



ANNUAL REPORT

BLOOMINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



2024

BLOOMINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Operating Guidelines

Our Mission

Our mission is to make our community **stronger, safer, and more resilient** through exceptional emergency response and superior service.

Our Vision

To be the premier Fire Department committed to excellence, innovation, and progress.

Our Core Values

- Accountability
- Excellence
- Adaptability
- Family

"Dedicated to our Community, our Profession, and each Other"

FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



Fire Chief: Cory Matheny

I am honored to present the 2024 Annual Report for the Bloomington Fire Department. Reflecting on the past year, I continue to be inspired by the dedication, resilience, and professionalism demonstrated by the men and women of this department.

In 2024, the Bloomington Fire Department responded to **14,165 incidents**, marking a **4% increase from the previous year** and making this the **busiest year in our department's history**. Of these incidents, **10,775 were related to Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**—accounting for **76.1% of our total call volume**. These numbers not only reflect the continued growth of our community, but also highlight the increasing demand for pre-hospital medical care and the evolving role of our fire department in supporting public health.

Throughout the year, we continued to focus on strengthening the delivery of emergency services and building operational capacity. Highlights of 2024 include:

- **The hiring of 19 new employees**, helping to stabilize our workforce and build momentum toward full staffing.
- Progress toward placing a **fifth frontline ambulance** into service, which will significantly improve our EMS system's reliability and reduce response times.
- Continued implementation of our **Strategic Plan (FY25–FY27)**, guiding our investments in personnel, training, equipment, and facilities.
- Ongoing collaboration with IAFF Local 49 to remove hiring barriers and enhance recruitment efforts.
- Continued investment in technology and critical equipment upgrades, including the **ALS 360 program** and our **SCBA modernization project**.

In addition to our emergency response efforts, the department remained actively engaged in training, public education, and community partnerships. Our firefighters completed more than **15,000 hours of training**, ensuring we remain prepared to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of our community. We expanded our public education programs, built new internship opportunities, and strengthened regional mutual aid coordination through MABAS Division 41.

As we look ahead, our department remains committed to continuous improvement and long-term planning. We continue to focus on **response time analysis**, **facility planning for future fire stations**, and identifying new ways to deliver superior service to the citizens of Bloomington.

In closing, I want to thank our elected officials, city leadership, and community members for their continued support of the Bloomington Fire Department. Most importantly, I want to thank the dedicated professionals who make up this department. Their commitment to excellence, compassion, and service is what makes this organization truly exceptional.

Sincerely,
Cory R. Matheny
Fire Chief



WHO ARE WE AS A CITY AND AS A FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Bloomington Fire Department is a full-time, professional, unionized organization dedicated to protecting the lives and property of those who live in, work in, or visit the City of Bloomington. Operating from five strategically located stations, the department responds to a wide range of emergency calls across the city's 27 square miles. Our response fleet includes four engine companies, two truck companies, four Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances, one EMS Supervisor unit, one Battalion Chief vehicle, a HazMat unit, and an Airport Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) unit.

Each fire apparatus is staffed with a captain, an engineer, and a firefighter. Each ALS ambulance is staffed by at least one advanced life support provider—either a Paramedic or a Prehospital Registered Nurse—while the second crew member may be an EMT-Basic or EMT-Intermediate. Our EMS Supervisor operates an ALS-equipped non-transport SUV and responds to complex incidents within Bloomington and throughout McLean County. The department operates on a three-platoon system, with each shift on duty for 24 hours followed by 48 hours off, ensuring 24/7 emergency response coverage.

As an all-hazards department, our personnel are cross-trained to respond to structure fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescues, and aircraft-related emergencies. All fire apparatus are licensed at a minimum of the Basic Life Support (BLS) level, with Engine 1, Truck 1, and Engine 6 licensed at the Intermediate Life Support (ILS) level. Ambulances serve dual roles, with crew members carrying turnout gear, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), and tools to participate in fire suppression operations when needed.

Fire Department

Bloomington Fire provides mutual aid across McLean County and is a proud member of the Illinois Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), serving as the Division 41 Hazardous Materials Response Team. Our specialty-trained HazMat Technicians are deployable for regional and national emergencies. The majority of our mutual aid responses involve EMS intercepts, where our EMS Supervisor provides advanced care and support to neighboring agencies during high-acuity calls.

Located in Central Illinois, Bloomington is home to approximately 79,232 residents and serves as the county seat for McLean County—the second largest county in Illinois by land area. The city is anchored by major employers including State Farm Insurance, COUNTRY Financial, Rivian, and Ferrero USA. In addition to its strong corporate presence, Bloomington continues to expand in the advanced manufacturing and logistics sectors.

The city benefits from strong transportation infrastructure, including Interstates 55 and 74, and is served by Amtrak rail lines shared with Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern. Illinois Wesleyan University, Illinois State University in nearby Normal, and the Central Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA) contribute to Bloomington's identity as an educational, cultural, and transportation hub. CIRA supports both commercial air service and general aviation and houses a 24-hour OSF Life Flight helicopter crew on-site.

