



GEARHART FIRE DEPT

**670 Pacific Way P.O. Box 2530
Gearhart, Oregon 97138
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2023 End of Year Report

About

The Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department was formed in 1906. We are a combination Department serving both the City of Gearhart and Gearhart Rural Fire Protection District, spanning approximately 29 square miles. Gearhart Fire additionally holds automatic and mutual aid agreements with every agency in Clatsop County, spanning from Knappa Fire District to Elsie Vinemaple Fire & Rescue and the Oregon State Fire Marshal.

Our Mission

Gearhart Fire is committed to serving the Gearhart Fire Protection area and neighboring communities with the highest level of life and property protection. We achieve this by providing excellent and compassionate service in an atmosphere that encourages innovation, professional development, and diversity. We strive for excellence, respect, trust, support and honor both internal and external. Our members are our most valuable assets.

Organizational Function

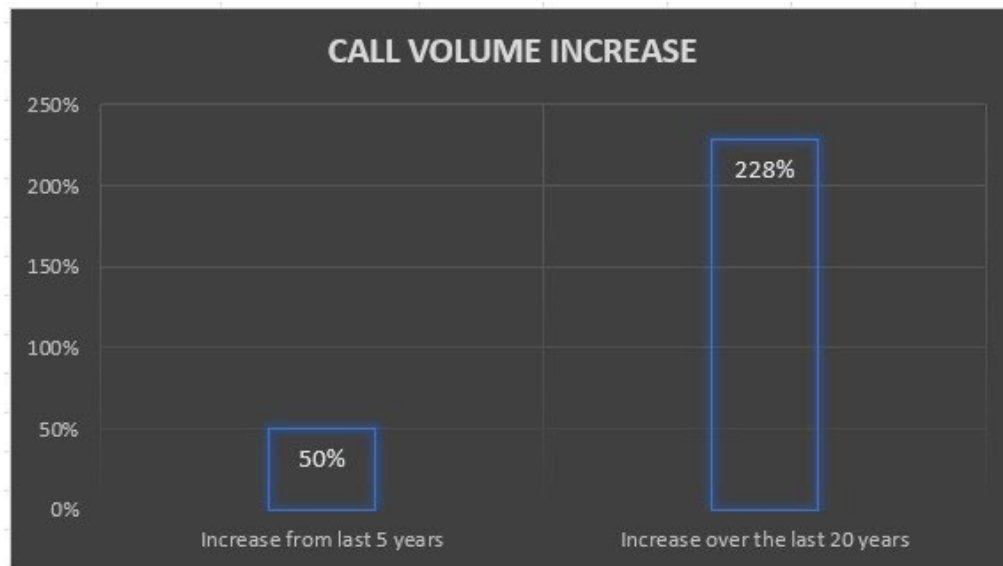
The Gearhart Fire Department is governed by a 5-member elected City Council as well as 4-member elected District Board of Directors. The District Board governs as its own legal entity and contracts services to the City of Gearhart for emergency services response. The Fire Chief of the Gearhart Fire Department serves as both the Department head of the City of Gearhart Fire Department and the Gearhart Rural Fire Protection District. The Chief is responsible for personnel management and delegating the supervision of all other paid and volunteer staff. Under the current organizational structure, the Fire Chief delegates authority through a Division Chief in charge of Operations, Training, and Fire Marshal. A number of other duties are delegated through positions consisting of a Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenant, Safety Officer, and two AIC (Acting in Capacity) Lieutenants.

The Gearhart Fire Department consists of two fire stations. Station 2900 (670 Pacific Way) is located on the south side of the district, on Pacific Way. The second station is 2900A (33496 West Lake Rd) and is at the intersection of Westlake Ln & Highway 101. The stations encompass a maximum roster of 35 volunteers with two paid staff. Currently the department includes 1 Fire Chief, 1 Division Chief, 1 Volunteer Assistant Chief, 1 Volunteer Captain, 1 Volunteer Safety Officer, 2 Volunteer Lieutenants, 2 Volunteer AIC Lieutenants, 2 Intern Firefighters, and 18 Volunteer Firefighters. Additionally, the Fire Department dedicated a Liaison to serve with the Gearhart CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), which serves the local community in times of natural disaster.

