



# ***Grand Blanc Township Fire Department***



# ***2023 ANNUAL REPORT***

***Fire Chief Robert Burdette***

***Deputy Fire Chief Kent Maricle***



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## ***Mission***

*Our mission is to mitigate the effects of emergencies, as we continue to improve and grow to meet the community's needs by actively engaging other emergency services, continued specialized training, and seeking additional opportunities to serve.*



## ***Vision***

*It is the vision of the Grand Blanc Township Fire Department to be recognized as the premier provider of rescue services in the region.*



### *A message from the Chief*

I am pleased to present our annual report for 2023. For the past seven years, it's been my pleasure to share your fire department's commitment to the residents, visitors, and businesses in our community. It also reflects our dedication to each other as a progressive fire service organization. The exceptional service provided by our officers and firefighters exemplifies our commitment to protecting our community.

In 2023, our department continued meeting the challenges to our daily operations with the expected growth of the community, and firefighter recruitment.

In October of 2023, the newly refurbished Baldwin Rd. Fire Station was completed. The facility has the needed dedicated areas that limit carcinogens and other contaminants from entering the living area. The facility is also equipped with a fitness room for commercial grade exercise equipment, for firefighters to improve their strength and cardio health.

A focused group continues to work on the Dort Highway Fire/DPS building. The group is finishing the Design and Development portion of the project in early 2024, having a possible groundbreaking to occur during the summer of 2024. Construction completion is anticipated to occur in the fall of 2025.

We are beginning today for our next Insurance Service Office (ISO) audit. Fire Departments are audited by ISO every five years. Our last audit occurred in 2020 after the City of Grand Blanc established its own department in 2019. ISO rates a community's fire suppression effectiveness, this rating is used in determining the costs to a resident or business for fire insurance. The rating is from 1 to 10, the goal is for your department to receive a low score. In 2020 Grand Blanc Township improved our score from a 5 to a 4. I have challenged the officers and firefighters to continue improving our score to a 3 rating.

Grand Blanc Township continues to provide their Fire Department with the highest quality equipment available that provides effective all hazard protection to the community and its Firefighters. In 2023 the Fire Department received two grants, the first from the Genesee and Shiawassee County Hundred Club to purchase two additional defibrillators for our fitness rooms and from the second from the State of Michigan for the purchase of ten handheld thermal image cameras.

I would like to thank the officers and firefighters of our department for their professionalism and commitment to the department and the community of Grand Blanc. I wish to also thank the township supervisor and the Board of Trustees for their continued support of the Grand Blanc Township Fire Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Burdette".

Robert Burdette, Fire Chief

## ***Introduction***

Our fire department is a combination department comprised of four full-time firefighters, 30 part-time firefighters, a full-time fire marshal, a full-time deputy chief, a full-time fire chief and a full-time administrative assistant. We are called upon to deal with situations that require special equipment and large numbers of highly trained individuals.

Firefighters take part in daily training sessions that prepare them for various incidents. Regular training sessions cover search and rescue, fire suppression, apparatus driving, apparatus operations and much more. In addition, many of the firefighters take part in additional training that is offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the National Fire Academy, or local colleges and universities.

Funding for the fire department comes through the township fire millage, general fund contributions from Grand Blanc Township and various grants.

***2023 Budget***  
***\$1,849,372.00***



## Organization

### Governmental

The fire department operates with guidance given by the township board. It responds to all incidents in Grand Blanc Township. GBTFD provides fire services to Grand Blanc Township, Genesee County, and other communities in Michigan under the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System.

The fire chief reports to the superintendent regarding employment and union issues, as well as general administrative functions, such as accounts payable and major purchases.

The deputy fire chief oversees the department's daily operations and is the incident commander at emergency scenes. The captains oversee their assigned fire station's operations. Lieutenants provide leadership to the firefighting staff at incidents and in the fire station. Sergeants provide mentorship to newly hired firefighters and are the starting point to advance into higher ranking positions. The fire marshal conducts firefighting functions, safety inspections at businesses and public education. Firefighters perform fire suppression and assist with fire safety education.



