

Mineral Wells Fire/EMS
Annual Report 2021

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department is to protect lives and property through, prevention, intervention, and utilization of a safe, rapid response system to emergencies.

Objectives

Our objectives are to serve the community with a pro-active philosophy for managing and facilitating the Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department activities. This may be achieved through committing to sound budget practices, modern training techniques, open communications, personnel support, and community involvement.

Values

RESPECT OTHERS

We will have **respect** for the people we serve, **respect** for our members, **respect** for our organization, and **respect** for ourselves.

PURSUE EXCELLENCE

We will **pursue excellence** with an unrelenting passion and will never accept mediocracy.

BE ACCOUNTABLE

We will **hold each other accountable** at all levels of our organization.

BE BETTER TODAY

Today we will strive to **be better** at our profession **than we were yesterday**. It is a privilege to be a member of the Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department. We will participate in all aspects of our work with energy, purpose, and gratitude.

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Message from Fire Chief Dunn

It gives me great pleasure to provide this annual report of the Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department for the year 2021. As you read through this report you will start to understand the amount and quality of service provided to the community of Mineral Wells and surrounding area by our dedicated firefighters of the Mineral Wells Fire EMS Department.

Strides in improving the fire protection side of the department continued to be at the forefront of our efforts this year. With our Insurance Service Organization (ISO) rating of 3/3y received in 2020, we continue to strive to improve our service, and lower our ISO rating. Quantity and quality of training was an area indicated that needed improvement. Attending the Texas A & M Annual Fire School is a regular part of our department's training going forward that receives a full point towards our ISO rating. Target Solutions, a web-based training, is another way we increased our training hours to meet the ISO requirements of 20 hours of fire training per month for each individual. Target Solutions also incorporates continuing education for our EMS certifications. With the help from City Council, we were able to replace a 20 year old ladder truck. The new ladder truck will increase ISO points due to its size and capabilities. We project that our next ISO rating should be near or at a 2/2y.

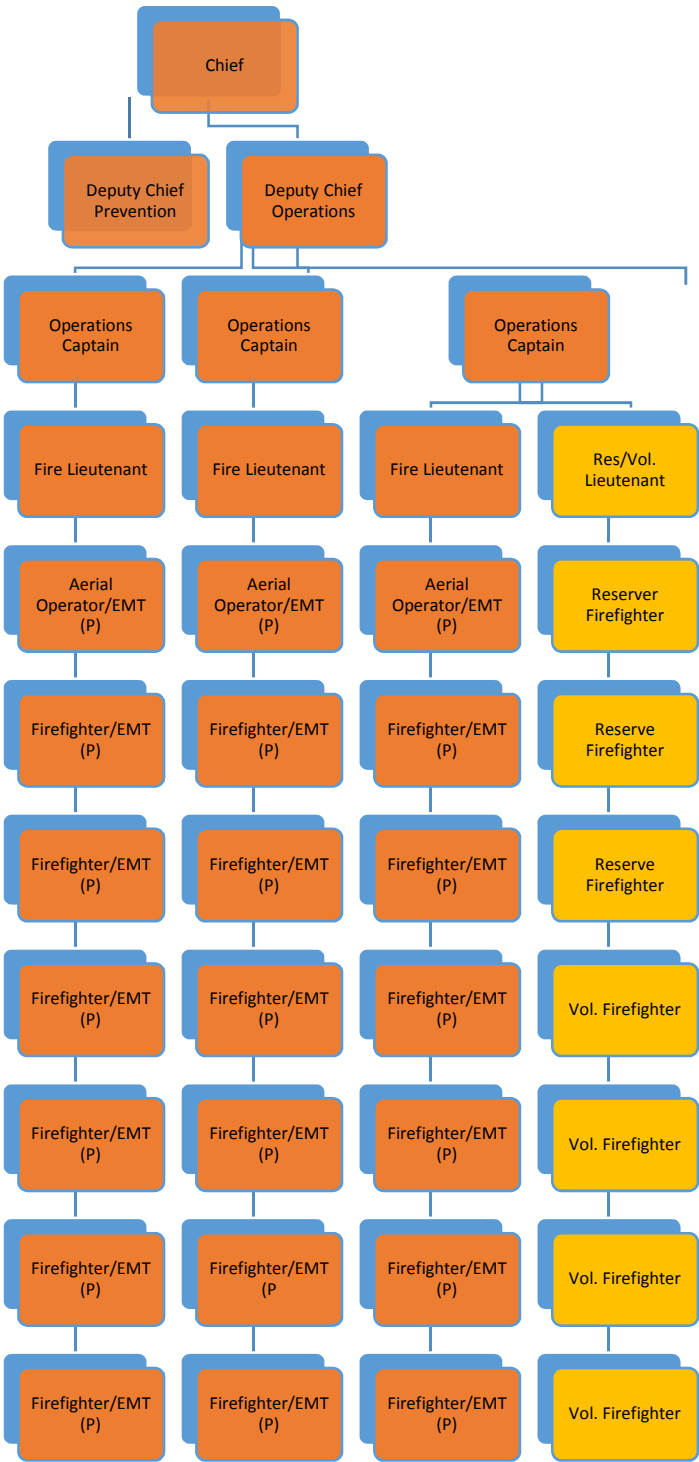
With the City Council's approval, two very important initiatives were taken on to help improve the number of responders, as well as the quality of the response. First, there were three new Firefighter EMS positions granted from our City Council, which were budgeted in 2021 – 2022. This was needed for relief in staffing that allowed the increase of minimum manning to eight personnel on duty at any one time. Next, was the request to apply for two grants through FEMA. The first was a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant (pending). This grant is to hire nine personnel to assist Mineral Wells Fire EMS in meeting NFPA 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. If awarded, this grant will increase the number of personnel per shift to twelve, allowing the possibility of answering simultaneous responses more adequately at one time. The hiring of nine more personnel at one time speeds up the Council's desire to protect and have reliable response to emergencies. Also, a very important improvement is the ability to maintain Two In, and Two Out law for firefighters when entering burning buildings. The second grant was requested through Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for the purpose of replacing and enhancing our radio communications by replacing our current seven year old handheld radios with new, public safety-rated type handhelds. This life-line will give firefighters the ability to better communicate on hazardous and dangerous scenes.

