
PALMER FIRE & RESCUE



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

SINCE THE COLONY

DAYS, THE COURAGEOUS MEN AND WOMEN OF PALMER FIRE & RESCUE HAVE BEEN WORKING TO KEEP THE CITIZENS AND VISITORS OF PALMER SAFE FROM LIFE AND PROPERTY THREATENING EMERGENCIES. MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THE BEGINNINGS OF OUR DEPARTMENT, BUT ONE THING THAT HASN'T CHANGED IS OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVE OTHERS.

OVER THE YEARS, OUR CITIZENS AND LEADERS HAVE CONTINUED TO SUPPORT OUR DEPARTMENT BY MAKING INVESTMENTS IN PALMER FIRE & RESCUE TO ENSURE OUR ABILITY TO SERVE. TWO CAREER AND APPROXIMATELY 50 PAID ON-CALL WEAR A PATCH THAT REMINDS THEM OF THE FAITH AND TRUST THAT HAS BEEN BESTOWED UPON EACH ONE OF US. IT'S A SYMBOL TO OUR COMMUNITY OF OUR COMMITMENT THAT WE TAKE SERIOUSLY.



THAT COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY CONTINUES INTO 2021 WITH THE PLANNED REPLACEMENT OF A FIRE ENGINE THROUGH THE GREATER PALMER FIRE SERVICE AREA, TRAINING, AND A RENEWED FOCUS ON PRIDE IN OUR SERVICE AND UPGRADING OUR STATIONS.

THE DEDICATED PROFESSIONALS OF PALMER FIRE & RESCUE ARE DEVOTED TO YOUR SAFETY AND WELFARE. WHETHER WORKING AT ADMINISTRATION, RESCUE OPERATIONS, FIRE SUPPRESSION, OR FIRE PREVENTION; THE MEN AND WOMEN OF PALMER FIRE & RESCUE ARE ALWAYS HERE TO SERVE YOU.

- **CHAD CAMERON**, FIRE CHIEF,
PALMER FIRE & RESCUE

PF&R MISSION

We, the members of the City of Palmer Fire & Rescue, dedicate our efforts to ensure the safety and welfare of the public through the preservation of life, property and the environment.

Our trained professionals perform this service in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

CHIEF'S VISION

To provide service to the community at the highest level of professionalism possible.

Proud of our past and embracing our future, the members of Palmer Fire & Rescue will work as an effective and integrated team, dedicated to continuous improvement and maintaining a positive environment.

The department will be a model to others and the pride of the community.

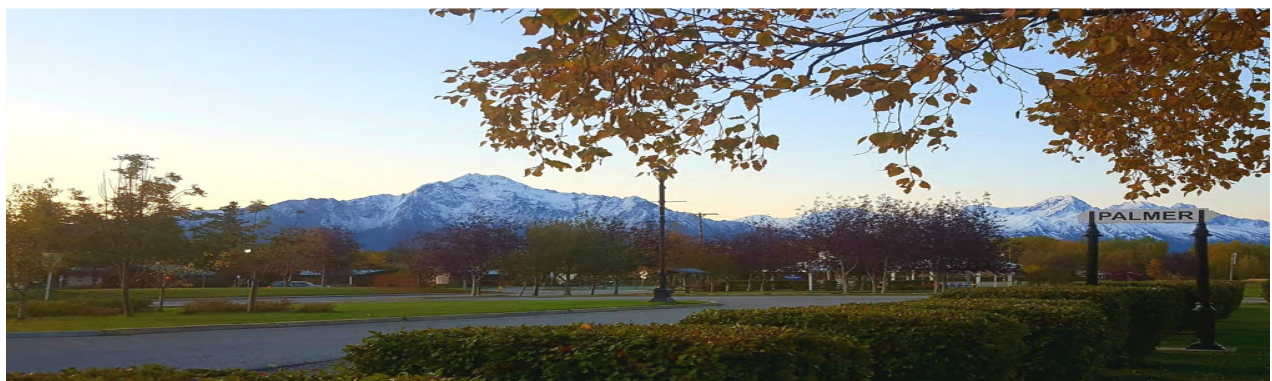
VALUES

- ✓ Teamwork – Working together as a team toward a common goal.
- ✓ Integrity – Maintaining consistency between actions and words at all times.
- ✓ Professionalism – Upholding industry standards and honoring the expectations of a professional firefighter both on and off emergencies.
- ✓ Positive Attitude – Remain optimistic throughout our service.
- ✓ Service – Provide the highest level of service possible to the community of Palmer through training, education, and performance.



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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

HISTORY:

The earliest record found describing fire protection in the Palmer area is a Fire Notice issued by Fire Warden Father Merrill Salzman on October 3, 1935.

The first recorded “practice call” and mention of the Palmer Volunteer Fire Department was recorded on March 6, 1936. The crew started the engine and pulled out hose lines in three minutes from the time the siren was sounded. Great job!

On January 18, 1946, the Matanuska Volunteer Fire Association was officially formed. They immediately purchased a 2 ½ ton fire truck from War Surplus Property Office. It had a 400-gallon water supply with a “fog-spray” method of firefighting.

