Annual Report

2025

Crystal Lake Fire Rescue





In Memory of
Fire Rescue Chief Dennis Ahrens
1944 - 2025

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Message From Fire Chief Craig Snyder





To the Citizens of the Communities we serve,

The Annual Community Report is designed to provide you with information on the activities of the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department in 2025, as well as inform you of future activities, goals, and vision of the department.

2025 was a year of growth for the Fire Rescue Department. Not only in our staffing, but in our calls for service to those we have sworn to protect. Our organizational values of Professionalism, Readiness, Innovation, Dedication and Empowerment are present in everything we do, as we strive each day to be an organization the community can be proud of.

On behalf of the men and women of the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department, I would like to thank you for your continued support as we look to a future of challenges, opportunities, growth, and organizational improvement.

It is our honor to serve the residents, businesses, and visitors of Crystal Lake and surrounding communities. Thank you for taking the time to review the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department 2025 Annual Report.

Sincerely,

Craig Snyder
Fire Rescue Chief

Department Overview

The City of Crystal Lake is located in McHenry County, Illinois, approximately 45 miles northwest of the City of Chicago. The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department provides service for the City of Crystal Lake, the Crystal Lake Rural Fire Protection District, the Village of Lakewood, and portions of Lake in the Hills. The area served is approximately 51.2 square miles, with a resident population of nearly 56,000 based on the 2020 census.

Services provided include fire protection, emergency medical care (Advanced Life Support), fire inspections, public education, and special team responses such as hazardous materials, dive rescue, trench, confined space, rope, and structural collapse.

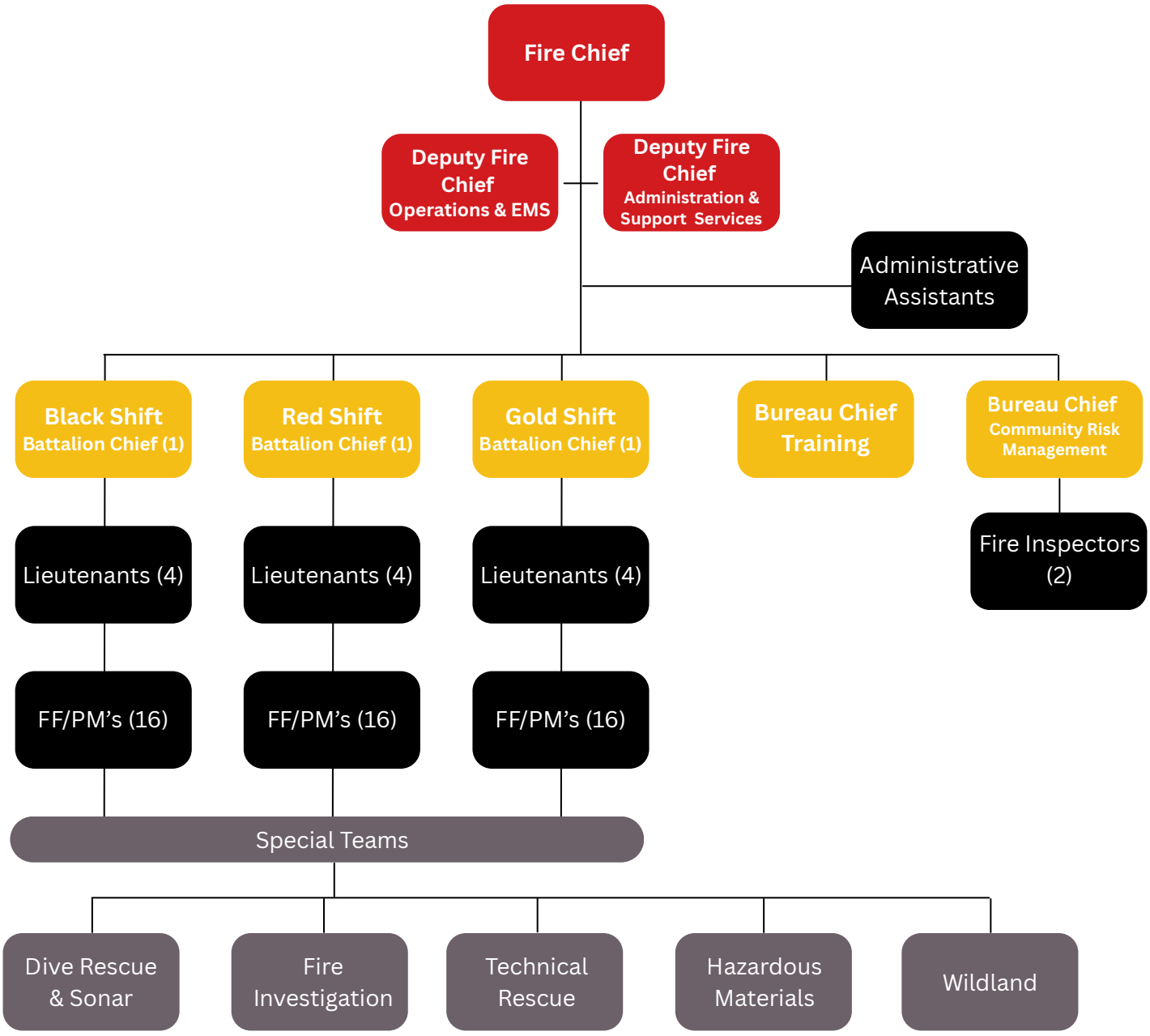
The City of Crystal Lake is the largest city in McHenry County, and the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department's service area includes four U.S. highways, Union Pacific and Metra railroads, three large lakes (Crystal Lake and Three Oaks Recreation Area), and McHenry County College. The Department also provides automatic aid to the Nunda Rural Fire Protection District, McHenry Township Fire Protection District, Algonquin / Lake in the Hills Fire Protection District, Huntley Fire Protection District, and Woodstock Fire Rescue District. Mutual Aid is provided to communities in McHenry, Lake, and Kane Counties through the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS).

The Fire Rescue Department provides 24-hour emergency response, operating out of three stations with 69 personnel. Staffing is provided by three shifts of full-time firefighters on a 24/48-hour schedule. Approved full-time positions include 3 Battalion Chiefs, 9 Lieutenants, and 51 firefighter/paramedics. Full-time firefighters, lieutenants and Battalion Chiefs are members of the Crystal Lake Professional Firefighters Association, Local 3926, of the International Association of Firefighters. Emergency response minimum staffing is 15 personnel per shift.

Administrative staffing positions include Fire Rescue Chief, two Deputy Chiefs, Bureau Chief of Training and Professional Standards, Bureau Chief of Community Risk Management, two Fire Inspectors of Community Risk Management, and two Administrative Assistants. In 2025, the Department responded to 7,862 calls for service.



