



2020

ANNUAL REPORT



PETERS TOWNSHIP
FIRE DEPARTMENT

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FROM THE CHIEF

On behalf of the brave men and women that make up the Peters Township Fire Department, I am proud to present our 2020 annual report. This past year has changed many of the ways the fire department operates. From emergency responses, to fire prevention and training, the pandemic has affected our daily delivery of emergency response to the community.

A short time into 2020, we began to realize this would be a challenging year. As the Emergency Management Agency for Peters Township, the Fire Department began planning for a pandemic response in February. By March, a full activation of the Emergency Operations Center had begun, along with a Township declared State of Emergency. This response is one that would last the duration of the year and continue into 2021.

Despite an increased workload from the pandemic, our organization persisted and achieved many goals that had been set for 2020. We placed in service a new pumper, purchased in 2019. We reorganized our staffing model and implemented a new line officer structure. We were reevaluated by the Insurance Service Office (ISO) and achieved a Class 3 Public Protection Classification, ranking the department in the top 15% nationally. We implemented an all-call system to make our home responses more efficient, and we delivered a robust fire education program virtually to most youth in our community.

None of this would be possible without the amazing support we receive from Township Administration, Council, and most importantly, the support of our community residents.

Thank you for taking the time to review this report.



Michael R. McLaughlin, Jr.

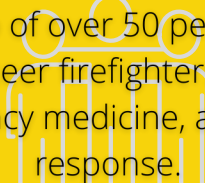
Fire Chief & Emergency Management Coordinator

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

WHO

WE ARE

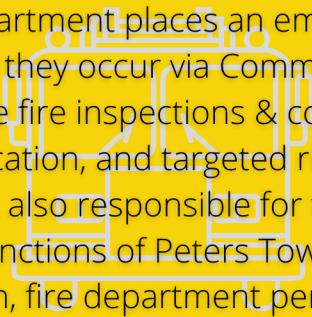
Our team is made up of over 50 personnel, comprised of both career and volunteer firefighters, professionally trained in fire, rescue, emergency medicine, and hazardous materials response.



WHAT

WE DO

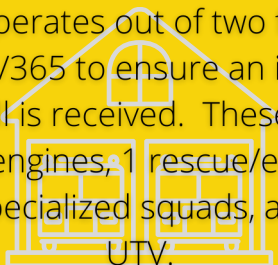
Our Firefighters provide an "all-hazard" response to emergency incidents in Peters Township and surrounding communities. Additionally, the department places an emphasis on preventing emergencies before they occur via Community Risk Reduction. These efforts include fire inspections & code enforcement, fire & life safety education, and targeted risk reduction. The department is also responsible for the emergency management functions of Peters Township. As part of community outreach, fire department personnel participate in community events and provide services such as car seat installations.



How

WE DO IT

Our department operates out of two fire stations, one of which is staffed 24/7/365 to ensure an immediate response, as soon as a 911 call is received. These stations house ten fire apparatus - 3 engines, 1 rescue/engine, a 109' aerial ladder truck, and specialized squads, as well as a boat and UTV.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Engine Replacement

In late 2019, PTFD received a new fire engine that replaced a 1988 apparatus that had reached its useful life. Engine 64-1 was placed in-service in January of 2020 and is the front line response engine from Station 64-1.



Structure & Staffing

The department's Chief Officers took time in 2019 to design a new leadership structure in an effort to better disperse responsibility. Three career firefighters (Christopher Chiprich, Christopher Barton, Tim Frazier) were promoted to the rank of Captain and four volunteers (Jeff Gruber, Keith Runt, Bob Lois, Rick Normand) promoted to Lieutenants. Additionally, Will Abbott was hired as a full-time firefighter.

