



# MOORHEAD FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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## MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY CHIEF

*On behalf of Chief Duysen and the members of the Moorhead Fire Department, it is my honor to present our annual report for 2020.*

*This year, more than any other in recent department history, has drawn upon our ability to adapt to changing conditions to fulfill our mission. In February, officials from the Moorhead, Fargo and West Fargo Fire Departments, Sanford Ambulance, Red River Regional Dispatch and our Medical Director met and developed plans to operate in the presence of a pandemic. Previously developed plans for H1N1 and Ebola response were updated, along with guidance from our local providers, to create procedures to protect first responders, compartmentalize service delivery groups and provide patient triage, transport and care in ways that allowed the delivery of essential services to continue.*

*These plans were put to the test when a COVID-19 outbreak occurred at Station 1 this summer. By isolating stations and crews we were able to limit the service disruption to this one station. Remaining crews at Station 2 and the administrative staff pulled extra duty. Our mutual-aid partners stepped up to provide additional response and we temporarily shed non-essential responses until our personnel were back in-service.*

*I'm extremely proud of our members' ability to adapt to the changing conditions during COVID, their dedication to the job and serving our community when their own wellness and the long-term impacts of that service were unknown. They have truly demonstrated an embodiment of our espoused values: Professionalism, Responsibility, Integrity, Cooperation and Dedication.*



*I look forward to a time when we can return to a more normal mode of operation and am confident that we will continue to adapt and fulfill the responsibilities of our duty and mission, whatever we face in the future.*

*Sincerely,*

**Jeff Wallin**  
**Deputy Chief**



*Rich Duysen, Fire Chief*

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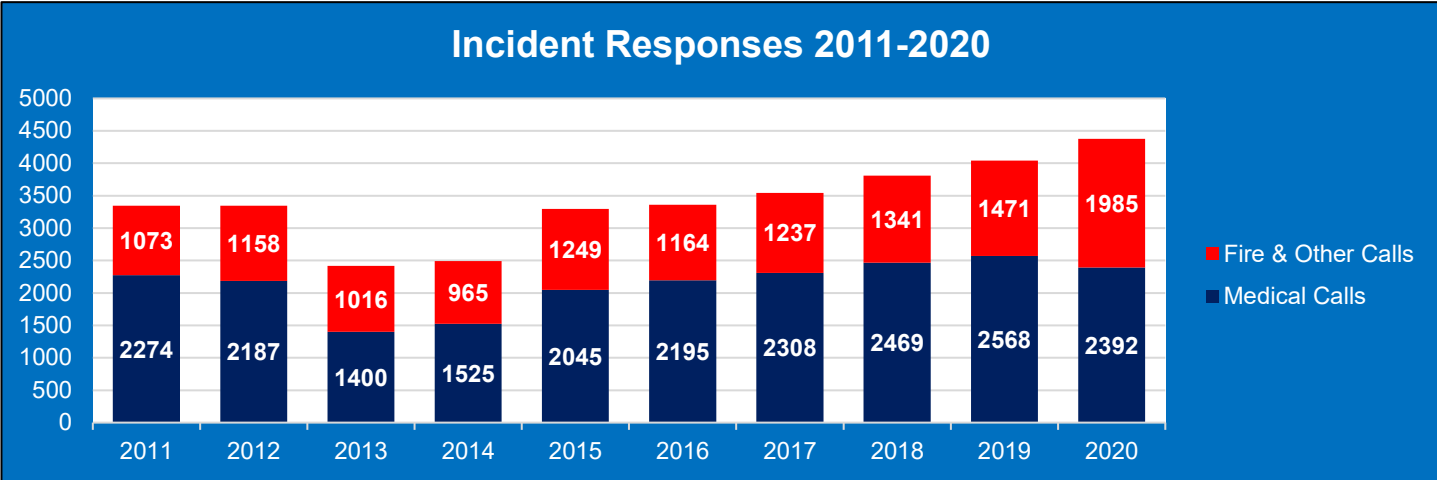
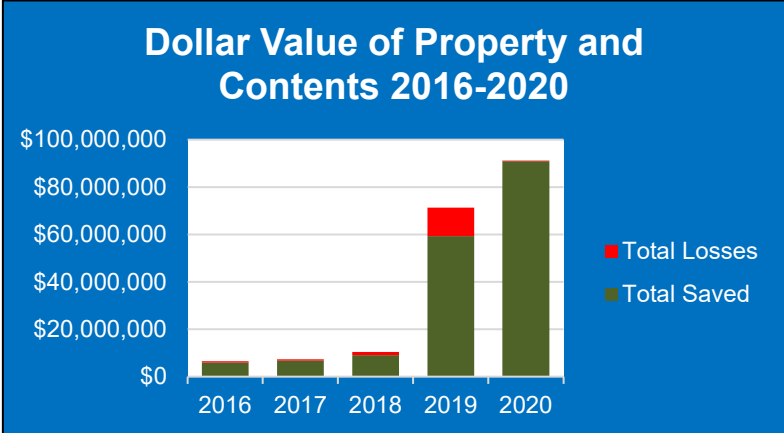
# EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In 2020 we responded to 4,377 calls for service as shown in the chart below. This averaged 12 calls for service each day. Of those, 54.6% were related to medical and rescue calls, the remaining 45.4% were related to fires, hazardous materials, and other incidents. A more detailed breakdown can be found in the 2020 NFPA Report in the Appendix on page 11.



