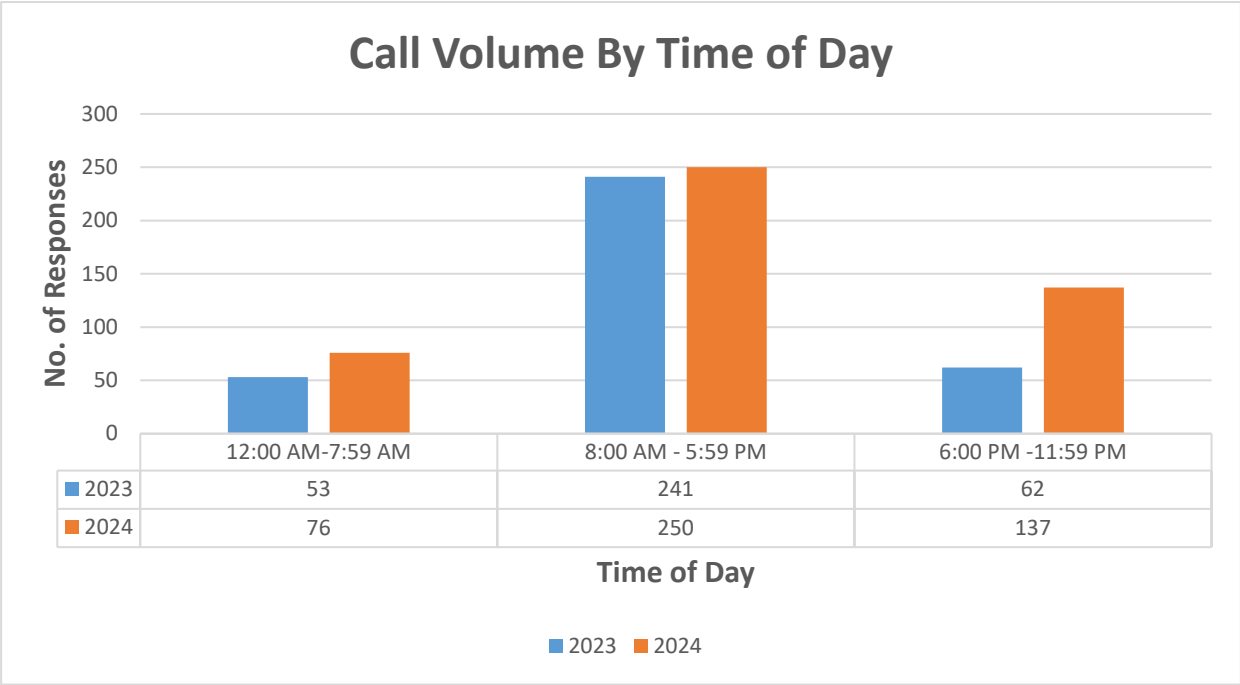


There was a 42% increase of calls in the station 1 coverage area and a 21% increase of calls in the station 2 coverage area. Station 2 responded to 20% more calls than Station 1 in 2024.