Obstacles: As far back as December 2022, a report published by the Oregon 72 Legislative Assembly task force on the state of Volunteer Firefighters. Firefighter safety has driven higher standards in training and protective equipment. A dramatic increase in calls places higher expectations on volunteers who are already stretched for time at full-time work and home obligations. Add to this national dilemma the specific obstacles faced living in a tourist destination with fewer young people in the demographic pool and limited affordable housing, and that is where you will find the challenges faced by Gearhart Fire. Overcoming increased calls, less volunteer pool, and higher training demands is not only the present, but even more so in the future.

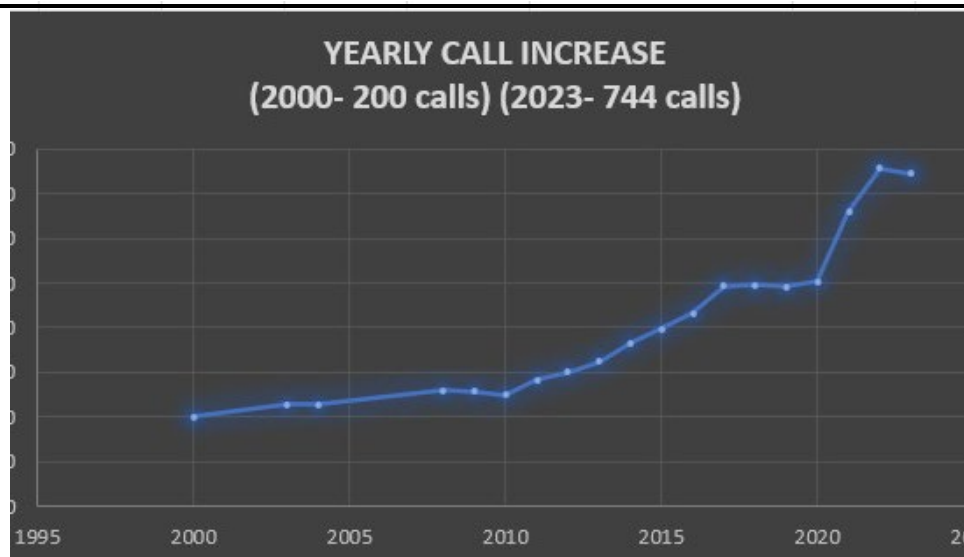
Response (Calls)

Our Department responded to 744 calls in 2023 including fires, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous materials, and medical emergencies. This is an increase of 50% from the last 5 years.

