



CITY OF PERTH AMBOY FIRE DEPARTMENT



Annual Report For the Year 2020





2020 was a very busy and productive year for the Perth Amboy Fire Department. The PAFD responded to 2,004 emergency incidents including 182 fires of which 7 were a multiple alarm fire. Staffing levels have reached the minimum requirements of NFPA 1710 where each company has four firefighters making operations safer for firefighters and the civilians sworn to protect. The Fire Prevention Bureau added certified fire inspectors from existing firefighter personnel, increasing the amount of inspections completed. Three FEMA Grants were awarded including a Port Security Grant to replace Marine 5 and two Assistance to Firefighters Grants for PPE and EMT training. New Apparatus were placed in service including Rescue 1, the Foam Tender and Car 5. The first piece of land was contracted for purchase for the new Northeast Fire Station with design work continuing. Nine Firefighters were appointed and assigned to shifts. Millions of dollars in taxpayer property was saved through the hard work of the fire department and civilian lives were saved. In 2020, over 8,000 hours of training were logged between all members of the department. The Dive Team, Special Operations and Marine Division all were fully operational for emergency response. The Perth Amboy Fire Department remains ready, staffed, trained and equipped for any emergency 24/7 365 days a year.



2020 Foam Tender In-Service Training

Career Division:

The career division of the fire department is made up of 73 members including the fire chief, 6 battalion chiefs, 12 captains and 53 firefighters. While everyone is assigned to fire suppression, members also wear multiple hats and make up the Bureau of Fire Prevention, Special Operations Team, Marine Division, Dive Team, Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Program and Honor Guard. These contributions to the Department are greatly appreciated as this is what separates us from many other departments in our ability to serve the public and handle

any emergency. The department plans to hire 3 replacement hires in 2021, which will ensure NFPA 1710 staffing compliance is maintained.

A promotional ceremony was held on September 30, 2020 at Fire Headquarters. Captains Brian Bonilla, Derek Kraese, James Garrison and David Ramos were promoted and Firefighters Jermaine Clark, Piotr Matusewicz and Michael Delfosse were sworn in. This was a historical promotional ceremony as James Garrison became the Department's first African American Captain in its 139 year history. Additionally, the three firefighters sworn in also completed their NJ State Fire Inspector Certification to assist the Bureau of Fire Prevention with fire inspections. In 2021 they will also complete their Emergency Medical Technician Certification and Special Operations basic training.



Captains Kraese, Ramos, Bonilla & Garrison Promoted on 9/30/2020

On September 18, 2020 the City appointed six additional firefighters. They are Richard Novo Jr., Jose Ruiz, Miguel Aponte, Luis Aviles, Matthew Snyder and Marcus Wicks. They began the Morris County Fire Academy on October 5th and graduated on December 23, 2020. These six hires will also complete Fire Inspector in 2021 along with Emergency Medical Technician and Special Operations basic training.

Out of the 2,006 incidents in 2020, there were several deserving of special recognition throughout the year. On March 6, 2020, the fire department responded to a late night fire at 390 Market Street. Units arrived to find heavy fire conditions in the basement of an apartment building with residents trapped on the top floor. Three residents, including a baby, were saved by the actions of Firefighter Lully Gonzalez and John Fazio. Firefighter Gonzalez entered in a third floor window from a ground ladder, crawled through the smoke to locate those trapped. They

were then turned over to Firefighter Fazio who was in the bucket of Truck 2. All were removed to safety and turned over to EMS for evaluation.



Recruit Firefighters Novo, Ruiz, Aponte, Aviles, Snyder & Wicks 9/18/2020

On August 25, 2020, the Department was dispatched to the Raritan Bay Buckeye Terminal for a trench/high angle rescue. All units arrived to find an injured worker approximately 20' below grade. Members of the shift and Special Operations Team set up a rope rescue system off Rescue 1 while Captain Daniel Arroyo, Firefighter Dylan Krushinski and Firefighter Kurt Gregroy climbed down a ladder to treat and package the victim. The worker was successfully rescued under the eye of three news helicopters above.