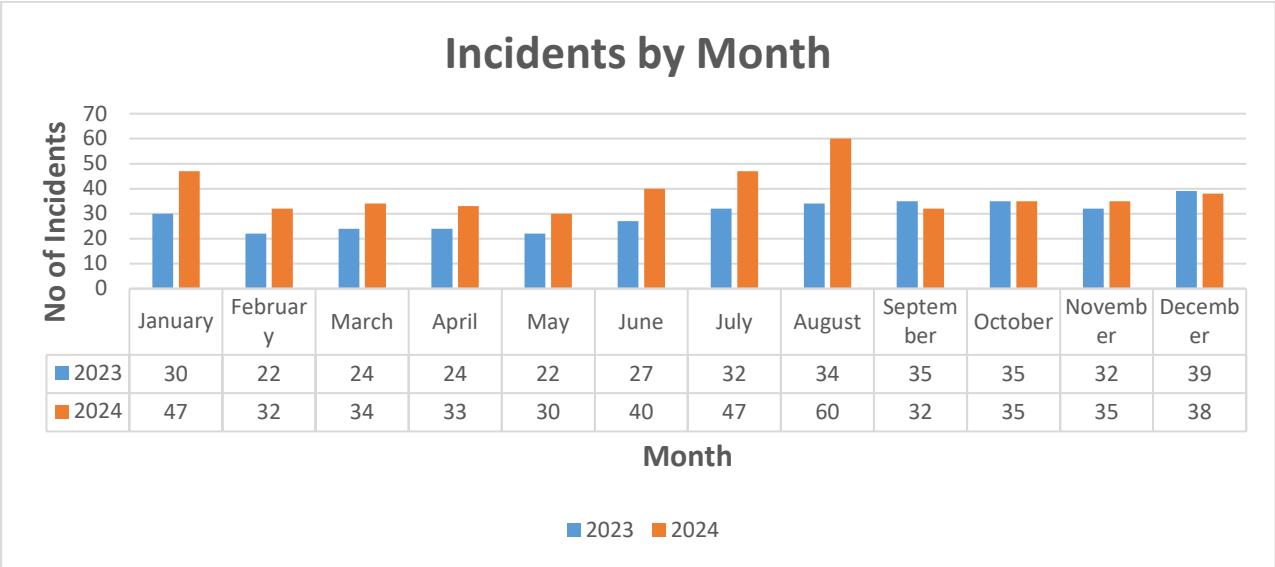
Call Volume by Day



Call Volume by Time



Call Volume by Month



Cost Recovery/Revenue Received

The following chart demonstrates cost recovery invoiced, and revenue received in 2024.

Type	Amount (\$)
STA Inspections	\$43,575
Specialized Rescue	\$3,850
MTO Recovery	\$7,296.10
Fire Marque	\$41,532.67
Other Miscellaneous (*Fireworks, Request for property search, Gov Deals etc.)	\$10,081.92
Grand Total	\$106,335.69

Fire Prevention

2024 Inspections

Inspection Type	Number Completed
Request	0
Complaint	0
Institutional	0
Re – Inspections total including commercial and STA's	146
Commercial	102
Commercial Residential	20
Industrial	27
Assembly	26
Residential	26
Tents	0
Display Fireworks	0
Public Amusement Area Fireworks	4
Outdoor Public Amusement Area Approved	0
Electrical Orders Issued	0
Bunk house Inspections	50
Short Term Accommodations	184
Total Inspections	585

Fire Inspection Average Timelines

Short Term Accommodations (STA) Time Considerations

Process	Time (Hours)
Fire Safety Plans review	1
Reviewing Floor plans and appliance paperwork	0.5
Emails and contact with owner or agent	1
Initial inspection	1
Follow up documentation (Cityview/Photo Uploads)	1
Re-inspection (s)	0.5
Total Time per STA (Average)	*5.0

Commercial Occupancy Inspection Time Considerations

Process	Time (Hours)
Commercial Site research including previous inspections and violations if applicable	1
Emails and contact with owner or agent	0.5
Initial inspection	1
Documentation of Findings and Report Writing	1
Service papers if required	0.5
Re-inspection (s)	0.5
Documentation filing and completion	1
Total Time per small Occupancy (Average)	*5.5

* **Average hours** based on small commercial occupancy and larger occupancies process will require more time.

Fire and Life Safety Education

Focus Group	Topic	Number of Persons
BMR Operations Staff	Extinguisher Training	38
NAOSH Week TBM Staff	Extinguisher Training	6
BMR Summer Beach Staff	Extinguisher Training	43
Home Hardware	Touch a Truck Event	75
Salmon Run	General Fire Safety	40
Seniors Fair	Public Education	100
Craigleith Ski Club	General Fire Safety	40
Vacasa	Extinguisher Training	15
Open House	Extinguisher / Smoke CO	350
Grace United Church	Extinguisher/AED	30
BMR Outdoor Staff	Extinguisher Training	22
	Total Number of Persons	759

Fire Safety Plans

Total Plans Submitted for Review	Buildings Inspected as Part of Review	Plans Approved
215	212	207

* Rejected plans are not tabulated as STA fire safety plans have several back and forth attempts before they are approved. Still labour intensive for inspectors, looking at simplifying the fire safety plan template further.