In all its efforts, the Bloomington Fire Department remains a pillar of safety and service. Backed by skilled personnel, modern equipment, and a deep commitment to public safety, we strive to deliver the highest quality emergency services. Through innovation, collaboration, and professionalism, we continue to protect and serve our community with excellence.





Mike Hartwig
Deputy chief,
Administration/
Operations



Eric Crabtree
Maintenance
Coordinator



Lee-Ann Gordon
Ambulance Billing
Manager



Karen Pumell
Support Staff V



Patrick Miller
Battalion Chief,
A-Shift



Mark Langelier
Battalion Chief,
B-Shift



Gavin Pitcher
Battalion Chief,
C-Shift

6 Full-time
Fire Captains

6 Full-time
Fire Captains

6 Full-time
Fire Captains

32 Full-time
Firefighters

32 Full-time
Firefighters

32 Full-time
Firefighters

Fire Station 1



Station 1 Captains



**Michael
Novak**
A-Shift



**Lance
Abel**
B-Shift



**Scott
Cheeseman**
C-Shift

Fire Station 1



Station 1 Captains



**Michael
Chaon**
A-Shift



**Tyson
Sholtz**
B-Shift



**Steve
Zimmerman**
C-Shift

Fire Station 2



Station 2 Captains



**Dennis
Hoyland**
A-Shift



**Lance
Benedict**
B-Shift



**Jason
Anglin**
C-Shift



Bloomington
ILLINOIS

Cory Matheny
Fire Chief

Jason Greer
Deputy chief,
EMS



Carl Reeb
Deputy chief,
Training



Nicholas Shaver
EMS Supervisor,
A-Shift



Chuck Casagrande
Captain, Assistant
Training Officer



Jon Powell
EMS Supervisor,
B-Shift



Jim Davis
Captain, Assistant
Training Officer



Derick Riordan
EMS Supervisor,
C-Shift



Frank Friend
Captain, Public
Information Officer



Paul Alferink
Management
Analyst



Dana Flanagan
Office Manager



Angie Quinn
Support Staff IV



Chris Davis
IT Specialist

Fire Station 3



Station 3 Captains



Matthew Bozarth
A-Shift



Eric Owens
B-Shift



David White
C-Shift

Fire Station 4



Station 4 Captains



Jason Kernosky
A-Shift



Justin Milton
B-Shift



Eric Hall
C-Shift

6

Fire Station 6



Station 6 Captains



James Schreiber
A-Shift



Jeff Moran
B-Shift



Kyle Kinefelter
C-Shift

ANNUAL FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Expenditure Highlights

1. Delivery of a new E-One Fire Engine (E-4)
2. ALS 360 Equipment Placed into Service (Stryker Ambulance Equipment – Cots, Stair Chairs, Cardiac Monitors, etc.)
3. Ordered 2 new Ambulances
4. Delivery of 6 Support Vehicles - Car-1, Car-2, Car-4, PIO, EMS-1, and BC-1
5. Station Updates – Kitchen Remodel at 3's and Boilers at HQ and 2's.



Proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budgetary Projects

1. HVAC Replacement at Station #3
2. HVAC Replacement at Station #1
3. Sprinkler Addition at Station #1
4. Kitchen re-model at Station #4
5. Studies – Standard of Cover and Station Needs Assessment

PROMOTIONS AND NEW EMPLOYEES

Promotions

Battalion Chief



Mark Languellier

Captain



Jeff Moran

Captain



Kyle Klinefelter

EMS Supervisor



Jon Powell

Engineer



Clayton Matteson

New Hires

There were 19 new employees hired in FY2025.

- Katie Breazeale
- Kevin Aschbrenner
- Mark Pitzer
- Mason Witzke
- Cal Urycki
- Heather Luth
- Jacob Bergelin
- Jason Mercer
- Brandon Brown
- Chris Marek
- Ethan Snively
- Phillip Taylor
- Robert Barnard
- Holden Lueck
- Dalton Hogan
- Jake Cheeseman
- Holden Snyder
- Ben Schuler
- Ian Wisher

RETIREMENTS

The Bloomington Fire Department would like to recognize the individuals who retired in 2024. Thank you for your service to the citizens of Bloomington, and we hope you enjoy your retirement.



**Battalion Chief
Dave Talley**



**Captain
Parrish Brown**



**Captain
Mark Visintine**



ADMINISTRATION - OPERATIONS

Deputy Chief Mike Hartwig



In 2024, the Bloomington Fire Department recorded its busiest year, responding to 14,165 calls for service—an average of nearly 39 calls per day. Of these, 10,775 (76.1%) were EMS-related, while the remaining 3,390 (23.9%) involved fire suppression, vehicle accidents, hazardous materials, and other incident types. Despite the growing demand for service, the department maintained daily operations with 29 on-duty personnel strategically positioned across five fire stations to ensure rapid response and citywide coverage.

Of the remaining 3,390 emergencies that the department responded to in 2024, 89 were documented as structure fires, accounting for a total dollar loss of \$5,516,795.00. The chart below outlines the annual number of calls and dollar loss over the last five years.