On March 5, 2020, Marine 5 was dispatched to a boat fire in the Arthur Kill with occupant trapped on board. The crew of Captain Kenneth Febles, and Firefighters Gregory Church, quickly responded, grabbed the occupant off the boat just as it fully engulfed in flames. This rescue was recorded by bystanders and made international marine news.

On October 29, 2020, the Department's Special Operations Team was dispatched into Port Reading for an injured worker approximately 50' above grade. On-Duty Special Operations members quickly responded with Rescue 1 and Truck 2. Upon arrival they ascended to the victim, packaged then lowered him to safety where he was turned over to EMS. This was all within 45 minutes of dispatch.

Fire Prevention:

In 2019, the Bureau of Fire Prevention was moved to the Fire Department. This division of the department is responsible for the Uniform Fire Code Enforcement throughout the City. Life Hazard Inspections, Non-Life Hazard Inspections, Code Compliances, Permits and

Complaints are all handled by the Bureau. The Bureau also assists with fire investigations and the juvenile fire setter intervention program. In 2020, the total number of firefighters that have obtained their Fire Inspector Certification rose to 10. When it was realized how understaffed the Bureau was, creative thinking and collective negotiations with the firefighters' union have made it possible for firefighters to work their off-duty days for the Bureau, without having to add additional staff, and are fully funded for by the revenue generated by the inspections. In 2021, we anticipate being able to complete 3 times the amount of inspections as the prior year. In 2020, a total of 348 Life Hazard Use inspections were completed, 540 Non-Life Hazard Use inspections were completed, 331 Uniform Fire Code Compliances were completed and 100 Fire Safety Permits were issued. That is up from 327 Life Hazard Use inspections, 161 Non-Life Hazard Use Inspections, 101 Uniform Fire Code Compliances and 100 Fire Safety Permits in 2019. It is the ultimate goal of the Bureau to complete 4,000 initial inspections annually as required by as the NJ State Uniform Fire Code and City Ordinance.

Fire Investigation

The Perth Amboy Fire Department continues to investigate all fires in accordance with the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code under the direction of the Fire Chief and Fire Official. The Fire Investigation Unit works diligently for hours after a fire is extinguished and sometimes for days after to best determine the origin and cause of a fire. They are able to assist the property owners and their insurance companies so that they can rebuild and bring their lives back to normal as quickly as possible. All suspicious fires are investigated by the Fire Investigation Unit in conjunction with the Perth Amboy Police Department. Members of the Fire Investigation Unit obtained their Certified Vehicle Fire Investigator Certification in 2020.



Origin & Cause Investigation (Overloaded Extension Cord with V-Pattern)

Special Operations:

The Special Operations Division continues to train monthly in the fields of water rescue, ice rescue, confined space rescue, high angle rope rescue, motor vehicle extrication, trench rescue, building collapse rescue and man vs machine type rescues. In 2020, training had to be reduced as the Covid 19 pandemic put restrictions on the amount of people that could gather at a time. The Team was still able to advance their training in all areas as the Department added Rescue Company 1 in service. Members of Special Operations Team staff Rescue 1 24/7, providing the team with all of their equipment in service on a frontline apparatus. Multiple rescues were made in 2020 utilizing the apparatus as a high anchor point, as it was designed to do, facilitating in the rescue of injured people. Not only with this protect the City of Perth Amboy, but it will be able to respond to all of the surrounding communities as the technical rescue unit. The Special Operations Team will also train all new hires in an 80 hour technical rescue class in 2021.



Home News Tribune Article from Special Operations Team Actual Rescue in August

Marine Division:

In 2020, Marine 5 responded to 22 emergency incidents and rescued several dozen people from sinking boats, that were in distress in the water in, or whose boat was on fire. This occurred mainly throughout the summer on weekends. In August, the Department was notified that it was awarded a 2020 Port Security Grant to replace Marine 5. This Grant was for \$900,000 that will be combined with a contribution from a redevelopment agreement for \$500,000 to fully fund the new vessel. The New Marine 5 will be expected to be completed in 2022 and will have the flow capacity of around 10,000gpm and be a major water based asset for the not only Perth Amboy, but the whole Southern Part of the Port of New York and New Jersey. The Marine Division is part of the New Jersey Regional Fireboat Task Force. This task force is made up of 12 New Jersey Fire Departments that have marine assets including: Perth Amboy, Newark, Jersey City, North Hudson, Kearny, Carteret, Linden, Elizabeth, Secaucus, Bayonne, Hoboken, and Edgewater. The Task Force is supported by the FDNY and United States Coast Guard as well. The main purpose of this Task Force is to have an organized marine response to all incidents within the Port of New York and New Jersey, which begins in Perth Amboy.