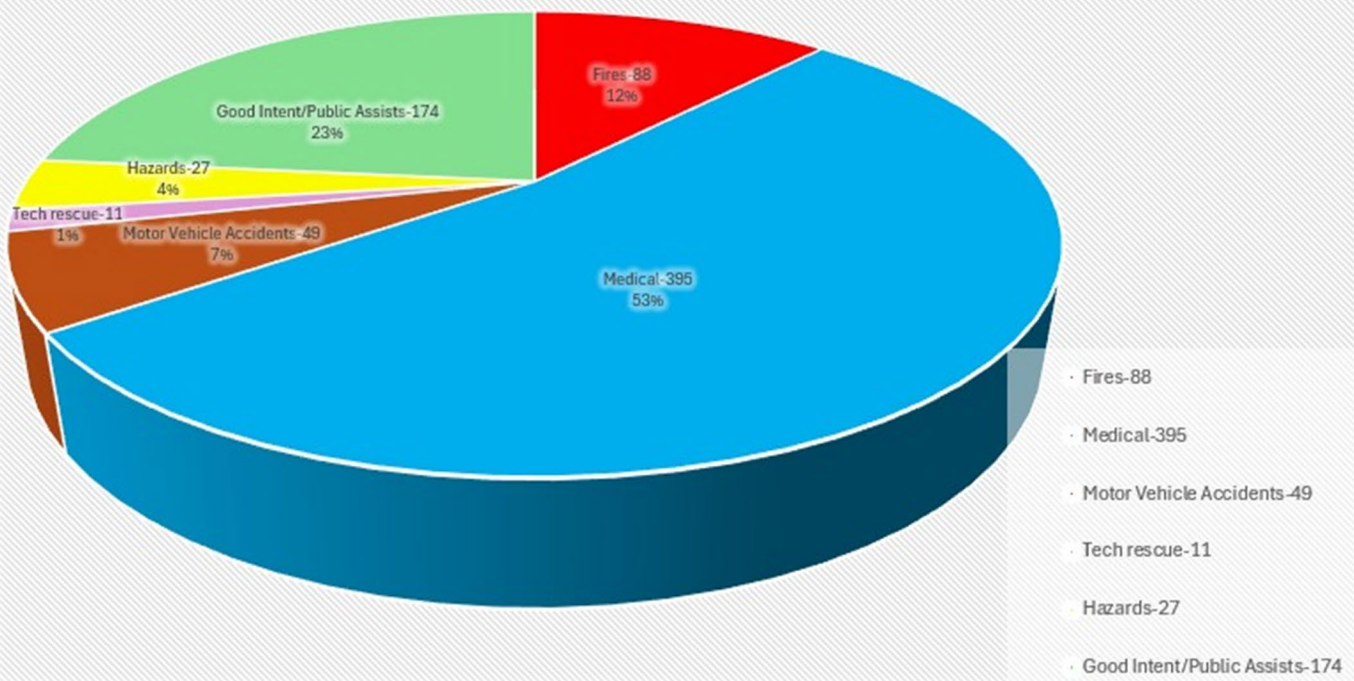


This increase in call volume has certainly been a testament to the dedication of each of our volunteers. These calls come in during the day, night, weekends, holidays, often taking volunteers away from their homes and families to answer the call of others. It's important to note that although our roster may be decent, we do not see every one of these volunteers for every one of those calls. Sometimes we are fortunate to have an excess of help, and sometimes we are only responding with a limited number of firefighters on the engine. Through the increased volume of calls and shortage of volunteer availability, Gearhart Fire has always responded to calls within its service area which includes an on-duty fire officer.

Response Breakdown



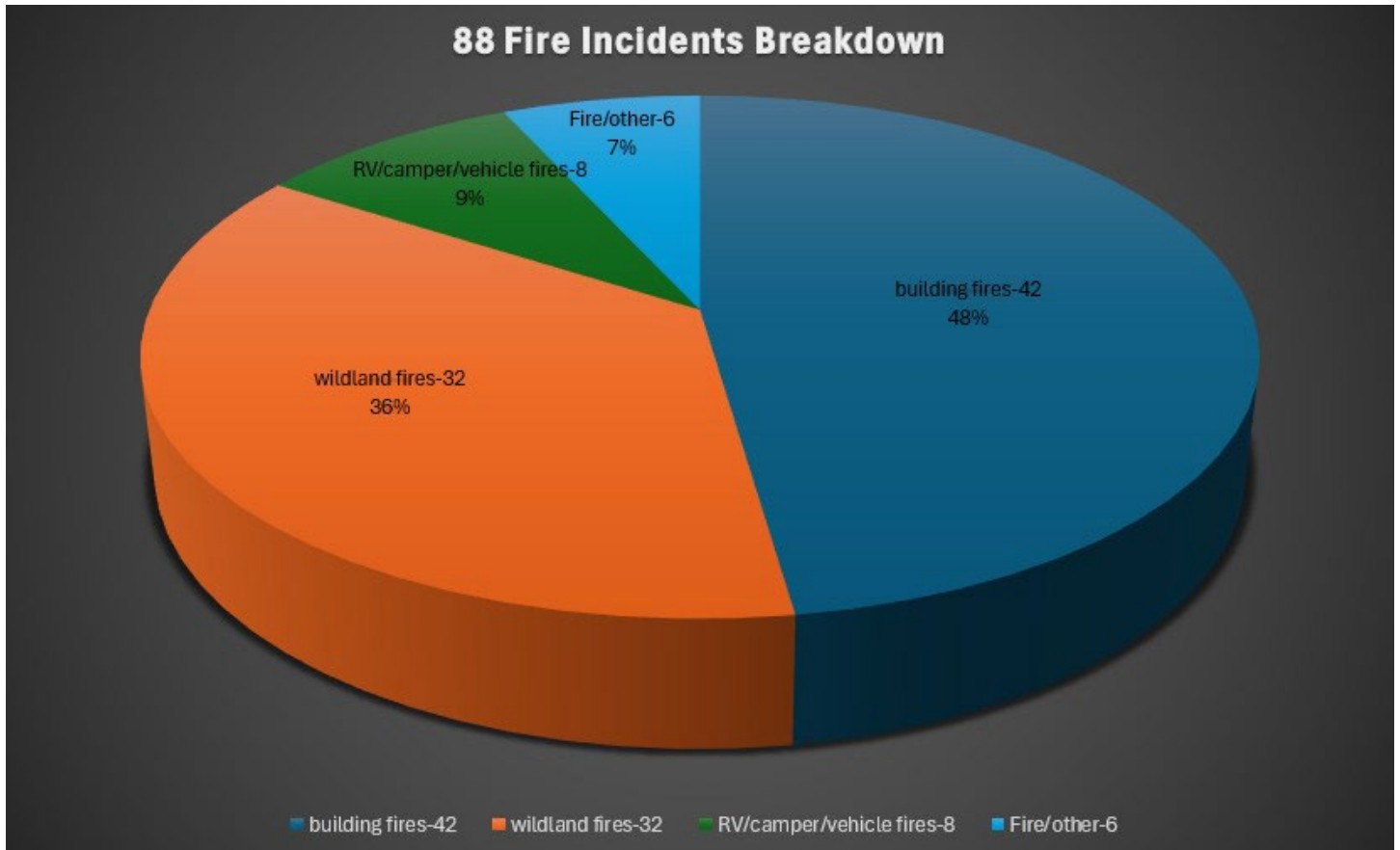
2023 Incident Type Breakdown 744 Total Incidents