Year	Calls	Dollar Loss
2020	11,583	\$2,020,345.00
2021	12,969	\$4,355,210.00
2022	13,272	\$1,235,210.00
2023	13,618	\$3,115,085.00
2024	14,165	\$5,516,795.00



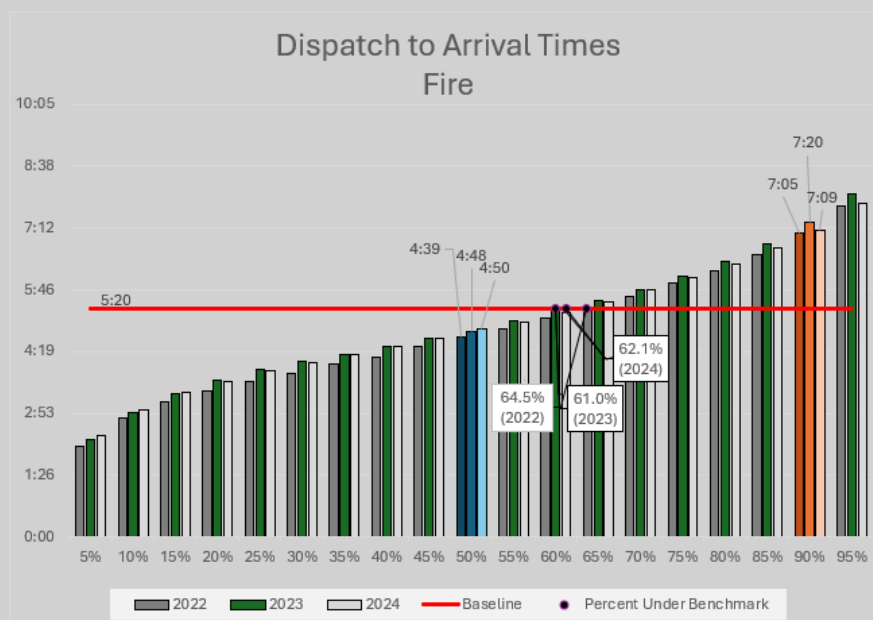
The Bloomington Fire Department operates as an all-hazards agency, responding to a wide range of emergencies beyond structure fires. These include EMS incidents, vehicle fires, traffic accidents, hazardous materials responses, and Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) operations. The chart below highlights the top 10 fire-related incident types recorded in 2024.

2024 Top10 Fire Incident Types



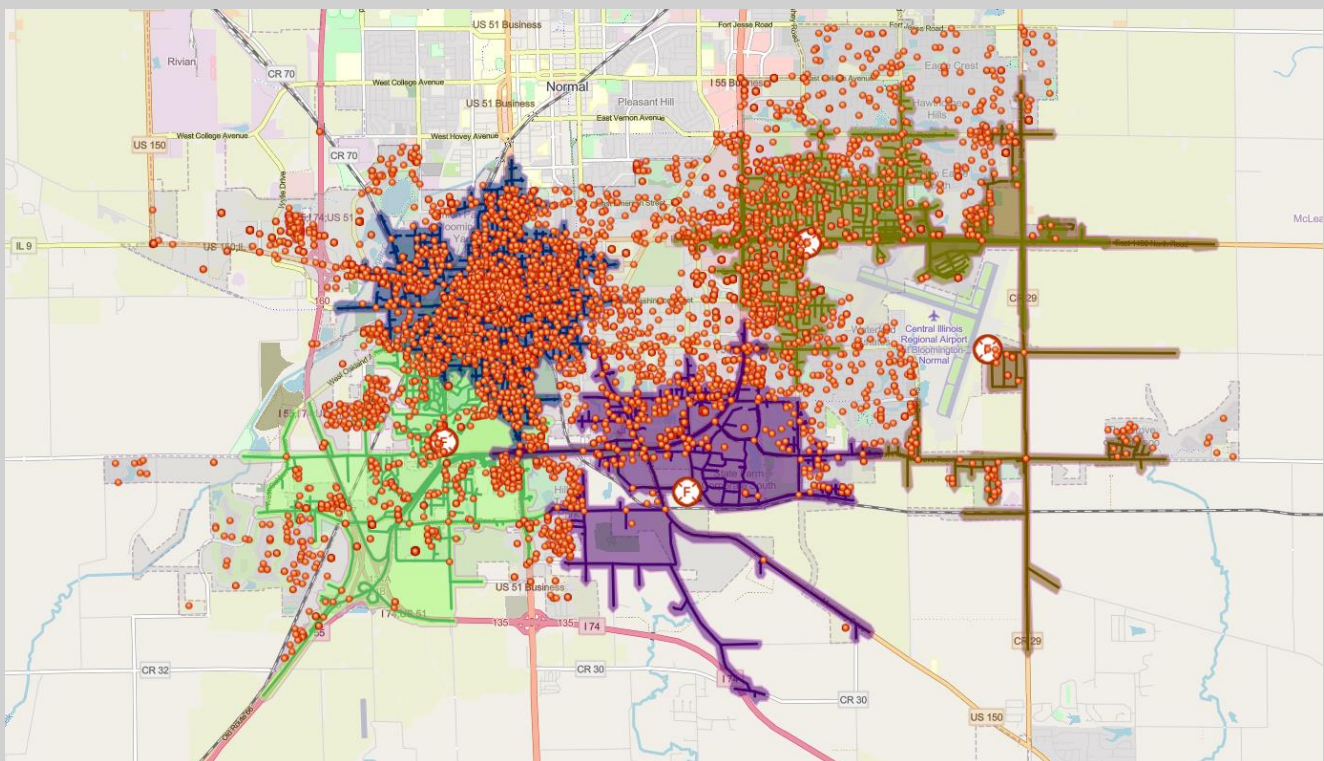
The department strives to meet industry standards for response times as established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). NFPA 1710 sets a 90% performance benchmark for both fire and EMS responses. Specifically, the standard recommends that the first unit arrive on scene within 5 minutes and 20 seconds for fire-related emergencies, and within 5 minutes for EMS incidents. This timeline begins at dispatch and ends when the first unit arrives on scene. It is important to note that these benchmarks apply only to emergent, lights-and-sirens responses; non-emergent calls are excluded from this data.