Organizational Chart





Fire Chief



Deputy Fire Chief



Deputy Fire Chief



Bureau Chief Community Risk Management



Bureau Chief Training

Significant Incidents

- **Structure Fires:**
  - 65 Della St.
  - 420 E Terra Cotta Ave
  - 1370 North Ave
  - 5000-5014 Skyridge Dr.
  - 5050 Rickert Rd
  - 370 Prairie St.



- Command Center Activations: 2 for storm related incidents
- Haz-Mat Call-out: 420 E Terra Cotta Ave

Promotions/Retirements/New Hires



New Hires

Deputy Chief Mark Menzel: 4-16-25

CRM Inspector Tom Schmitz: 9-8-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Sam Hensley: 2-3-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Seth Nowak: 2-24-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Colin Dacquisto: 4-28-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Dalton Bennett: 6-2-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Noah Evans: 6-2-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Christian Brown: 8-11-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Julieanna Contesso: 9-8-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Daniel Doyle: 9-29-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Connor Hewitt: 12-8-25

Firefighter/Paramedic Alex Hoey: 12-8-25

Administrative Assistant Michaela Krause: 8-4-25

Promotions

Deputy Chief Heidi Olsen: 4-8-25

Battalion Chief Brian Tamason: 4-9-25

Lieutenant Robert Seyl: 4-9-25

Firefighter/Paramedic John Hussey: 4-28-25

Retirements

Deputy Chief Richard Kaiser: 7-25-25



Highlights of 2025

BIG NEWS! - New Fire Safety Simulator

The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department applied for the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant through FEMA. The department has been awarded $229,821.43 in grant funds to purchase a new fire safety trailer and FIAR fire extinguisher training system. The fire safety trailer and fire extinguisher training system will allow the department to offer more interactive, hands-on, practice-based fire safety education to the community. The safety trailer pictured below, built for Jacksonville Fire Rescue, will be very similar to the one purchased for Crystal Lake Fire Rescue.

Estimated delivery: September 2026





Pictures from JHB Group

Live Fire Training

This past year, the department received a donated property, Flowerwood, to conduct live fire training. Flowerwood was used to run various fire attack and rescue drills. Training exercises such as this are invaluable to a fire department. Live fire training allows firefighters to replicate a realistic scenario in a more controlled environment, enhance skill and safety practices, enhance teamwork and communication skills and abilities, build confidence, and become more familiar with their equipment.




HURLEY






CRIMSON


CRYSTAL LAKE
LT. BORST


E340
MSA


LAKE
HURLEY

Fire Suppression Response Times For Each Station

Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department Fire Suppression Response Times Within Each Response District			
	Station 1	Station 3	Station 4
Average Turnout Time	1:02	1:02	0:56
Average Travel Time	4:55	4:51	5:52
Average Alarm to Scene Time	6:01	5:55	6:53