Over the years firefighting has advanced; however the spirit of community has remained forever strong in our members. The way we alert our staff has changed, from a siren to pager and smartphones; however, our personnel still answer the call whenever requested to help our community.



Fire Warden Father Merrill Salzman is on the left
Press photo – Estelle Collection

SERVICES PROVIDED:

The services provided to the community by Palmer Fire & Rescue include:

- * Fire Response
- * Rescue operations including vehicle extrication up to approximately mile post 129 of the Glenn Highway and associated backcountry
- * EMS Assistance
- * Fire Safety Education
- * Responds to surrounding communities for assistance
- * Fire Prevention and Burn Permits
- * Fire Investigation



Alaska Railroad Surplus 1909 Fire Truck-Lazy Mt. Children's Home Near Palmer, Alaska
Palmer Museum of History & Art-Lazy Mt. Children's Home Collection

STAFFING PROFILE

Work Schedule

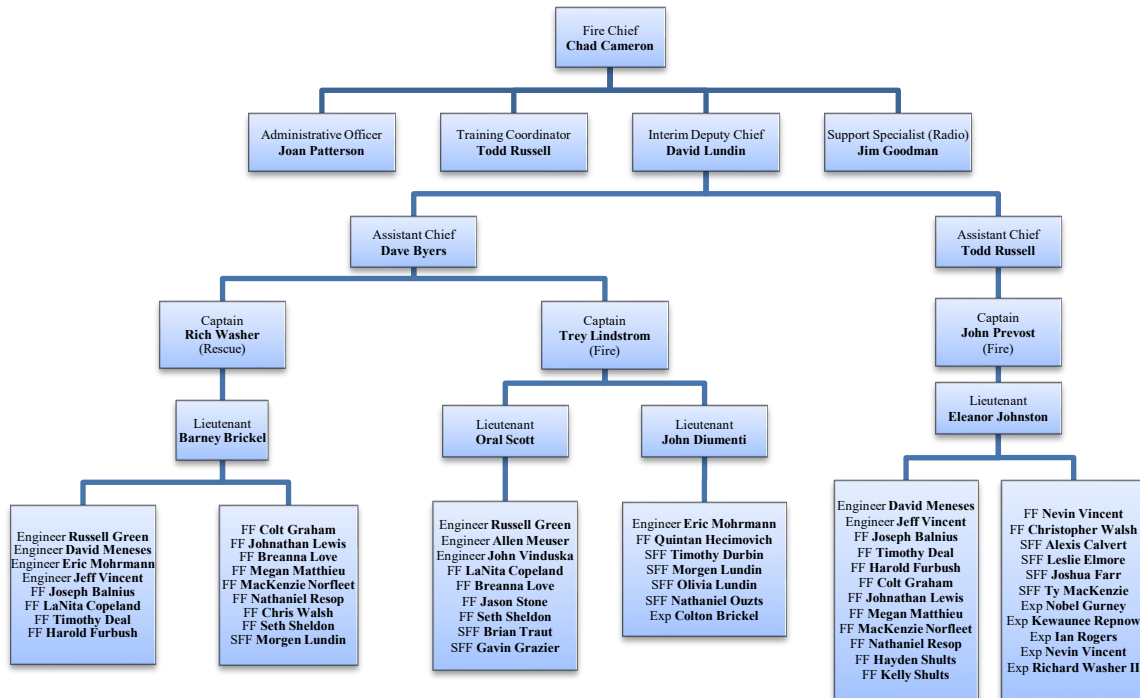
There are two, full-time personnel (Fire Chief and Training Coordinator) who are scheduled five, eight-hour workdays, Monday through Friday. All other emergency response personnel are paid on-call and respond from either their place of work or their home.

Personnel

- Emergency response personnel – 1 Fire Chief, 50 paid on-call personnel (Training Coordinator is not responsible for responding in his role but responds as a paid on-call member)
- Attempts are made to staff a four-person crew from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm which is the period of the day that has the highest call volume.
- Training Coordinator - 1
- Administrative Assistant – 30% FTE (Shared employee with Community Development)
- Support Specialist (Radio) – Part-time employee shared with Palmer Police Department



PALMER FIRE & RESCUE'S ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



STATION INFORMATION

Station 3-6 · Fire Department Headquarters/Training
 645 E. Cope Industrial Way · Palmer, AK 99645
 (907) 745-3709 · <https://www.palmerak.org/fire-rescue>

- **Tender 3-1** – 2015 Pierce International
- **Brush 3-2** – 2012 Ford F550
- **Air Trailer** – Air compressor with a generator and cascade system
- Indoor and Outdoor training facility



Station 3-1 – Downtown – 717 S. Cobb Street
 Date Built: 1978; 0.22 Acres

- **Engine 3-1** – 2007 Pierce Contender
- **Engine 3-6** – 2001 Pierce Contender
- **Truck 3-1** – 2015 Rosenbauer 101' Platform Cobra
- **Rescue 3-1** – 1994 Hackney Freightliner
- **Support 3-1** – 1997 Ford Explorer