Insurance Services Office

After a rigorous evaluation from the Insurance Services Office (ISO), the department received an improvement from a Class 4 to a Class 3, potentially affecting insurance rates for township residents and businesses.
(Continued P. 6)



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Pandemic Response

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic proved to have an effect on our organization just like any other. In the matter of days our department instituted guidelines for operations ranging from emergency medical response to car seat installations and everything in between. Despite frequent contact with confirmed CoVid-19 positive patients, none of our personnel contracted the virus while on duty. (Continued P. 7)

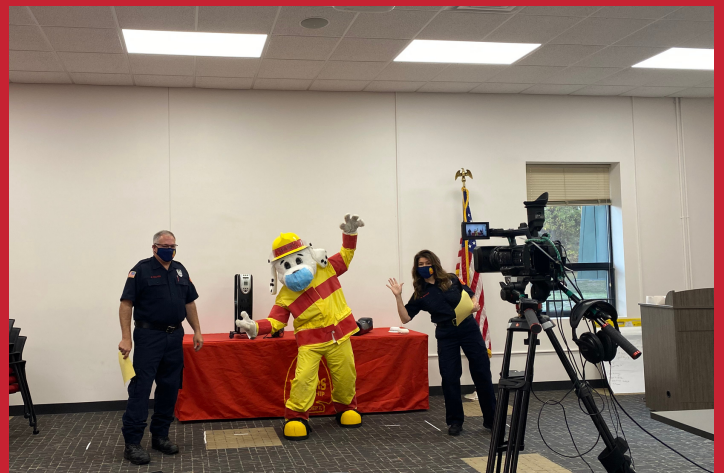
All-Call System

In an effort to increase home response by off-duty career and volunteer firefighters, the department instituted an "all-call" system. This system allows for calls to be dispatched in a different manner depending on the severity of the emergency.

Virtual Programs

Multiple classes and series were delivered for township and surrounding residents via online platforms:

- Virtual Open House
- Fire & Life Safety Sundays for Adults
- Fire & Life Safety Sundays for Children
- Hybrid Citizen's Fire Academy
- Virtual Car Seat Safety Inspections
- Daycare Staff Fire Prevention
- Development of a temporary fire prevention website to house outreach and education opportunities throughout the pandemic



Insurance Services Office (ISO)

What is ISO?

ISO provides ratings used by insurance carriers in order to evaluate the risk associated with property and casualty insurance. Through their Public Protection Classification (PPC) Program, each community in the United States is issued an ISO rating ranging from 10 to 1, with ISO class 1 being the best.

"A community's investment in fire mitigation is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. So insurance companies use PPC information to help establish fair premiums for fire insurance — generally offering lower premiums in communities with better protection."
(ISO Website)

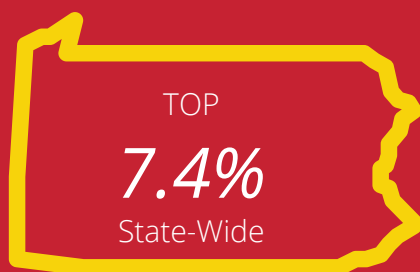
What is Measured?

Communities are evaluated in four categories:

- Fire Department Operations
- Emergency Communications
- Water Supply
- Community Risk Reduction

What this rating means for Peters Township...

Our improvement in ISO from a Class 4 to Class 3 is an accomplishment to be celebrated by our community from both a financial and life safety perspective. This achievement reflects a number of evidence-based improvements made over the past four years by the Peters Township Fire Department in conjunction with township officials. These improvements have a direct impact on the public safety of all who live, work, and visit Peters Township. Additionally, this improvement has the potential to decrease insurance premiums of residents and businesses.



Pandemic Response

As first responders, adapting to a situation in order to overcome obstacles is first nature to us. Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic is no different. We were dealt a situation that hasn't been seen in almost one hundred years. Our goal, as always, has remained the same: assess the situation, adapt our operations and response, and overcome the obstacle. While we as a nation are still on the last part of the goal, the Peters Township Fire Department (PTFD) and Emergency Management Team wasted no time with the first two. Our Emergency Management Team began stocking Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), our Emergency Operations Center was activated to monitor the situation 24/7, partnerships were made with area organizations to assist those that could not leave their homes with grocery and medication delivery, and communication was established with our health care facilities within the township.

We would like to extend our most sincere gratitude to our residents that have continued their incredible support throughout the pandemic with donations of PPE and food!