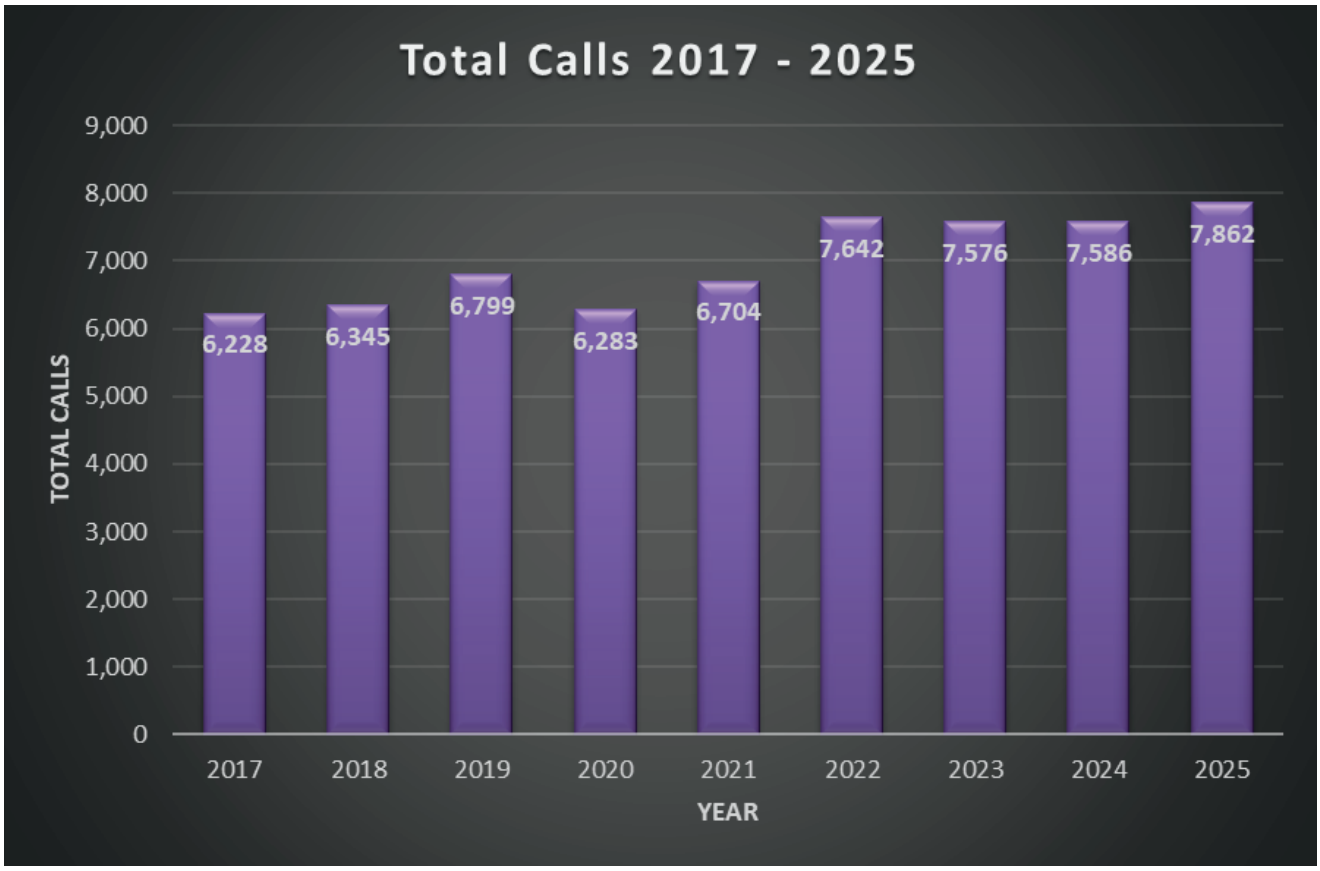
EMS Response Times For Each Station

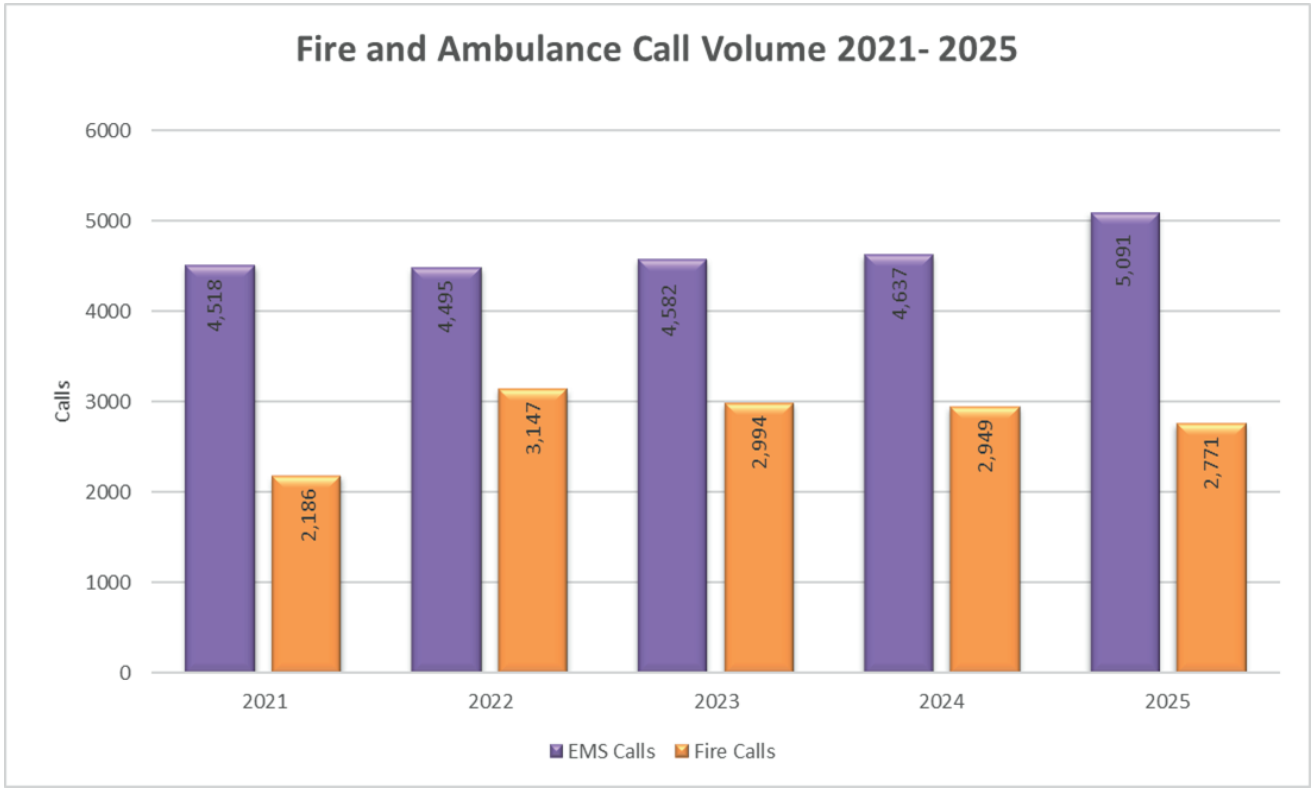
Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department EMS Response Times Within Each Response District			
	Station 1	Station 3	Station 4
Average Turnout Time	1:00	0:56	0:55
Average Travel Time	4:42	4:33	4:44
Average Alarm to Scene Time	5:42	5:31	5:39

Incident Statistics

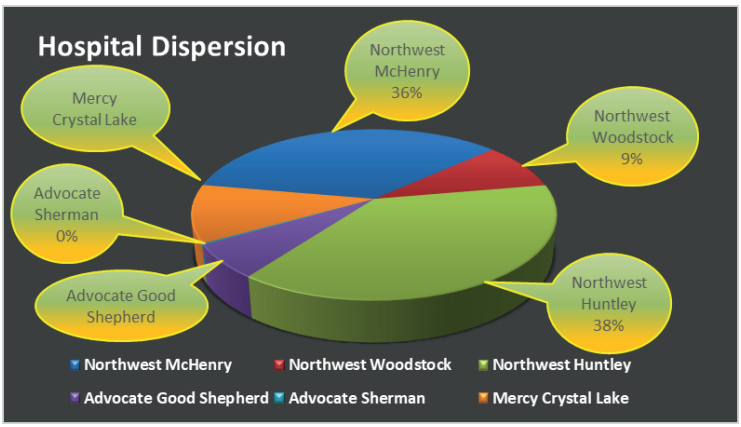
Incident Type	#2021	%2021	#2022	%2022	#2023	%2023	#2024	%2024	#2025	%2025
Fire	**85**	1.27%	**91**	1.19%	**76**	1.00%	**86**	1.14%	**88**	1.16%
Over Pressure, Rupture, Explosion	**1**	0.01%	**5**	0.07%	**3**	0.04%	**4**	0.05%	**1**	0.01%
Rescue and EMS Incidents	**4528**	67.54%	**4904**	64.17%	**4929**	65.06%	**4989**	65.85%	**5151**	67.99%
Hazardous Conditions (No Fire)	**216**	3.22%	**212**	2.77%	**296**	3.91%	**202**	2.67%	**228**	3.01%
Service Call	**751**	11.20%	**975**	12.76%	**922**	12.17%	**966**	12.17%	**923**	12.18%
Good Intent Call	**336**	5.01%	**426**	5.57%	**443**	5.85%	**484**	6.39%	**521**	6.88%
Fire Alarms	**779**	11.62%	**1014**	13.27%	**893**	11.79%	**841**	11.10%	**943**	12.45%
Special Incident Type	**8**	0.12%	**15**	0.20%	**14**	0.18%	**14**	0.18%	**7**	0.09%
Total	**6704**	100.00%	**7642**	100.00%	**7576**	100.00%	**7586**	100.00%	**7862**	100.00%

Jurisdiction	#2021	%2021	#2022	%2022	#2023	%2023	#2024	%2024	#2025	%2025
City of Crystal Lake	**5669**	84.56%	**6596**	86.31%	**6390**	84.35%	**6299**	83.14%	**6455**	85.20%
CL Rural FPD	**587**	8.76%	**611**	8.00%	**682**	9.00%	**808**	10.67%	**845**	11.15%
Lakewood	**316**	4.71%	**324**	4.24%	**339**	4.47%	**289**	3.81%	**336**	4.44%
Out of District	**132**	1.97%	**111**	1.45%	**165**	2.18%	**190**	2.51%	**226**	2.98%
Total	**6704**	100.00%	**7642**	100.00%	**7576**	100.00%	**7586**	100.00%	**7862**	100.00%