In 2023 Gearhart Fire responded to a total of 744 calls for service, breaking down into...

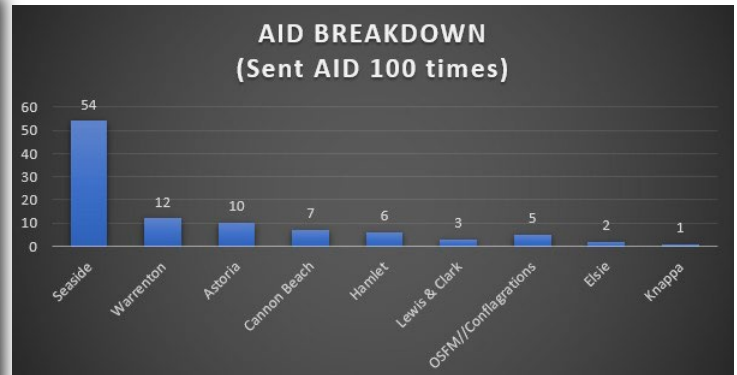
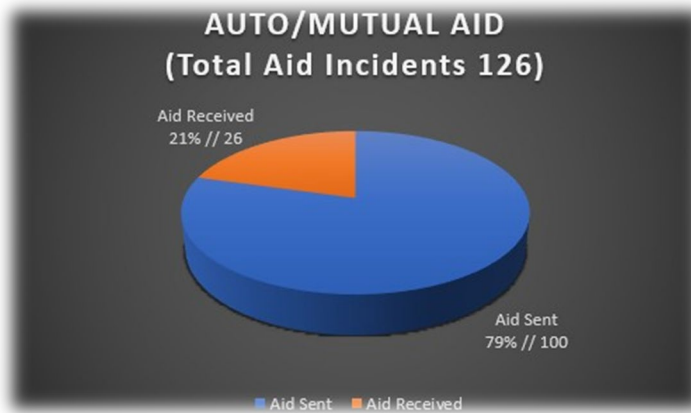
- 53% - Medical related
- 23% - Public Assist
- 12% - Fire (fire breakdown on separate graph)
- 7% - Motor Vehicle Accident related
- 4% - Hazards
- 1% - Technical Rescue related

Fire Incident Breakdown



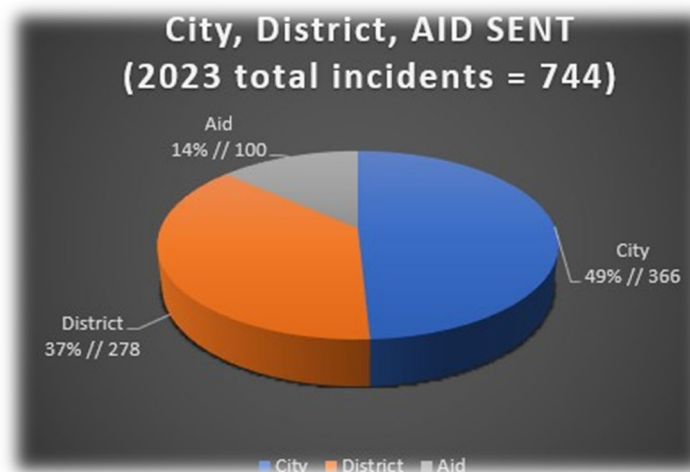
48% - Building Fires
36% - Wildland Fires
9% - Mobile Property Fires
7% - "Other Fires" (EG. Camp fires, beach bon fires, unauthorized burning)