The total valuation of property involved in fire-related calls in 2020 totaled 59.2 million dollars. Fire damage was estimated at 296,232 dollars resulting in a 99.7% save rate.

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) conducted an analysis of the City's fire protection capability and reaffirmed our ISO Class 3 rating (lower numbers on a 1 to 10 scale are better). This places the Moorhead Fire Department in a better rating bracket than 87.8% of fire departments in the United States. This generally translates into lower fire insurance rates for homes and businesses (2017 ISO statistics).

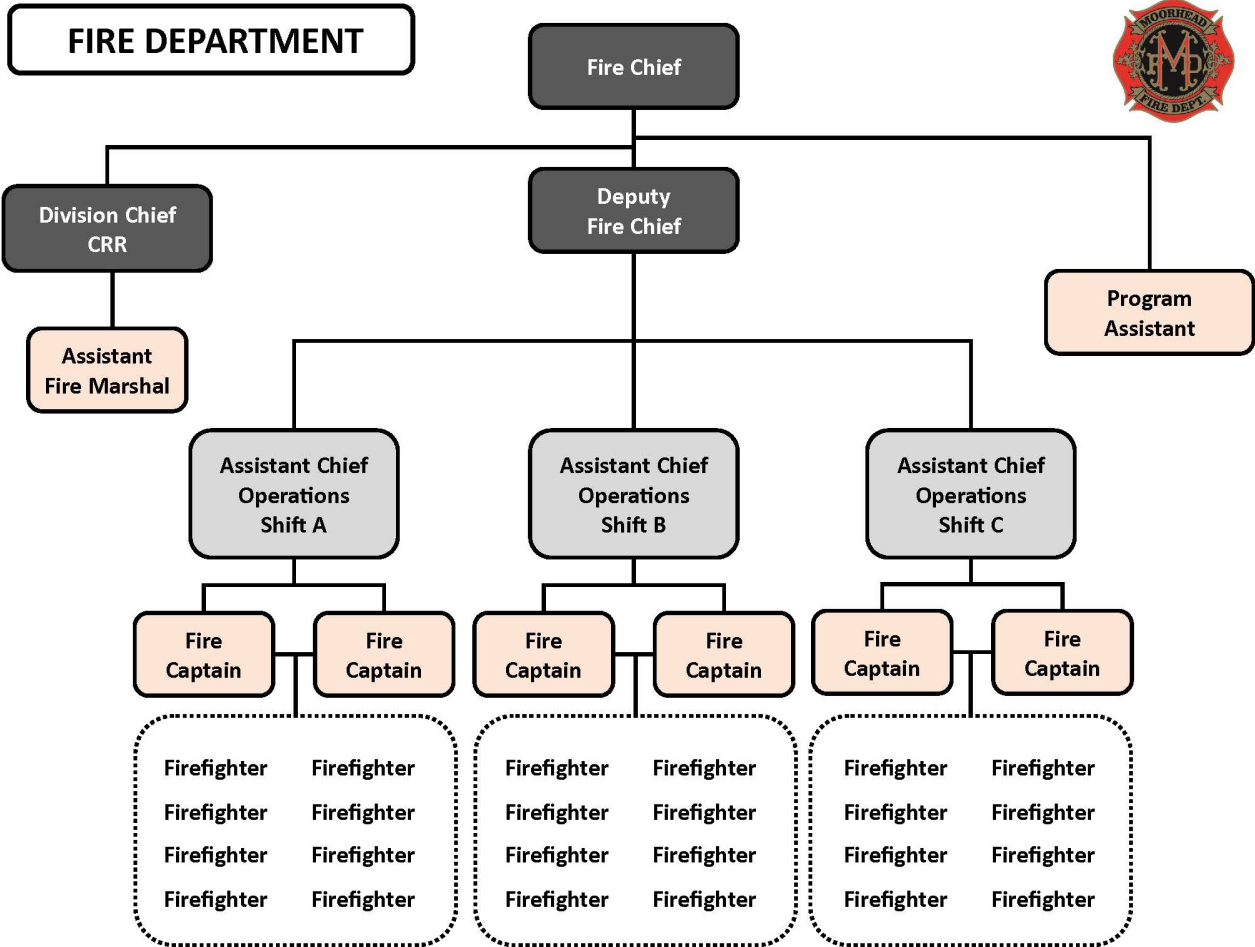


# PERSONNEL

The Moorhead Fire Department utilizes three shift commanders (Assistant Chiefs), six station Captains and eight Firefighters that respond to calls from the public during 24-hour shifts out of two stations. They are led by the Deputy Chief who also performs other administrative functions.

The Fire Marshal/Emergency Manager, a Division Chief, heads the Community Risk reduction programs for the department and the City, assisted by the Assistant Fire Marshal.

The Fire Chief oversees all department operations, supported by the Program Assistant, our most senior department member, who assists in the administration of all areas of the fire department.