Mineral Wells Fire/EMS has increased our firefighters' ability to train. With help from the TIFMAS (Texas Interstate Mutual Aid System), we are eligible to obtain grant funding up to \$12,500 on individual training. This type of training will help to prepare our firefighters with specific functional fire ground operations.

In 2021, Mineral Wells Fire/EMS was deployed as a member of EMT-F 2 (Emergency Medical Task Force 2) through the North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Committee (NCTTRAC) to numerous large incidents. Our first deployment was to South Texas to help with the over ran 911 system during the outbreak of COVID in that area. We also were deployed to Southeast Texas when a Category 4 hurricane threatened the Texas coast. Last, we were deployed for a flooding event in East Texas where we assisted in the potential evacuation of residents stranded in these flooded areas.

It is a privilege to lead this department of willing, selfless Fire and EMS personnel. They strive daily to better prepare themselves and your equipment for the service of this community. Mineral Wells Fire/EMS is a progressive, customer-driven department, and we encourage you to contact us if you have questions or if you have suggestions to improve our service to you. Ryan Dunn, Fire Chief

Organization Chart



Employee Demographics

The Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department is authorized to have 33 full-time positions. There are 30 Fire/EMS positions, 3 dispatch positions, and 0 civilian support staff positions in the Fire/EMS Department budget.

Staff Tenure		Staff Age	
1 year or less	(9)	20-29 Years	(9)
1 to 5 years	(12)	30-39 Years	(15)
6 to 15 years	(9)	40-49 Years	(3)
16 to 25 years	(0)	50-59 Years	(3)
		60 + Years	(0)

Overall, demographic data indicates a young workforce with 70% of our workforce having less than 5 years of experience with the Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department. The average age of personnel is 33 years. We expect to see a younger, less tenured workforce in the foreseeable future. Retention efforts will be an ongoing challenge for the department.

From January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, the Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department had seven resignations. In counter, we hired 7 new employees. We also hired an additional 3 firefighter for this fiscal year that was approved by City Council. We perceive that retention of our employees is one of our main obstacles. Mineral Wells Fire/EMS will make every effort to eliminate this obstacle through continued and future focus on training, education, career development, and succession planning, which are all imperative to retaining and maintaining an effective workforce.