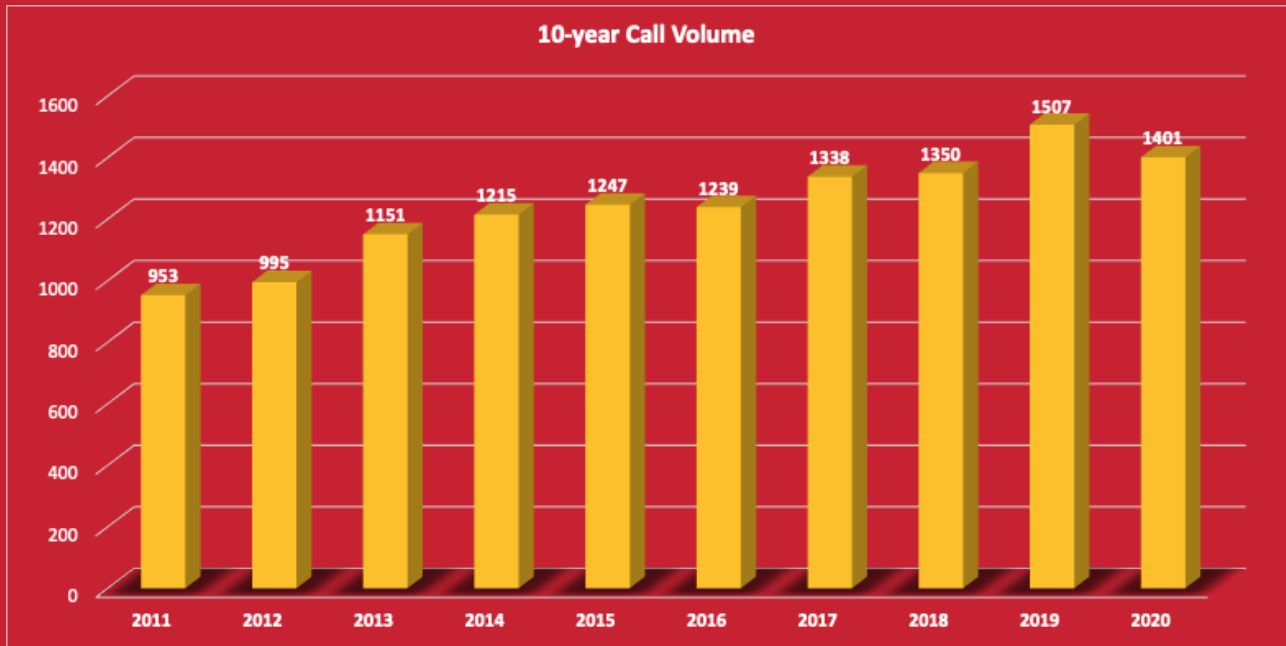


Top: disinfecting supplies and masks prepped for other township departments
Bottom R: To brighten spirits, PTFD convinced the Easter Bunny to visit area children during the Stat-at-Home Order
Bottom L: Emergency Management Staff in the Operations Center



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Peters Township Fire Department's primary purpose is to respond to various emergencies throughout our township and surrounding communities in order to reduce and eliminate hazards to people, property, and the environment. Peters Fire personnel are trained and equipped to respond to a wide range of emergency incidents that include, but are not limited to: fire, rescue, and emergency medical. Over the past five years, PTFD has seen a steady rise in emergency incidents.



As noted above, there has been a steady increase in call volume over this 10-year span. A slight decrease in 2020 can be attributed to the stay-at-home order which resulted in a lower call volume during those months. Additionally, fire department response to medical calls was altered in an effort to decrease the number of emergency medical providers in contact with a potential CoVid Patient and thus also resulted in fewer dispatches for medical emergencies.

Response Times

With rapid response and mitigation of emergencies at the forefront of our mission, the accurate tracking and evaluation of data such as response times is crucial to our organization. As indicated on the right, District 1 response times decreased in 2020 while District 2 responses increased.