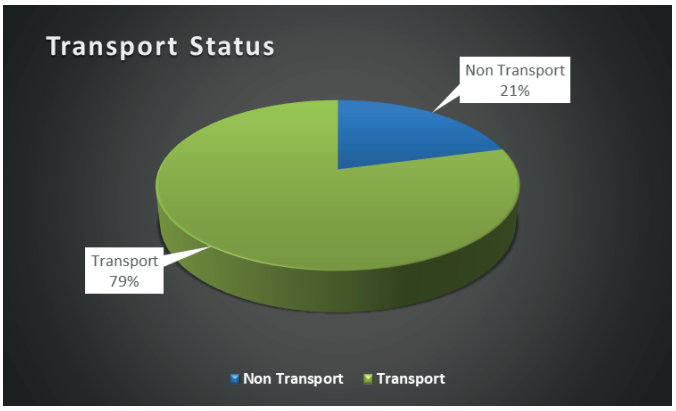

Total Calls 2017 - 2025
TOTAL CALLS
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
6,228
6,345
6,799
6,283
6,704
7,642
7,576
7,586
7,862
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
YEAR


Fire and Ambulance Call Volume 2021- 2025
Calls
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
4,518
2,186
4,495
3,147
4,582
2,994
4,637
2,949
5,091
2,771
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
EMS Calls
Fire Calls

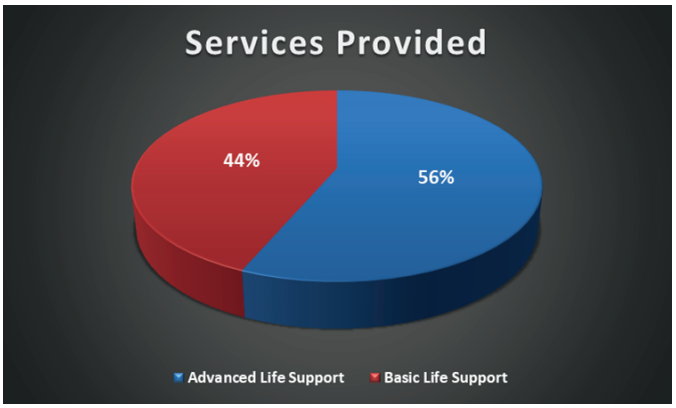
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)



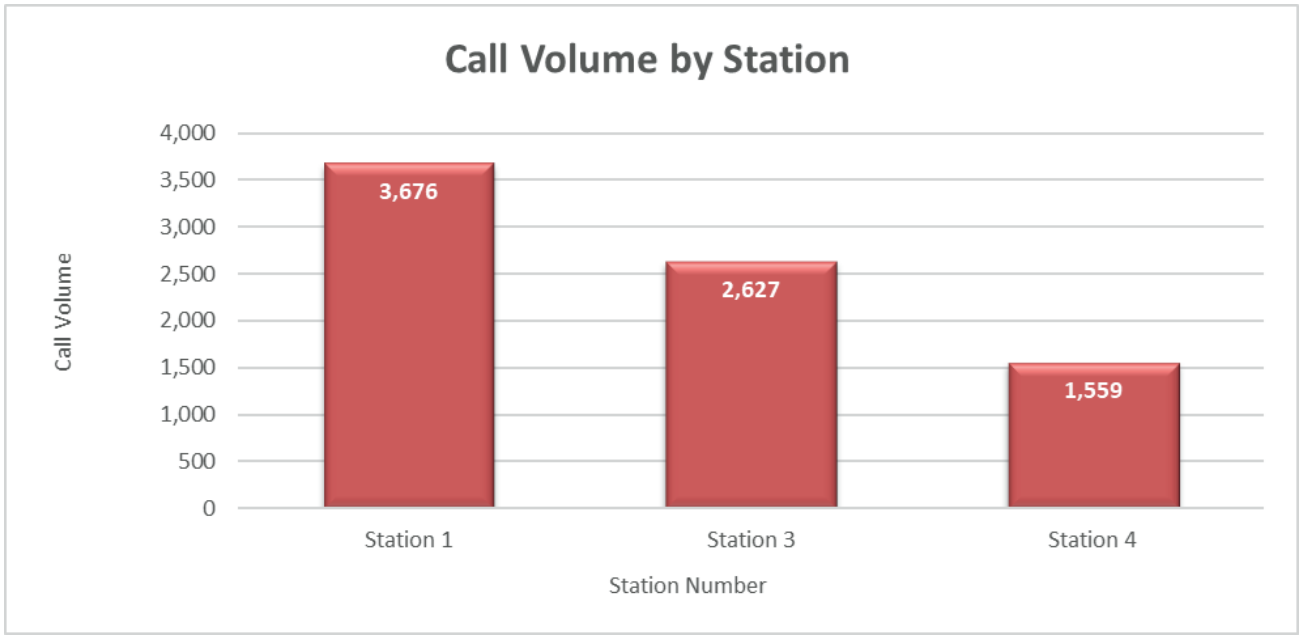
Transport Destination	Number of Patients	% of Patients
Northwest McHenry	1459	35.34%
Northwest Woodstock	369	8.94%
Northwest Huntley	1560	37.79%
Advocate Good Shepherd	262	6.35%
Advocate Sherman	10	0.24%
Mercy Crystal Lake	451	10.93%
Other	17	0.41%
Total	4128	100.00%