Marine 5 Rescuing the Sole Occupant from a Boat Fire in the Raritan Bay in March

Juvenile Firesetter Intervention:

The Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Program was currently consists of 10 members of the department that completed specialist I training in addition to 2 members that completed the specialist level II training, which is a management level course so the coordinators of the program ensure it follows all applicable laws. Each of the 4 shifts has members trained so that in the event of an issue, the problem can be immediately addressed. The program exists to prevent youth fire tragedy through education, intervention, and mental health support. By forming unique partnerships and offering support to agencies dedicated to providing intervention services to fire involved youth, such as the Middlesex County Fire-setter Intervention Program, Social Services, Prosecutors Office, Police and as well as the Board of Education. An emphasis on following up with troubled youth and ensuring fire prevention education is followed has been priority this year. A continued effort will ensure the message of the program is brought to all levels of educators throughout Perth Amboy.

Dive Team:

The Dive Team became fully functional and able to respond to emergencies on October 1, 2019. This Team was funded by the Port Security Grant Program in 2017. In total, 28 members now make up the team. 12 firefighters and 4 police officers are trained to the SCUBA Rescue Certification and 12 firefighters were trained to the dive tender level. Since its inception, the Dive Team has completed over 4,000 hours of training. In 2020, the Dive Team responded to 4 Dive Rescue & Recovery emergencies around the area as they are the only team available in Middlesex County.



Members of the Dive Team completing monthly training at the Waterfront

Volunteer Division:

The volunteer division currently has 6 active certified volunteer firefighters and 5 fire police officers. In 2020 the Volunteer Division completed 1,240 hours of participation. Within the department, they respond as an additional crew to working fires in Car 9, a dedicated response vehicle that has air packs, radios and hand tools. The Volunteer Division also takes care of the Fire Department's Museum. There are there every Tuesday night at 6pm to work on the antique fire truck, maintain & organize the museum and give any tours for the public. The Volunteer Division also greatly helped out with the City's Code Blue throughout the winter. Here members assisted the homeless at the Community Center stay warm on the coldest nights of the year. The volunteer division is where a majority of the career firefighters in the department began their fire service career.



Members of the Department Participated in the 19th Annual 9/11/ Remembrance Ceremony

Training Division:

The training division, under the command of Battalion Chief Gonzalez, oversaw over 6,000 hours of training in 2020. Additionally over 2,000 hours of shift training was completed throughout the year. Due to the Pandemic, limited group training could be conducted for the Special Operations Team, Marine Division and Dive Team, however they were able to adapt and overcome to be prepared for their missions.

Industry:

In addition to all of the residential and commercial properties throughout the City of Perth Amboy, there are 3 major petroleum terminals. The department continues to complete

annual training at these facilities. In April 2020, the department took delivery of a 4,000 gallon foam tender that will be part of our industrial fire response. With this fire apparatus, the PAFD can immediately attack a fire involving flammable liquids without having to wait for mutual aid departments that have these specialty apparatus from around the state. Also, the entire department continues to train with Kinder Morgan’s Carteret Emergency Response Team to be able to utilize them for assistance while responding to industrial emergencies in our city.

National Fire Incident Reporting Data:

The fire department responded to a total of 2,004 incidents in 2020. This year, the department responded to 182 fires, of which 44 were structural fires including 7 that were a multiple alarm fire. The total call volume was slightly down from 2019, but that was due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, where less people were out and about throughout the year and there were far less motor vehicle accidents than prior years. Overall, there were 2 less fires in 2020 than in 2019 so that amount of working incidents was about the same.