District 1: Areas south of Valley Brook and West of Thomas Road

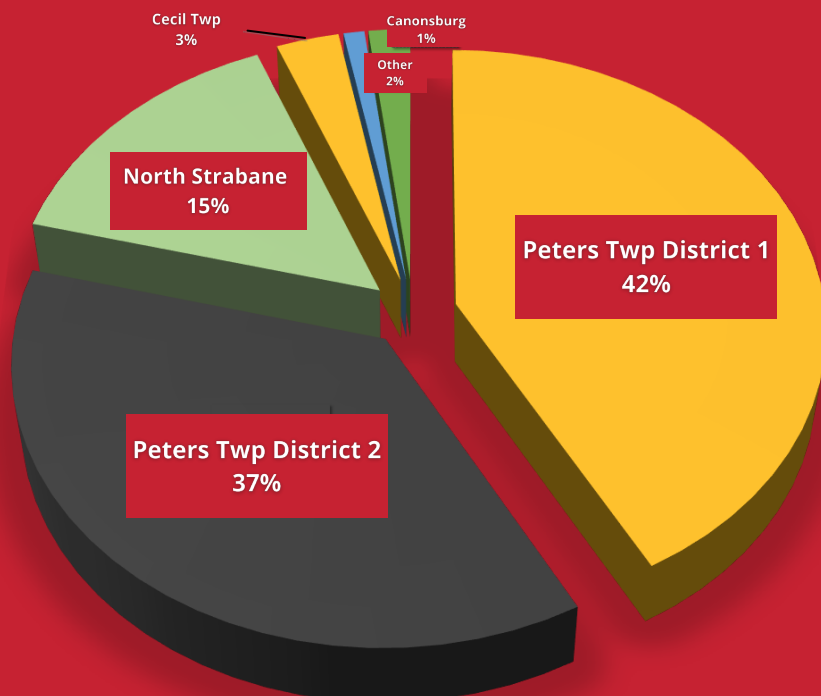
District 2: Areas north of Valley Brook and East of Thomas Road

Average response Time by District

	2019	2020
District 1	5:01	4:49
District 2	8:44	9:04

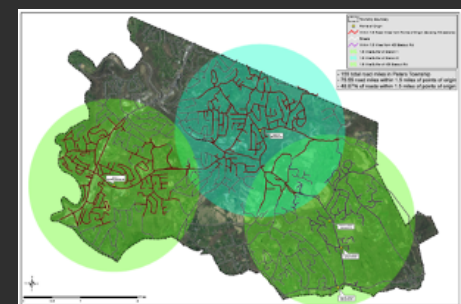
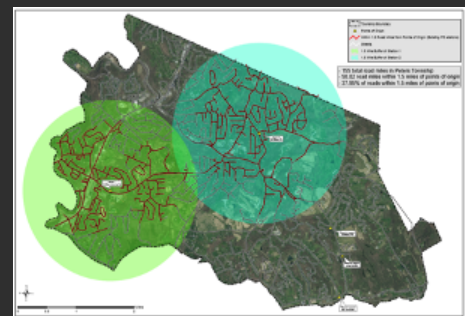
Calls by District

The below graph highlights the call breakdown within Peters Township as well as our automatic and mutual aid partners.



Fire Station #3

By constructing our third fire station, response times are expected to decrease for certain areas in Districts 1 and 2. The first picture below shows our current coverage, while the second shows future coverage. The design for Station #3 will go out to bid in 2021.