Station 3-2 – Farm Loop – 5955 N. Glenn Highway
 Date Built: 1985; 1.1 Acres

- **Engine 3-2** – 2016 Rosenbauer 7400 International
- **Tender 3-2** – 2019 Rosenbauer International
- **Tender 3-4** – 1990 Peterbilt Boardman
- **Brush 3-1** – 2016 Ford F550
- **ATV Trailer**
 - Two, 2008 Yamaha Big Bear 400
 - 1996 Suzuki Quad Runner
 - Patient Trailer

Station 3-3 – Lazy Mountain – 15855 E. Clark Road
 Date Built: 1984; 5.0 Acres

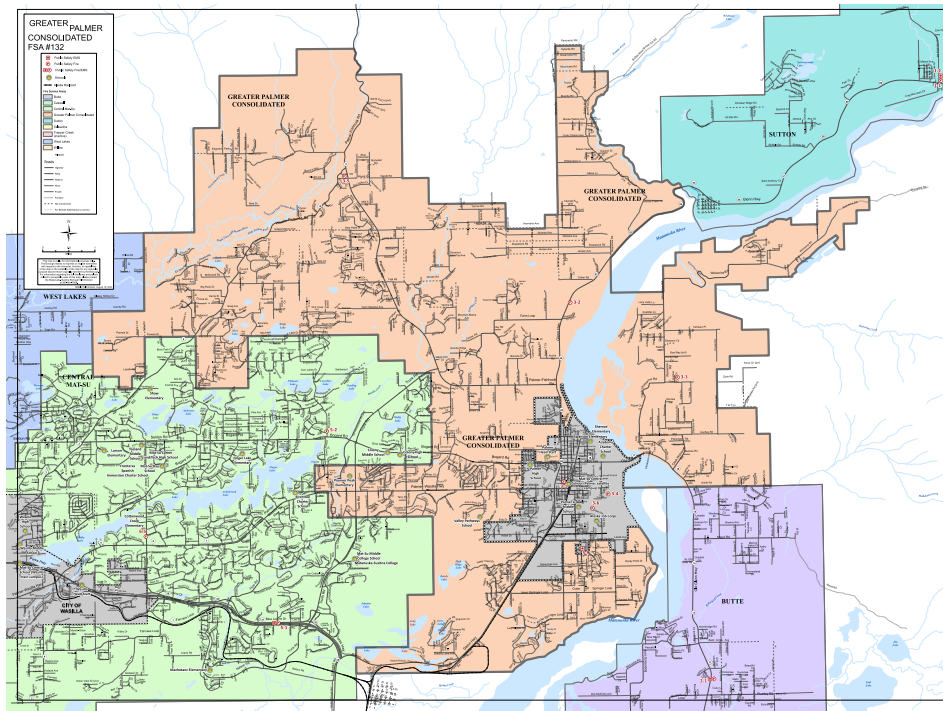
- **Engine 3-3** – 1994 Pierce Saber
- **Tender 3-3** – 2000 Pierce International
- **Brush 3-3 / Quick Attack** – 2006 Ford F350

Station 3-4 – Palmer Airport – 901 S. Airport Road

- **Engine 3-4** – 1987 Grumman Spartan
- **Brush 3-6** – 1989 Ford F350

Station 3-5 – Fishhook – 8200 E. Turner Road
 Date Built: 1982; 0.99 Acres

- **Engine 3-5** – 2012 Pierce Responder 4x4
- **Tender 3-5** – 2009 Pierce International
- **Rescue 3-5** – 2005 Ford F550
- **Brush 3-5** – 1984 International 4x4
- **SRU 3-5/Snow Machine Trailer**
 - Two, 2009 Skidoo FT9D Skandic
 - 2018 Skidoo Summit 850



FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Revenue:

	2019 Actual	2020 Projected	2021 Proposed
City of Palmer Contribution	\$435,251	\$298,788	\$501,680
MSB – Greater Palmer Fire Contract *	\$401,111	\$262,845	\$460,480
MSB – Rescue Service Contract	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Total:	\$886,362	\$611,633	\$1,012,160

* These funds do not include the contribution of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for rent, insurance and vehicle insurance.

Expenditures:

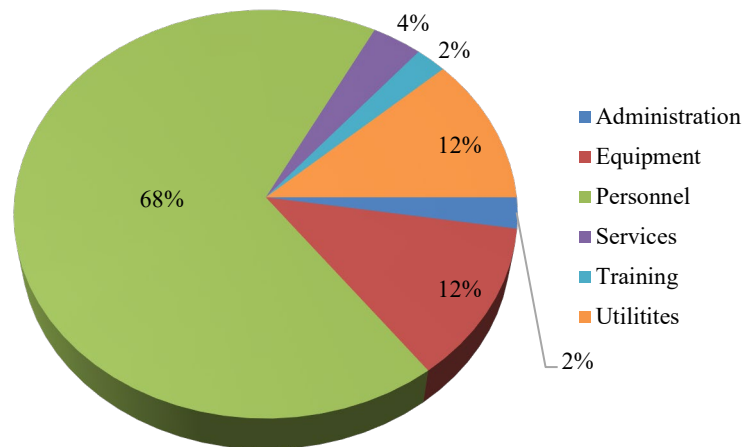
	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Projected Actual	2021 Proposed
Administration	\$29,726	\$22,401	\$27,283	\$25,529.56	\$24,700
Equipment	\$92,821	\$96,989	\$104,074	\$22,341 *	\$124,000
Personnel	\$553,971	\$534,432	\$611,366	\$325,253 †	\$688,360
Services	\$30,176	\$25,316	\$20,935	\$29,487	\$35,500
Training	\$21,263	\$22,139	\$25,586	\$8,461 ‡	\$22,000
Utilities	\$82,478	\$90,336	\$97,118	\$100,559	\$117,600
Total:	\$810,435	\$791,613	\$886,362	\$611,633 *†‡	\$1,012,160