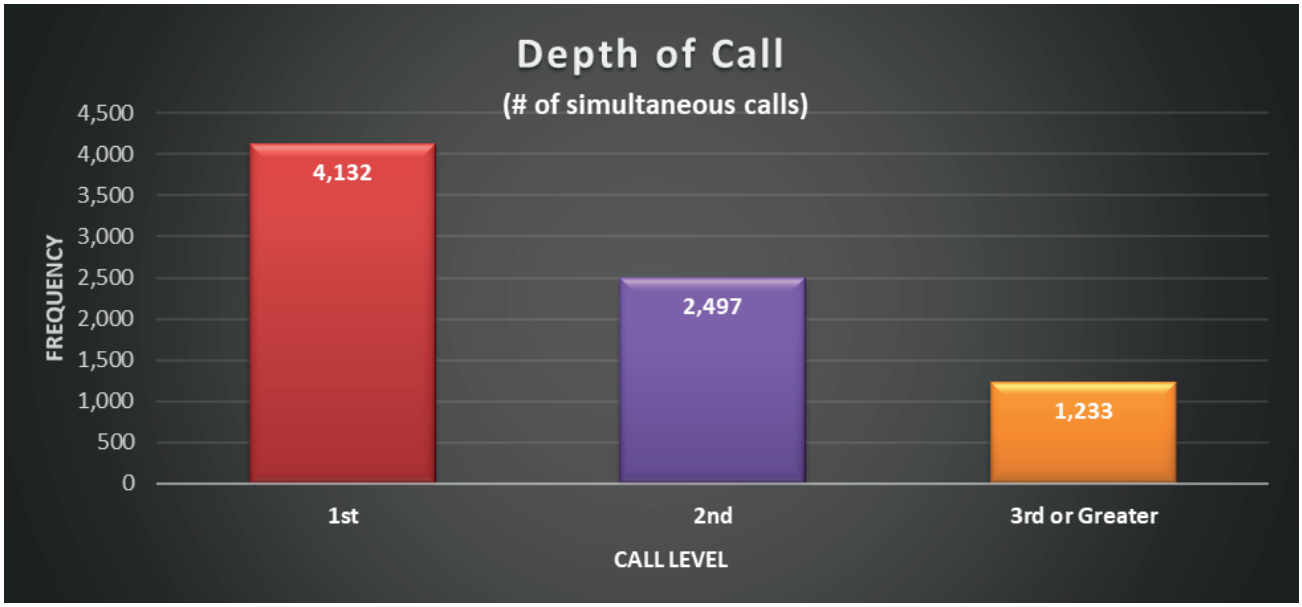


Transport Status	Number of Patient	% of Patients
Non Transport	1089	20.87%
Transport	4128	79.13%
Total	5217	100.00%



Services Provided	Number of Patient	% of Patients
Advanced Life Support	2942	56.39%
Basic Life Support	2275	43.61%
Total	5217	100.00%

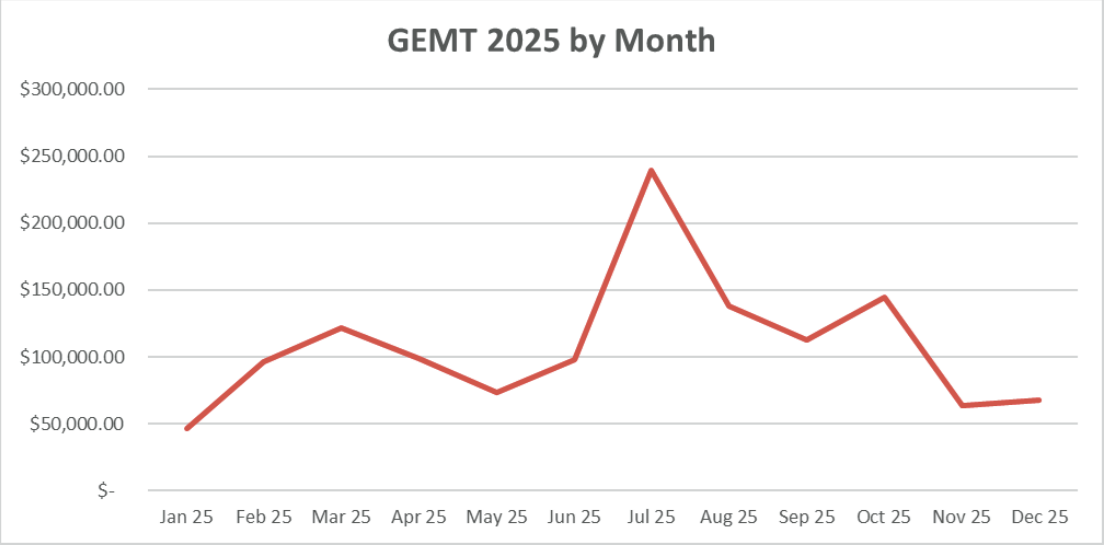

Call Volume by Station
Call Volume
4,000
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
3,676
2,627
1,559
Station 1
Station 3
Station 4
Station Number


Depth of Call
(# of simultaneous calls)
FREQUENCY
4,500
4,000
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
4,132
2,497
1,233
1st
2nd
3rd or Greater
CALL LEVEL

2025 GEMT Payments

The GEMT program is a federally funded Medicaid initiative that was established in Illinois through legislation in 2019. This program enables municipalities to receive extra Medicaid reimbursements for ambulance services, surpassing the amount reimbursed by the State for Medicaid claims related to Emergency Transportation. In 2025, Crystal Lake Fire Rescue successfully collected $1.3 million from GEMT payments.

GEMT Ambulance Receipts CY2025		
Month	Collected	
Jan 25	$	46,207.00
Feb 25	$	96,622.00
Mar 25	$	122,129.00
Apr 25	$	98,757.00
May 25	$	73,593.00
Jun 25	$	97,809.00
Jul 25	$	239,260.00
Aug 25	$	138,427.00
Sep 25	$	113,086.00
Oct 25	$	144,928.00
Nov 25	$	63,785.00
Dec 25	$	67,637.00
Total	$	1,302,240.00



Bureau Chief of Community Risk Management
Chris Bedore



The Community Risk Management (CRM) Team is responsible for identifying, prioritizing, and mitigating local fire and life safety risks through strategic investment of resources. The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department's CRM Team focuses on reducing risk within its defined area of operations by implementing, monitoring, and evaluating prevention and mitigation strategies.

The Community Risk Management Team enforces local fire and life safety codes, conducts plan reviews to ensure life safety and code compliance, and manages mandated compliance reporting for life safety systems within the City of Crystal Lake and its rural response areas. In addition, all community complaints related to fire and life safety concerns are investigated and managed through the Community Risk Management Team.

In 2025, the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department followed the **2018 International Fire Code (IFC)** with local amendments.

Inspections: Fire inspections are conducted annually by the Community Risk Management Chief, two full-time inspectors, and frontline personnel of the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department to identify and correct potential fire and life safety hazards.

Dedicated Community Risk Management Inspectors perform annual life safety inspections and conduct additional inspections related to permitting, occupancy changes, and community concerns.

Through these inspections, the Fire Department plays a vital role in educating business owners and residents on proper fire prevention practices, ultimately reducing risk and improving overall community safety.