Smoke Alarm Program

Dwellings Inspected	Deficiencies Identified
41	Yes/Corrected 41 new devices installed

Fire Code Enforcement

Smoke Alarm Tickets Issued – Part 1	Smoke Alarm Infractions Issued – Part 3	Part 3 – Fire Code Violations Registered	Results
0	0	0	

- Please note we did not issue smoke alarm or code related court prosecutions. This section is just for enforcement action at Provincial court.

Inspection Orders

Inspection Type	Number of Orders
Bunkhouse	0
Condominium Corporations	5
Boarding Rooming Lodging	0
Commercial	90
Industrial	9
Assembly	21
Residential	0

Prevention Highlights

- Inspectors are working through commercial properties.
- STA Inspections and Fire Safety Plan reviews are still taking place.
- 7 file searches were completed.
- Fire call volume is up 30%, this takes time away from fire staff completing inspections.
- Two (2) Fire Inspectors were off for extended periods of time in 2024, so inspections have been reduced due to the reduced staffing levels.
- New business card fireprevention@thebluemountains.ca continue to be a success at the Home Hardware store in Thornbury, where hardware staff encourage consumers to contact us and take business cards for email contact.

Training

Annual Summary and Highlights

2024, started with a class of eight (8) recruits with six (6) Paid Per Call Recruits successfully finishing the recruitment process. They started their online training early in the year and began in person practical training in April. By the end of June, they were ready and responding with their respective stations.

We investigated the feasibility of changing our Learning Management Software (Stillwater Training) which allows us to track training as well as deliver online content and provide instruction for practical training. Our current provider has been collaborating with us, and we have decided to continue to move forward with them on a yearly basis.

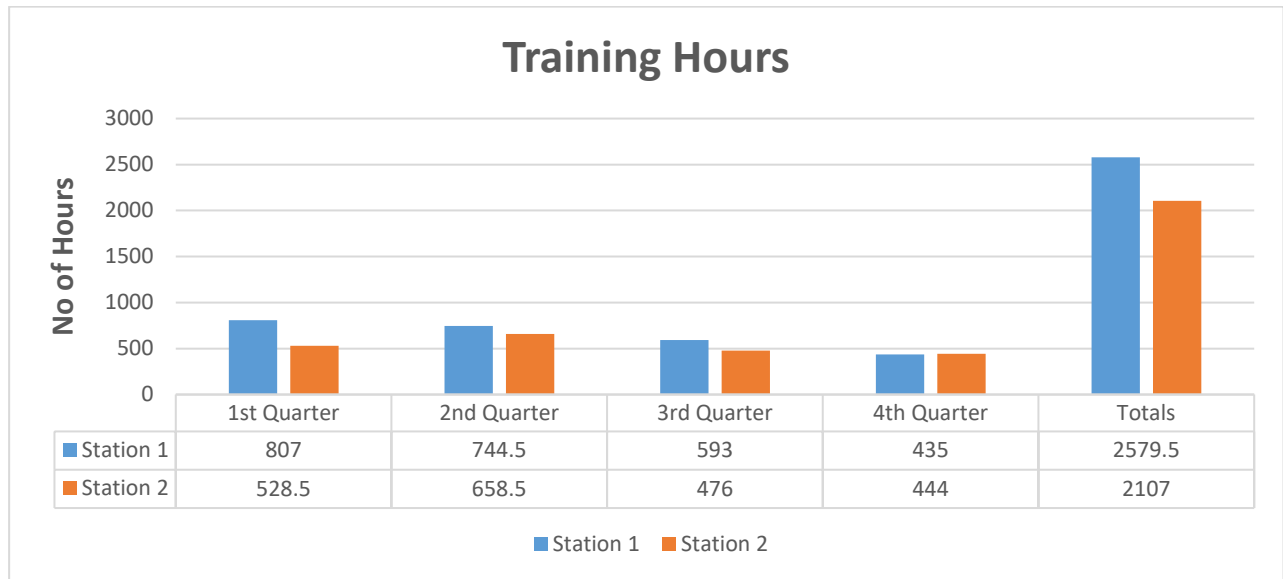
Our firefighters continue to excel with an average of 115 hours of training each, per year. We are nearing our targets for Firefighter Certification, and we will meet our legislated requirements by July 2026. Many of our firefighters have continued to attend the Ontario Fire College as well as our Regional Training Centers for National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) courses as well as additional training opportunities such as a new course on EV & Lithium-Ion Battery Fire & Explosion Awareness. We also completed Mental Health Awareness training in Q4. We delivered the Resilient Minds Program through the Canadian Mental Health Association, which was delivered by Deputy Chief Smith and Lori Elliot from First Health Counselling in Owen Sound.