Along with handling emergencies in the City of Perth Amboy the department also responded to 46 mutual aid incidents in surrounding municipalities including: Woodbridge, Fords, Carteret, Port Reading, Keasbey, Avenel, Colonia, Hopelawn, South Amboy, and Sayreville. In 2020, there was a total of 47 mutual aid responses from other municipalities into the city of Perth Amboy so there was a clear balance of mutual aid for the first time ever. Listed below is the incident breakdown for 2020:

Total Fires	182
100 Fire, Other	1
111 Building fire	44
112 Fires in structure other than a building	0
113 Cooking fire, confined to container	50
114 Chimney or flue fire, confined	0
116 Fuel burner / Boiler Fire	1
118 Trash or rubbish fire, contained	3
1181 Dryer Fire contained	2
131 Passenger vehicle fire	12
132 Road freight or transport vehicle fire	2
134 Water vehicle/boat fire	2
138 Off-road Vehicle or Heavy Equipment fire	1
142 Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	9
142M Mulch Fire	17
150 Outside rubbish fire, other	3
151 Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	3
154 Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire	20

160 Special outside fire	0
161 Outside storage fire	2
162 Outside equipment fire	3

Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat(no fire) 0

211 Overpressure rupture of a steam pipe	0
222 Overpressure rupture of a boiler	0
251 Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition	0

Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident 629

300 Rescue, EMS, other incident	6
311 Medical assist, assist EMS crew	181
320 Emergency medical service, other	2
321 EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	181
322 Motor vehicle accident with injuries	130
323 Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)	39
324 Motor Vehicle Accident with no injuries	30
331 Lock-in	19
341 Search for person on land	1
342 Search for person in water	5
350 Extrication, rescue, other	0
351 Extrication of victim(s)	0
352 Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle	5
353 Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator	13
354 Trench/below-grade rescue	1
356 High Angle Rescue	2
357 Extrication of a victim from machinery	1
360 Water & ice related rescue	1
361 Swimming water areas rescue	1
362 Ice rescue	2
363 Swift water rescue	1
364 Surf rescue	0
365 Watercraft rescue	8
381 Rescue or EMS standby	0

Hazardous Condition (No Fire) 422

400 Hazardous condition, other	5
4002 Hazardous Condition Reported-Unfounded Problem	1
410 Combustible/flammable gas/liquid condition	4
411 Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	11

412 Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	60
413 Oil or other combustible liquid spill	4
420 Toxic condition, other	0
421 Chemical hazard (no spill or leak)	2
422 Chemical spill or leak	4
424 Carbon monoxide incident	53
440 Electrical wiring/equipment problem, Other	10
441 Heat from short circuit (wiring), defective/worn	12
442 Overheated motor	3
443 Breakdown of light ballast	1
444 Power line down	51
4441 Cable or phone line down	156
445 Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	24
451 Biological Hazard	4
460 Accident, other	0
461 Building or structure weakened or collapsed	10
462 Aircraft standby	3
463 Vehicle Accident general cleanup	4

Service Call 155

500 Service Call, other	0
510 Person in distress, Other	0
511 Lock-out	23
520 Water problem, other	1
5201 Secure open hydrant	1
521 Water evacuation	0
522 Water or steam leak	19
531 Smoke or odor removal	6
541 Animal problem	2
542 Animal rescue	7
550 Public service assistance, Other	1
551 Assist police or other governmental agency	23
552 Police matter	8
553 Public service	12
554 Assist invalid	1
555 Defective elevator, no occupants	9
561 Unauthorized burning	9
571 Cover assignment, standby, move up	32

Good Intent Call 153

600 Good intent call, Other	10
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611 Dispatched & cancelled en route	63
621 Wrong location	1
622 No Incident found on arrival at dispatch address	21
631 Authorized controlled burning	0
632 Prescribed fire	0
650 Steam mistaken for fire, other	0
651 Smoke scare, odor of smoke	27
652 Steam, vapor, fog or dust thought to be smoke	5
653 Smoke from barbecue, tar kettle	4
671 HazMat release investigation w/no HazMat	22