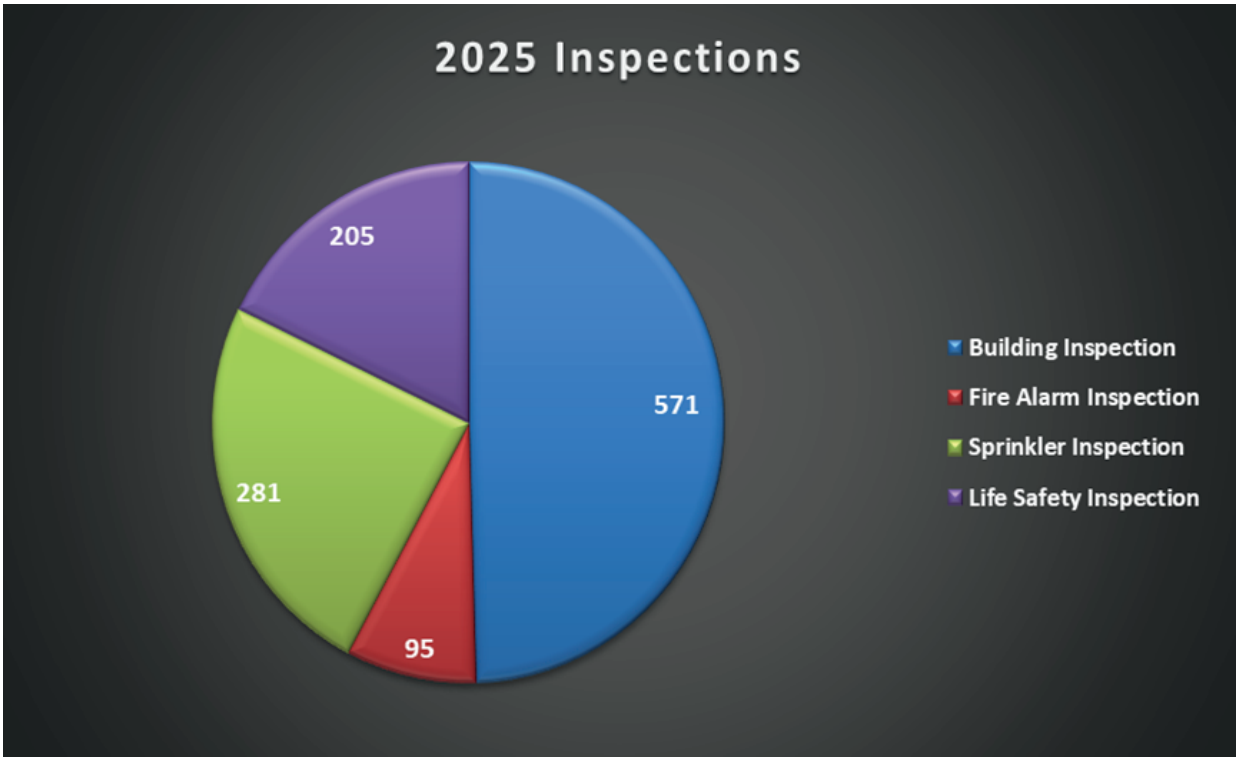
Plan Reviews: Community Risk Management Inspectors provide a critical life safety function by conducting plan reviews for both new and existing buildings. These reviews are guided by life safety principles and code compliance requirements.

The plan review process helps ensure that buildings within the community are safe places to live, work, conduct business, dine, sleep, and recreate. By maintaining compliance and reducing risk, these efforts also contribute to lowering insurance costs for residents and businesses throughout the community.

Fire Investigation: In 2025, the Crystal Lake Fire Investigation Team consisted of **nine active members**. Fire Investigators responded to **15 fires**, taking the lead on **11 investigations** and completing detailed Cause and Origin reports for each incident. Investigators also provided support on **four mutual aid fire investigations.**

The Fire Investigation Team collaborated with local businesses and partnered with the McHenry County Sheriff's Office, Crystal Lake Police Department, the District and State's Attorney's Offices, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).


2025 Plan Reviews
148.00
46.00
312.00
8.00
2.00
13.00
24.00
Building Permit Plan Review
Sprinkler Plan Review
Fire Alarm Plan Review
PUD Plan Review
SUP Plan Review
Cursory Plan Review
Special Event


2025 Inspections
205
571
281
95
Building Inspection
Fire Alarm Inspection
Sprinkler Inspection
Life Safety Inspection

Public Education & Community Events

Public education is essential for enhancing fire prevention and safety. The most effective way to safeguard individuals from fire or EMS emergencies is to empower them to prevent such incidents. The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department engages in various public education initiatives year round. For instance, the Adopt a Firefighter program has instructed approximately 1,200 first-grade students on crucial fire safety topics, including smoke alarm safety and how to dial 9-1-1.

Our department members actively engaged with the community by attending career panels at local high schools, providing station tours, and conducting fire extinguisher demonstrations, among other activities! Additionally, we took part in various community events, such as National Night Out, Johnny Appleseed, Read Across America, and the Lakeside Festival.



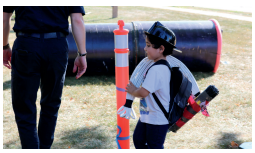
















Bureau Chief of Training & Professional Standards William Whyte



The Division of Training and Professional Standards is committed to ensuring that members of the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department are confident, competent, and professional in delivering emergency services to our community. We proudly serve the citizens, stakeholders, and visitors of Crystal Lake, as well as the Village of Lakewood and the Rural Fire Protection District. Our goal is to achieve excellence in all aspects of our duties.

2025 Highlights and Achievements
Training and Certifications:

- Over 700 hours of continuing education completed by department members.
- Certification courses included:
  - Inspector I & II
  - Instructor I
  - Fire Apparatus Engineer
  - Vehicle Machinery Operator
  - Fire Service Vehicle Operator
  - Trench Operations
  - NIMS 300 (National Incident Management System)
  - Incident Safety Officer
  - Advanced Fire Officer
  - All Hazards Operations
  - Blue Card Incident Command System
  - Command Officer Academy
- Certifications obtained through:
  - Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
  - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
  - Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL)
  - National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Staffing and Growth:

- Major hiring initiative in 2025:
  - 11 new firefighter/paramedics
  - 1 administrative assistant
  - 1 fire investigator
  - 1 Deputy Chief of Operations
- Increased staffing to meet growing community needs and rising call volume.

Specialized Rescue Teams:

- Continued participation in MABAS Division 5 specialized teams:
  - Dive Team
  - Hazardous Materials
  - Sonar
  - Technical Rescue (Confined Space, Trench, Collapse)
- Monthly training sessions to maintain readiness and compliance.

Looking Ahead to 2026:

- Primary Focus: Company-level training and integration of new hires.
- Continued emphasis on:
  - Leadership development
  - Safety programs
  - Specialized rescue readiness
  - Maintaining high standards of emergency service delivery

Training Bureau

In 2025, the Training Bureau has accomplished the following:

Officer Development:

- Leadership training emphasized to manage expanded personnel.
- Courses completed by officers:
  - Advanced Fire Officer
  - Incident Safety Officer
  - All Hazards Operations
  - Blue Card Incident Command System
  - Command Officer Academy
- Focus on integrating new hires and building cohesive teams through company-level training.

