

2013 Annual Town Report



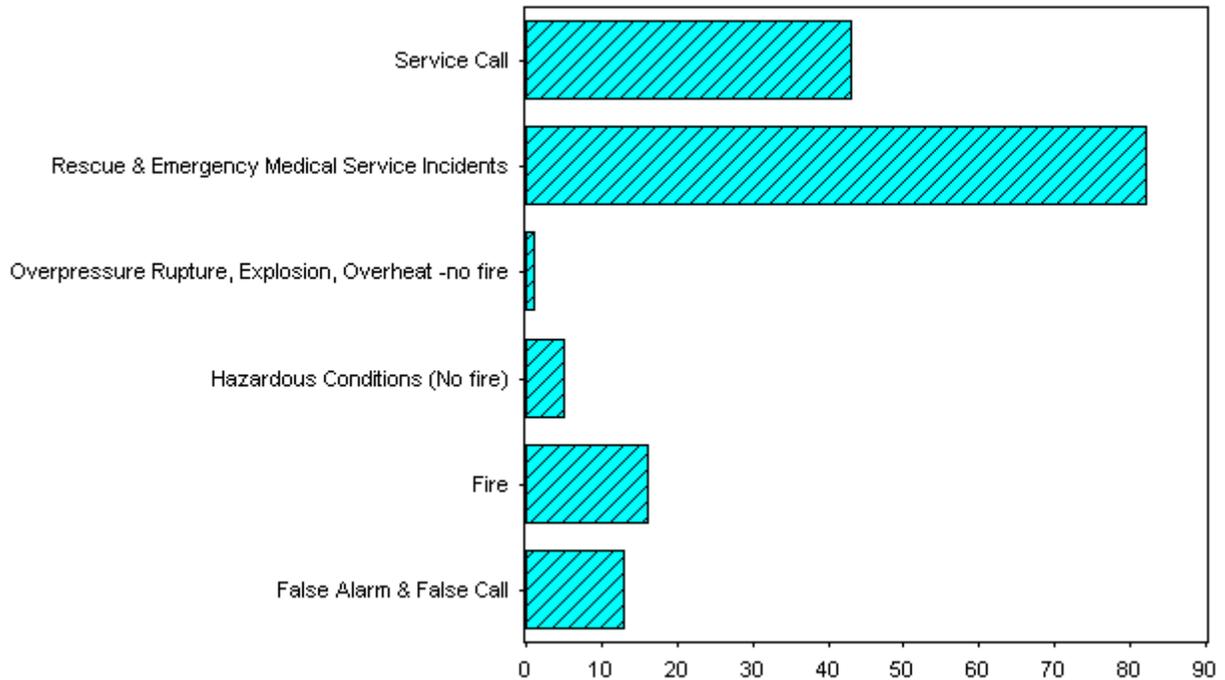
Westhampton Fire Department

Submitted February 6, 2014

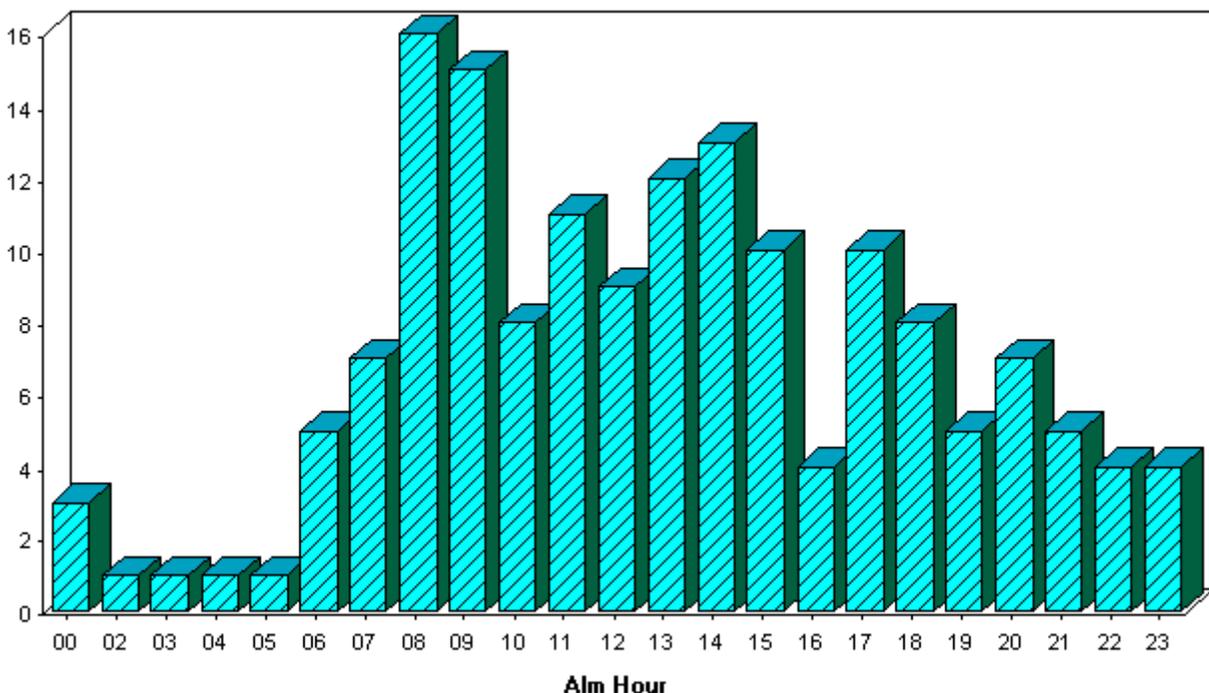
2013 Annual Town Report- Westhampton Fire Department