Firefighter Certifications

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection and the Texas Department of State Health Services are the state agencies that regulate activities and career activities for personnel of Fire and EMS Departments. Among the agency's responsibilities is to establish training and certification criteria for personnel, including higher level certifications (above the basic). Higher certification levels are obtained by a mixture of time in position, formal education, and completed training.

Firefighter Certification	
Basic	18
Intermediate	2
Advanced	8
Master	2

EMS Certification	
Basic	12
Advanced	2
Paramedic	12
Lisc. Paramedics	4

Fire Prevention Related Certifications	
Investigator Basic	0
Investigator Intermediate	1
Investigator Advanced	1
Investigator Master	1
Advanced Arson Investigator	1
Plans Examiners	3
Inspector Basic	1
Inspector Intermediate	2
Inspector Advanced	1
Inspector Master	1

Fire Operations Related Certifications	
Haz-Mat Tech	3
Head of Suppression	1
Driver/Operator	12
Fire Officer 1	2
Fire Officer 2	8
Fire Instructor 1	4
Fire Instructor 2	6
Fire Instructor 3	3
Incident Commander	4
Basic Wildland	3

Administrative Duties

Administrative Support and Support Services includes:

- Budget administration
- Contract administration
- Purchasing
- Records management
- Maintenance of equipment and facilities
- Payroll
- Personnel services
- Training
- Hiring
- Promotional testing
- Quality management
- EMS billing
- Grant administration

Administrative support is responsible for the delivery of efficient and effective executive assistance to fire suppression and EMS services.

Though the Mineral Wells Fire/EMS Department does not have support staff, these task are carried out by the Chief, Deputy Chief, and shared with all personnel. Support services provides the essential equipment, supplies, and maintenance necessary to fulfill the core mission of the Fire/EMS department.

Administration and Support Services is also responsible for the coordination and delivery of effective training programs for career staff on the subjects of firefighting, technical rescue, emergency medical care, and safety. In addition, the division is responsible for the department firefighter health and wellness program.

Support Services includes:

- Hose testing
- Bunker gear maintenance, cleaning and testing
- Training – fire and EMS
- Pre-fire Plans
- Fire Hydrant Maintenance
- SCBA, Maintenance and monthly checks
- Air sample testing

Fire Prevention & Community Safety

The Fire Prevention & Community Safety Division categorizes activities into three broad areas: fire prevention activities, fire inspection activities, and fire investigations. Fire Prevention activities include inspections, plan review, safety consultations, public education , addressing legal process matters, conducting referrals, and training activities. Overall, fire prevention activity is usually maintained by an Assistant Fire Marshall. At this time, this is split by three employees: Fire Chief and two Deputy Chiefs.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Inspections	654	741
Plan Reviews	8	28
Public Education	80	88
Legal Issues	10	19
Training	8,864	9,466
Investigations	15	32

Fire Inspection/Investigation Activities

Fire Inspections of facilities within the city are accomplished through a collaborative effort between three employee fire inspectors/investigators.

<u>Fire Inspector:</u>	<u>Amount of Inspections:</u>	<u>Investigations</u>
Chief Ryan Dunn	5	3
Deputy Chief Craig Hedrick	741	28
Other inspectors	1	1

Fire Inspection/Investigation covers a wide area of focus. Inspections include surveys of businesses, schools, day cares, hotel/motels, and assemblies. Investigations include all structure fires and others suspicious in nature. Inspections are performed to evaluate compliance with local fire and life safety codes, to offer evaluations of safety appliances and equipment, to provide assistance in meeting requirements for conducting events or assemblies, and to ensure that properties are properly prepared for occupancy. In all cases, the purpose of our inspection program and activities is to educate and ensure that all businesses within Mineral Wells are operating in as safe an environment as possible.

The three Fire Inspectors typically handle safety complaints, certificate of occupancy inspections, new construction inspections, construction plan review, and respond after hours as necessary.

Mineral Wells Fire/EMS operates in three shifts for fire suppression and EMS runs. Each of the shifts participates in pre-fire planning where the shifts will go and look at potential life safety hazards. The life safety hazards are detrimental in the safety of our firefighters. All shifts share the potential dangerous building with each other so firefighters are not injured or potentially killed.

