

# Portage Fire Department

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James Snyder, Mayor

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**Ron Ziulkowski**, Division Chief  
**William Lundy**, Division Chief  
**Chad Bogue**, Division Chief

Mayor Snyder

CC: Council, Clerk Treasurer

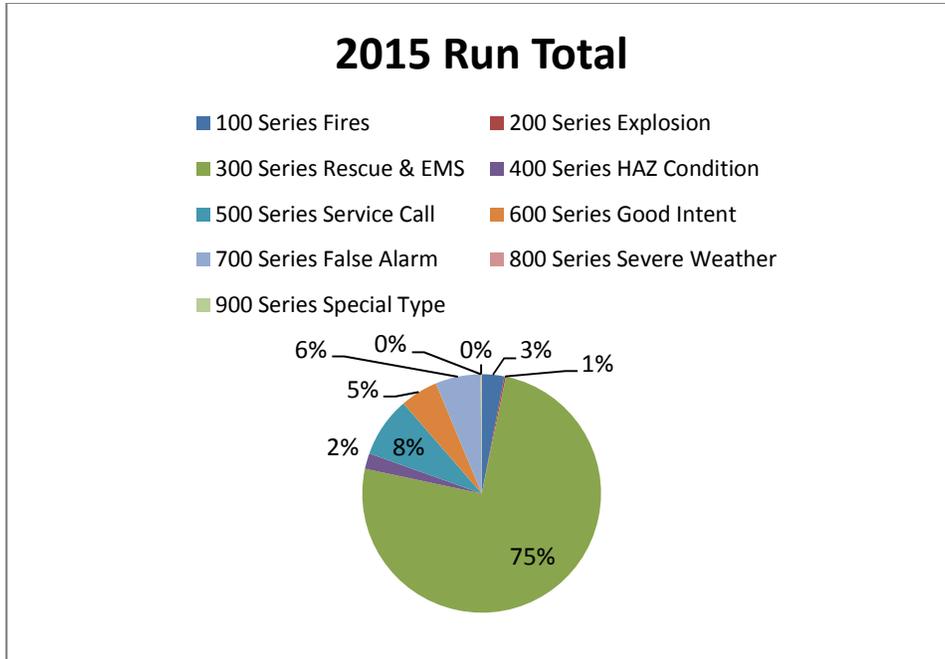
Reference: 2015 Fire Department Year End Report