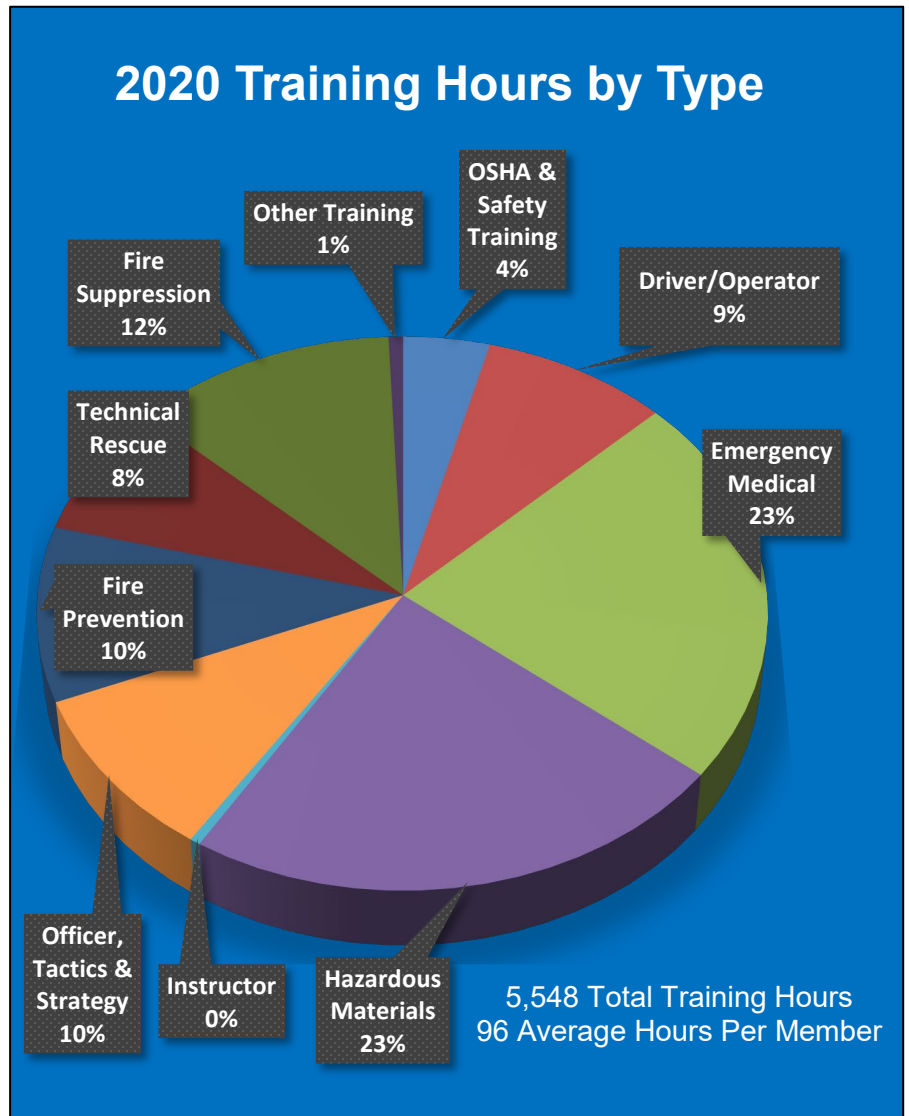
# TRAINING

In 2020 our crews completed 5,548 hours of training to prepare for a wide variety of emergency calls. This averaged out to 96 hours per member.

Our crews conduct fire training to meet the continuing education requirements for maintaining their Minnesota Firefighter License and National Firefighter II Certification as well as accumulating credit to maintain our City's ISO rating.

We have staff members Nationally Certified in 18 different training categories that include firefighting, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, fire prevention, fire investigation, fire code enforcement, fire supervision and adult education. A majority of this training was conducted in-house by our own on-duty staff; a considerable cost savings.

Our Emergency Medical Technicians receive all required training in-house to maintain their licenses in a partnership with the MN Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board and Sanford Health.



# COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

The goal of the Fire Prevention Bureau is to minimize the risk of life and property loss through a proactive Community Risk Reduction Program. Community risk reduction combines prevention and mitigation strategies to make life safer. Risk prevention involves anticipating potential hazards within the community and facilitating interventions to prevent occurrences. Risk mitigation involves anticipating potential hazards within the community and facilitating interventions to diminish adverse outcomes.

Community risk reduction is the sharing of responsibility between government and its citizens to create an environment where people live, work and invest in a safe community. The entire community (including citizens sharing in the responsibility for their own safety and preparedness) and the fire department collaborate to mitigate the fire risk within the community.

The Moorhead Fire Department supports this effort through a variety of programs such as emergency management and fire prevention.