### Township Board 2020-2024

Scott Bennett  
*Supervisor*

Dave Robertson  
*Clerk*

Mark Kilmer  
*Treasurer*

Joel Feick  
*Trustee*

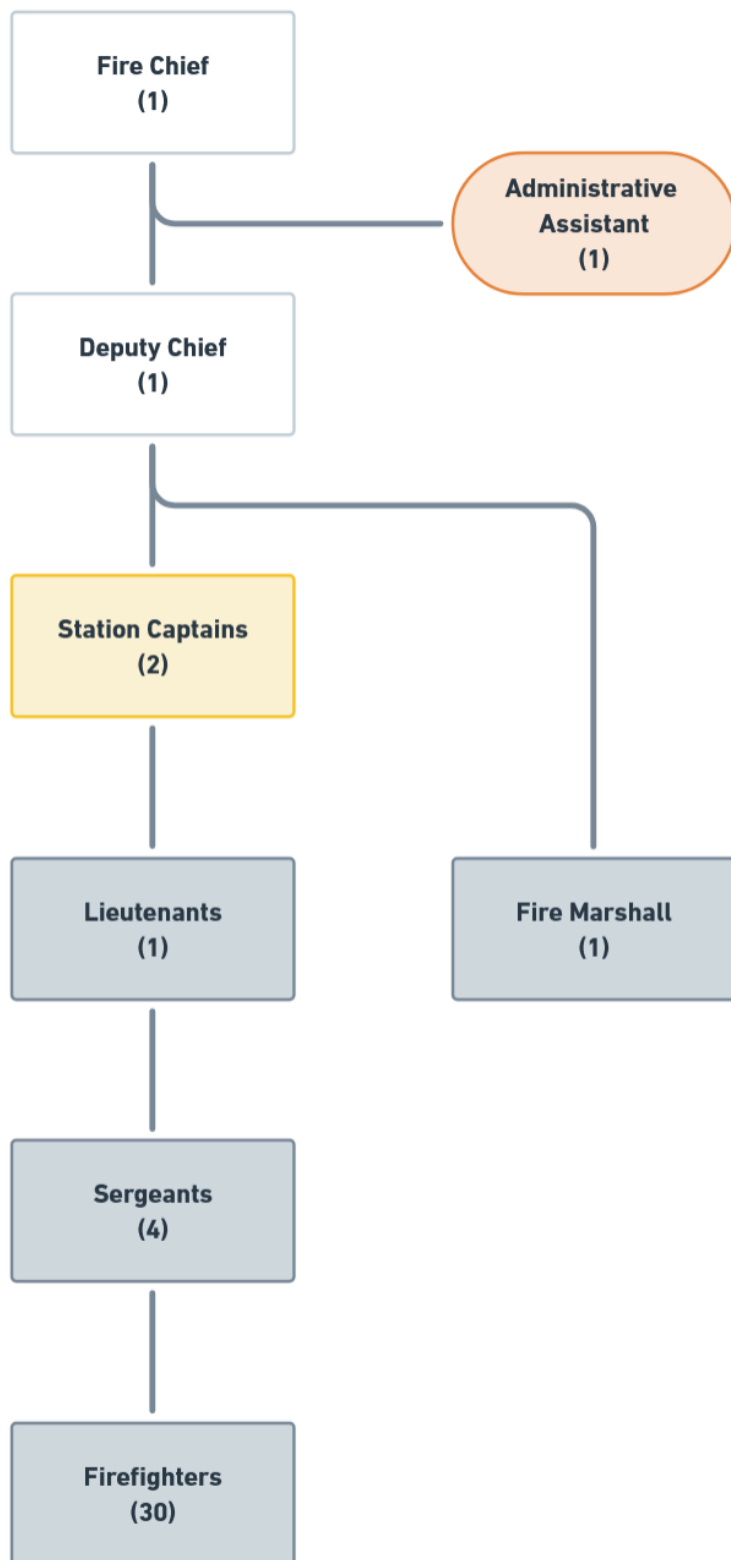
Sarah Hugo  
*Trustee*

Jude Rariden  
*Trustee*

Paul White  
*Trustee*

Dennis Liimatta  
*Superintendent*

## 2023 Fire Department Organization Chart



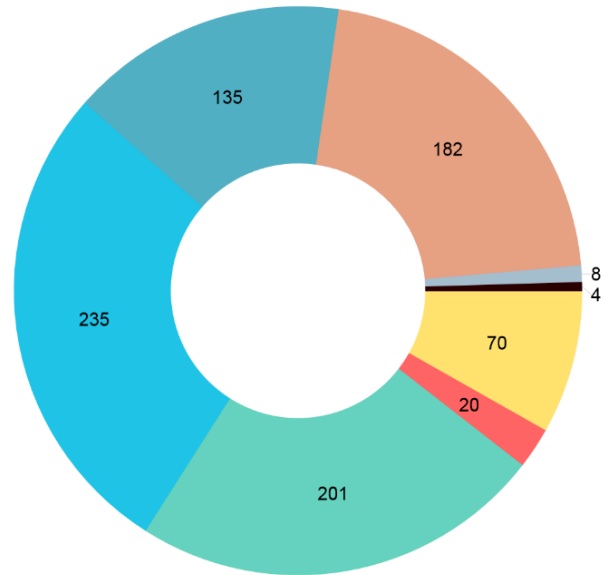
## Incidents

The Grand Blanc Township Fire Department responded to a total of 855 incidents in 2023.