* COVID funding was able to purchase much of the necessary equipment therefore funds were not taken from the City of Palmer budget.

† Palmer Fire & Rescue operated with the Fire Chief position vacated for most of 2020. This vacancy created the decrease in funds utilized by the Department as shown in the 2020 Projected Actual budget.

‡ Due to COVID restrictions, training opportunities were decreased.

2021 Proposed Allocation



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

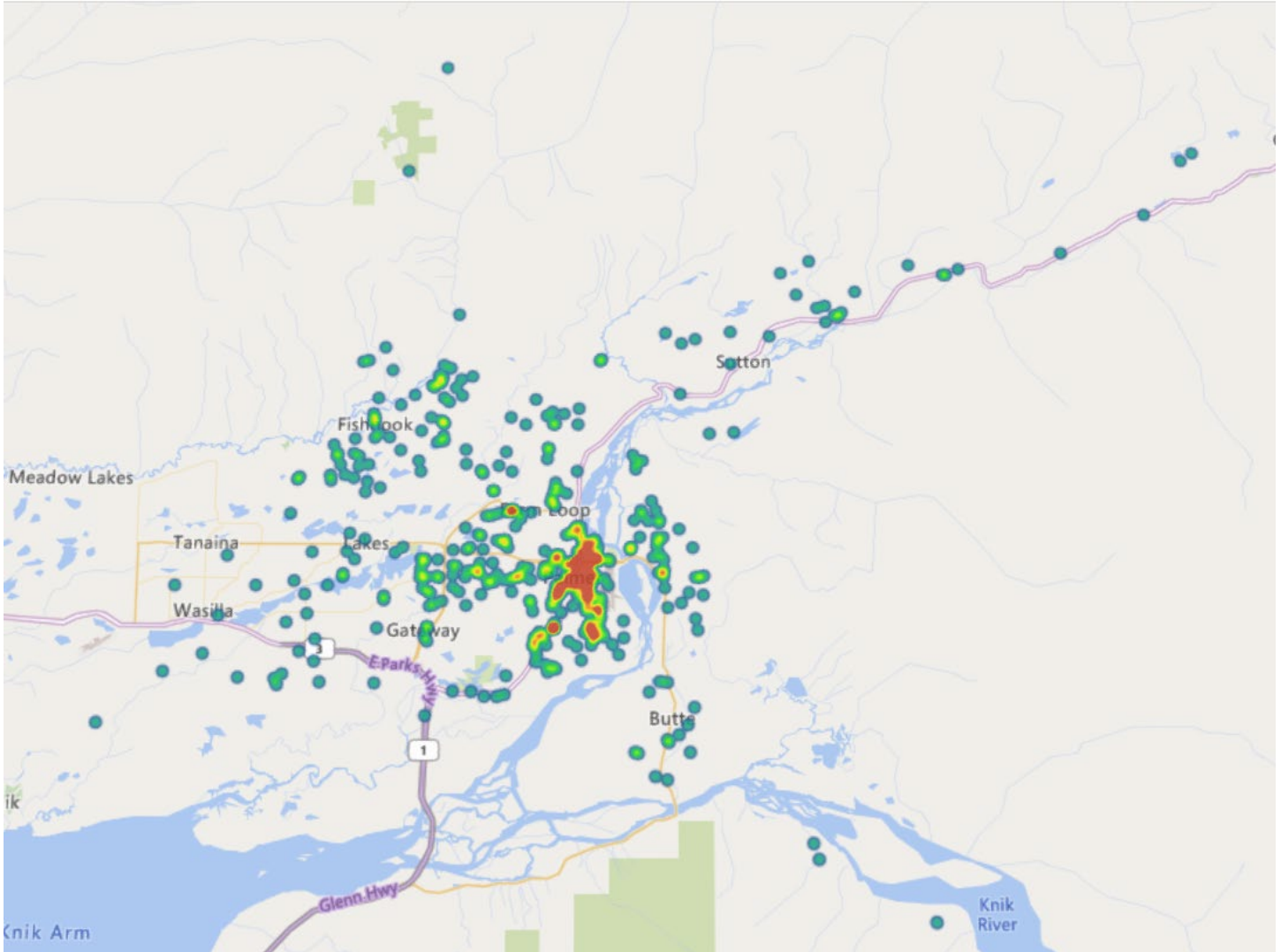
Palmer Fire & Rescue is responsible for ensuring that our people and equipment are ready to safely and effectively respond to 911 calls. This response capability is maintained primarily by our paid on-call staff. The Department's officers voluntarily staff every evening from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am. All members help staff the stations from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

Palmer Fire & Rescue (PFR) responds to all fire and rescue emergencies in the City of Palmer and the Greater Palmer Fire Service Area. PFR's primary rescue response area includes everything on the road system from Glenn and Parks Highway interchange south of Palmer to Moose Creek on the Glenn Highway. PFR has mutual aid agreements to include area to approximately mile 129 on the Glenn Highway and Lake Louise. Agreements are in place to work with the other Matanuska-Susitna fire departments as well as the Alaska State Troopers and the Department of Forestry to assist with delivery of services.