## FIRE CAUSES

In 2020 there were 37 reported structure fires within the City of Moorhead. Those include fires occurring in homes, apartments, businesses, vehicles, and outside areas such as grass and dumpsters. The majority of fires occurred in homes or apartments. It is the places where we spend the most time and feel the most comfortable that accounts for the location where we see the highest risk of fire.

In 2020 the kitchen area was the most frequent location where fires occurred. We would consider all of the 2020 kitchen fires as preventable because they were started by unattended cooking. Complacency also plays a factor whether storing items on a stove top, taking a phone call while cooking, or being distracted in other ways, a fire can start quickly and catch someone by surprise. Thankfully we did not have any fatalities, but this highlights the need for education, being vigilante and attentive while cooking.

The second leading fire location in 2020 were bedrooms and third was exterior decks and patios. The primary cause of these fires were the improper disposal of cigarettes and other smoking materials. This year's data showed that fires most commonly occurred where people spend the majority of their time, at home. In homes people feel the most comfortable, which can lead to a sense of complacency. People let their guard down at home and have a feeling that nothing will happen to them. That is until something does happen. The safest action is to prevent the fire from ever occurring by being aware of how personal behaviors and actions contribute to their own fire risk.

**“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”**  
*Benjamin Franklin*



## CODE ENFORCEMENT

- Rental Housing Inspections for Buildings with 5+ Units
  - 5,394 Units / 254 Buildings
- Commercial Inspections
- Hotel Inspections
- Plan Review
- 48 Daycare / Foster Care Facilities
- Permits
- Citizen Concerns and Complaints
- Campus Inspections

### *Rental Housing Inspections*

- Electrical Hazards
- Interior/Exterior Building Component Deficiencies
- Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Alarms Missing or Inoperable