In 2024, the Training division developed a new in-house Driver Training Program, and this program was launched in Q1 of 2025. The program has been well-received with great success and enthusiasm.

We are proud of our firefighters and their ongoing commitment to training and education.

General Training – Annual

Our firefighters attend weekly training every Monday evening and this training contains our NFPA maintenance training for programs such as, Ropes and Knots, Ladders, and SCBA training. We also utilize Monday evenings for enhanced training topics such as Rural Water Supply and Water Shuttle, Firefighter Survival techniques, Mental Health initiatives, and Technical Rescue maintenance training. Our PPC firefighters have an 87.5% attendance rate to these training nights with many of them able to attend over 90%. We thank them for their ongoing dedication to training and education.



Additional Training Opportunities

In 2024, we were able to send staff for Live Fire training at the Markdale Regional Training Center. Full time and PPC firefighters were offered an opportunity to attend this training utilizing the Mobile Live Fire Training Unit (MLFTU) from the Ontario Fire College. We are fortunate to get this opportunity again in 2025. We also provided Resilient Minds Mental Health Training in December to all available staff. We will be scheduling another course in 2025 to ensure that all staff can participate in this amazing program. The program focused on building the awareness of first responders on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress in themselves and those around them. We also discuss how to build resiliency within yourself and techniques for relieving stress.

Recruit Firefighter Training

In 2024, we hired eight (8) PPC Firefighters candidates that started testing and training in early 2024. Of the eight (8) candidates six (6) were successful in completing the recruit Firefighter Training for a total of 744 recruit training hours.

Ontario Fire College / RTC Courses

As in previous years we continued to utilize both the Ontario Fire College and the Grey County Regional Training Centre (RTC) for courses. The Grey County RTC is a facility that is close to home that offers some certification courses required by our staff. We also used the RTC in Brockton to facilitate certification courses with a live fire requirement. Since the closure of the Fire College in Gravenhurst the reliance on RTC's has increased, which continues to pose issues with scheduling for some of our staff. We have been working diligently to overcome these obstacles, and we are in a great position for meeting our legislated certification requirements. We will continue to send students to the Ontario Fire College for online and hybrid courses as required. Many of these courses are the classroom style courses such as Fire Inspector and Public Educator.

Emergency Management

We have completed the Annual Community “Essential” Level Program. This consists of fifteen (15) elements to be completed and sent into Emergency Management Ontario. These items are to fulfill compliance with the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and its associated Regulation 380/04.

The following are the fifteen (15) elements which are required to be completed annually:

1. Community Emergency Management Coordinator designated
2. Community Emergency Management Coordinator training completed
3. Community Emergency Management Program Committee established
4. Emergency Management Program Bylaw current
5. Hazard identification and risk assessment current
6. Emergency Response Plan reviewed and submitted to Emergency Management Ontario
7. Emergency Response Plan Bylaw current
8. Designated Emergency Operations Center
9. Emergency Operations Center communications equipment
10. Critical Infrastructure Inventory current
11. Required annual training for Community Control Group
12. Required annual emergency management exercise for Community Control Group
13. Designated Emergency Information Officer available
14. Public Education / Awareness Program delivered to residents digitally
15. Review elements and submitted to Emergency Management Ontario

2024 Significant Events

- Review of Membership for the Community Emergency Management Group and Program Committee
- Update of By-Law 2024-68 to adopt an Emergency Management Program and Emergency Response Plan
- Community Emergency Management Group completed the Incident Management Systems 100 course
- Program Committee updated and reviewed Emergency Response Plan, including the Critical Infrastructure and HIRA for 2024, as per Emergency Management Ontario
- Annual training of Municipal Emergency Control Group and tabletop emergency exercise with
- Provided information to the public with 72-hour preparedness message digitally
- Provided information on the provincial roll out of the alert ready notification tests.
- Provided information to the public on the Winter Readiness Campaign 2024