Live Fire and Specialized Training:

- Conducted live fire training at donated Flowerwood property in collaboration with Illinois Fire Service Institute.
- Multiple training evolutions under real-life conditions.
- Rapid Intervention Team training completed with McHenry Fire Department.
- Ice rescue training provided to all members.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS):

- 68 certified paramedics maintained state licensure.
- Each paramedic completed 100 hours of EMS training annually.
- Training provided by McHenry-Western Lake County EMS system and in-house programs.

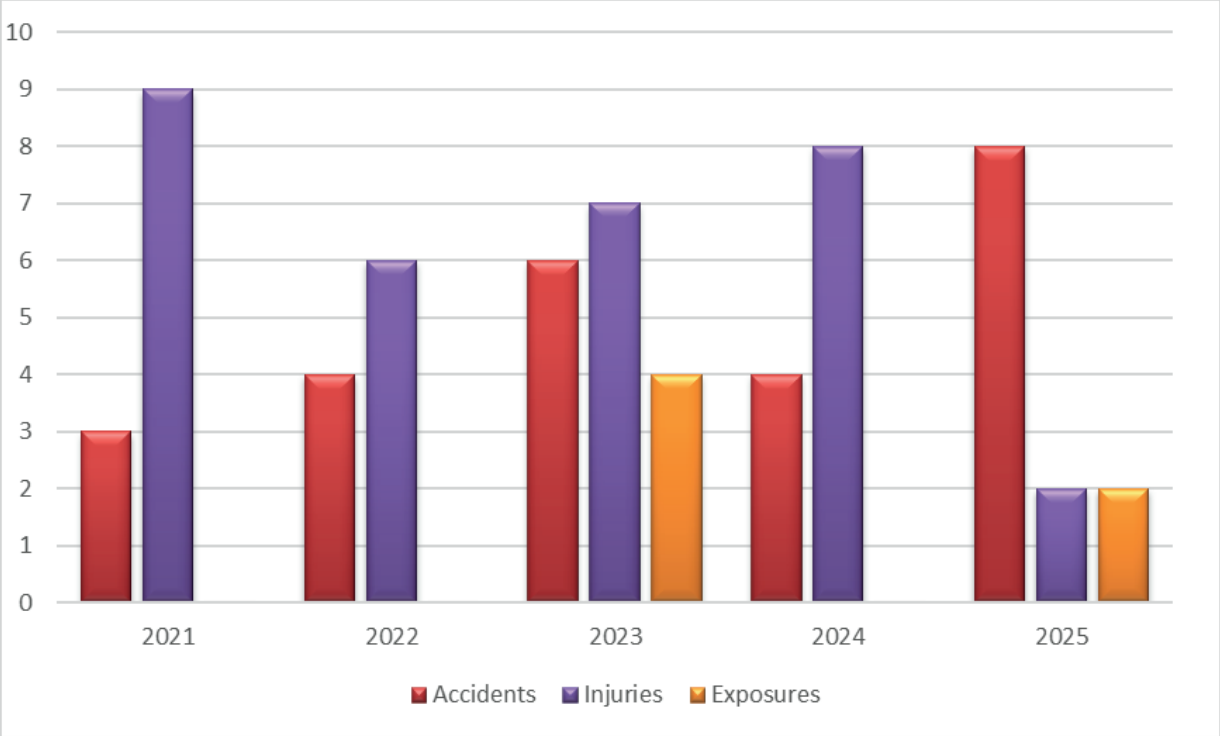


Safety Committee

The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department Safety Committee continues to be an integral part of the City of Crystal Lake's overall risk management plan and program. Through the Safety Committee, management and employees can communicate safety concerns and ideas to promote a safe work environment for Department employees.

The Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department has accomplished many things over the past year.

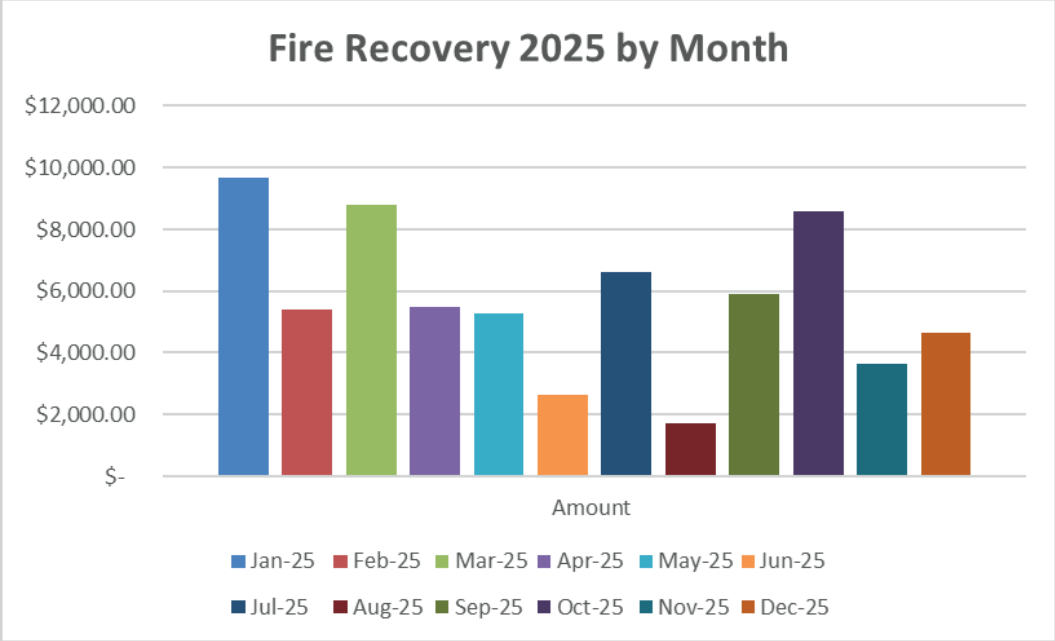
- Safety Committee reviewed 12 incidents (accidents, injuries, exposures) for root cause analysis.
- Behavioral Observation Program implemented:
  - Monthly safety messages addressing identified risks.
  - Focus on prevention and creating a safer work environment.



Fire Recovery USA

In line with the City's Ordinance, Fire Recovery USA collects funds from non-residents for services rendered during motor vehicle accidents, hazardous materials incidents, and structural fires. Throughout the year, a total of $68,389.52 was successfully recovered.

Fire Recovery 2025		
Month	Amount	
Jan-25	$	9,674.88
Feb-25	$	5,390.00
Mar-25	$	8,776.48
Apr-25	$	5,499.84
May-25	$	5,280.00
Jun-25	$	2,648.32
Jul-25	$	6,597.16
Aug-25	$	1,718.28
Sep-25	$	5,901.84
Oct-25	$	8,596.40
Nov-25	$	3,652.64
Dec-25	$	4,653.68
Total	$	68,389.52



Going Forward 2026

As the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department moves into the year 2026, we have several goals and projects on the horizon, including, but not limited to:

1. Staffing & Organizational Growth

- The department continues to plan on future hiring, including additions of firefighter/paramedics as part of its ongoing staffing efforts
- The department planned strategic leadership positions (like additional Lieutenants) to support long-term planning and administration.