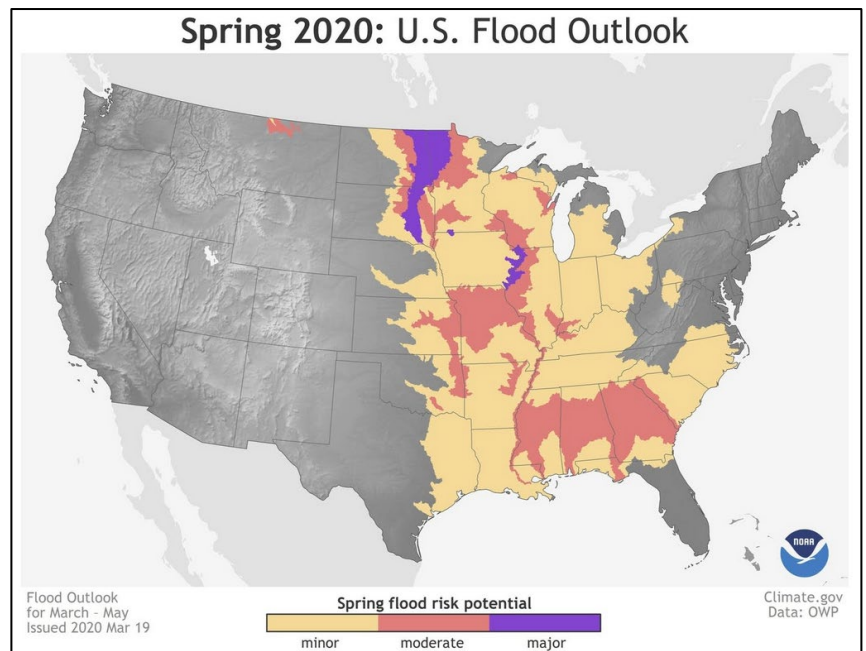
## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2020 was a very busy year for Emergency Management. The year started off with a potential major spring flood risk and in March the world was gripped by a global pandemic, unlike anyone has seen since the 1918 Flu Pandemic.

### *Spring Flooding*

The wet 2019 fall and heavy snow amounts from October through December, placed the Red River Basin at record precipitation levels. The record wet fall led to many of the river and ditches being full. This prompted the National Weather Service in Grand Forks, North Dakota to issue warnings about the moderate to high level of risk from flooding.

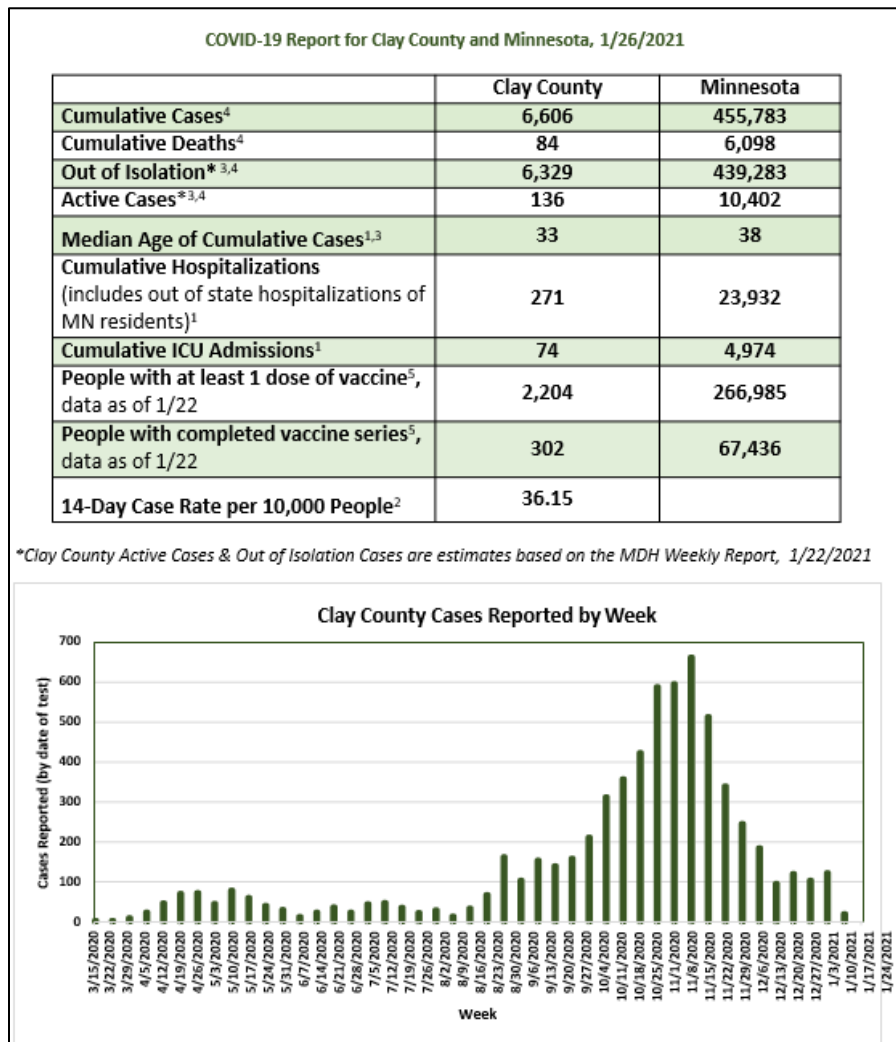
The City of Moorhead took action and planned out the flood mitigation strategies. Compared to past years, the threat to public infrastructure decreased to the point where no sandbags needed to be made. All the mitigation plans were updated, and staff trained on how to execute those plans, but in the end due to dry conditions during spring snow melt, the flood never materialized.