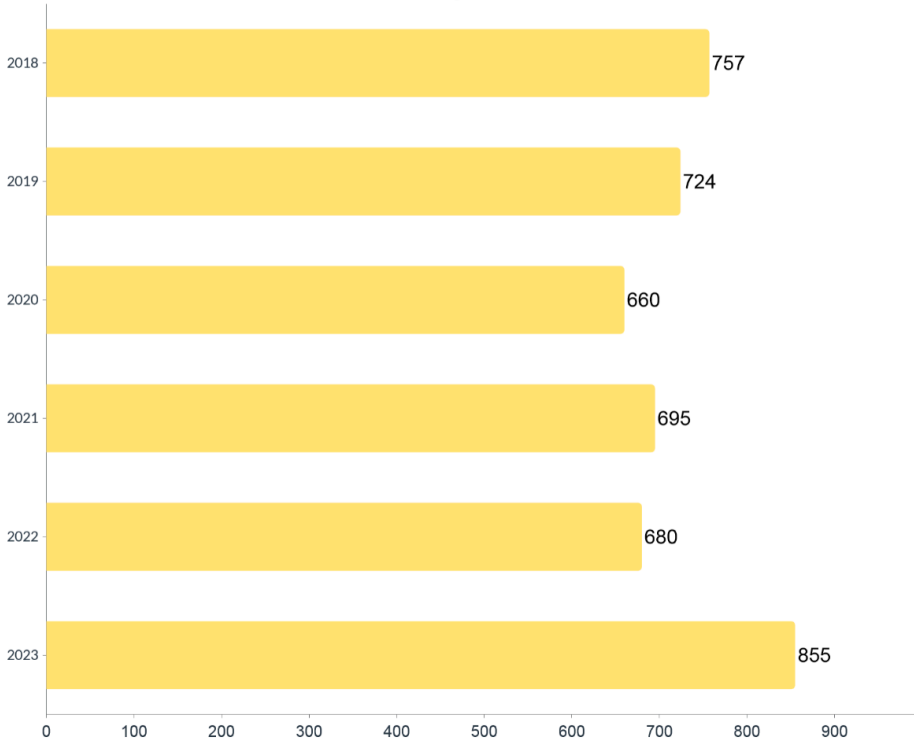
Incidents are sorted into eight categories using the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). These categories provide standardization with reporting similar incidents for comparison with other fire departments at the county, state, and national levels. The eight groups are:

- Fire 8%
- Rescue 2%
- Hazardous Condition 24%
- Service Call 27%
- Good Intent 16%
- False Alarm 21%
- Overpressure 1%
- Special Incident 0%

Number of Incidents by Type



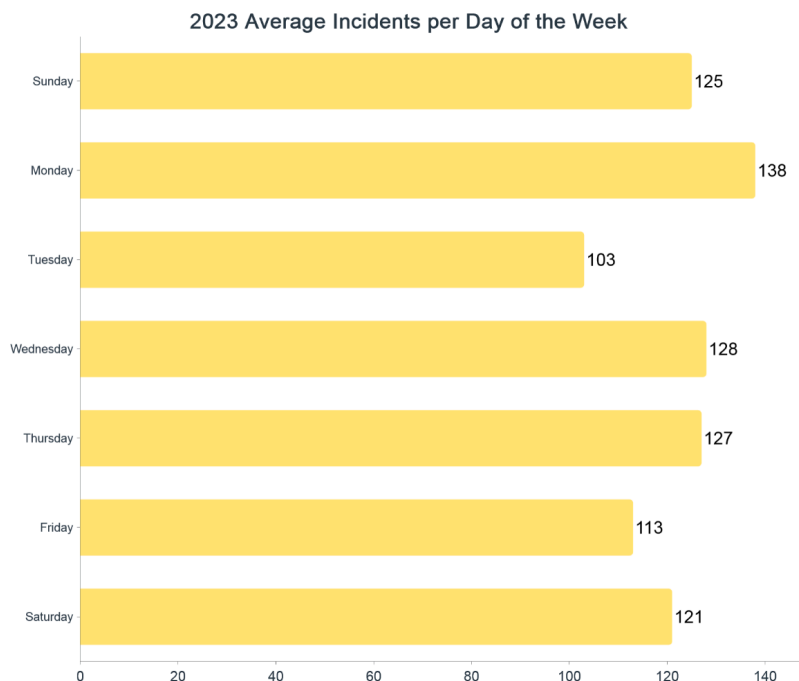
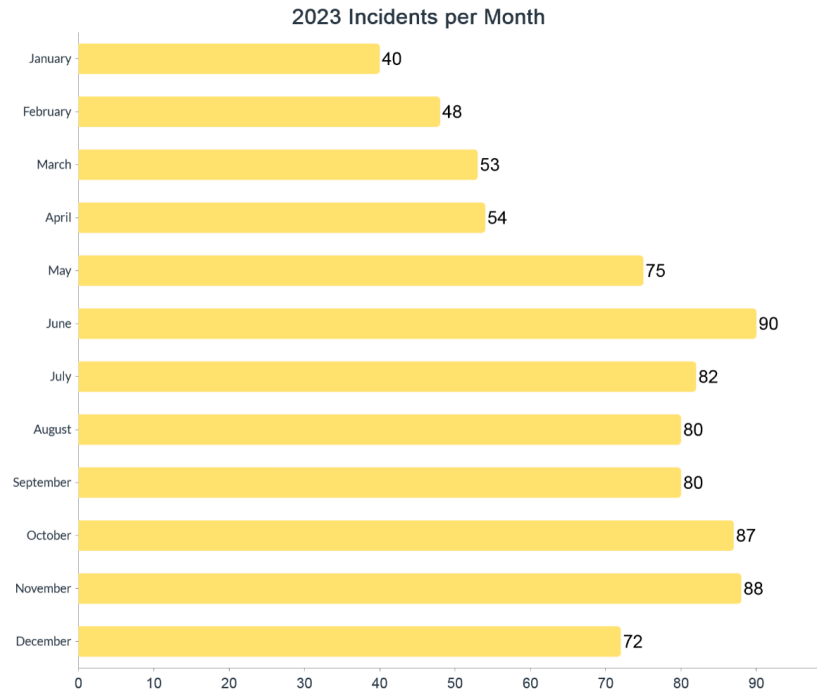
Historical Yearly Incident Count