Fire and EMS Operations

The Fire Department Operations Division has experienced a consistent increase in the annual number of response calls. There was a 9% increase in calls from the previous year.

Fire Department Total Call Volume	2020	2021
Total Fire Calls	1,052	1,253
Total EMS Calls	2,177	2,445
Total Fire Department Calls	3,229	3,698

When the Fire Department receives a call, it is answered by one of the two stations. For an understanding of call distribution, we provided the following station's call volumes.

Station Call Response Volume	2020	2021
Total Fire Station 1	1,883	2,102
Total Fire Station 2	1,346	1,596

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For reporting purposes, fire apparatus responses and emergency medical service responses are tracked separately. Fire apparatus responses are divided into categories, including fires (of all types), rescue, hazardous conditions, public service, and false calls/false alarms. Data analysis indicates an upward trend in all calls.

Fire/EMS Call Volume	2020	2021
<i>Fires:</i>	163	151
Includes structure, vehicle, and grass		
<i>EMS:</i>	2,177	2,413
Emergency medical calls		
<i>Rescue:</i>	33	35
Extrication and rescues calls		
<i>Hazardous Conditions:</i>	102	125
Includes gas or fuel leaks, overheat, electrical hazards		
<i>Public Service:</i>	570	558
Public assistance, cover assignments		
<i>False Calls and Alarms:</i>	180	412
No hazard found, malfunctioning alarms, good intent, etc...		
<i>Severe Weather:</i>	4	4
Natural disasters, wind storm, lighting strike, flooding		
Total:	<u>3,299</u>	<u>3,698</u>

Ambulance calls for service continue to increase. The City of Mineral Wells experienced an increase in EMS calls last year by 236 calls. Emergency Medical Service calls account for approximately 66% of all department calls. Fire calls also increased by 173 calls. Fire calls were approximately 34% of the department's calls.

Ambulance Call Volume	2020	2021
<i>Patient treated and transported:</i>	1,562	1,734
<i>Patients not transported:</i>	615	679
Total Ambulance Calls:	<u>2,177</u>	<u>2,413</u>

Response Times

Response time of emergency units is a measure of three individual components of the response sequence, and can reveal valuable information related to service delivery. The primary components of response times are:

- **Call Processing:** The time required for the dispatcher to receive the 9-1-1 call, gather and enter the information into the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system, selecting appropriate units, and the beginning of the process of alerting units that will respond (“dispatch time”).
- **Turn OUT or “Reaction” Time:** The time required for the responding personnel to receive the dispatch information, get to the vehicles, dress in PPE as appropriate, mount the vehicles, and leave the fire station. Turn out times are measured from “dispatch time” to “en route” time.
- **Travel Time:** The time required to actually drive the vehicle to the incident location. This is measured from “en route” time to “arrival” time. This time is affected by factors such as distance from the fire station location, traffic conditions, route taken during the response, and weather conditions.

The individual calling for emergency services is sensitive to the total response matrix. They call and then count the minutes until help arrives. We report the response time of fire units, including only the turn-out and travel time (i.e., dispatch time to arrival time), because that is the only portion of the response matrix that we (fire department) can affect.

First arriving unit on the scene is important and the most frequently reported response time statistic. However, it is not the total or even most important measure of service delivery. When only one unit is all that is responding, first arrival is critical.

Second arriving unit is important because it frequently represents when a fire company can actually begin attacking a fire (if fully staffed) or rendering certain other types of aid. The requirement mandated by the State of Texas in Texas Administrative Code Rule 435.17, which we call “Two-in, Two-out,” requires a minimum of four firefighters to be on scene of a fire in a structure before anyone can enter the structure to begin extinguishment of the fire. As a result, a fire company staffed by two firefighters (our present staffing) that arrives at the location to find a house with active fire burning in say five minutes, cannot begin to go inside the building to fight the fire until another unit with two or more people arrives. If this is nine minutes, then the first crew is on scene for four minutes, but unable to fight the fire from the inside. Time temperature curves demonstrate fire intensity double every 90 seconds. In other words, in four minutes a fire will intensify and grow by 525%. Given that, the response time of the second arriving company is a critical measure in these instances.