January 18, 2016

Mayor

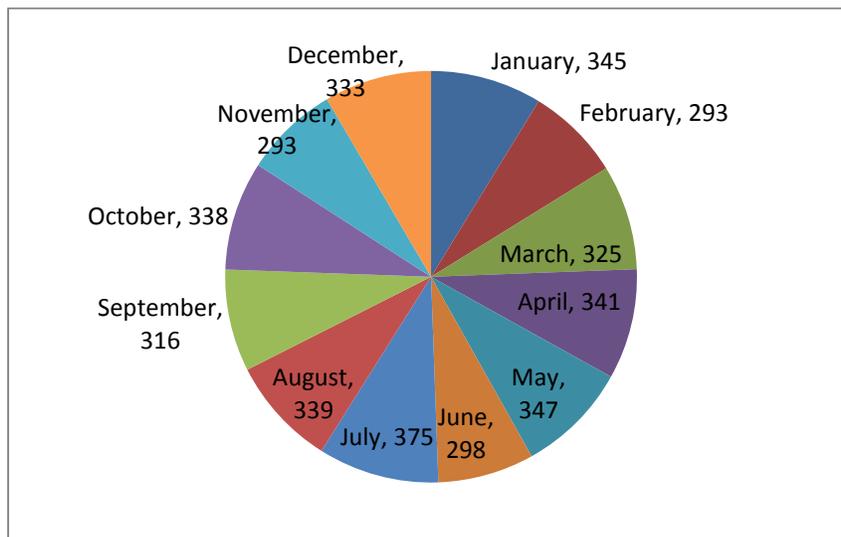
The members of the Fire Department Serve with “PRIDE”, the mission statement we live by. As we close out 2015 we look forward to 2016. A year when we the department will turn 50. Serving with Pride is what we have done and will do through education of the citizens and our members. We look forward this year as we celebrate with the City this mile stone. The fire department made its biggest change in our tactics in 2015. Modern buildings are constructed differently than their predecessors. Today's air tight, energy efficient buildings with all our modern furnishing's burn three times as hot as yesteryears buildings. Research shows that 30 years ago, you had about 17 minutes to escape a house fire. Today, you have only 3 or 4 minutes. National Institute for Standards and Testing and Underwriters Laboratories who are making this ground breaking discoveries are telling fire departments to make the change from the tactic air is good and water is bad, to the exact opposite water is good and air is bad. We are using thermal imaging not only to search for victims but to also see room temperatures. We have to cool rooms to below 800 degrees to keep them tenable for fire fighters and occupants. We are teaching residents through fire prevention to close doors behind them; as well we are controlling doors and windows as we make our way through the building. No longer are the days of seeing fire fighters on roofs on newer constructed buildings making vent holes. Modern fire tactics use the acronym of SLICE-RS. This stands for Size-Up, Location of the Fire, Isolate the Flow Path, Cool from a Safe Distance, Extinguish and then Rescue and Salvage are added in as necessary. We are teaching our fire fighters to recognize new building construction and to use these techniques. Also to keep fresh on the older techniques for building 30 years and older. We as a fire department owe it to the citizens to be well trained to solve their emergencies.

