



City of Perth Amboy Fire Department



*Annual Report
For the Year
2012*





2012 will forever be remembered as the “Year of *THE* storm”. The weather event that emergency services personnel have been training and preparing for years came to fruition with the arrival of Superstorm Sandy on October 29th. Although the city received a record amount of destruction to the waterfront area as well as city-wide power outages; Perth Amboy fared far better than communities to our south and east and has displayed exceptional determination in cleaning up and moving forward. Responding to more than 300 calls for assistance during the storm, the Perth Amboy Fire Department continues to maintain a reputation throughout Middlesex County as one of the most progressive fire and emergency services agencies in the area. The services that the department continues to provide, especially in the difficult economic times, where more and more municipal agencies are being required to reduce their capabilities; is a testament to the viability and adaptability of all the department members, Career and Volunteer.

Faced with operating within tight budget constraints, the department continues to maximize efficiency in all areas of operation. For the second consecutive year, the department has reduced the total amount of overtime from the previous year. If the 900 hours of reimbursable overtime that was caused by Superstorm Sandy is removed from the yearly totals, overtime was reduced almost 1,000 hours from the previous year and *more than 4,000 hours* from 2010! One of the reasons for this reduction is the continued decrease in the amount of sick time used within the department (decrease in more than 1,700 hours over the past four years). In addition, the total accumulated leave time continues to be reduced by 1,650 hours over the previous year and more than 6,300 over the past four years.

The following is a review of the operations of the Perth Amboy Fire Department during the year 2012:



*Boats from the Municipal Marina deposited
Onto Front St. By Superstorm Sandy*



*Battalion Chief Cleary surveys Marina Damage
At Sunrise on October 30th*

Career Division:

The Fire Department saw the retirement of one long standing member of the department in 2012. Firefighter Hugo Fleites retired on July 1st after more than 25 years in the Career Division and 32 years of service in the Perth Amboy Emergency Services. At the time of his retirement, Firefighter Fleites was serving as the Engine #1 Operator on Group #1.

The department was also fortunate to hire three replacement firefighters during 2012. Firefighters Jason Arvelo, Daniel Arroyo and Feroz Khan were added to the department ranks in February. Following 300 hours of academy and in-house training the newest members of the department were sworn in to their new positions by Mayor Diaz during a May 16th City Hall ceremony. In addition to basic firefighter and apparatus operator training, these newly hired firefighters also successfully completed 90 hours of Fire Prevention and Inspection training. This training will provide the ability of these fire department personnel assisting with Fire Prevention Bureau duties during their regular scheduled shifts.



The department's Marine unit continues to provide the only year round water based fire & rescue services available in the immediate area. Marine 5 has made several water based rescues from vessels in distress in the area waterways and provided initial search and rescue services at various incidents during the year. Members continue with on-going operational training and maintenance to maintain its year round ready to respond status. Marine 5 made a total of 24 emergency responses during 2012 to a variety of water based emergencies. The unit has been utilized by municipalities from New York City to New Brunswick for a variety of assignments ranging from stranded vessels to marine fires, hazardous materials incidents and persons in the water.

The unit has also been requested to assist or stand by at various events along the local waterways during the year including:

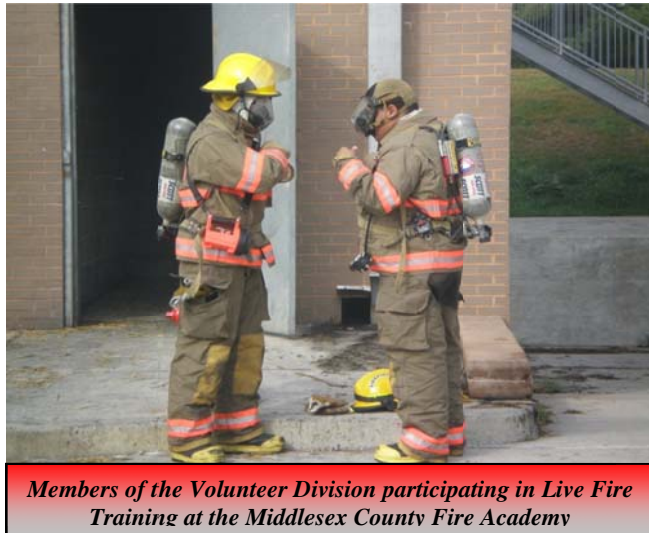
- ❖ *Celebrate the Amboy's Fire Works Display*
- ❖ *Macy's Fireworks Display*
- ❖ *Highland Park Fireworks Display*
- ❖ *Perth Amboy Memorial Day Ceremony*
- ❖ *Carteret Memorial Day Ceremony*
- ❖ *Lawrence Harbor Waterfront Festival*