The graph below shows the department's performance relative to the NFPA standard over the past three years. In 2024, 62.1% of emergency fire responses met the recommended benchmark.



We continue to analyze our data to find opportunities to reduce response times and move closer to meeting national standards. Our review has identified parts of the city where we consistently fall outside the 4-minute drive-time threshold established by the NFPA.

The chart below highlights the 4-minute drive time coverage areas surrounding each of our five fire stations. Orange dots represent emergent calls for service received in 2024. Calls occurring outside of these drive-time zones have been identified as areas for future evaluation, including the potential need to add or relocate fire stations. To help address response time challenges, the department is also expanding its use of traffic preemption equipment, which allows responding units to control traffic signals. This technology is intended to reduce delays and expand the effective reach of the 4-minute response zone.



TRAINING

Deputy Chief Carl Reeb



The Bloomington Fire Department is fortunate to employ many service-oriented, talented, and dedicated firefighter/EMS providers. In 2024, our personnel responded to over 14,000 calls for service. Meeting this demand requires not only a strong academic knowledge foundation, but also the ability to perform a wide range of hands-on skills across multiple disciplines.

Discipline	Number of total FF's trained in that discipline
Firefighting	122 of 122 (108 in 2023)
EMS	122 of 122: 23 - EMT Basic/ 20-EMT-Intermediate/87-Paramedics
HAZMAT	122 of 122 Operations level / 58 of 108 Technician level
ARFF (Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting)	15 of 122
Fire Investigators	7 of 122
Ice Water Rescue	122 of 122
Drone Pilots	7 of 122
Incident Command Certified	59 of 122
Auto Extrication	82 of 122 Operations level / 16 of 122 Technician level

In 2024, the department hired nineteen new firefighters—the largest number in a single year in our department’s history. Twelve were hired in April and seven more in August. This group also reflects what is likely the most diverse hiring class to date, representing a wide range of ages, genders, races, prior careers, and military service. Notably, it was the first time in recent history that candidates were not required to hold EMT or paramedic licensure at the time of hire. All nineteen recruits have exceeded expectations, with eight currently enrolled as the first group in a yearlong paramedic training program led by the department’s Assistant Training Officer for EMS. The program is delivered in collaboration with Heartland Community College and the McLean County Area EMS System.

As call volume continues to increase each year, it places added pressure on both time and resources available for training. The department continues to find creative ways to deliver high-quality instruction while balancing operational demands and budget constraints. Through intentional time management, we ensure our personnel receive the training necessary to deliver the highest level of service to the community..

Our training program is guided by regulatory requirements set by agencies such as the Illinois Department of Labor, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Training occurs both in-house at our fire stations and training tower, as well as at certified off-site facilities like the Illinois Fire Service Institute and the National Fire Academy. In addition, many of our members pursue higher education, working toward Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or Master’s degrees alongside their departmental training.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Deputy Chief Jason Greer



Emergency Medical Services (EMS) incidents continue to be the leading call for service for the Bloomington Fire Department, accounting for over 76% of total call volume. EMS is delivered through a tiered system of providers, including firefighters licensed at the Paramedic, EMT-Intermediate, or EMT-Basic levels. Each license level brings unique skills and qualifications to the scene, allowing the department to provide comprehensive pre-hospital care.

The department continues to experience substantial growth in EMS demand. In 2020, BFD responded to 8,645 EMS incidents. By 2024, that number rose to over 10,700, highlighting the increasing needs of a growing community. Medic 1, based out of the Headquarters Fire Station, was the busiest unit in the city, responding to over 4,300 incidents. Additionally, the department assisted agencies with medical incidents outside the City of Bloomington 266 times in 2024.