The Westhampton Fire Department had another busy year in 2013 providing emergency services to the community. The Department responded to one-hundred and sixty-six calls for service this year. These calls for service were for fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, motor vehicle accidents, utility wires down, residential fire alarm activations, and many more. The following graphs give a visual depiction of these emergency responses over the last year and the time of day personnel are being called to respond to these emergencies.

Incident Type Summary
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2013} And {12/31/2013}



Count of Incidents by Alarm Hour
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2013} And {12/31/2013}



The Department's fleet of apparatus consists of a 2004 Engine, a 1986 Engine, a 1990 garbage truck cab and chassis with a milk truck body converted into a Water Tanker, a 2002 Brush Truck, a 2009 Rescue Truck, and a 2009 Mobile Air trailer with a light tower and generator. All vehicles are checked by Department personnel on a weekly basis to ensure a state of operational readiness and reliability. In addition, the Town's Highway Department has been a tremendous asset to the Fire Department, completing all routine maintenance, fluid changes, and upkeep of the vehicles. The vehicle maintenance program, as established, helps to prolong the expected life-span of the vehicles and improve the safety during emergency responses. Again this year, we had both Engines professionally pump-tested to ensure adequate pump performance as determined by the manufactures. These testing procedures are also reflected in the Department's Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating and meet the requirements set by National Standards pertaining to Fire Apparatus.

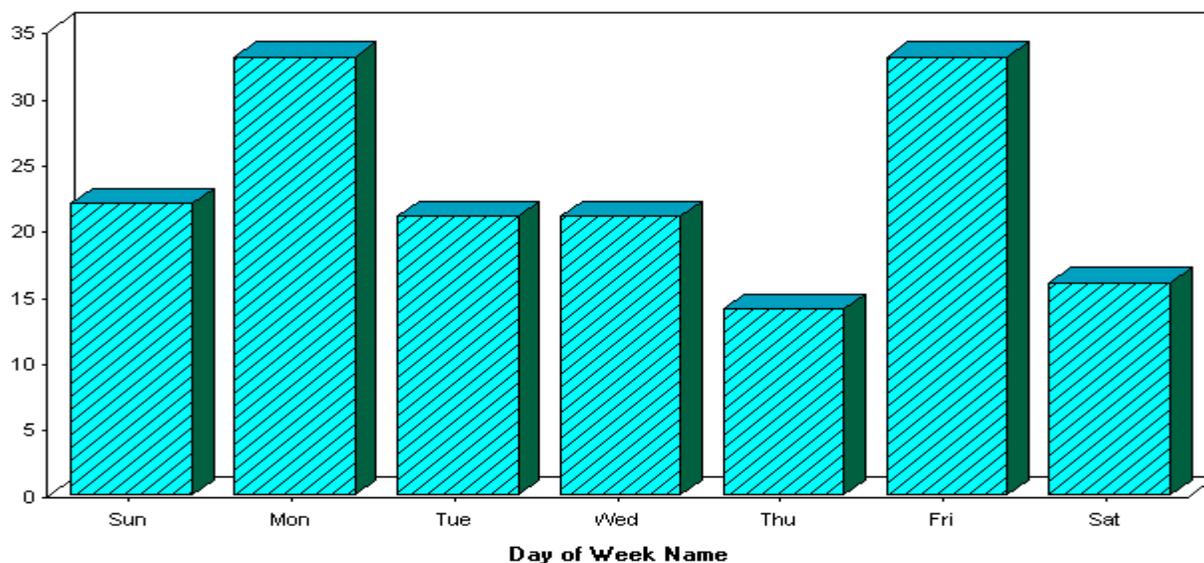


Department Retro-fitted Tanker Vehicle

The Department also had all of the fire hose pressure tested to ensure adequate operational effectiveness. National Standards recommend that this is done once a year, and in addition, it is reflected in the ISO ratings that this testing procedure be done to minimize the insurance rates in Town. More important, to ensure the safety of all members utilizing fire hose during operational procedures, it is our responsibility that they are provided with equipment that is safe and functioning to the highest standards. The testing revealed that the Department did have fire hose in service that did not pass the required pressure rating. These were removed from service and replaced with some of the spare hose that was also tested and passed the requirements. These testing requirements demonstrated that this was a project that was needed and should be continued each year to help ensure that the integrity and operational capacity of the equipment is maintained. We also had all of our ground ladders tested to the National Standards, ensuring they could meet the performance requirements during emergency operations. All of these projects are critical to properly maintaining all of the equipment and ensuring the highest degree of safety for our personnel utilizing these resources.