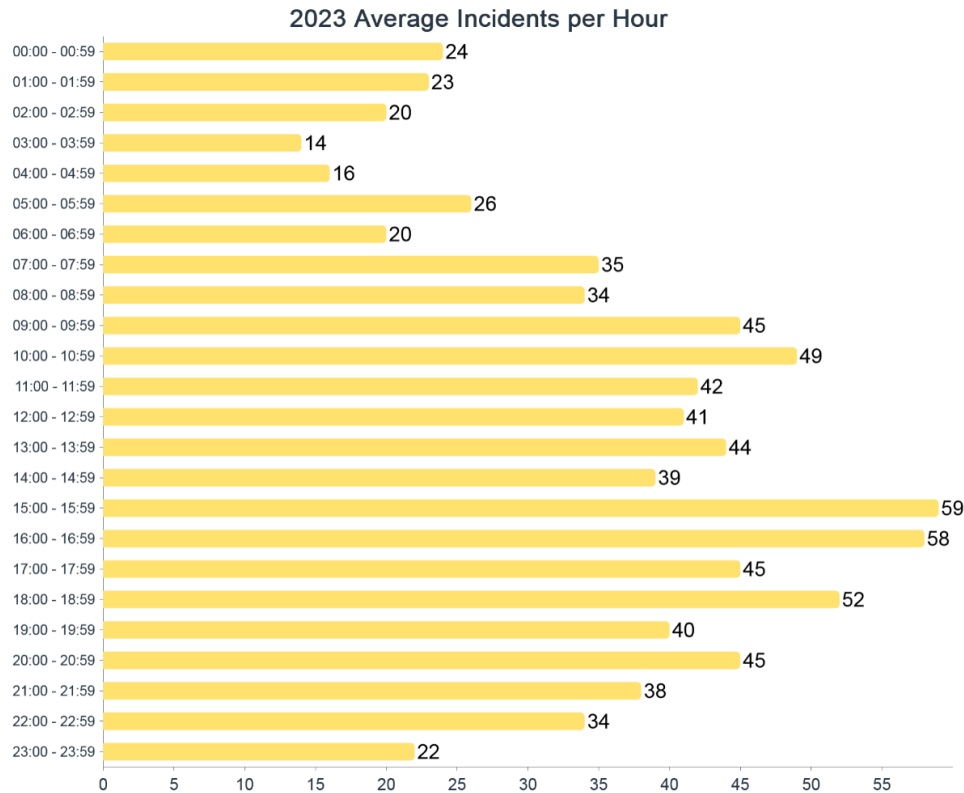
The fire department's incident call volume has increased over the past six years. One reason this occurred is the police and EMS providers were responding to calls for lifting people who fell and were not injured (lift assist) in 2022. The fire department took on this role in 2023, increasing our calls for Service and Rescue by 31%.

## Responses by Month, Day of the Week, & Time of Day

The month of June was the busiest in 2023. A breakdown of the data shows that Monday has the highest number of incidents during the week. This single day accounts for 16% of our incident volume. Tuesday was the least busy, accounting for 12% of the events.



When the incidents are grouped by time, 80% of the incidents occurred between 8:00 a.m. and midnight. This is the time when both fire stations are staffed with two firefighters. After midnight, the Baldwin Road Fire Station is not staffed, yet it is now prepared to operate around the clock.



## Major Saves & Losses

We were fortunate once again to have only a few fires where significant damage occurred. The fire department saved 95% of the property value that was involved in fires during 2023.

Three major incidents account for 68% of the property value loss, one of them being a commercial structure fire with a property loss valued at over \$848,000.