## Fire

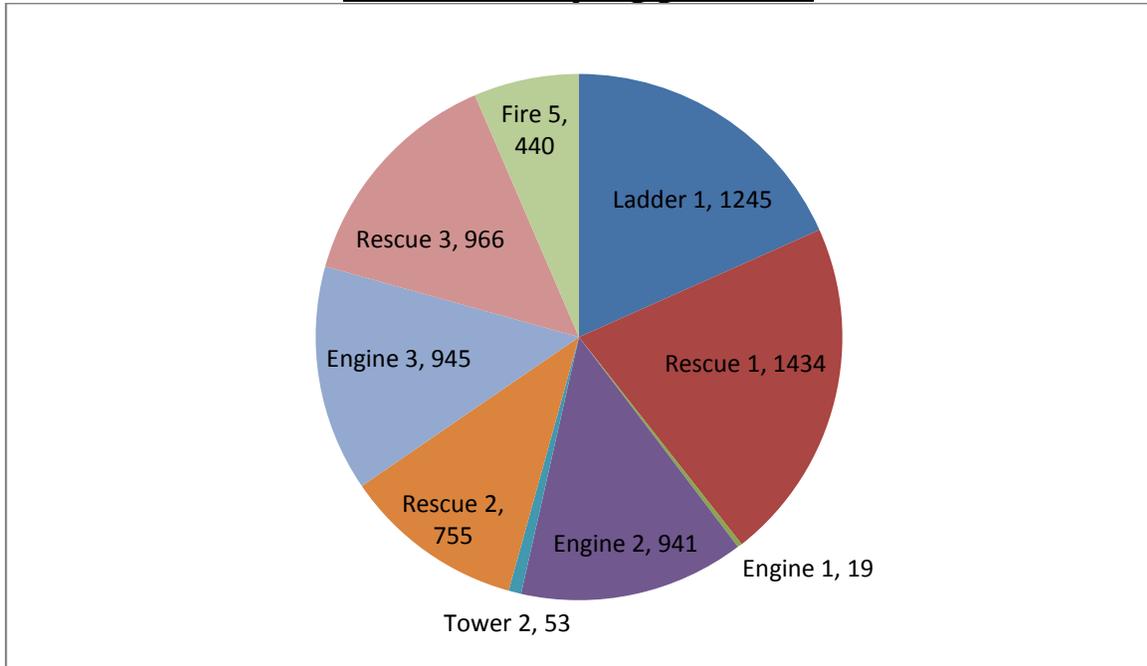


The Portage Fire Department had a total of 3943 runs for the year 2015. There were 119 fires, 9 explosion, 2961 engine responses to EMS calls, 83 hazardous conditions (No Fire) consisting of electrical issues, carbon monoxide, and fuel spills, 322 calls of service for smoke or odor removal, water leaks, lock outs and lift assists, 201 good intent calls where the call was unfound or we were cancelled before arrival to the scene, 242 false alarm & or false call, 1 severe weather & natural disaster, and 5 special type, which include citizen complaints. We had a total fire loss of \$1,786,650.00 in 2015. It is important to note that fire loss is estimated and may not reflect the true cost of repair or replacement of our customers' property.

### Incidents by month



## Incidents by apparatus



ISO evaluates the effectiveness of the fire department. They complete these evaluations every 10 years. These evaluations drive the insurance costs for businesses and residence. As we strive to have a better rating this reduces the premium rates. We are rated in three areas, two of which we don't have direct control over but we continually work with these groups to enhance our service. County Dispatch and the Indiana American Water Company are the other areas of the evaluation. In 2015 we had ISO re-evaluate our fire protection capabilities. With the added water tower and increased main size along route six our water score improved over last evaluation. County dispatch although the move was controversial increases our score with the staffing levels they currently maintain. We scored well in both of these areas. We look forward to keeping the relationship established with these groups to continue to improve service. We were pleased to find out that our new ISO rating was increased from a Class 4 rating to a Class 3. The recent restructure of the fire department staffing to add an on duty Division Chief most certainly assisted with our improved rating as this was a weakness in previous evaluations. This restructure improved our minimum manning 13 personnel to 14 personnel on duty. While the fire department received an improved ISO, several other fire departments in Lake and Porter County did as well. It should be noted that your ISO rating is directly related to the community and infrastructure that a fire department is directly responsible to protect. A community with many residential, commercial and industrial structures puts increased responsibility on its fire department, therefore receiving an improved rating particularly that of "3" is quite an accomplishment.

We continually strive to improve firefighter safety with our gear replacement program. For several years the fire department has identified as a goal in the capital replacement plan, the need to purchase new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Our current SCBA's are at least 2 safety editions behind the current standards. In late 2014 we

completed a grant request through FEMA and Homeland Security for the purchase of new SCBA's. This grant was written by Portage Fire Department and included other departments such as Ogden Dunes, South Haven, Porter, Chesterton and Burns Harbor. In August of 2015 we received notice that we were awarded the grant request for a total of \$785,000.00 federal money. The local communities are responsible collectively for 10% matching funds. Portage fire department's responsibility will be approximately \$23,000.00. This grant saved the city of Portage approximately \$240,000.00. We are expecting delivery of the new SCBA's in April of 2016. Our maintenance program for our apparatus continues to improve the safety and reliability of our vehicles. In 2015 we logged many more repairs and improvements. Our vehicles are performing better than ever and some much needed repairs were able to get completed. Tower 2 had all of hydraulic lines replaced. This was warranted because in 2014 during an inspection of the Tower, Underwriters Labs indicated that the lines were starting to crack and leak slightly. This repair cost approximately \$20,000.00 but it was necessary for safety of our citizens and firefighters and it will most definitely increase the longevity of Tower 2 by several years. We have continued to work on the replacement specifications for Ladder 1 and hope that the Board of Works allows us to replace the aging vehicle in 2016. We try to follow the recommended guidelines that NPFA suggest on the age of our frontline apparatus. The guide states that frontline fire apparatus (pumpers) should be replaced between 10 and 15 years of age. Ladder 1 is currently 16 years and will be 17 years by the time a replacement can be purchased and built. Other factors besides age also play a role in replacement times.