Automatic and/or Mutual Aid



Gearhart Fire holds necessary mutual aid agreements with every department in the County to provide life and/or property-saving resources in critical times of need. We additionally sent aid statewide under the umbrella of the Oregon State Fire Marshal. Though this graph depicts aid sent out of our response area, note that it is to those agencies who will return aid to us when needed. Mutual-Aid-Agreements are a common cornerstone of emergency response agencies around the United States, with our initial County-wide Mutual-Aid-Agreement originating circa 1960.

Response to The City vs The District



It is important to reflect that though our Department is at a call volume of 744 calls for the year, the City alone sustained approximately the same amount of calls our entire Fire Protection District had in 2014 (365 calls). The District has sustained the same amount of calls our entire Fire Protection District had in 2011 (283 calls).



There was a 57% increase in hours over last year. This isn't solely part of incidents but more complex scenes, extended times for coverage, investigation, time to return apparatus to service, and training hours.

Training

2022

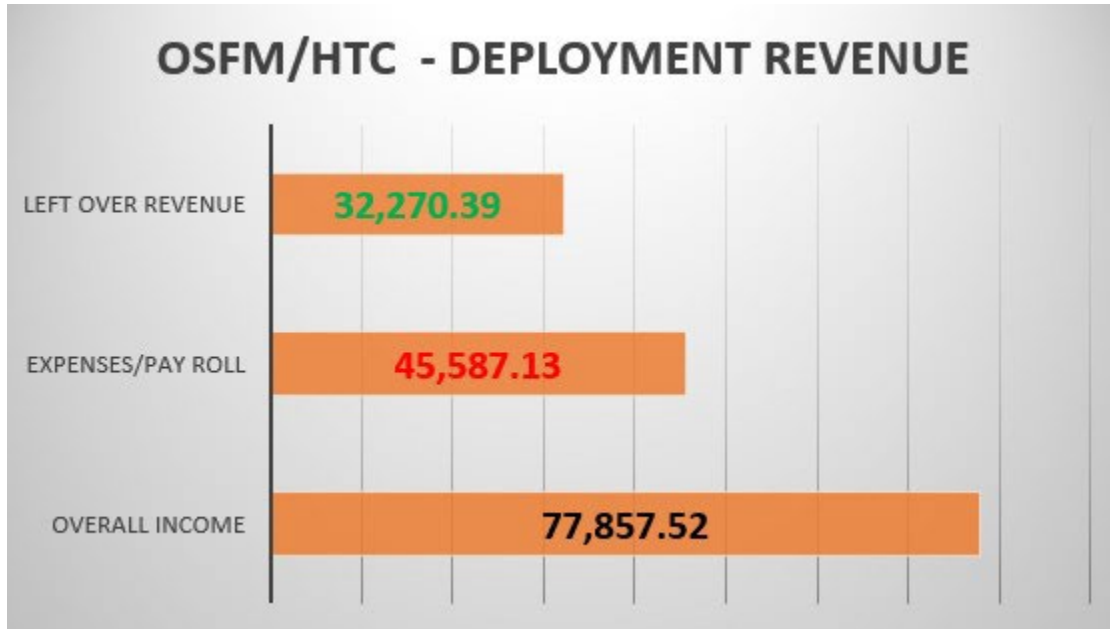
2023

2,709 Hours

2,867 Hours

Though there is only a small difference in accounted hours here, there is numerous hours from behind the scenes that were not accounted for. This includes time spent by firefighters either driving, water rescue training, and/or independent study. Our hope is that with this new year, and new ways we are documenting both incidents and training the credit for hours spent will be better demonstrated in the 2024 annual report.

Mobilization Revenue



Annual mobilizations provide numerous benefits to our agency, enhancing our capabilities both locally and Statewide. These deployments offer invaluable hands-on experience that strengthens our firefighters' skills when responding to emergencies at home. They also foster strong Regional and Statewide relationships, ensuring seamless collaboration with partner agencies.

