

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mission Statement

The Fire Department will strive for excellence in the performance of duty and service to the community and the customers it serves. The Department is committed to find better ways to protect the lives and property of its citizens from the ravages of fire and other disasters and to contribute to the physical wellness of the community through emergency medical service.



Fire Department Role

The Fire Department continued its evolution from a strictly fire prevention and suppression organization to incorporate all hazards mitigation into its service to the community. A significant portion of time and training is spent on preparation for disasters, both man made and natural.

In May of 2006 the New England region was inundated with flooding rains during the Mother's Day weekend. Upon receipt of a call from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) this department responded to the area of the dam between the upper and lower Mystic Lakes. It was noted that the volume of water flowing between the lakes was overwhelming the dam and that parts of that neighborhood were in danger of being seriously flooded. The Fire Department, working in conjunction with the Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), activated its plan to mitigate this problem.

Over the next three days the members of the Fire Department, as well as members of its Auxiliary Fire Department, worked tirelessly to divert water away from the homes in the neighborhood and back into the lower Mystic Lake. Disastrous flooding of homes was averted and the neighborhood soon returned to its normal status. As a result of similar flooding in 1996, the Fire Department and AEMA had designed a plan to deal with flooding in the area. This plan was flawlessly implemented in 2006.

Through the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), which has been adopted by the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), the Department is able to work seamlessly with other departments in Town to respond to and mitigate any disaster, manmade or natural. The CEMP was developed originally to respond to hazardous emergency incidents as a result of the Somerville rail yard incident in 1979, but has evolved into the all hazards plan it is today. The CEMP allows the fire department to share resources with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During the 2006 Mother's Day flooding the department was able to utilize some of these available state resources.

Fire prevention continues to be a major focus of the Arlington Fire Department. Captain Chip Ryan oversees that inspections by our well-trained officers and firefighters have continued to make Arlington one of the most fire safe communities in the metro Boston area. Arlington has gone several years without a death due to a building fire. Fire prevention, combined with an aggressive interior attack by its suppression teams when necessary, accounts for this positive statistic. The amount of money saved by building owners and insurance companies through prevention and aggressive firefighting are impossible to calculate, but substantial.

In September of 2006 ground was broken for the first new fire station in town in over 80 years. The new station at Park Circle, being built to house Engine 3 and its crew, will be completed in the fall of 2007. During this period temporary quarters for this crew have been erected near the existing site.

Over 60% of the calls by the Fire Department are for medical emergencies. Maintaining Emergency Medical Technician status for the majority of the department is the responsibility of Captain Kevin Shaw. New equipment and techniques are consistently introduced requiring hours of additional training. Between training officer Kevin Kelley and EMS officer Captain Shaw, the challenge to maintain these services are done in-house, minimizing the expense to the Arlington taxpayers.

Deputy Chief William DiRosario and Deputy Chief Wayne Springer retired from the department with twenty-eight years of service. Firefighter Allan Glennon retired with twenty years of service. The first three new recruits hired by this department since 2001 were brought on to replace these retirees.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

During the year 2006 the fire department responded to 4,398 calls for assistance. This is a slight increase from 2005. Of these calls, 2,189 were for medical emergencies. Dollar loss was down considerably from 2005, to a total of \$214,170.

Fire Call Types	FY2006
Fires	111
Emergency Medical	2189
Medical Assists	398
Alarms Sounding	610
Carbon Monoxide Activations	83
Water Hazard	75
Mutual Aid	67
Lockout / In	93
Electrical Hazard / Down Power Line	151
Motor Vehicle Accidents	107
Smoke Scare	26
Natural Gas Emergencies	131
Flammable Liquid Hazards	30
Hazardous Condition	157
Other	170

Fire Prevention/Fire Investigation Unit

The Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) responds to all fires within the Town and is responsible for determining their cause and origin. A thorough investigation of the cause, origin, and circumstances of how a fire occurred will often prevent similar incidents from happening again. The experience, knowledge, and continuous training of the members of the FIU, working in conjunction with the State Fire Marshal's Office and the Attorney General's Office, allows for numerous resources to successfully investigate and prosecute all fire related crimes.

The FIU was implemented 14 times this past year to investigate various incidents including structure fires, vehicle fires, dumpster fires, unattended candle and cooking fires, careless disposal of smoking materials, and chemical reaction fires.