#### 1. Personnel Safety

Many of the changes in the new standards deal with safety items such as higher visibility, cab noise abatement and various interlocks. You must determine if you are willing to delay the availability of certain safety features until the new unit is purchased

#### 2. Obsolescence

Due to inadequate braking, slow pick-up and acceleration resulting in a tendency not to slow up at intersections, inadequate protection of driver and men, and structurally weakened chassis due to overloading (Freitag, 1984).

#### 3. Condition of Major Components

An examination of the major components of an apparatus must be made including the drive train, transmission, engine, pump, chassis, and body.

#### 4. Availability of Replacement Parts

As apparatus get older, replacement parts may become more difficult to obtain, leading to longer periods of "down time".

#### 5. Changes in National Standards or Federal Mandates

Determine how close to compliance with present NFPA standards (1901, *Engine Fire Apparatus*; 1902, *Initial Attack Fire Apparatus*; 1903, *Mobile Water Supply Fire Apparatus*) your current apparatus comes.

#### 6. Maintenance Costs and Performance

All apparatus should be tested annually. These tests, together with your records of maintenance, should be used to determine the cost trend in maintaining the apparatus. As costs increase and the value of the apparatus decreases, you will reach a point where it is no longer economical to continue investing in repairs.

#### 7. Mission

Is the present unit adequate to complete the mission now as well as five to ten years from now?

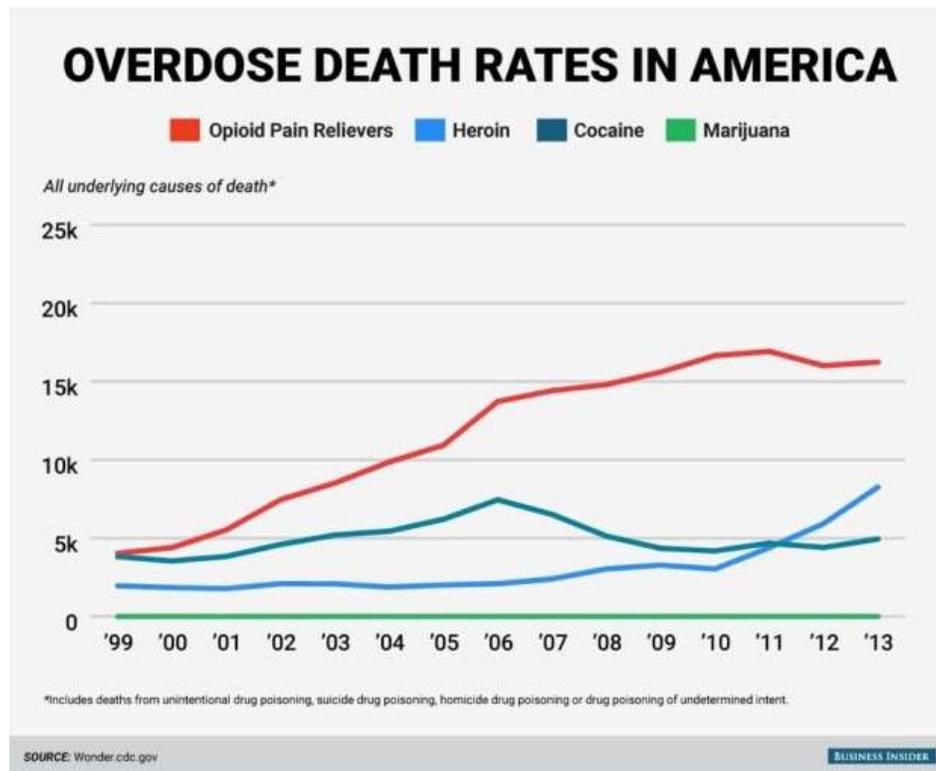
## ***EMS***

### **Governmental Ambulance Reimbursement**

In 2015 the Portage Fire Department received our first to Governmental reimbursement for services back installments for 2011 and 2012. The 2011 was \$204,091.84 and 2012 came to be \$226,132.36. Collected \$920,263.63.