2. Capital Improvements & Equipment

- The city's FY2026 and multiyear Capital Improvement Plan includes planned purchases and major equipment updates for the Fire Rescue Department — such as extrication tools, power saw replacements, and new radio systems — to enhance response capabilities.
- Ambulance and Engine replacement is in planning stages, with some delays due to national vehicle supply issues.

3. Station Infrastructure Planning

- A fire station study and evaluation are planned for 2026 to assess whether existing stations need remodeling, a new station should be built, or a hybrid approach should be pursued — part of long-term service capacity planning.

4. Modernization & Software Implementation

- The department is migrating towards new dispatch and resource software (called First Due) to streamline operational systems and reduce software redundancy.

5. Continued Community Service & Public Safety

- Beyond emergency response, the department maintains training, public education, fire inspections, and hazardous materials and water rescue capabilities — reinforcing community safety and preventive services.

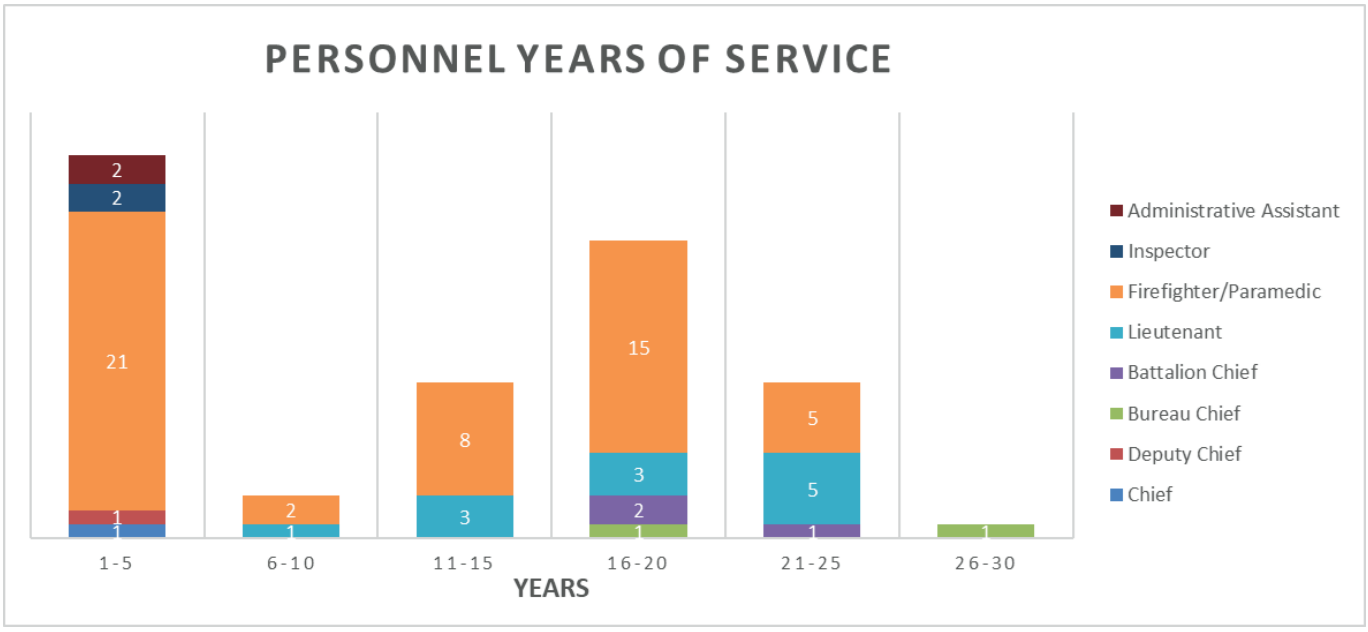


Years of Service

In 2025, the Crystal Lake Fire Rescue Department welcomed new personnel, hiring eleven firefighter-paramedics, one Community Risk Management Inspector, one Deputy Chief, and one Administrative Assistant. Additionally, several promotions were made during the year:

- One Bureau Chief was elevated to Deputy Chief
- One Lieutenant advanced to Battalion Chief
- One Firefighter/Paramedic moved up to Lieutenant

Furthermore, one member of the Fire Department retired.



Department Roster

Officers

Fire Rescue Chief - Craig Snyder

Deputy Chief of Administration - Heidi Olsen

Deputy Chief of Operations and EMS - Mark Menzel

Bureau Chief of Community Risk Management - Chris Bedore

Bureau Chief of Training and Professional Standards - Bill Whyte

Support Staff

CRM Inspector - Jason Funk

CRM Inspector - Tom Schmitz

Administrative Assistant - Megan Lettieri

Administrative Assistant - Michaela Krause

Gold Shift

Battalion Chief - Jim Sustek
Lieutenant - Chris Angelo
Lieutenant - Dan Williams
Lieutenant - Nick Borst

Black Shift

Battalion Chief - Brian Tamason
Lieutenant - Brian Marino
Lieutenant - Robert Seyl
Lieutenant - Tim Odishoo

Red Shift

Battalion Chief - Darrell Cook
Lieutenant - John Volenec
Lieutenant - Ryan Muscavitch
Lieutenant - James Gualdoni

Department Roster

Firefighter/Paramedics

Aiello, Mike
Bennett, Dalton
Bergstrom, Garret
Brechbiel, Robert
Brown, Christian
Bucheger, Adam
Carreno, Ruben
Chociej, Kamil
Contesso, Julieanna
Delgado, Sergio
Doyle, Daniel
Evans, Noah
Fasbinder, Ryan
Forsberg, Joe
Fowles, Adam
Hagen, Kim
Hagen, Scott
Havemann, Ed
Hensley, Nicholas
Hensley, Samuel
Hewitt, Connor
Hoey, Alex
Hurley, Mike
Hussey, John
Kauke, Bryan
Kempe, Kyle
Kerley, Tim
Klug, Matthew
Kownacki, Kevin
Kreher, Rich
Kuhn, Amy
Landwer, Mark
Leuck, Matt
Linneman, Tom
Lucas, Michael
Nicolay, Carley
Pace, Palmer
Pireh, Martin
Ramirez, Jonathan
Rosner, Joseph
Ryan, John
Smith, George
Spivey, Jim
Sypura, Andrew
Szatkowski, Dane
Van Laeke, Brian
Vega, Ramon
Walker, Curt
Wisz, Robert

Station Locations









Fire Station One
100 W. Woodstock Street

Fire Station Three
844 Virginia Road

Fire Station Four
8705 Bard Road