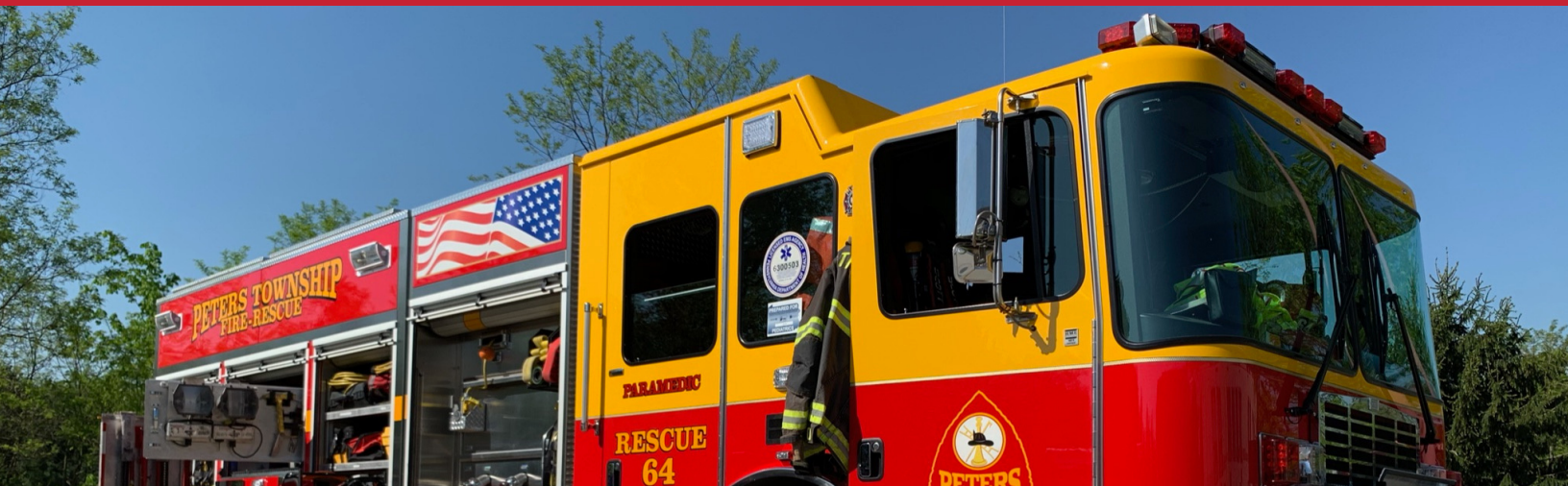
Incident Types

The Peters Township Fire Department responds to a wide range of emergency calls. The chart to the right provides a two-year comparison of incident type and frequency per year.

This information is valuable to us for a number of reasons. One of which is steering the focus our public fire and life safety education programs in order to reduce community risk.

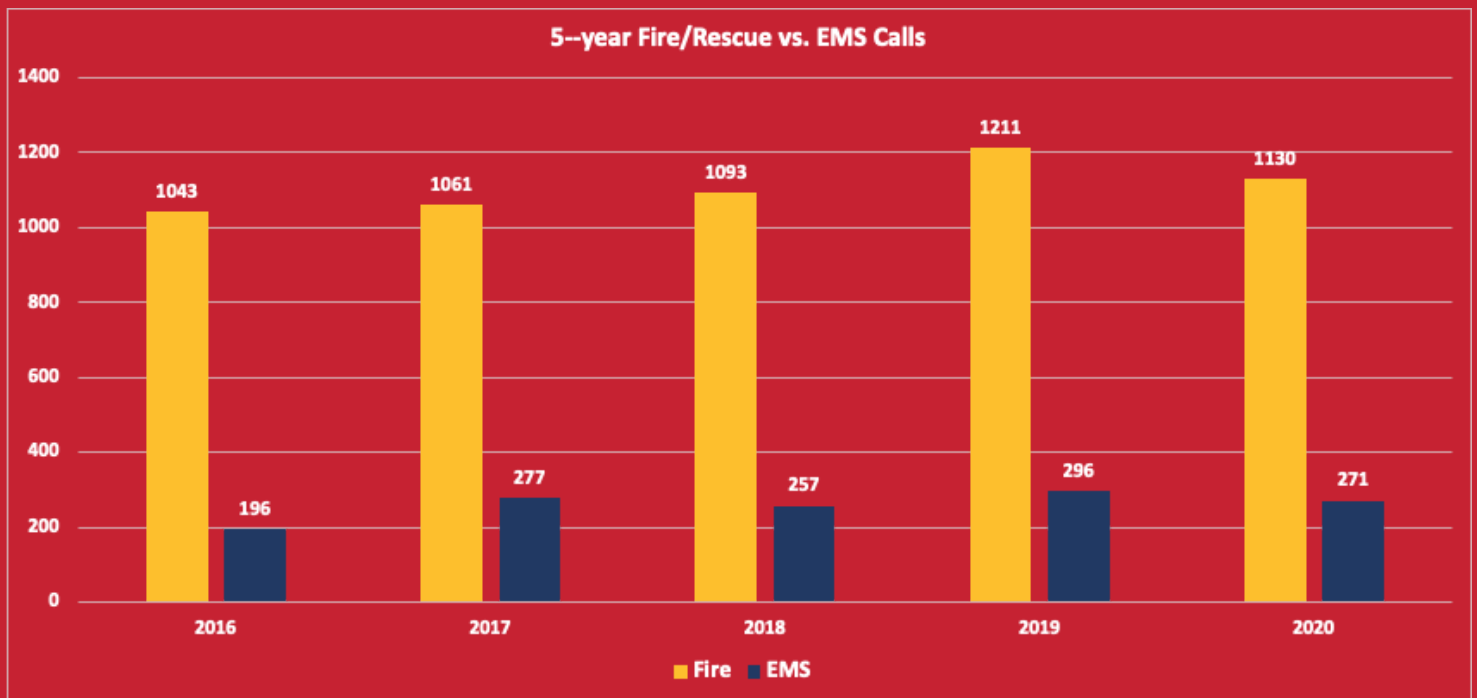
This data is evaluated on a regular basis to monitor for trends. As trends are observed, further research is performed to look for common factors such as neighborhood and age group. Based on the results, we are able to target education and community outreach to specific age groups, neighborhoods, or business types in an effort to reduce the frequency of a given emergency and ultimately increase public safety.