The Student Awareness for Fire Education (SAFE) program educated the elementary students of the Town in fire safety for the ninth year in a row. The Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program (JFIP) counseled young, potential fire setters in the dangers of playing with fire. The JFIP, partnering for the fifth consecutive year with the Germaine Lawrence School, educated students who were identified as firesetters. These are only two of the programs that Arlington Firefighters volunteer to be trained in to protect their community.

The Fire Prevention Division of the Fire Department issued 1,062 permits in the year 2006 totaling \$30,957.

Training

Captain Kevin M. Kelley, Training Officer, is responsible for managing a comprehensive training program designed to meet the needs of all members of the department. The primary focus of the Training Division is to promote training necessary to allow the firefighter to achieve specific career goals. Firefighters are constantly evaluated and tested by the division to ensure proficiency in skills and retention of knowledge. This training includes inspections, classroom sessions, practical applications and actual calls for service.

Every firefighter's career with the Fire Department begins at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) in Stow. The MFA's fire instructors hone the knowledge, ability, and instincts of recruits during a rigorous eleven-week schedule of training evolutions and a challenging curriculum. All firefighters graduate with the NFPA certification of Firefighter I/II. The final result is a group of highly trained individuals.

The training division strives to offer fire service personnel complete and progressive training required to perform the job to which they are trusted, the protection of the lives and property of the citizens of Arlington. Courses have been hosted internally, bringing in MFA professionals as instructors. Private sector representatives delivered training to all members of the Department. Captain Kevin Shaw, department EMS coordinator, delivered all emergency medical service training in-house.

The training division handles the development and delivery of all company-level drills, department-level training initiatives, as well as, new recruit orientation and training.

In 2006, the Department was able to obtain hands on training when its members were allowed access to a home that was scheduled for demolition. The firefighters were able to practice apparatus placement, hose line advancement, forcible entry, roof ventilation, and roof operations. Instructors, as part of the MFA's Impact series, came to Arlington and instructed members on pediatric emergencies, structural hazards, and common emergencies. KEYSpan provided training on natural gas emergencies. All the department's members were trained and certified, per Presidential Directive number five, in the National Incident Management System (NIMS). All members were certified through the NIMS 700 level and to the Incident Command System 100 level (ICS). Chief Officers also received ICS 200 level certification. For the second year in a row Captain Kelley worked at the Middlesex Sheriffs Department's Youth Safety Camp. Captain Kelley represented Arlington at the one-week camp where Arlington's youth learned about fire safety, prevention, policing, personal responsibility, and team building.

EMS

The Arlington Fire Department staffs a class 1 Rescue/Ambulance with two EMT-Basics, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The Department currently has 61 EMT's and 13 first responders. Rescue 1 will transport to six-area point of entry hospitals for a Basic Life Support (BLS) transport and any appropriate hospital for an Advanced Life Support transport (ALS).

Captain Kevin Shaw, Department EMS coordinator is responsible for all in-house medical training, recertifications, medical supplies, and keeping all EMT's and first responders updated with the latest information from the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) and Department of Public Health. All Department EMT's have an obligation to provide pre-hospital patient care in accordance to Statewide Treatment Protocols, Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The Department recently purchased a 2006 Ford E450 Osage Rescue/Ambulance. This is the first ambulance delivered under the new four-year replacement policy. Since the closure of Symmes Hospital, Rescue 1 puts exponentially more mileage bringing the sick and injured to hospitals throughout Metro Boston. This fact requires that a new ambulance be purchased every four years rather than the five years the Town had planned on in past years

Equipment purchased for the new rescue/ambulance included a stretcher, stair chair, backboards, and other miscellaneous equipment. The department also purchased six new cardiac defibrillators with pediatric capabilities and state of the art technology. All department apparatus including both rescues are equipped with automatic external defibrillators (AED). The most recent equipment purchase was a carbon monoxide oximeter, a device that non-invasively measures carbon monoxide levels in the arterial blood. This device is the first of its kind and has only been on the market for about a year.

All Department personnel have been recertified in CPR in accordance with the latest American Heart Association guidelines. This 8-hour course consisted of adult, child and infant CPR along with AED training. The Department is still looking at the possibility of upgrading our level of medical care to Advanced Life Support (ALS).