Through a continued Inter-Local Service Agreement between the City of Perth Amboy and Middlesex County, which partners the department with the Middlesex County Health Department and Hazardous Materials Unit, the department continues to serve as the main back-up agency to the Middlesex County Hazardous Materials Unit for Mass Decontamination response. The need to support the County unit is critical to the emergency response capabilities throughout not only Middlesex County, but also the entire northern New Jersey region; especially in the event of any type of Chemical Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear or Explosive terrorist incident. This also allows the department to have these services immediately available to our citizens, an advantage over most other municipalities in the County

Volunteer Division:

The members of our Volunteer Division continue to be an active participant in department operations. The Bureau continues to develop into a cohesive; well trained and disciplined member of the local emergency response system. A total of eight new members were accepted into membership during 2012. As of the end of the year, all members have completed their required fire academy training and have integrated into the full operation of the Division. Their addition to the ranks of the Volunteer Division brings the total number of Certified Volunteer Division members to 26.



Members of the Volunteer Division participating in Live Fire Training at the Middlesex County Fire Academy

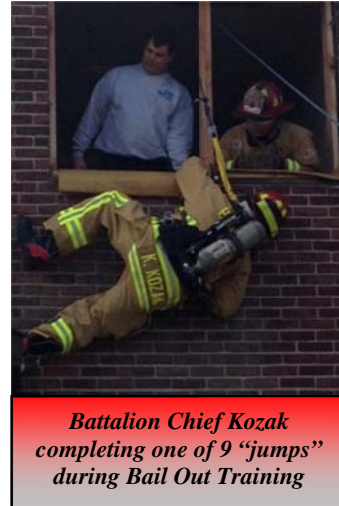
The Volunteer Division has continued to maintain their training participation as well as day to day department activities. Members completed a total of 1265 man-hours of training throughout the year.

Members also continue to actively participate in the In-Station duty program. This program allows members to spend 4 hour blocks of “on duty” time in the firehouse to respond with the initial response apparatus to alarms, providing for additional manpower on initial arriving apparatus at an emergency incident. The In-Station Duty Program also serves to foster a cohesive working relationship between members of the Career and Volunteer Divisions. Members have spent more than 2,500 man-hours participating in this activity during the year.

On November 18th, members of the department were fortunate to spend an afternoon at the NJ Firemen’s Home in Boonton with the oldest member of the department Art Brown as he celebrated his 100th Birthday. A former Volunteer Chief in the department, Art served as the Grand Marshall of the department’s 125th anniversary parade in 2006.

Department Training: The department saw a continued increase in both In-Service and outside agency training during the year. A total of 6,693 hours of in-house training was completed by members of the department (5,428 Career/1,265 Volunteer) in annual required training topics including Hazardous Materials, Right-to-Know, Bloodborne Pathogens, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus/Fit Testing. In addition a wide variety of firematic topics were covered including:

- * CPR
- * Water Supply & Hose Line Advancement
- * Ventilation
- * Search & Rescue
- * Thermal Imaging Camera Operations
- * Bail Out Training
- * Water Rescue
- * Foam Operations
- * Incident Command
- * National Incident Management System



Battalion Chief Kozak completing one of 9 "jumps" during Bail Out Training

Department members also continue to take advantage of various training opportunities offered through outside agencies. Members completed a total of 53 courses of instruction offered by 17 outside agencies throughout the country. Members completed a total of 2,877 hours of training offered through outside training agencies. In many cases, members are able to bring the education back to share with other members of the department through in-service training.



Firefighters Arroyo and Church rappelling at the Middlesex Fire Academy

The department also continues to maintain a good working relationship with various local industries throughout the city. Members once again spent a week of training at the Buckeye facility. In addition, industrial site training was conducted at Morton Salt, Ashland Corporation, Next Era Energy and Gerdau Ameristeel. This annual training allows members to not only interact with staff of the facility, but also provides valuable information to department members in case of an actual emergency incident within the facility.



Confined Space Training at Morton Salt

National Fire Incident Reporting Data:

The fire department responded to a total of 2,656 incidents in 2012, an average of 7 responses per day. This represents the highest number of incidents over the previous four years.

Utilizing data and definitions compiled by the National Fire Incident Reporting System, a department response to a “Fire” incident includes any response generated by the fire department to an open flame in need of extinguishment.