One of the greatest challenges faced by volunteer departments across the country is the recruitment and retention of Department members. Greater demands on training, increasing call volumes and the balance of a full time job and family all require a delicate balance that can minimize the number of people interested in becoming a member. The Town of Westhampton has been very fortunate over the years, given the difficulties seen by other departments, to maintain this type of department and the high level of performance and services provided by these individuals. The Department currently has thirty-two volunteer members and is always seeking new members to help serve the community. These volunteers are vital to keeping the overall cost for services down while at the same time performing a critical service needed in the community. As seen in the graph below, these volunteers are called out on all different days of the week throughout the year.

Incident Responses by Day of Week
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2013} And {12/31/2013}



Members of the Department are continuing to work with the Elementary School and their staff to deliver public education and fire safety lessons to the Students. This education is done in the form of classroom presentations and demonstrations as well as public education programs at Town events such as the Fall Festival. Our Department continues to be a member of the Hampshire County Fire Defense Association providing us access to a regional public education trailer to assist in the delivery of the fire safety lessons. In addition, our Department again received a grant in the amount of \$5,704 to assist with the purchase of educational materials and supplies for these programs. This continues to be an extremely valuable program and we look forward to our continued collaboration with the school Administration for this purpose.



Per capita, based on the Town census published in last year's Town Report, Westhampton residents pay approximately \$10.85 for fire protection each year. This would not be remotely possible if it wasn't for all of the dedicated volunteers in the Department. In continuing to build out our department, we were proud to welcome Scott Start to the Department as a new member. The Department is always looking for new volunteers and anyone who is ever interested is encouraged to call the Department and speak with the Chief.

This year the Department continued to rely heavily on its website to help with the communications throughout the community. We have transitioned all of our burning permits and inspections to this online forum to make it more convenient for anyone to request or schedule these and get immediate feedback. For a Department that is an all volunteer, we have already seen a dramatic improvement in communication both externally and internally with our members. We hope to continually make improvements such as this in the future to better service all the residents as efficiently as possible. To

access this website, please visit www.westhamptonfire.org and you can also visit us on our Facebook page under the Westhampton Fire Department.

This year, the Department also began providing services for installation of child safety restraint systems. Motor vehicle crashes continue to be a leading cause of injury and death for children under the age of 12. Based on information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), although motor vehicle deaths among children age 12 and under has decreased by 43% in the past decade, still more than 9,000 children age 12 and under have died in crashes in the past decade. The Department has one technician trained to properly install these seats to help continually reduce the number of children becoming injured. Knowing how to use car seats, booster seats, and seat belts along with wearing these no matter how short the trip, will lead to a safer environment for our children. To sign up for this service, simply click on our website and choose a date.

At the Town Meeting in May 2013, the Town appropriated \$35,000 out of free cash to go towards the installation of a compressed air foam system on our current E-One Typhoon Engine along with the purchase of new fire hose. The purpose of this project is to improve our operational capabilities with the limited water supply here in Town by using this new technology to enhance the water we carry on our current fleet of vehicles. This project is currently being completed and will be in operation by late spring. The Department would like to, again, thank the Town for their support for this much needed project.

The Department was able to partner with Josh Laprade this past fall to help him complete his Eagle Scout project. Josh approached us back in the spring to ask if he could paint the Public Safety Complex for his project. Josh put a lot of time, effort, and coordination into this much needed project and he did a traffic job. This project saved the Town thousands of dollars and was a great investment in the community for a great purpose. Thank you Josh and congratulations on the honor of becoming an Eagle Scout.

There are a number of capital projects that the Fire Department is going to need input and support on from the community in the immediate future. The largest of these is a need for a new Public Safety Complex to meet the growing demands of the community. The current facility is reaching sixty years old and no longer is able to accommodate the demands placed on the public safety services (Police, Fire, EMS, and Emergency Management). In addition, one of the Engines is twenty-six years old and has reached its life expectancy. However, no new Engine available will fit in the current facility given the current size and parameters. All of these items have been forwarded to the Town Capital Improvements Committee with emphasis placed on a new building. We will continue to explore all available funding options to minimize the financial impact on the community, but the conversation needs to continue in order to plan and prepare for vehicles and equipment for the next ten to twenty-five years and a facility that will continue to meet the service demands for the next fifty plus years.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of the personnel at the Department for their continued support and dedication to the Town and the Department. It continues to be an absolute pleasure and honor to work for all of them and be part of an organization that cares so much about their community. The members of the Westhampton Fire Department continue to do much more than respond to emergencies. Throughout the years, they continue to clean residents chimneys each fall, hang the flags on the utility poles in the center of town when needed, get involved in community sponsored events such as the Halloween parade, fill residents swimming pools and the water tanks at the Town Cemetery, install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, and put up house numbers for residences to help emergency responders find the proper location and decrease response times. The Westhampton Fire Department is one of the few healthy and vigorous volunteer departments left in the region, and all of the members are very dedicated and proud to serve the residents and community. Thank you and have a safe and healthy year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher W. Norris
Fire Chief