***In 2023, there was a 20% increase in overall call volume over 2022***

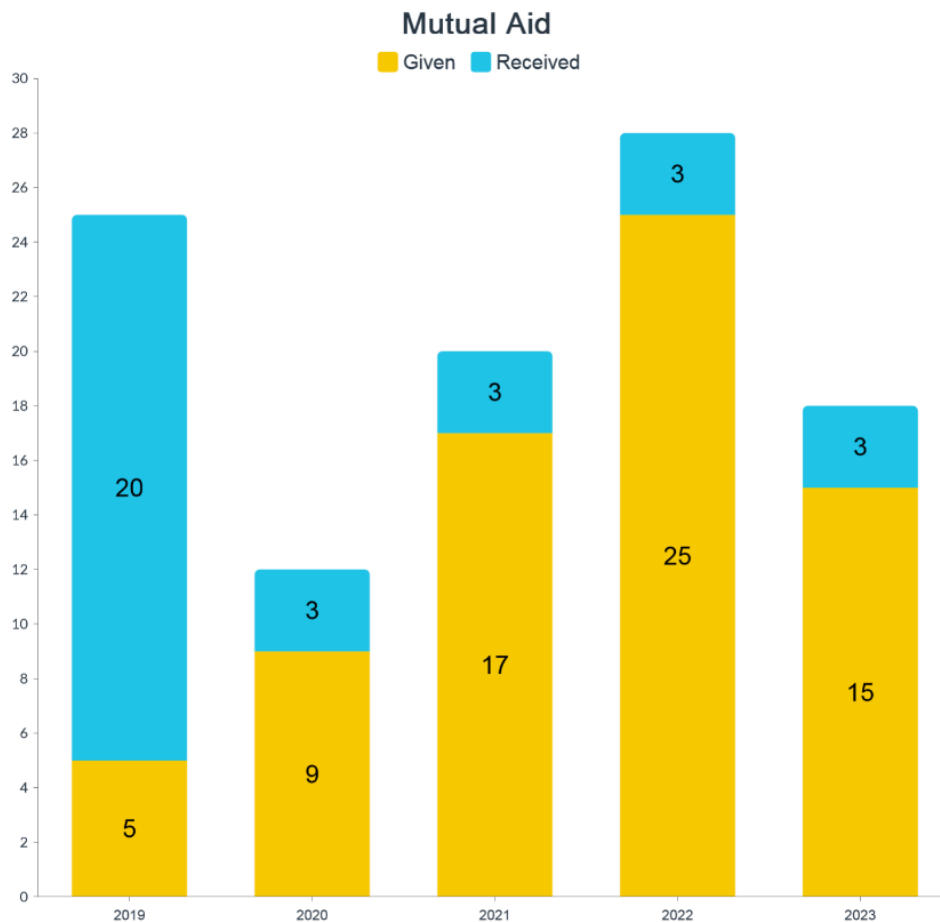
Total Calls for Service	855
Mutual Aid Received	3
Mutual Aid Given	15
Property Save Rate	95%
Property Save Value	\$48,352,205
Property Loss Rate	5%
Property Loss Value	\$2,417,610
Civilian Injuries	0
Civilian Deaths	1
Firefighter Injuries	1
Firefighter Deaths	0

## Mutual Aid (help to/from neighboring departments)

Firefighting is very labor demanding and resource intensive. The Grand Blanc Township Fire Department is fortunate that assistance from neighboring communities is rarely requested. However, we are active members of the Genesee County mutual aid agreement and the Michigan Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). These two agreements offer us the availability of additional resources for large incidents at no additional cost. Because of these two agreements, neighboring communities are welcome to ask for our assistance when they feel it's needed.

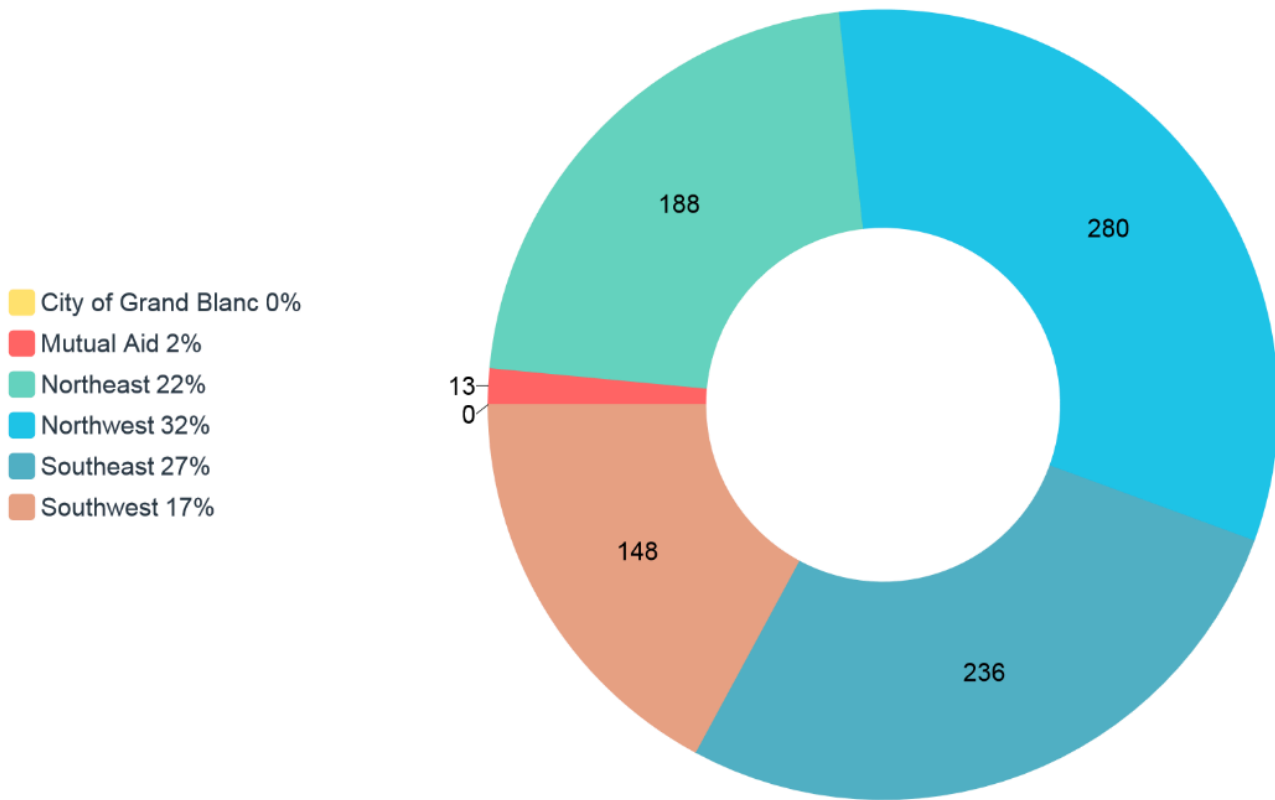


Helping neighboring fire departments with additional staff or apparatus was requested from the city of Flint, Flint Township, Mundy Township, City of Burton, and North Oakland County Fire Authority in 2023.