Structure Fire 640 Amboy Ave

December 29,

In 2012, the department responded to 231 fires, compared to 178 in 2011. In addition, a “Building Fire” is classified as any fire within a building with the exception of confined fires involving cooking with no extension from the cooking container, a fire confined to a chimney or flue, incinerator or trash compactor or fuel/oil burner with no flame extension outside of the heating unit. The total number of building fires has increased to from 30 in 2011 to 47 in 2012. Of the 47 building fires a total of 25 were multiple alarm incidents of two alarms or greater, an increase of almost 50% over the past four years (13 multiple alarm fires in 2009). During a 32-day period between June 3rd and July 5th the department responded to two five-alarm fires.

The department also continues to see an increase in the amount of service orientated type calls for assistance to the public, ranging from lock outs and residents trapped in elevators to flooded basements and animal rescues. The department responded to 1,012 calls for non-fire or EMS assistance by members of the public during 2012, an increase of 230 calls over 2011.



554-604 Cortlandt Street

June 3, 2012

Public Fire Education:

Through Fire House tours and school visits, the department was again able to provide fire prevention safety education to more than 6,500 children within the city. Department members conducted more than 40 Fire House tours and school visits during the course of the year.

The department has also been represented at Career Day programs that were conducted at McGinnis, Shull, Peterson, Wilentz, Ceres and Flynn Schools as well as the High School during the course of the year.



Sparky greets a Friend at the Fire Prevention Open House

For the second consecutive year, the department sponsored an Open House at Fire Headquarters during Fire Prevention Week in October. Nearly 200 members of the community attended the event which was organized by Captain Arroyo along with the assistance of the Fire Officer and Firefighter Unions as well as the Volunteer Division. A variety of fire prevention/fire service activities were available including the Fire Safety House from the Middlesex County Fire Academy, fire rescue demonstrations by members of the department and an endurance course, where Firefighters assisted members of the public to complete. In addition, raffles, prizes and refreshments were also provided. The interest from the public insures that the open house will be an annual event for years to come.

The department also continues to expand programs and training provided to various groups and agencies throughout the city including:

- * Catholic Charities
- * Puerto Rican Association for Human Development
- * Perth Amboy Seniors Organization
- * Market Square Seniors
- * Perth Amboy Board of Education
- * Second Home Adult Day Care
- * Perth Amboy Housing Authority



Firefighters Batista and Ramirez with Fire Prevention give aways

One of the largest public education endeavors that the department has ever undertaken actually came out of the 2011 Fire Department Open House. Under the leadership of Battalion Chief Abraham Pitre and College of New Jersey Post-Graduate student Elizabeth Clark, the Fire Safety for the Blind and Visually Impaired program has grown from a local project to a state wide program. This program, which is believed to be the only one of its kind throughout the nation, is geared towards not only the students and

families of the blind and visually impaired community, but the fire service as well. Although members of the department were well versed in fire safety presentations, being able to effectively and reassuringly instruct visually impaired children presented unknown challenges. Combining the vast knowledge in this area of expertise by Ms. Clark and the fire safety knowledge of department members, a program was developed and delivered to all members of the department in making a presentation to the visually impaired. In addition,



BC Pitre, Firefighters Walling and Febles go over fire equipment during visually impaired fire house visit

members were taught the proper way to safely and effectively communicate with children who have this disability. Once trained, members of the department have provided fire safety education to several student groups through both visits to Fire Headquarters as well as volunteering time to visit the St. Joseph School for the Blin in Jersey City.

The program has been recognized by the New Jersey State Fire Commission as well as the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety, who have invited Battalion Chief Pitre and Mrs. Clark the opportunity to conduct several training classes on the topic throughout the state over the past year. In addition, specific training has been provided to members of the Jersey City Fire Department to enable the state's largest department to provide the same fire safety instruction to the visually impaired in their community.



BC Cleary lets students feel, hear and smell the fire

Over the course of the past three years, the department has been fortunate to realize an investment of more than \$1.5 million in capital improvements. In addition to bonding, more than \$500,000 has been provided through federal and other grant funding opportunities. These improvements include the complete replacement of turnout gear for all Career and Volunteer members of the department, as well as the replacement of 75% of the department's self-contained breathing apparatus; some of which were purchased in 1991. In early 2013 the department will take delivery of a new fire engine, the first fire engine purchased by the department since 1999. An aggressive schedule has been proposed to continue with apparatus replacements through 2017 to insure that the department never again faces the dilemma it faced two years ago when the physical condition of the department fleet of apparatus made it a challenge to provide a full complement of viable apparatus.