Incident Type	2019	2020
Structure Fire	30	16
Structure Alarm	376	335
North Strabane	232	206
Mutual Aid	59	75
Rescue	15	24
Vehicle Accident - No Entrapment	82	83
Hazardous Condition	237	194
Rescue - Mutual/Auto aid	7	7
Vehicle Fire	6	7
Brush Fire	12	12
Other Fire	7	5
Medical	296	271
Weather Related	2	23
Miscellaneous	146	143
TOTAL	1507	1401



Emergency Medical Response

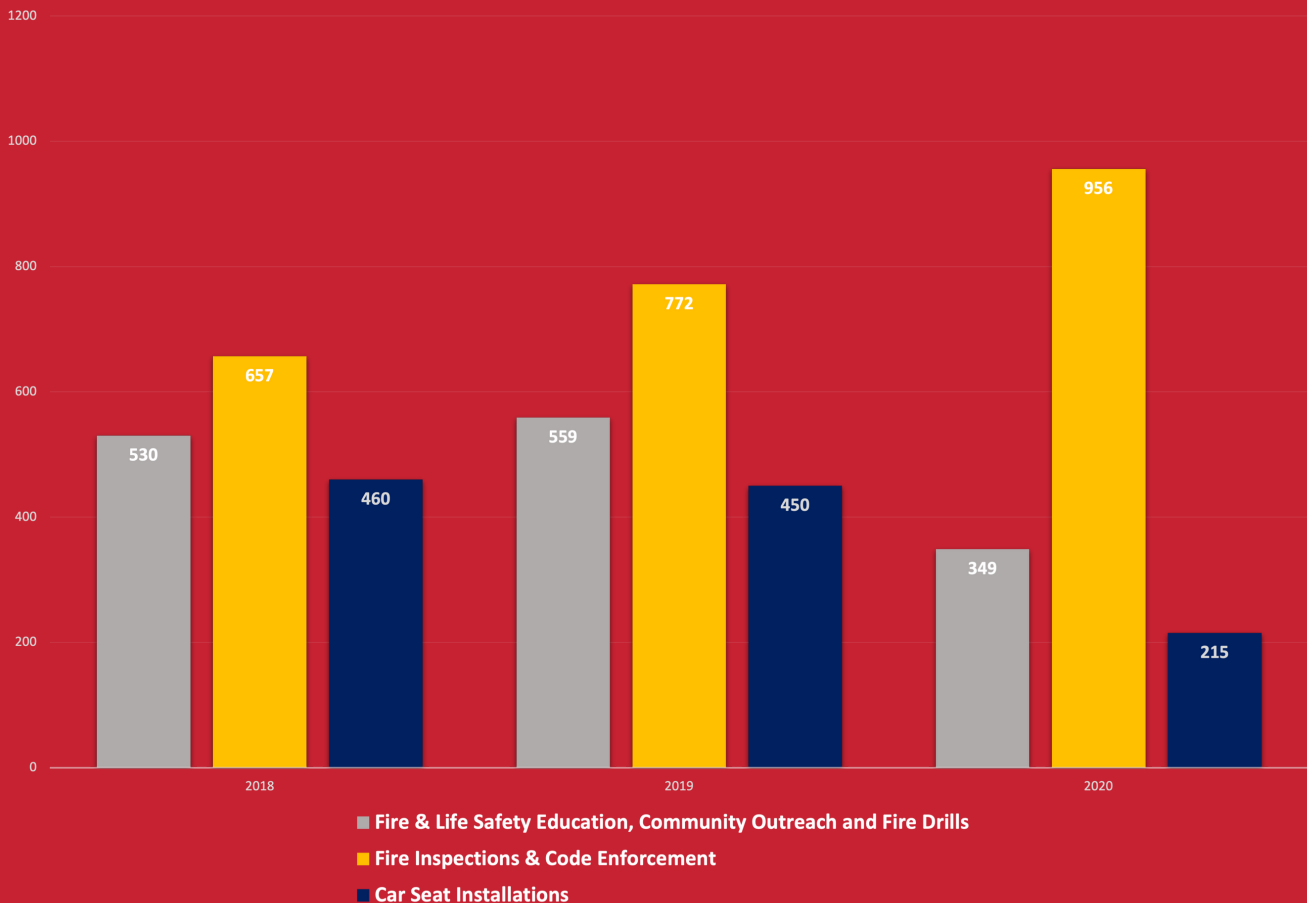
The Peters Township Fire Department is one of few fire departments in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that is certified under the Department of Health as an Advanced Life Support Quick Response Service (QRS). A QRS certification allows the department to respond to emergency medical calls when an ambulance has a delayed response or there is a high priority call such as an unconscious patient. PTFD has three fire apparatus certified as Advanced Life Support QRS vehicles, meaning they carry all of the equipment that an ambulance has, with the exception of being able to transport a patient. This equipment allows our personnel who are cross-trained in both fire and EMS as EMTs and Paramedics to administer life-saving medications and interventions prior to the arrival of an ambulance. These capabilities coupled with our strong relationship with Peters Township Police and EMS cultivates a team approach when caring for critically ill and injured patients and contributes to positive patient outcomes.



NON-EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

The Peters Township Fire Department prides itself on the aggressive and proactive approach taken on the prevention of emergencies before they happen. This is accomplished through a multitude of services including residential and commercial inspections and safety consultations, public fire & life safety education, and a strong presence within the community. The following pages will review these non-emergency operations as well as other areas of community outreach and public relations. The below chart highlights these non-emergency services.