Palmer Fire & Rescue maintains response capabilities to best meet the needs of our unique community. In addition to fire suppression and rescue response, these capabilities include technical rescue disciplines.



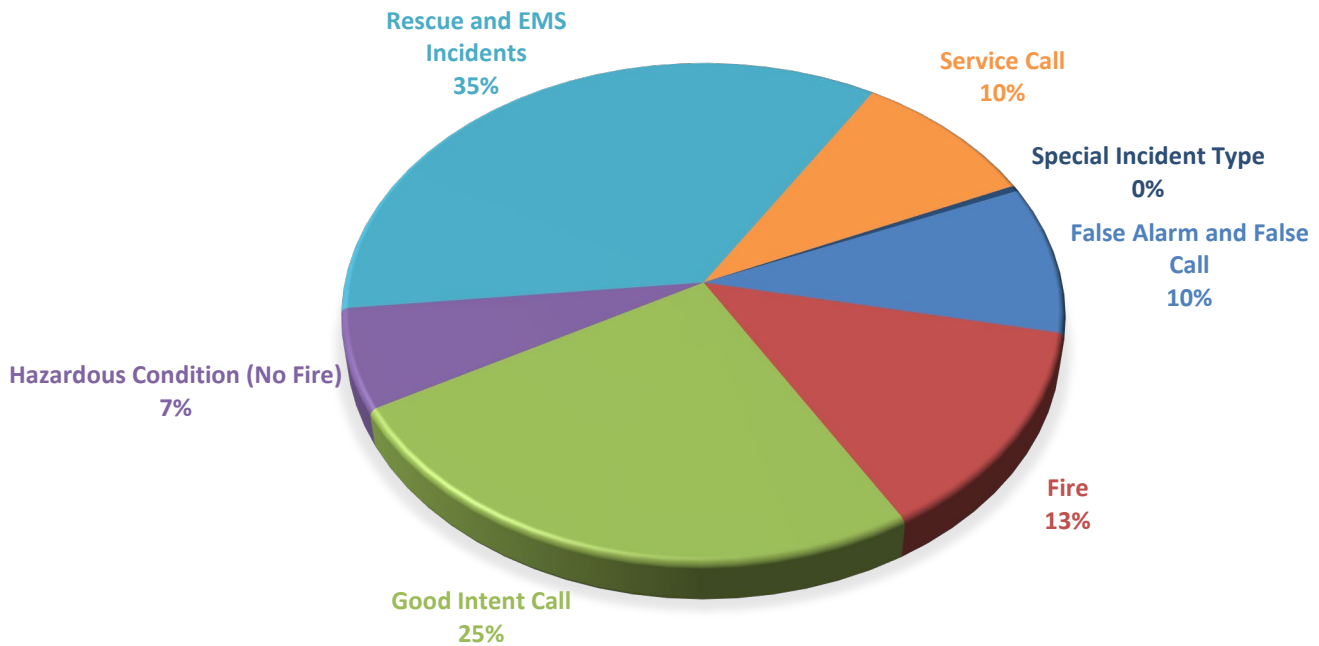
EMERGENCY INCIDENTS



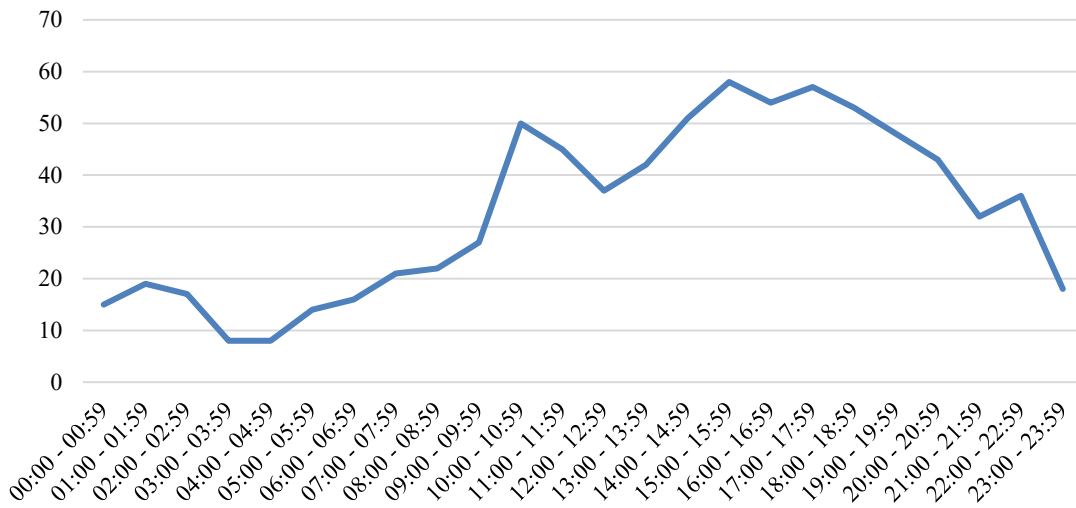
2020 Call Types per Area

Call Type	City	GPFS 3-1	GPFS 3-2	GPFS 3-3	GPFS 3-5	Mutual Aid Given	Total
Fire	30	24	10	4	13	25	106
Rescue & EMS	100	77	18	10	28	47	280
Hazardous Condition	14	9	5	1	19	3	51
Service Call	34	11	1	0	2	27	75
Good Intent Call	56	42	11	8	23	60	200
False Alarm & False Call	35	21	4	3	23	1	76
Special Incident Type	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Total	270	184	49	27	97	164	791

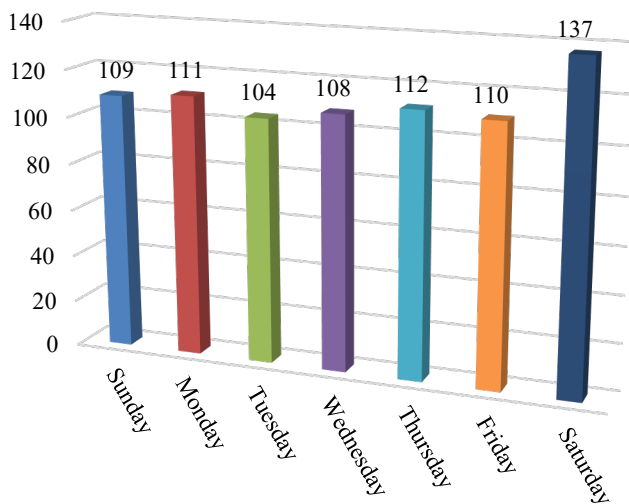
2020 Response to Call Types



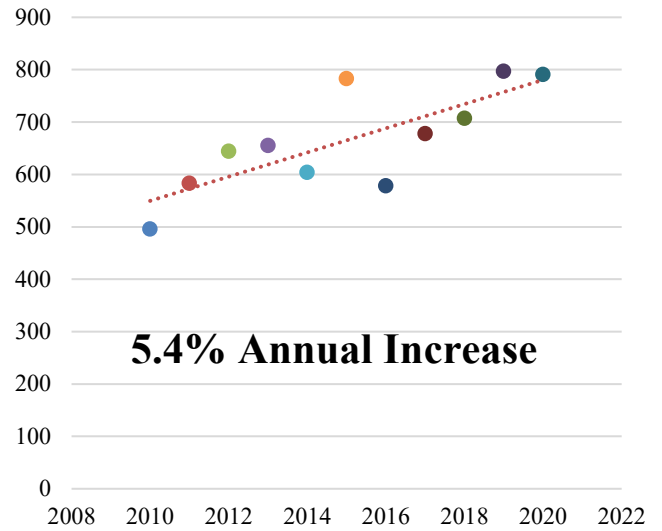
2020 Incidents by Hour of Day



2020 Incidents by Day of Week



Incident Total Trending



Incident Count by Year