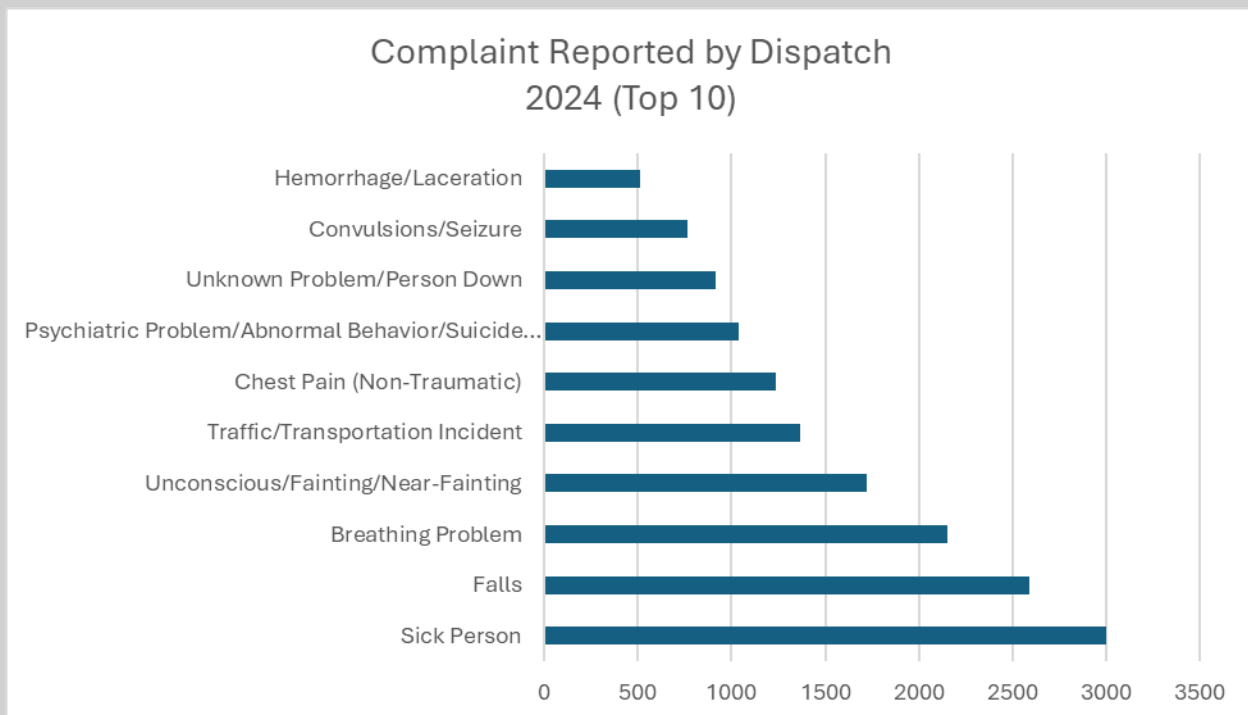
In addition to emergency responses, BFD provides ambulance and medical standby coverage for a variety of local events, including:

- Bloomington Bison Hockey
- High school and Illinois Wesleyan football games
- Downtown arena events
- Tailgates and Tallboys music festival – this event presents unique challenges due to its large crowds and multi-day outdoor setup.
- BFD paramedics have received specialized training to provide medical support to the Bloomington Police Department SWAT team.

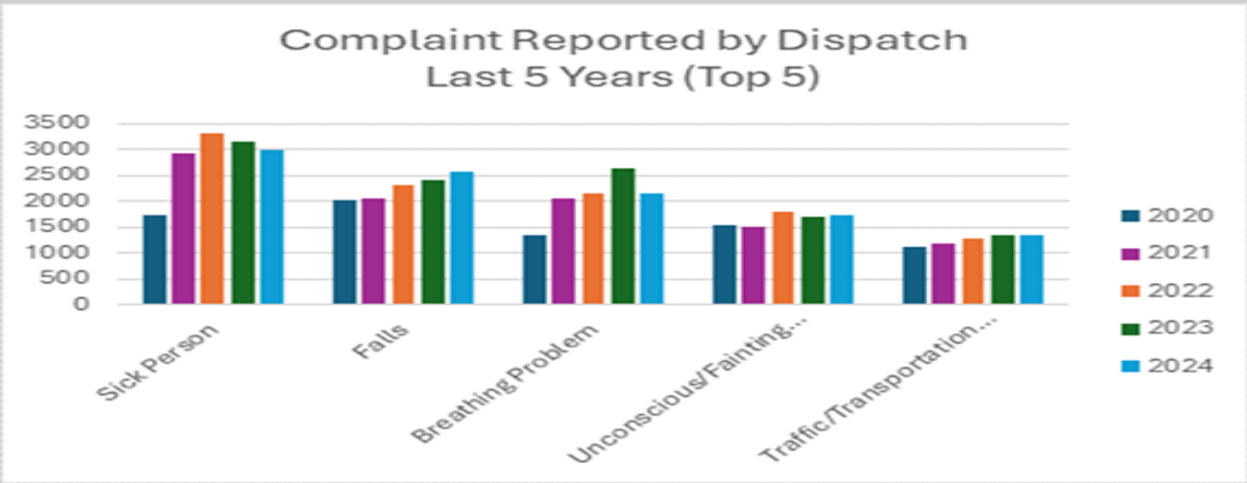
The department's EMS response begins at the City's 911 Communications Center, where telecommunicators gather vital information. Using Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems, dispatchers deploy the closest available ambulance. Calls are prioritized using International Standards for Emergency Medical Dispatch based on severity. In critical cases—such as suspected heart attacks or strokes—a fire apparatus and EMS Supervisor may also be dispatched to provide rapid advanced care and coordination. As the first point of medical contact, EMS crews are an extension of local emergency departments. They bring advanced-level training, life-saving medications, and specialized equipment directly to the scene.