Average Response Time	2020	2021
First Responding unit :	4 minutes 31 seconds	4 minutes 38 seconds
Second Responding Unit:	7 minutes 51 seconds	8 minutes 07 seconds

Operational Highlights

With the onset of the COVID pandemic in 2020, our initial call volume dropped from normal. A lot of this was due in part of stay at home orders and people's fear of going to the hospital. Once normalcy returned to our society, we saw a resurgence in calls, giving us a record setting year for calls to service. 2021 saw a continued increase in calls to service and once again, we set a record for call volume. COVID did play a small part in this, but so did our increasing city population and growth.

We have been working towards getting more of our personnel certified in the rescue disciplines. Currently, we have 9 Swiftwater Tech 2's, with 3 more attending school in May. We have 10 certified in Trench and Confined Space, with 6 more obtaining these certifications in March and April.

As an agency we have become more involved with EMT-F 2, which has allowed us to help Texans in the event of a crisis. To date, we have assisted Hidalgo County by giving aid to the local EMS providers when they were overwhelmed early on with COVID cases. We have also sent personnel to assist with Hurricane Laura, and with potential flooding in Lumberton. During this time, MWFD has been on standby status for numerous events.

Medic 4 was placed in service in 2020, with Corona Virus Local Recovery funds. Ladder 2 was placed in service in July of 2021. Both apparatus replaced units that were aged and becoming more difficult to work on due to the manufacturers no longer being in business.

Our department has become more active with the Parker County Chiefs Association, which allows neighboring departments to get together and discuss a variety of topics that are pertinent to the strength of all organizations. We have also been more involved with the Parker County Training Chiefs group. This group was put together in an effort to streamline items at the operations level. Most notably, the first item that was tackled was training and implementing a universal MAYDAY policy that will be followed by all departments from Mineral Wells to Azle.

Our Fire Marshal office has also been working closely with our neighbors, and we now have an agreement with Weatherford Fire Department. This agreement is in place for when our Fire Marshal is out of town or unavailable and vice versa. This greatly helps both cities have access to investigation and enforcement capabilities 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Our training budget has benefited due to the ability to obtain TIFMAS grant funding towards eligible courses. This funding gives us access to \$12,500 in grant funds towards training annually. To date, we have sent 10 firefighters to aerial operator school in which the grant assisted us in \$6,650 towards the tuition. We have also sent an additional 7 firefighters to various training through the aid of this funding.

We have hosted numerous training exercises that have been open to departments statewide. We have hosted Aerial Operator, Trench Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, and Incident Safety Officer. Each class attendance roster has been filled to capacity.

Emergency Management

Emergency management coordinates with departments of the city, the private sector, and community stakeholders to mitigate, prepare, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards presenting the greatest risk. These threats and hazards can include natural disaster, disease pandemics, chemical spills, and other manmade emergencies. Activities and programs of Emergency Management are organized into the following areas:

- **Mitigation**- Activities that change the nature of the threat, decrease vulnerability, or reduce exposure to disaster impacts. Mitigation activities can occur throughout the disaster cycle and can be structural or non-structural in nature.
- **Preparedness**- Actions taken before an emergency to plan, organize, equip, train, and exercise to build response capabilities. Preparedness activities take place within the city and throughout the community.
- **Response**- Actions that are taken during or immediately after a disaster occurs. Response actions include mobilization of emergency services, first responder activities, and activation of the Emergency Operations Center when necessary.
- **Recovery**- Activities that continue beyond the initial emergency response. Recovery focuses on restoring critical community functions to normal and managing reconstruction. Rebuilding efforts can also include mitigation practices to reduce risk for the future.

Mineral Wells Fire/EMS has made updates to its radio system, with grant allocated money. We are currently planning to meet for a secondary, large disaster exercise, which the dates have not been confirmed. Public outreach with an initiative called Stop the Bleed has been enacted. We are currently providing training to Mineral Wells ISD employees that could save someone's life in a crisis (e.g., active shooter). The Palo Pinto County Disaster plan is currently being updated, with requirements needed for the State of Texas. The primary focus for Mineral Wells Fire/EMS is to update infrastructure that will be a necessity in the event of a large scale emergency.

Contacts

Chief Ryan Dunn

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Deputy Chief Craig Hedrick

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Captains

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- Sam Streun
- Ethan Weathers
- Jared Self

Lieutenants

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- Chris Brooks
- Caitlin MacRae
- Randall Noe