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Greater Palmer FSA	209	271	248	244	290	252	198	188	241	208
City of Palmer	374	373	407	360	493	326	480	519	556	583
Totals	583	644	655	604	783	578	678	707	797	791

2020 Unit Response Totals

Station	Unit	Fires	EMS	Alarms	Other	Total
3-1 (Palmer)	Engine 3-1	34	6	33	61	134
	Engine 3-6	55	27	32	117	231
	Rescue 3-1	2	79	1	19	101
	Support 3-1	9	206	8	61	284
	Truck 3-1	8	1	5	15	29
3-2 (Farmloop)	Brush 3-2	5	5	0	1	11
	Engine 3-2	14	5	6	16	41
	Tender 3-2	17	0	0	9	26
	Tender 3-4	4	0	0	5	9
3-3 (Lazy Mtn.)	Engine 3-3	3	0	2	4	9
	Tender 3-3	13	0	0	4	17
3-5 (Fishhook)	Brush 3-5	2	0	0	2	4
	Engine 3-5	17	3	9	33	62
	Rescue 3-5	0	40	0	13	53
	Tender 3-5	27	0	2	7	36
3-6 (Training)	Brush 3-1	15	7	1	13	36
	Support 3-4	2	5	0	2	9
	Tender 3-1	26	0	1	17	44
Admin & Officers	CV 31	22	90	18	70	200
	CV 32	43	58	20	71	192
	CV 33	37	81	8	49	175
	CV 35	17	51	14	46	128
	CV 36	33	80	21	111	245
	Support 3-3	19	20	1	18	58



FIRE INFORMATION

91.7%

In 2020, Palmer Fire & Rescue saved 91.7 % of the value of the property threatened by fire