## Response Zones

Number of Responses by Zone



Separating our response area into zones provides the fire department administration with key information in planning future operations of the department. Grand Blanc Township is separated into four zones, with Grand Blanc and Perry roads dividing north and south, and Dort Highway, I-75, and Holly Road dividing east and west. Two additional zones were created for responses to incidents that occurred inside the city of Grand Blanc and neighboring communities.

In 2023, 32% of the incidents occurred in the Northwest, followed by the Southeast at 27%.

## Response Times



Every month, the fire chief reports the apparatus response times to the Board of Trustees. The firefighters have a goal to be enroute within two minutes of dispatch and on the scene within eight minutes for emergency calls. In 2023, the firefighters recorded an average reaction time of 1 minute and 50 seconds, which represents the time it took firefighters to board the apparatus and depart the station. The travel time represents the time the apparatus left the station until they announce over the radio that they have arrived on the scene. For 2023, the average arrival time was 5 minutes and 54 seconds. The average response time to an emergency was 7 minutes.

<b>Responding Station</b>	<b>Reaction Time</b>
Grand Blanc Township Station 1	1m 25s
Grand Blanc Township Station 2	2m 16s
Average Turnout Time	1m 50s
	<b>Travel Time</b>
Grand Blanc Township Station 1	5m 03s
Grand Blanc Township Station 2	6m 38s
Average Travel Time (First on Scene)	5m 54s
<b>Average Response Time to Emergency Incidents</b>	<b>7m</b>
<b>Average Time on Scene</b>	<b>40m 44s</b>

## Community Involvement

Every year, the fire department takes part in many events that occur in Grand Blanc and Genesee County; Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army, Grand Blanc Township's Christmas tree lighting, Wreaths Across America held at the national cemetery and multiple events with the community schools. The firefighters are very proud that we are asked each year to be a part of these events.



## Community Risk Reduction

Over the past years, the State of Michigan has compiled statistics for fire-related deaths. When compared nationally, Michigan has one of the highest death totals from residential fires. The Bureau of Fire Services reported that 125 Michigan residents lost their lives from fire in 2023.

Many of the fires occurred during the evening hours. They started in living rooms, with the leading cause being improperly discarded smoking material. Heating equipment (space heaters, wood stoves and fireplaces) was next, followed by cooking fires.

Smoke alarms were reported as being present and working in only 28% of the residences where a deadly fire occurred.



The fire department has regularly provided and installed smoke and carbon monoxide alarms throughout our community free of any cost. **Residents only need to contact the fire department to have these life saving devices installed.** Alarms are received from the state of Michigan's MI Prevention program.

The key to **surviving a house fire** is **early detection**, along with the **rapid evacuation** from the structure. Little time can be wasted when exiting a burning home. Practicing your escape route regularly is essential.

# MICHIGAN FATAL FIRE STATISTICS

## 2023

**125** PEOPLE died in **112 FIRES**

**↑4%**  
INCREASE  
in **deaths** compared  
to 2017-2022 average

**↑11%**  
INCREASE  
in **fire** compared  
to 2017-2022 average



**11** MULTI-FATAL FIRES  
resulting in **24** deaths

ONLY  
**28%**  
of homes were  
reported as having  
working smoke alarms



**25%**  
of victims were  
reported as  
disabled

### REPORTED HOME VALUES

as compared to Michigan's \$150,000 median value



**77%** OF HOMES  
with fatal fires  
valued **below**

**22%** OF HOMES  
with fatal fires  
valued **above**

**1%** of fatal fires were not in residential structures

### SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES!

Put one on **EVERY LEVEL** in **EVERY BEDROOM**



Change batteries **EVERY YEAR OR WHEN IT CHIRPS** and replace every **TEN YEARS**

**TEST** smoke alarms every month

MFISfoundation.org

GENDER

**62%**  
MALE

**38%**  
FEMALE

AGE

**22%** 0-39 years old  
**44%** 40-69 years old  
**34%** 70+ years old

TIME

**64%** 6pm - 6am  
**36%** 6am - 6pm

DAYS

Most fatal fires occurred on  
**Saturday & Sunday**

### TOP 3 FATAL FIRE CAUSES



SMOKING



HEATING



COOKING

### TOP 3 AREAS OF ORIGIN



BEDROOM



LIVING ROOM



KITCHEN

(These numbers reflect only the reported fires.)

### MI PREVENTION HOME SAFETY VISITS

Visited  
**6,116**  
HOMES

Visited with  
**12,818**  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Installed  
**21,022** & **3,975** & **157**  
SMOKE ALARMS CO ALARMS SPECIAL ALARMS



## **Fire Marshal's Minute**

Lieutenant Christopher Keller, Fire Marshal

The Grand Blanc Township Fire Department's focus is on reducing fire and life safety risks in the community. One way we accomplish this is through community risk reduction, which involves fire inspections, building plan review of construction, and by providing public education to our residents and business on how to prevent fires and what to do if a fire does occur.