**COVID-19**

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11th, 2020 because of the speed and transmissibility of the disease. The first cases of COVID-19 were reported in China, but the virus quickly spread to all parts of the world. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, President Trump followed suit and declared a National Emergency and invoked emergency powers to mobilize federal resources to support state, local, and tribal governments. Mayor Jonathan Judd then declared a local emergency on March 16<sup>th</sup> so procurement of critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and mitigation supplies could be implemented to reduce transmission of the disease.

Clay County Public Health (CCPH) was the local lead agency for pandemic responses and the City of Moorhead worked closely with CCPH to monitor community spread of COVID-19, the local active case counts, and the emergency protective measures such as mask mandates and social distancing requirements. In 2020 Clay County experienced the highest active cases in Northwest Minnesota with a spike in cases starting in late August and the first time exceeding over a 100 active cases in the week of Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup>. The cases then quickly grew to over 600 active cases per week in November before a slow decline to end 2020. The COVID-19 is still active at the completion of 2020, with new vaccine becoming available in January 2021.





## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education focuses on educating the community about the benefits of proper safety practices and eliminating hazardous conditions. It is a proactive method of preventing fire-based emergencies and reducing the damage caused by them.

Covid-19 had certainly changed the day to day activities here. It was unfortunate we could not provide face-to-face education, but found alternative ways to share important messaging.

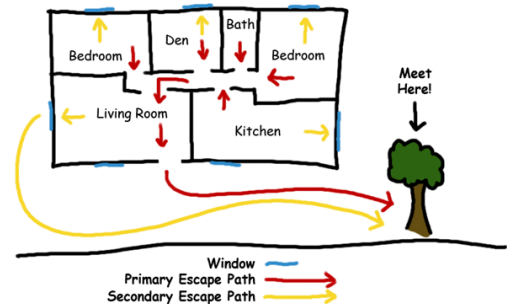


## FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

October was fire prevention month. The 2020 Fire Prevention Week campaign theme was "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!" In prior years, we would host a Community Open House to communicate fire prevention educational messaging. Due to Covid-19, activities were posted on our Facebook page for the community to enjoy virtually.

### Virtual Fire Prevention Month Activities

- Home Fire Escape Plan
- Video Featuring Moorhead Fire
- Home Fire Safety Checklist
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Poster Contest



# HAZ-MAT TEAM

The Moorhead Fire Department worked with the State of Minnesota, Department of Public Safety, State Fire Marshal Division (State) to provide hazmat response to the Northwest and West Central regions of Minnesota. The response area includes 14 counties, encompassing 13,560 square miles with a population of 287,869 (2018 Estimated Census). The Moorhead Regional Hazmat Response Team is designated by the State as both an Emergency Response Team (ERT) and Chemical Assessment Team (CAT). Incident complexities determine whether the ERT or CAT responds to an event. In brief, the difference between the two is the ERT responds with 10 personnel with emphasis on controlling a complex hazardous materials leak, whereas the CAT responds with 5 personnel and provides incident technical support and air monitoring.

Our 2020 Budget was \$60,000.00 for the Chemical Assessment Team and \$100,000 for the Emergency Response Team, funded by contracts with the State of Minnesota.