Fire Loss Information

	Pre-Incident Value	Loss Value	Value Saved
2020	\$11,533,150	\$957,225	\$10,575,925
2019	\$5,618,600	\$1,396,155	\$4,222,445
2018	\$19,501,155	\$537,050	\$18,964,105
2017	\$4,866,843	\$1,450,245	\$3,416,598
2016	\$7,325,000	\$640,050	\$6,684,950
2015	\$10,883,055	\$1,760,700	\$9,122,355
2014	\$61,179,350	\$2,311,990	\$58,867,360
2013	\$48,027,131	\$999,150	\$47,027,981
2012	\$9,259,157	\$1,886,800	\$7,372,357
2011	\$5,612,750	\$853,200	\$4,759,550
2010	\$151,277,995	\$746,755	\$150,531,240
Total	\$323,551,036	\$13,539,320	\$321,544,866

Breakdown of 2020 Fire Loss

Incident Type	Sum of Total Loss
Alarm system activation, no fire – unintentional	\$2,500
Building fires	\$498,375
Camper or recreational vehicle (RV) fire	\$12,000
Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue	\$1,050
Cooking fire, confined to container	\$10,800
Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire	\$1,000
Fire in mobile property used as a fixed structure	\$41,400
Mobile property (vehicle) fire, other	\$27,000
Off-road vehicle or heavy equipment fire	\$2,500
Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	\$16,000
Passenger vehicle fire	\$344,100
Trash or rubbish fire, contained	\$500

FIREFIGHTER INJURIES

Eight firefighter injuries were reported in 2020.

- During a trash dumpster fire, four firefighters suffered from smoke inhalation. Due to the proximity of the dumpster to a building, crews immediately began extinguishment to prevent extension into the building. The smoke from polyurethane insulation once cooled surrounded members and apparatus before they could exit the area. The injury report was for documentation purposes only.
- A firefighter suffered heat exhaustion after working on a fire. While being evaluated at rehab, it was determined by medics that the firefighter's vital signs had not returned to normal quickly enough. The firefighter was taken into Mat-Su Regional Hospital for further assessment.
- During a structure fire, while working on top of an apparatus, a firefighter lost their footing and fell to the ground. Although the firefighter was not transported, they were later evaluated by a doctor and treated for injuries.
- A firefighter slipped on the ice while working on a hose line. Medics assessed the firefighter and requested he be evaluated at Mat-Su Regional Hospital.
- During fire suppression efforts, a firefighter experienced frost bite to their fingers. The firefighter injuries were recognized after the fire and they did not seek medical attention.



TRAINING OVERVIEW

Palmer Fire & Rescue's Training Division is staffed by Fire Training Coordinator Todd Russell and assisted by members who specialize in various disciplines in the service. The training division is responsible for all training activities: scheduling, coordinating, delivery and record keeping for fire suppression and rescue services.

Palmer Fire & Rescue's firefighters fill many different roles to protect the community. Firefighters are cross trained in auto extrication, various rescue disciplines including rope and water, fire control and suppression, hazardous materials spills and many other techniques in order to meet the needs of the community. Training Palmer Fire & Rescue's personnel for numerous emergencies is ongoing and challenging. Changes to current standards by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), State of Alaska, and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) constantly require evolving the training of our staff. Our staff are continuously revising and updating training programs to meet the new standards.

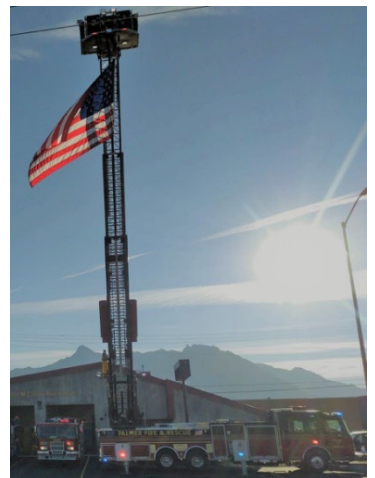
The majority of the training is conducted during training nights on Monday evenings or in special classes during the weekend. Our personnel volunteer to staff positions during the evenings from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm. During this time, they train as well as service the stations and equipment. Delivery of training while taking emergency calls has offered some challenges.

During 2020, the restrictions associated with the COVID pandemic greatly hampered our training efforts. Routine training was altered to accommodate social distancing requirements. All scheduled out-of-town training was cancelled. Efforts were made to train online where applicable. In the summer, we began training in small groups at our stations. Fall, we were able to transition into modular training in smaller groups at one location.

Officer development is an area of weakness in the current training curriculum. Efforts are currently being made to formalize training for members fulfilling or wanting to fulfill officer positions.

Firefighter health continues to be a major topic of discussion industry wide. Initiatives in cancer reduction for firefighters from various governing bodies pose challenges regarding changing behaviors in firefighters as well as obtaining the necessary resources and equipment. Palmer Fire & Rescue continues to put emphasis on firefighter health by providing new washing machines for gear as well as providing more gear available to decrease the usage of dirty gear.