The department tracks both the most common dispatch reasons and assessed medical problems. This data helps drive decisions about resource allocation, training, and system improvements.

The chart below shows the most common reasons people called 911 for medical help in 2024. These are based on what was reported to dispatchers at the time of the call.

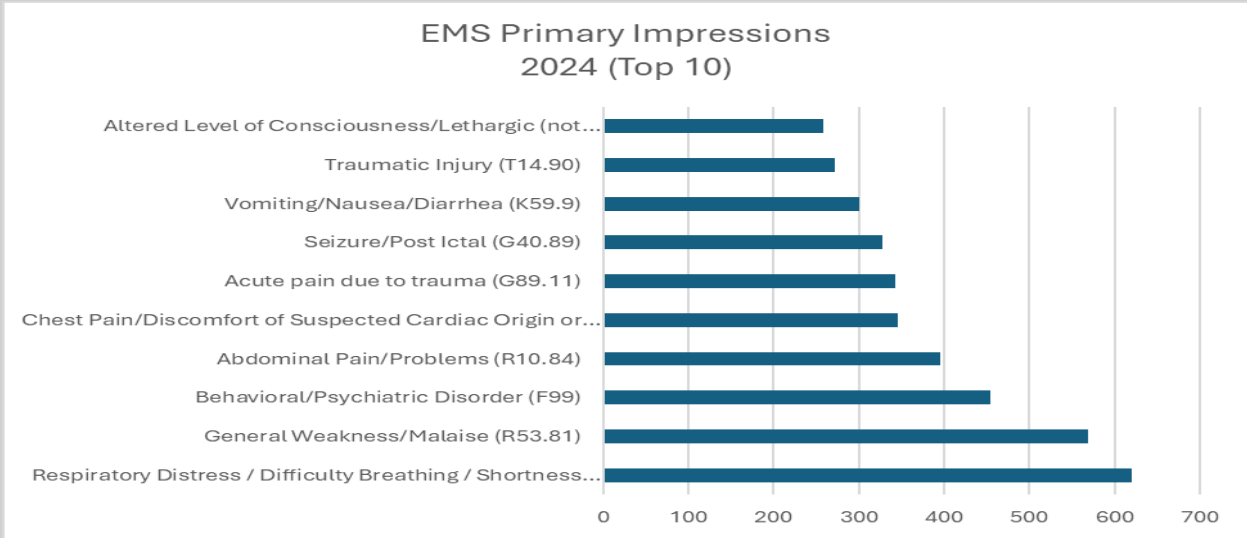


The chart below shows how the top five EMS dispatch complaints have trended over the last five years. This helps us identify long-term patterns and prepare resources to meet ongoing community needs.



Notably, calls related to general illness, falls, and breathing problems have consistently ranked as the top three EMS complaints since 2020. In response, the department is planning to prioritize fall prevention as part of our 2025 Community Risk Reduction efforts. We've begun working with the Illinois State University School of Nursing to explore opportunities for collaboration, with the goal of reducing fall-related injuries—particularly among older adults in our community.

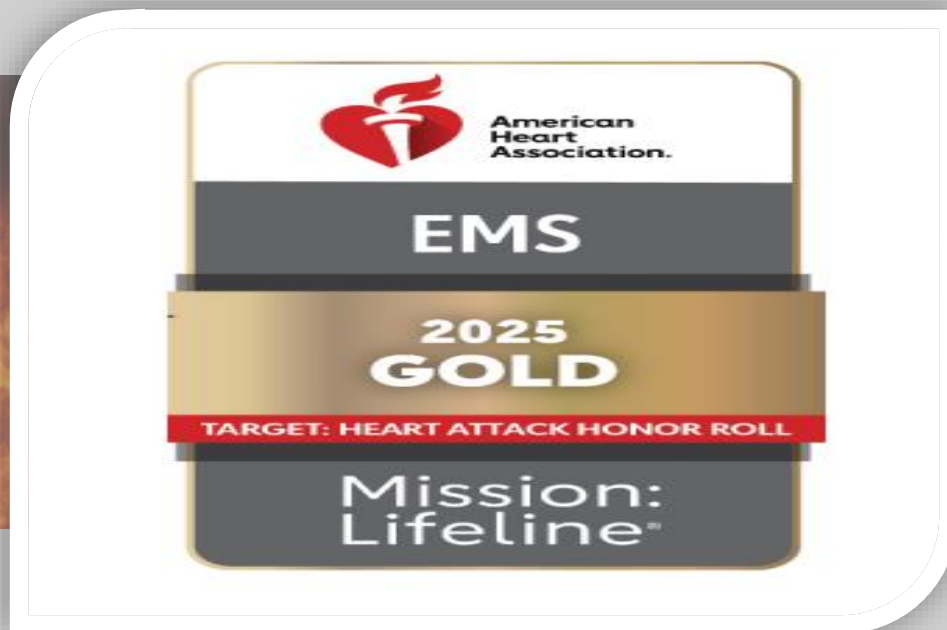
After arriving on scene, our EMS providers assess each patient to determine the actual medical problem. This chart shows the most common medical conditions diagnosed by our paramedics in the field during 2024.