### **Fire Inspections**

Fire inspections have been proven to reduce fires and associated loss, including death and injury. Our intent is to provide a safe environment for the businesses in the community, as well as for the residents. In 2023, on average 50% of the occupancies inspected required additional inspections to resolve code violations. Additionally, several fire inspections revealed businesses operating in structures not approved for the type of operations conducted by the businesses, requiring additional fire and life systems to meet code requirements.

### **Plan Reviews**

In addition to occupancy fire inspections, the fire marshal performs plan reviews of life safety systems and site plans for any new construction projects. Before a project can begin, it must go through a plan review process, which may include a site plan review and review of life safety systems being installed or modified.

Site plans and life safety plan reviews allow potential problems to be identified prior to construction beginning so that they may be accounted for ahead of time. In 2023, nine site plan reviews were conducted with 13 life safety system plan reviews conducted.

## ***Top 5 Common Violations Found During Fire Inspections***

**Combustible storage to close to sprinkler heads and/or ceiling**

**Combustible storage within 30 inches of electrical panels**

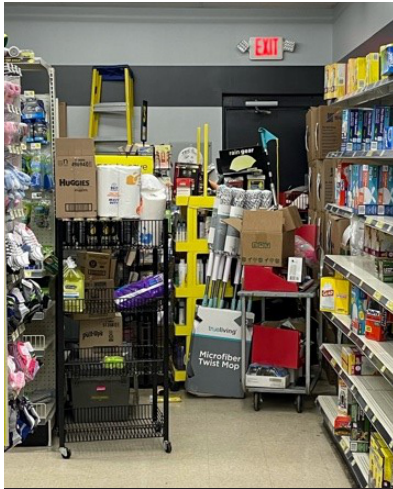
**Business address not visible from street**

**Exits and exit aisles obstructed**

**Electrical cover plate not installed**

## Complaints

In 2023, 17 complaints were investigated and the majority of them were resolved after making contact with the business owners. In most cases, complaints are easily resolved through educating the business about the violation and providing assistance to an acceptable solution that would resolve the violation.



**Obstructed emergency exits**



**Improper storage of combustible materials**



**Obstructed electrical service equipment**

## Smoke Alarm & Carbon Monoxide Installation Program

This year we partnered with the American Red Cross to take part in their “Sound the Alarm Campaign” from April 15 to May 6. The goal of the campaign was to install smoke alarms in homes throughout Genesee County. Smoke alarms were provided free of charge by the American Red Cross and installed by fire department personnel. Each house was able to have three smoke alarms installed if needed.

The day before the campaign kicked off, we responded to a devastating fire that left a family with nothing and had drawn a lot of attention from both the media and residents. With the attention from the recent fire, we developed a strong social media campaign to educate residents about the importance of having smoke alarms. The campaign proved to be successful with over 60 smoke alarms installed.

Furthermore, approximately 80 additional smoke alarms were installed throughout the year with the assistance of MI Prevention, who provided the alarms. Eighteen carbon monoxide detectors also provided by MI Prevention were installed and 63 batteries replaced in alarms where the existing batteries were found to no longer be functioning correctly.

**143**

**Smoke Alarms**

**18**

**CO Detectors**

**63**

**Batteries**

## Public Education

The primary goal of public education is to decrease injury and the loss of life from fire. In hopes of doing so, crews take part in a variety of events throughout the year to interact with the public.

Every October, the Grand Blanc Township Fire Department seeks to engage with kindergarten through second-grade students in the Grand Blanc Community Schools and local day care facilities to commemorate Fire Prevention Week. This year, crews visited with over 750 students and spoke to them about the importance of practicing fire safety.

This year for National Night Out, the Davison-Richfield Fire Department once again allowed us to utilize their fire safety trailer to give children and adults a realistic experience of conditions faced in a house fire. The trailer uses artificial smoke to reduce visibility and sounds smoke alarms, allowing firefighters to interact with children and adults in a safe environment and teaching them how to safely get out of a home in the event of a fire. Additional realistic scenarios are also capable with the use of the trailer including weather safety and cooking safety.

Crews this year once again had the opportunity to visit Grand Blanc Pediatric Dentistry during their monthly team meeting in October to talk to the employees about fire safety in the workplace and fire extinguishers. In total, 25 employees were instructed and demonstrated the proper way to use a fire extinguisher to extinguish a fire.



## **Training & Education Events**

### **Lieutenant Jeremy Oxford**



In 2023, the Grand Blanc Township Fire Department continued training beyond the minimum state required standards. Each firefighter was responsible for completing 46 hours of training. Firefighters trained in all aspects of fireground operations to maintain skills and ensure all members were ready to face all challenges that the fire service brings. In addition to basic fireground training requirements, the department hosted specialized training in electric vehicle hazards, rapid intervention team firefighter survival, ice water rescue and confined space rescue. Several firefighters completed additional education and training classes beyond the minimum.