The Department plans to work on a voluntary fitness program for firefighters. We realize that fit firefighters can work more safely, recover more quickly and are more efficient when working at an emergency scene. Furthermore, firefighters suffering injuries are apt to heal more quickly, thereby returning to work sooner.









Total Training Hours for Personnel: 5,125.5 hours


PERSONNEL RELATED NEWS

PROMOTIONS & CERTIFICATIONS




Firefighter I

-  Hayden Shults; March 5, 2020
-  Joseph Balnius; June 20, 2020
-  Colt Graham; June 20, 2020
-  Jonathan Lewis; June 20, 2020
-  MacKenzie Norfleet; June 20, 2020
-  Jason Stone; July 30, 2020




Firefighter II

-  Chris Walsh; June 28, 2020

Fire Officer I

-  Barney Brickel; December 13, 2020
-  Eleanor Johnston; December 13, 2020
-  Oral Scott; December 13, 2020

Lieutenant

-  John Diument; August 3, 2020
-  Eleanor Johnston; August 3, 2020
-  Oral Scott; August 3, 2020



2020 AWARDS

Top Participation

- 🏆 Captain John Prevost – 361 hours
- 🏆 Firefighter Johnathan Lewis – 390 hours
- 🏆 Captain Trey Lindstrom – 412 hours
- 🏆 Assistant Chief David Byers – 487 hours
- 🏆 Firefighter Megan Mattieu – 569 hours
- 🏆 Captain Richard Washer – 755 hours
- 🏆 Firefighter MacKenzie Norfleet – 772 hours
- 🏆 Interim Deputy Chief David Lundin – 817 hours
- 🏆 Assistant Chief Todd Russell – 847 hours
- 🏆 Firefighter Colt Graham – 946 hours
- 🏆 Firefighter Joseph Balnius – 1,025 hours
- 🏆 Lieutenant Eleanor Johnston – 1,367 hours

Explorer/Support Firefighter of the Year

- 🏆 Support Firefighter Ty MacKenzie

Rescue Technician of the Year

- 🏆 Firefighter Joseph Balnius

Firefighter of the Year

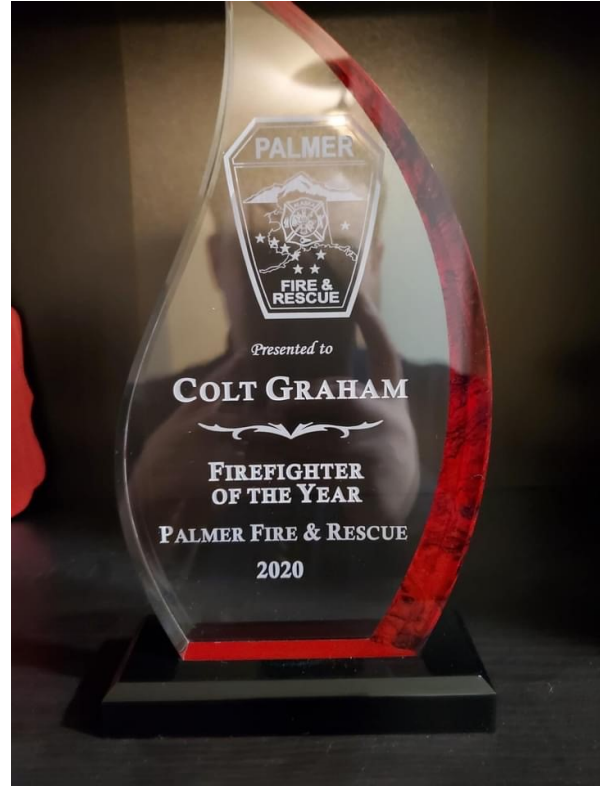
- 🏆 Firefighter Colt Graham

Officer of the Year

- 🏆 Lieutenant Eleanor Johnston

Chief's Award of Excellence

- 🏆 Assistant Chief David Byers
- 🏆 Assistant Chief Todd Russell
- 🏆 Interim Deputy Chief David Lundin



MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

Five Years

- 🏆 Support Firefighter Alexis Calvert
- 🏆 Support Firefighter Morgen Lundin
- 🏆 Support Firefighter Olivia Lundin
- 🏆 Firefighter Breanna Love
- 🏆 Firefighter Christopher Walsh
- 🏆 Engineer Russell Green
- 🏆 Lieutenant John Diument

Ten Years

- 🏆 Firefighter Timothy Deal

Twenty Years

- 🏆 Captain John Prevost
- 🏆 Deputy Chief David Lundin

Thirty Years

- 🏆 Assistant Chief David Byers

Forty Years

- 🏆 Administrative Assistant Joan Patterson

ONGOING INITIATIVES

- 🛡️ Upgrade current part-time support firefighter position to full-time fire prevention position
- 🛡️ Identify Department's Core Values
- 🛡️ Update Mission Statement
- 🛡️ Repair / Update all Stations
- 🛡️ Replace Support 3-1
- 🛡️ Obtain two gear dryers
- 🛡️ Rearrange apparatus for optimal utilization
- 🛡️ Increase scope of backcountry rescue
- 🛡️ Evaluate the need for an ARFF apparatus