*New Engine #2
2013 Pierce Arrow XT 1500 gpm Engine*

The largest challenge of the Fire Department – like all municipal departments, during not only 2013 but moving forward into the future is the need to address the ability to adequately operate on a daily basis with limited, if not shrinking financial resources. The Fire Department continues to maintain fiscal responsibility in day-to-day operations, as well as continuously searching for additional funding resources. Some of the funding sources and strategies include the following:

- ❖ **Grants & Financial Assistance.** During the past year, the department has submitted several federal grant requests totaling more than \$2 Million for personnel as well as various equipment needs. In addition the department has received \$20,000 annual assistance over the past two years from Middlesex County for maintenance of Marine 5. It is hoped that this funding for 2013 will be continued by the County Freeholders
- ❖ **Local Industry.** Historically local industries within the city have provided the department with various advanced rescue equipment. These equipment donations have enabled the department to provide various levels of technical rescue without placing a burden on the overall department budget. The department continues to foster a close working relationship with our industrial neighbors and is hopeful for the continued assistance they provide.

- ❖ **Neighboring Industries.** As previously mentioned, with the department being one of the only emergency response agencies in Middlesex County to provide immediate technical rescue response, the department continues to contract our rescue services to industries outside of the municipal borders. Currently the department receives \$40,000 annually for this work. The department is hopeful in expanding this service in the future.
- ❖ **Continued Member Cooperation.** The members of the department continuously go above and beyond when dealing with building and equipment maintenance and repair. During the past year alone, work performed by members of the department conservatively saved more than \$15,000. This continued cooperation and pride in the department will enable the scarce financial resources to continue to be spent on items that are absolutely necessities.

Any alternative funding ability that can be obtained outside of the local property taxation, in addition to continued fiscal responsibility will assist in overcoming the financial obstacles that lie ahead for the department during the upcoming year and beyond.

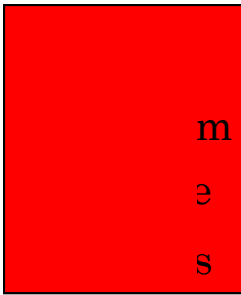
During the year 2013, the department will continue to strive to maintain its reputation as being one of the most progressive fire and rescue agencies in the state. Living up to the mission of the department of *Striving to become a strong and cohesive, well-supervised and trained combination fire department that will be able to meet the challenges of the new millennium by providing fire suppression, medical and rescue services, promote public awareness and fire prevention activities to decrease the perils of fire; as well as responding to other emergencies to best protect the community. Always vigilant – planning for the future.*

Department Mission Statement

652 State Street

July 5, 2012





Fires:	2009	2010	2011	2012
Building Fire	21	51	30	47
Multiple Alarm Fires	13	14	16	25
Fires in Non-Structures	2	4	1	2
Cooking Fire	65	59	57	65
Fuel Burner/Boiler Malfunction	10	16	12	6
Chimney/Flue Fire	0	1	0	2
Passenger Vehicle Fire	19	16	14	23
Road/Freight or Transport Fire	0	4	4	3
Off Road/Heavy Equipment Fire	0	2	1	0
Water Vehicle Fire	2	1	0	0
Fire In Mobile Property – Fixed	0	0	0	1
Fire in Portable Building – Fixed Location	0	0	0	1
Mulch	3	16	7	11
Brush/Brush Grass Mixture Fire	13	19	11	18
Outside Rubbish, Trash or Waste Fire	27	32	36	45
Dumpster/Outside Trash Receptacle Fire	8	6	3	4
Outside Storage Fire	1	1	0	1
Outside Mailbox	0	0	1	0
Outside Equipment Fire	3	6	1	2
TOTAL FIRES:	196	233	178	231

Overpressure Rupture Explosion:

Overpressure Rupture, Explosion	1	1	1	1
Overpressure/Steam Boiler	0	3	0	3
Excessive Heat/Scorching/No Explosion	0	3	0	1
TOTAL OVERPRESSURE:	1	5	1	

Rescue & EMS Incidents	2009	2010	2011	2012
Medical Assist EMS Crew	16	59	27	70
EMS/First Responder Calls	3,014	428	245	474
Motor Vehicle Accident	51	123	144	158
Motor Vehicle/Pedestrian	23	29	44	31
Motor Vehicle Accident No Injury	5	13	21	18
Lock In	10	6	18	13
Search for Person in Water	1	1	2	3
Search for Person on Land	0	1	0	1
Extrication	9	16	13	6
Extrication from Machinery	0	1	1	2
Removal of Victims from Stalled Elevator	18	16	28	24
Water/Surf/Ice Related Rescue	6	3	3	3
High Angle Rescue	1	0	0	0
Watercraft Rescue	19	5	12	8
Rescue/EMS Standby	1	1	2	1
TOTAL RESCUE/EMS	3,174	702	560	812