## Calls for Service

We did not have any requests from the State Duty Officer, but we did have one consultation with East Grand Forks in June. The incident involved a truck which had turned over in a ditch and was leaking product into a slough next to it. We used the PEAC program to send them information while they worked with the trucking company to resolve the issue. The incident did not need a response and the local department was able to take care of the problem. Tate Mills from the State Fire Marshal's Office helped facilitate the conversation between us and the Fire Chief from East Grand Forks.



We also did a standby for our Waste Water Department in April, while they changed out valves on several pieces of equipment.

In jurisdiction calls (55), ranging from liquid spills to gas leaks, also kept our department busy this year. With the closing of the colleges and schools in our area due to COVID, the number of calls for hazmat responses were reduced in comparison to 2019.

## 2020 Training Hours:

Our training was on pace to ensure all members met the required number of hours of training, but once COVID restrictions were put into place, the department only completed 820 hours of training for the year. With the cancellations of all outside training, our members averaged 22.5 hours for the year. (Note: One member had been off work due to an injury in April, and one other member was deployed for several months for military activities.)

# APPENDIX – NFPA REPORT

The following are the applicable statistical sections of the 2020 NFPA report that are used by the Moorhead Fire Department.

**NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION FIRE EXPERIENCE REPORT**  
**MOORHEAD FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
 January 2020 to December 2020

**Part II: MAJOR FIRES**

Date	Name of Occupant or Owner, Property Use, and Address	Number of Civilian Fire Deaths	Property Loss
1/22/2020	1 or 2 family dwelling 1108 11TH ST S	0	\$20,000.00
5/1/2020	Multifamily dwelling 2505 COUNTRY CLUB PKWY	0	\$45,000.00
6/20/2020	1 or 2 family dwelling 4847 ABBY WAY	0	\$80,000.00

**Part IV: BREAKDOWN OF FALSE ALARM RESPONSES**

Types of False Alarm	Number of Incidents
1. Malicious, Mischievous False Call	53
2. System Malfunction	134
3. Unintentional	239
4. Other False Alarm	4

**Part V: INTENTIONALLY SET FIRES IN STRUCTURES AND VEHICLES**

	Number Of Fires	Number of Civilian Fire Casualties		Estimated Property Damage
		Deaths	Injuries	
1. Structure Fires Intentionally Set	4	0	0	\$10,620.00
2. Vehicle Fires Intentionally Set	0	0	0	\$0.00

**Part III: BREAKDOWN OF STRUCTURE FIRES AND OTHER FIRES AND INCIDENTS**

A. Fires In Structures By Fixed Property Use (Occupancy) (all in Section A are Incident Type 110-129)	Number Of Fires	Number of Civilian Fire Casualties		Estimated Property Damage
		Deaths	Injuries	
1. Private Dwellings	13	0	0	\$164,570.00
2. Apartments	13	0	0	\$53,310.00
3. Hotels and Motels	0	0	0	\$0.00
4. All Other Residential	3	0	0	\$8,600.00
5. TOTAL RESIDENTIAL FIRES	29	0	0	\$226,480.00
6. Public Assembly	1	0	0	\$0.00
7. Schools and Colleges	0	0	0	\$0.00
8. Health Care/Penal Institutions	3	0	0	\$1,000.00
9. Stores and Offices	2	0	0	\$550.00
10. Industry/Utility/Defense/Labs/Manufacturing	0	0	0	\$0.00
11. Storage in Structures	2	0	0	\$15,600.00
12. Other Structures	0	0	0	\$0.00
13. TOTAL STRUCTURE FIRES	37	0	0	\$243,630.00
14a. Highway Vehicles	8	0	0	\$18,800.00
14b. Other Vehicles	4	0	0	\$14,300.00
15. Non-Structure/Non-Vehicle	4	0	0	\$15,500.00
16. Brush/Grass/Wildland	6	0		
17. Rubbish/Dumpsters	23	0		
18. All Other Fires	1	0	0	\$2.00
19. TOTAL FOR FIRES	83	0	0	\$292,232.00
20. Rescue/Emergency Medical Responses	2,392			
21. False Alarms	430			
22. Mutual Aid Given	8			
23a. Hazmat Responses	55			
23b. Other Hazardous Responses	59			
24. All Other Responses	1,350			
25. TOTAL FOR ALL INCIDENTS	4,377			

	Number of Confined Fires	Number of Nonconfined Fires
5. Residential Fires (line 5 above)	4	25
13. Structure Fires (line 13 above)	6	31