Looking Ahead: 2025 Initiatives

To continue meeting the community's growing needs, the Bloomington Fire Department will:

- Place new, state-of-the-art heart monitors on all fire companies and ambulances
- Place two new ambulances into service, replacing aging units that have reached the end of their service life



Commitment to Excellence

The Bloomington Fire Department is committed to meeting the community's increasing demand for EMS. Ensuring that all residents and visitors receive exceptional pre-hospital medical care remains a core priority. Through ongoing training, strategic resource investments, and collaboration with healthcare partners, BFD will remain responsive and prepared to deliver high-quality emergency medical services to the public.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TEAM - Bat.Chief Gavin Pitcher



The Bloomington Fire Department's Hazmat Division has once again demonstrated unwavering dedication and excellence in fulfilling its mission to protect lives, property, and the environment from hazardous materials incidents. Through a combination of rigorous training, proactive maintenance, and effective response strategies, our division has continued to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and service excellence.

Training and Education:

Education and training remain fundamental pillars of our division's success. Over the past year, our employees dedicated an impressive 1517 hours to Hazmat education and training.

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance expertise within our ranks, the department sent 19 new firefighters to the Hazmat Operations certification program, a comprehensive 40-hour course designed to equip responders with essential skills and knowledge.

Equipment Maintenance and Acquisition:

Maintaining operational readiness is paramount for our division, and despite the challenges posed by aging equipment, we remained proactive in addressing maintenance and equipment needs. Throughout the year, we have completed various maintenance items related to the HAZMAT vehicle and equipment. MABAS continues to provide limited support through monitor calibration and testing and replacement equipment. Due to the limited MABAS support, the department has started the replacement of aging HAZMAT items such as SCBA's and bottles, testing equipment and deployment resources.

Financial Sustainability:

The implementation of the "spiller pays" ordinance has created a mechanism for the fire department to recover a portion of the costs associated with hazardous materials incidents. In 2024, this initiative returned \$1,772.94 to the City's general fund. While this represents only a fraction of the actual expenses tied to hazmat responses, it supports our continued ability to operate efficiently and sustain specialized capabilities.

Hazmat Response Statistics:

Despite the challenges posed by a high call volume, our team remained poised and responsive, attending to a variety of Hazmat incidents throughout the year. The following is a breakdown of incidents responded to by the Bloomington Fire Department Hazmat Division:

Total HAZMAT related calls: 197

Carbon monoxide incidents: 28

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) leaks: 4

Chemical spills or leaks: 3

Gas leaks (natural gas or LPG): 151

Gasoline or other flammable liquid spills: 8

Other Hazmat dispatches: 3

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Bloomington Fire Department Hazmat Division remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the community from the dangers posed by hazardous materials incidents. Through continuous training, diligent maintenance, and effective response measures, we stand ready to address any challenges that may arise. As we look towards the future, we remain dedicated to advancing our capabilities and furthering our mission of ensuring the safety and well-being of all residents.



PUBLIC EDUCATION

Captain Frank Friend



The Public Information Officer (PIO) continues to serve as a vital link between the Fire Department and the public, media, partner agencies, and the private sector. Key responsibilities include managing social media platforms, coordinating community engagement events, promoting community health and fire safety programs, serving as the department spokesperson, and maintaining the Bloomington Fire Department website.

Community Risk Reduction

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) remains a cornerstone of the department's mission. Through strategies such as education, engineering, economic incentives, emergency response, and enforcement, the department works to identify and address unsafe behaviors in high-risk populations. These efforts are increasingly guided by data analysis, with a focus on improving community resilience. Education continues to be our most powerful tool in raising awareness and preventing emergencies before they occur.



Public Education & Community Risk Reduction

In 2024, the Bloomington Fire Department continued its strong emphasis on public education, outreach, and proactive safety initiatives that support our mission of building a safer and more informed community.

Major Initiatives

Smoke Alarm Campaign	Installed 250+ alarms in partnership with the Red Cross.
Internship Program	Hosted two interns—one now pursuing paramedicine, the other supporting social media outreach.
Grant Funding	Secured \$90,000 to expand life and fire safety education.
Ride-Along Program	Engaged 300+ participants in firsthand experiences.
STEM Outreach	Completed a hands-on project introducing students to emergency services.
HOTPAD Safety Program	Distributed 1,700 cooking safety pads via local food programs.
Door Hanger Outreach	Delivered 300 post-incident fire safety reminders.
Renters Insurance Campaign	Increased awareness and participation among residents.
Blood Drives	Partnered with the Red Cross on two successful donation events.

Community Engagement

In 2024, the Bloomington Fire Department directly engaged more than 10,000 community members through public events, safety education, media outreach, and hands-on training—extending our impact both in person and online to build a safer, more informed community.