Unfortunately, 2020 took a toll on many of our non-emergency activities, especially in the early months of the pandemic, as evidenced on our numbers below. Our crews worked hard to adapt and overcome, finding new and exciting ways to connect with community members.



Inspection & Code Enforcement

Under the direction of the Fire Chief, PTFD assigns one firefighter as the inspector. This firefighter works closely with the Peters Township Planning Department to ensure all codes are strictly adhered to. This is accomplished not only through plan reviews prior to construction, but throughout the building process, and with final testing and inspection once the building is complete. Duty crews also assist in routine annual inspections of occupancies to ensure all fire and life safety standards are continuously being met.



Fire Drills

On a monthly basis, all personal care facilities, child care centers, preschools, and educational institutions must undergo a supervised fire drill. PTFD crews conduct these drills and test both occupants and staff on their reaction to a fire alarm activation. Additionally, these drills allow us to test the alarm systems and the companies who monitor them to ensure that they are working properly and will notify us quickly in case of a fire or emergency.

CoVid precautions in nursing homes and other facilities affected this frequency in 2020.



Residential Fire & Life Safety Inspections

Peters Firefighters often conduct consultations in residential homes as well. Crews work with the homeowners to identify hazards within the home and mitigate them as soon as possible. Topics discussed include smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, what to do in the event of a fire, trip hazards, etc. Residents can schedule these inspections by calling the fire department.