### **Fire Staff & Command**

#### **Executive Leadership Program Certification**

Deputy Chief Maricle

#### **Fire Instructor 1**

Fire Marshal Keller

Sergeant Sorenson

Sergeant Hertzberg

Firefighter Getz

Firefighter Brancheau

#### **Fire Instructor 2**

Lieutenant Oxford

#### **Medical First Responder**

Sergeant Hertzberg

Firefighter Newton

#### **Associate Degree**

Fire Marshal Keller

Sergeant Hertzberg



## Vehicles & Equipment



2019 Sutphen, 75 ft. Ladder  
2000 gpm pump



2009, 2010, 2012 Pierce, Pumpers  
1500 gpm pump



2001 Pierce, 100 ft. Aerial Platform  
2000 gpm pump



2014 Pierce Pumper/Rescue  
1500 gpm pump and Breathing Air Cascade System



John Deere Gator ATV

In addition to the vehicles shown above, the department also utilizes one pickup to support operations and two SUVs for the chiefs' use.

## Grand Blanc Township Fire Stations

In October the Fire Department held a ribbon cutting and open house at the newly renovated Baldwin Road Fire Station. Using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the station can now accommodate operations around the clock. The renovations included the addition of sleeping quarters, a fully equipped fitness room and a full kitchen. The structure's roof was replaced and additional insulation was installed to eliminate leaks and ice buildup. Multiple rooms were repurposed to create a decontamination area that includes a bathroom for firefighters to shower in when they return from fires and a personal protective equipment cleaning and storage area.



Our Board of Trustees identified the need to replace our existing Saginaw Street Fire Station during a strategic planning meeting that occurred in 2021. They unanimously voiced their support to have this as a priority. Since that date, the township established a committee to spearhead the efforts to have the replacement station constructed.

The property owned by the township on Dort Highway will soon have a combined Fire and Department of Public Services building on it. We are now completing the design and development phase and are hopeful to have a groundbreaking occur in June of 2024.

## Staff

The firefighters are the key to the success of our fire department. Whether full-time or part-time, they respond to incidents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As in many combination employment fire departments, our firefighters will answer the call for help even when they are off duty, leaving events, meals, and jobs to respond.

The ever-increasing time necessary to be a part-time firefighter is an enormous commitment. We are happy to have gained seven new part-time and one full-time firefighter.

To become a part-time firefighter in Grand Blanc Township, applicants are selected for an interview by a panel of officers from our department. A physical agility test is then performed. If they are selected, the candidate will receive a pre-employment physical, drug screen and background check.

Those selected who are not state certified will then be enrolled in the county fire academy for formal training during their probationary period. Candidates who have already received state certification will begin serving their probation period.

When residents need help, we send highly qualified and trained firefighters to assist. Our extensive employment process ensures that only quality firefighters are answering calls.

The Grand Blanc Township Fire Department is very lucky to retain the highly trained, professional firefighters. Chief officers have a combined 80 years of experience, Captains to Sergeants have a combined 126 years and firefighters have a combined 176 years.

The demands that are asked of full-time and part-time firefighting staff are enormous. Hiring a qualified person to send to training academies is becoming harder each year. This problem is occurring across the United States. Fortunately, national organizations like the International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Volunteer Firefighter Council and others are helping develop tools to combat the problem.



## 2023 Roster

<b>Name (*full time staff)</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
Robert Burdette*	Fire Chief	42 years
Kent Maricle*	Deputy Fire Chief	36 years
Meghan Delano*	Office Administrator	8 years
Christopher Keller*	Fire Marshal/Lieutenant	17 years
William Larsen*	Captain Station 1	33 years
Bradley Hutchison	Captain Station 2	31 years
Jeremy Oxford*	Lieutenant Station 1	11 years
Michael Hertzberg*	Sergeant	11 years
Jake Haller	Sergeant	10 years
Adam Frank	Sergeant	8 years
Martin Sorensen	Sergeant	8 years
Ryan Brancheau	Firefighter	13 years
Michael Hocken	Firefighter	12 years
Jakob Sifferman	Firefighter	12 years
Adam Peterson	Firefighter	12 years
Sue McKay	Firefighter	12 years
Javon Johnson	Firefighter	8 years
Patrick Popadich	Firefighter	7 years
Clint Wilson	Firefighter	6 years
Ryan Jeltema	Firefighter	6 years
David Bechtel	Firefighter	6 years
Alfred Perry	Firefighter	4 years
Frank Getz*	Firefighter	3 years
Nicholas Perry	Firefighter	4 years
Jeremy Jones	Firefighter	2 years
Sean Blakemore	Firefighter	1 year
Jonah Tetmeyer	Firefighter	1 year
Kurt Stuart	Firefighter	1 year
Lauren Simpson	Firefighter	1 year
Travis Struble	Firefighter	1 year
Ryan Goodyear	Firefighter	1 year
John Tap	Firefighter	1 year
Alexander Newton	Probationary Firefighter	10 months
Bart Jones	Probationary Firefighter	10 months
Brent Connell	Probationary Firefighter	10 months
John Doudna	Probationary Firefighter	9 months
Luke Larsen	Probationary Firefighter	5 months
Justin Crump	Probationary Firefighter	3 months
Brayden Moore	Probationary Firefighter	2 months



***The Grand Blanc Township Fire Department remains committed to serving our community with the highest level of professionalism.***



***Thank you for entrusting us with your safety since 1924.***