Service Calls:

Person in Distress	15	15	4	3
Lock-Out	38	32	57	28
Water Problems	11	2	3	1
Water/Steam Leak	32	27	43	29
Water Evacuation	0	0	2	1
Secure Open Hydrant	0	0	1	3
Smoke/Odor Removal	17	23	15	12
Animal Rescue	7	2	4	6
Public Assistance	20	26	18	25
Assist Police or Other Government Agency	39	69	67	79
Assist invalid	3	2	1	4
Defective Elevator (No Occupants)	6	7	28	6
Cover Assignment/Standby	8	13	6	4
Unauthorized Burning	0	0	2	5
TOTAL SERVICE CALLS	198	218	251	206

Hazardous Condition:	2009	2010	2011	2012
Hazardous Condition – Unfounded	19	34	9	34
Combustible Gas Condition	4	3	2	10
Gasoline/Flammable Liquid Spill	13	20	11	14
Gas Leak (Natural Gas or LPG)	41	42	45	66
Oil or other Combustible Liquid Spill	15	23	8	9
Chemical Spill/Leak	2	5	2	5
Toxic Condition	2	0	0	2
Carbon Monoxide Incident	30	26	49	46
Electrical Wiring/Equipment Problem	38	34	11	11
Heat From Short Circuit (Wiring)	8	21	11	9
Overheated Motor	8	4	2	7
Light Ballast	1	1	1	4
Downed Power Line	37	167	153	242
Arcing Electrical Equipment	26	31	23	35
Building Collapse	2	21	8	10
Accident/Potential Accident	0	1	1	0
Aircraft Stand-By	0	2	8	0
Vehicle Accident – General Clean Up	1	1	3	0
Hazardous Condition – Other	58	19	20	7
TOTAL HAZARDOUS CONDITION	305	455	367	511

Good Intent Calls:

Dispatched/Cancelled En route	25	80	49	90
No Incident Found Upon Arrival	15	37	26	41
Steam other gas mistaken for Smoke	16	8	10	17
Smoke Scare, Odor of Smoke	52	53	40	63
Smoke from Barbecue	5	3	3	3
HazMat Investigation/No HazMat Found	5	12	7	6
Good Intent – Other	27	4	8	10
Vicinity Alarm	0	3	2	4
Authorized Controlled Burning	0	1	1	1
EMS Call Injured Transported by Non-FD Unit	1	3	2	0
Wrong Location	0	0	1	1
Biological Hazard Investigation	0	0	1	1
TOTAL GOOD INTENT CALLS	146	204	150	237

False Alarm/Malfunction:	2009	2010	2011	2012
Malicious False Alarm	21	15	20	22
Malicious False Alarm Central Station	13	32	39	22
Malicious False Alarm Local Alarm System	2	4	3	5
Bomb Scare – No Bomb	1	1	0	6
System Malfunction	34	85	94	142
Sprinkler Activation Due to Malfunction	6	6	2	7
Smoke Detector Malfunction	98	112	104	79
Heat Detector Malfunction	6	8	9	3
CO Detector Malfunction	14	26	24	33
CO Detector Activation, No CO Readings	16	24	24	38
Unintentional Alarm Transmission	25	4	8	6
Sprinkler Activation – No Fire	5	10	7	6
Smoke Detector Activation – No Fire	100	104	123	125
Detector Activation – No Fire	20	20	30	29
Extinguishing System Activation	2	3	0	1
Alarm System Activation – No Fire	96	66	81	77
TOTAL FALSE ALARM	541	520	568	601

Severe Weather & Natural Disaster:

Earthquake Assessment	0	2	2	0
Flood Assessment	0	3	1	2
Lightning Strike (no Fire)	3	0	0	1
<u>Wind/Tornado/Hurricane Assessment</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>42</u>
TOTAL SEVERE WEATHER	3	33	4	45

Special Type of Incidents:

Citizen Complaint	0	0	9	8
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**TOTAL INCIDENT
RESPONSES:**

2012: 2,656

2011: 2,088

2010: 2373

2009: 1,841*

***TOTAL INCIDENT RESPONSES**

2009: 4,562

Includes EMS Service delivery

01/01/2009-08/31/2009