- Media & Communications: 26 press releases, 10 media interviews, and 201 Facebook posts reached over 229,000 people, generating 31,000+ interactions.
- Events: Participated in 42 public events, including Fire & Life Safety Day, Day of the Dozer, and local school raffles.

Public Education Impact:

The following table highlights a portion of the measurable impact of our 2024 public education programs, which provided hands-on safety training and outreach to residents across Bloomington.

Community Engagement & Public Education	
CPR Classes	23
Fire Station Tours	18
Fire Extinguisher Classes	7
Business Fire Drills	6
Merit Badge Sessions	5
Smoke Detectors Installed	18
Knox Boxes Installed	5
Car Seat Safety Checks	1

These outreach and education efforts remain critical components of our mission to build a safer and more informed community.

Looking Ahead: 2025 & Beyond

As we plan for the future, we remain committed to data-driven CRR strategies:

- **Fire Safety Simulator:** Launching mid-2025 to provide mobile, hands-on safety education.
- **Smart Burner Program:** Targets cooking-related fires—ongoing in-home deployment and tracking.
- **Fall Prevention Initiative:** Exploring a targeted program in response to 2,500+ annual fall-related calls.
- **NERIS Evaluation Tools:** Enhancing CRR tracking and outcome analysis with the upcoming national rollout.

***Note:** Staffing remains a key factor in expanding CRR programs. As emergency call volume grows, sustainable support is essential to maintaining high-quality outreach and prevention efforts.*

AIRCRAFT RESCUE FIREFIGHTING

Captain Chuck Casagrande



The Central Illinois Regional Airport operates within the City of Bloomington. For an aircraft to land, an Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) vehicle operator must be on site. These ARFF drivers are required to undergo continuous monthly training to maintain their qualifications for operating on the airfield. The Bloomington Fire Department currently maintains 15 qualified drivers, with five drivers assigned per shift, ensuring that a certified ARFF driver is always available.

The department maintains a comprehensive ARFF training program in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulation Part 139. This ensures the department can provide ARFF response to CIRA. The FAA enforces strict guidelines for every aspect of this program and conducts an annual physical audit to inspect training records and ensure compliance.

Per Part 139, all required training topics must be completed within one year. If even a single topic is missed by one day, the driver is considered out of compliance and may not operate the vehicle. There are 13 required topics, an annual live fire training event, three special equipment modules, and biannual testing conducted by CIRA. The department covers these requirements twice annually to ensure all personnel remain compliant.

In 2024, the department continued its second in-house ARFF Academy. Participants (new drivers to the program) completed all training topics and practical exercises required by CIRA for initial certification. This training effort was a collaborative initiative between the Bloomington Fire Department and CIRA Airport Operations personnel.

In conclusion, the Bloomington Fire Department's ARFF Training Program remains committed to achieving high standards through rigorous training and education. These efforts were validated in 2023 when the FAA awarded the department a perfect score during its annual inspection—signifying a gold standard in ARFF operational readiness.

FIRE INVESTIGATION - Captain Mark Languellier



Over the past year, the Fire Investigation Team of the Bloomington Fire Department conducted a total of 50 fire investigations. Each case was thoroughly examined to determine origin and cause, with a focus on improving community safety, reducing fire risk, and supporting criminal investigations when necessary. Our seven-member team operates in a dual role capacity, balancing fire suppression duties alongside their fire investigation responsibilities. This dual responsibility is taxing at times, but the members of the team are committed to excellence.

The team members also record countless hours of training each and every year, in conjunction with their regular training across the board with the fire department, in order to recertify as Fire Investigators with the Office of the State Fire Marshal every four years.

Of the 50 total fires investigated, 30 were determined to be accidental in nature. These incidents included cooking fires, electrical malfunctions, improperly discarded smoking materials, and heating-related mishaps. We emphasize public education in these areas to help reduce recurrences.

Of the remaining 20 fires, 12 were classified as undetermined, despite extensive investigations. These cases lacked sufficient evidence to confirm a definitive cause, or there were multiple potential ignition sources within the area of origin and could not be narrowed down to just one single cause. This is not uncommon within the fire service. Factors such as extensive fire damage, delayed reporting of the fire, or absence of witnesses limited our ability to conclude the investigations with certainty. Nevertheless, documentation and evidence were preserved in case additional information becomes available.

Eight fires were classified as intentionally set, triggering criminal investigations. For these incidents, our team worked closely with the Bloomington Police

Department detectives to gather evidence, interview witnesses, and process the scene. Their partnership remains a vital resource, particularly in incendiary cases where legal consequences are pursued.

One notable intervention this year involved a juvenile fire setter. Our investigation team conducted a fire safety intervention, which is used as an assessment tool to determine the level of risk a juvenile has for the potential of starting more fires in the future. The goal of this outreach is to prevent future fire-setting behavior and ensure the safety of the individuals and the community.

As always, our investigators and operational activities are carried out at the direction of the Fire Chief, who provides direction and prioritization based on departmental needs. We remain committed to delivering high-quality investigations, supporting fire prevention efforts, and maintaining readiness. The dedication of our team members in balancing the demands of fire suppression and investigative duties continues to be instrumental in serving and protecting our community.





Bloomington

FIRE DEPARTMENT



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