False Alarm & False Call 465

700 False alarm or false call, Other	9
710 Malicious false call, other	1
713 Telephone, malicious false alarm	4
714 Central station, malicious false alarm	12
715 Local alarm system, malicious false alarm	0
721 Bomb scare, no bomb	1
730 System malfunction, Other	2
731 Sprinkler activation due to malfunction	3
733 Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	79
734 Heat detector activation due to malfunction	4
735 Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	86
736 CO detector activation due to malfunction	24
740 Unintentional transmission of alarm, Other	2
741 Sprinkler activation, no fire	4
742 Extinguishing system activation	0
743 Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	77
744 Detector activation, no fire - unintentional	20
745 Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	122
746 Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	15

Severe Weather & Natural Disaster 0

800 Severe weather or natural disaster, other	0
812 Flood Assessment	0

Special Incident Type 0

900 Special type of incident, Other	0
9001 Training evolution	0
911 Citizen complaint	0

Public Outreach and Fire Education:

The PAFD has maintained a continual partnership with the Red Cross in a public smoke detector installation campaign. In the past four years, over 1,000 free smoke alarms have been installed throughout the City of Perth Amboy, of which have resulted in the lives of multiple families saved, and property preserved. The Red Cross maintains a stock of 10 year maintenance free smoke detectors with the department so we can install them in homes that cannot afford to buy them on their own. The New Jersey Division of Fire Safety also supplies the Department with 10 year maintenance free smoke detectors.

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, many City and Department community events were cancelled in 2020 including our Annual Fire Prevention Open House. In lieu of this, several “Zoom” style meetings and events were conducted with the Board of Education, bringing the Firehouse to the children at home for Fire Safety Events. Additionally, the Fire Department was able to bring some Birthday Cheer to members of the community by organizing Fire Truck drive-byes.

In 2020, the Department was able to continue its annual fundraiser for the Susan B. Komen Foundation for fighting breast cancer with the annual T-Shirt sales donation. Throughout the month of October, members of the Fire Department are able to wear the approved T-Shirt to show our support for those that have lost their lives and are battling breast cancer. Shirts are also sold to the public to join in on the fight.



Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Shirts at the City’s Annual Ceremony in October

Outlook for 2021:

In 2020, the Perth Amboy Fire Department continued to maintain the highest level of services to all City Residents as well as any municipality that may call for assistance. In 2020 over 2,000 emergency incidents were handled by the Perth Amboy Fire Department. This number is only going to get busier as the city grows. The department will continue to expand and be ready for any emergency 24/7 with the best staff, equipment, training and apparatus.

The land has been contracted to purchase for the new Northside Fire Station. In 2021, the Department plans to complete construction plans for the Fire Station and acquire the land necessary. It is anticipated that in 2023 the ground breaking for the construction of the fire station will take place with an opening date of 2024. This much needed station will put the Department in NFPA 1710 compliance for a 4 minute or less citywide response time and greatly enhance public safety in the Northside of the City.

In 2019 the Fire Department took over the Fire Prevention Bureau and in the fall of 2020, additional staff obtained their Fire Inspector Certification. This brings the total up to 10 Firefighter/Inspectors able to work off-duty and complete inspections. The Bureau's ultimate goal is to be able to inspect nearly 5,000 occupancies annually and in 2021, it is anticipated that an additional 10 members will obtain their Fire Inspector bringing the total to 20.

The Dive Team is fully operational and ready to respond to underwater emergencies. The capabilities will be expanded in 2021 when the next level of training is completed where the dive team will then be able to operate out into the major waterways and able to conduct dive operations from the fireboat. This training was put on hold in 2020 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

A Port Security Grant was awarded in 2020 to replace Marine 5, our 15 year old fireboat. The new boat will have nearly 4 times the water flow capacity as the existing one, providing all waterfront properties and areas of the City with a secondary water source in the event of a large scale emergency. This boat should be ordered in the summer of 2021 and delivered in the summer of 2022.

Fire safety initiatives will continue with our smoke detector hotline and Red Cross Sound the Alarm Events. 732-376-5419 is the number that all city residents can call and the fire department will install, free of charge, smoke detectors for single and two family houses that need them.

We look forward towards keeping all of the people and property of the City of Perth Amboy safe throughout 2021 and promise to be ready whenever and wherever they may be an emergency. Thank you for your continued support.



In Memory of Ex-Chief Anton "Tony" Massopust



PERTH AMBOY FIRE DEPARTMENT



"Always vigilant · planning for the future."