Fire & Life Safety Education

During a year like no other, Peters Township Firefighters were forced to improvise in 2020. As always, we provided offerings for all ages to be able to get involved.

Fire Prevention: Early age - Early Teen

Peters Township Fire Department is very active in the many school and early childhood education/daycare programs within the community. In addition to the monthly fire drills, all students receive fire prevention lessons geared at familiarizing them with firefighters and their gear, discouraging the use of matches or heating materials, and what to do in the event of a fire. We frequently see this training put in action during actual emergencies.



Fire Prevention: Adult - Senior Citizen

PTFD offers a number of opportunities for adults to receive fire education throughout the year. In addition to the Citizen's Fire Academy, PTFD offers educational opportunities to various community groups, social clubs, and housing communities. Programs are also offered for senior citizens in semi-assisted living facilities.



Community Outreach

Without our community, we wouldn't be here! Our firefighters take an active role in our community and truly engage with our residents any time they have the opportunity. We participate in a number of events each year to maintain and continue building our relationship with our community members, and we're always open to new opportunities!

Community Outreach opportunities were limited in 2020 but enjoy a few pictures below, some from previous years.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Under the direction of Peters Township Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator Mike McLaughlin Jr., PTFD performs the Emergency Management functions for Peters Township. Emergency management is the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters. Emergency management seeks to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with both man-made and natural hazards and disasters.



Covid-19

Covid-19 has been a true test for Peters Township's Emergency Management Team. As part of this function, the department has been instrumental in the planning and preparation for the response to the pandemic and all it has entailed. These roles have included planning, logistics, purchasing, as well as public information.

Emergency Operations Center

A township-wide emergency operations center (EOC) is located at Station 64-1 on East McMurray Road. The EOC is essential to the continuum of emergency services during natural or man-made disasters. It provides a unified location for the management and command of incidents and depending on the type and size of incident, includes representatives from police, fire, EMS, emergency management, public works, and township officials.

PETERS TOWNSHIP EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

A function of the Peters Township Fire Department

STAY AT HOME ORDER

Issued for Washington County

Beginning at 8:00 pm, Saturday, March 28th

Residents must **STAY AT HOME** with the exception of:

- Tasks essential to Health & Safety (prescriptions, doctor visits)
- Getting supplies to maintain health and safety for your family or for others to whom you are assisting (grocery shopping, pet store)
- Outdoor activities *if social distance is maintained*
- To perform work at an approved essential business
- To care for a family member or pet in another household



Peters Township Fire, Police, EMS remain
ON DUTY to serve you 24/7/365.



TRAINING

Training is crucial to the success of a fire department as our industry is ever-changing, expanding, and evolving. In 2020, Peters Township Firefighters spent nearly 4,200 hours attending training. Every Monday night, PTFD gathers for in-house training during which our crews work together to review and practice skills. Depending on their current level of training, Peters Firefighters also attend regional, state-level, and sometimes national courses that further expand their knowledge and skillset.



VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

The Peters Township Fire Department was built by volunteers and they remain a strong and necessary force within our organization today. In a combination fire department comprised of both career and volunteer firefighters, mutual respect and camaraderie is essential for the greater success of the organization, and we are thankful to have that here.



Volunteer Duty Program (VDP)

The VDP was originally established in 2009 as a way for volunteer firefighters to work side-by-side with career firefighters on duty. Through this program, firefighters sign up for a pre-scheduled time block in which they will staff the station, participate in training, and other operational duties. Not only does this program increase personnel in-station, but it further strengthens the already steady relationship between crews.

Total VDP Shifts & Hours Covered

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Shifts	979	681	645	707	711
Hours	3916	2724	2580	2828	2715

2021 OBJECTIVES

- Complete Station 64-1 Mansard replacement
- Launch new Fire Department Website
- Complete process for Station 3 design
- Complete NFPA Pilot Program for Community Risk Reduction
- Re-certify (3) Advanced Life Support Apparatus through the Pennsylvania Department of Health