### **Overdoses**

The Portage Fire Department is still seeing an alarming number of cases with heroin and prescription pill overdose incidents. The Police Department gave the overdose medication Naloxone twice last year reversing the ill effects of drugs. The Portage Fire Department Paramedics gave Naloxone 65 times in 2015. This is up from 2014 where we administered it 50 times that year. In 2015 per Porter County Chuck Harris advised 15 deaths where toxicology results showed Opioids as cause of death last year in Portage.



No Downey Workers Compensation claims in 2015 like 2104.

## ***Training***

PFD personnel received 8,870 man-hours of training in 2015. That translates to an average of over 145 hours of training per firefighter. These training hours included basic and advanced firefighter training, EMS education, engineer and driver's training and company officer and leadership training. We have been working very diligently to not only provide numerous training hours but specifically more focused, quality training.

Indiana Department of Homeland Security's Firefighter Training System District 1 held its area wide career firefighter academy in 2014. This academy, paid for by the State of Indiana and included several veteran PFD instructors, provided over 1100 man-hours of training for 3 PFD rookie firefighters. This training would have cost us nearly \$6000 to perform in-house and nearly \$15,000.00 to send the 3 out to another fire academy; both having been done in the past.

We take pride in the CPR training we do in the community. We are an AHA community training center. Here is the breakdown of the classes taught in 2015.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Number of classes</b>	<b>Students</b>
HCP Initial Course	30	127
HCP Renewal Course	75	379
Heartsaver CPR / AED (all disciplines)	123	684
Heartsaver CPR in Schools	34	557
Heartsaver First Aid with CPR	82	493
Heartsaver First Aid	5	22
Bloodborne Pathogens	3	16
Instructor Course	2	14

PFD has a total of 79 Instructors affiliated from Portage FD, Chesterton FD, Porter FD, PC EMA, Merrillville Schools, YMCA, Mittal, South Haven FD, PC Dispatch, Ritten House NH, Washington TWSHP FD, Northshore Healthcare, Portage PD, Ogden Dunes FD, Lake Station FD, Wheatfield EMS, Ivy Tech and several private businesses. Total CPR classes taught; 354 for a total of 2,292 students. This is the second consecutive year that we reached over 2,000 students. 354 classes taught is a record number of classes in a year for CPR by PFD instructors.

## ***Inspections and Prevention***

Fire Inspection efforts were made to minimize fire risk and 274 buildings inspections were conducted. Fire inspections were completed for 7 hotels, 3 institutional, 132 apartment buildings, 4 industrial, 31 factory, 7 educational, 44 office/personal, 26 mercantile, 12 restaurants, 8 storage.

The Fire Prevention theme for 2015 was "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!" The theme is chosen each year by The National Fire Protection Association. Prevention efforts were concentrated to fire prevention education in the schools. A fire prevention program was given at all elementary schools for grades Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The program for each grade level, teaches the student what to do in case they are in a building that catches on fire. Starting with Kindergarten, the student is introduced to a firefighter who shows them

their protective firefighting gear. The firefighter puts the gear on as he explains its purpose. 1<sup>st</sup> grade is taught fire safety basics: Stop drop and roll, 911, and to “go outside” if the building is on fire. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade is shown a cartoon video that shows one of the characters having a fire at their house. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade learns the importance of a home escape plan and is shown how to make one. 4<sup>th</sup> grade learns how to prevent fires and is given a home safety checklist. 5<sup>th</sup> grade is a review of all the past lessons with a “Jeopardy” type game, where students get to give a question to the fire answer.

The fire department hosted its annual Fire Prevention Open House October 3, 2015. The fire trucks and ambulances were available to get in. Children could try on fire gear and spray a fire hose. Home fire safety was demonstrated in the Edith Trailer. Food and drink were served. We also invited the National Park fire Department to teach wild land fire safety with a visit from Smokey Bear.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Th Fieffer', written in a cursive style.

Thomas Fieffer  
Fire Chief