Participation in the Statewide Mutual-Aid system is crucial—not only do we assist other communities in times of need, but we also rely on that same support when faced with major incidents in our own jurisdiction. As a State-recognized emergency response resource (we are a government agency in the State of Oregon/we are the Governor's resource), we play a vital role in Oregon's disaster response efforts.

Additionally, the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has invested heavily in our agency, providing hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants and equipment to enhance our operational readiness. As demonstrated in the graph above, mobilizations also generate significant revenue for our agency, helping sustain and improve our department while benefiting our personnel through funding and experience.

Insurance Service Office (ISO) ISO rating. (Further details in separate files on website)

Insurance Service Office (ISO) is an independent organization who conducts what is referred to as Public Protection Classification (PPC) survey and onsite review. Part of the review compares community risks to what the fire district can provide in fire suppression (e.g., putting out fires). The ISO PPC Program plays an important role in the underwriting for insurance companies. Most US independent insurers use PPC information as part of their decision-making when deciding insurance coverage and premium rates. PPC rates are on a scale from “1” to “10”, with “10” being no protection and “1” being the highest community protection possible. PPC rating occurs approximately every 10 years unless there is a significant change in the community, e.g., re-districting.

Gearhart Fire’s PPC rating is classified as a “3”. Our work to provide for upgraded apparatus, training/certification, documentation on inspections and in house operations better this rating. By holding a lower classification number, this, in part, improves the insurance rate for individuals inside our response area.

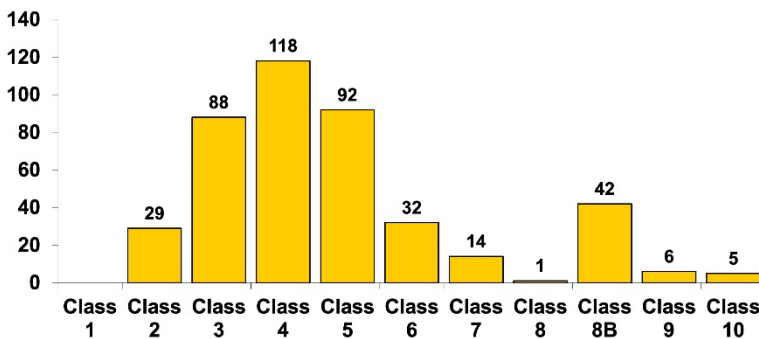
PPC points are given within the following categories: a) apparatus, b) staffing, c) water supply, and d) fire prevention.

Why Care about ISO?

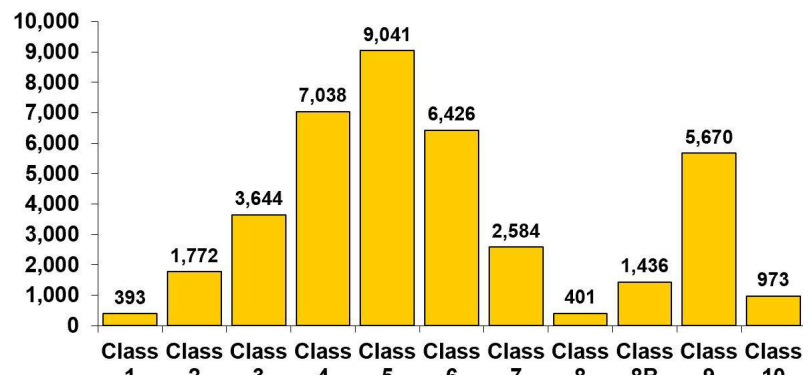
It’s important for homeowners and commercial owners alike to realize that changes in a department’s ISO can impact their insurance bills. The lower the score, the better their insurance rate.

The challenging goal is to maintain our “3” rating while working to lower it to a “2”, by addressing where we can advance, such as updating fire apparatus, maintaining hydrants for the city and district, documenting hydrant maintenance, fire inspections, and fire prevention pre-plans. The graphs below depict just how many departments currently hold a “3” rating. This is all in part to the work of our volunteers and staff!

Oregon



Countrywide



Apparatus List

| App# | Loc | Yr | Make/Description | Notes |
|-------|------|------|------------------------------|--|
| 2921 | MAIN | 2010 | Pierce Fire Engine - Type 1 | |
| 2923 | SUB | 1997 | Spartan Fire Engine - Type 1 | On the radar to replace within 5 years, with a Type 1-3, for better versatility of the district. |
| 2935 | SUB | 1995 | International Water Tender | Grants submitted to replace apparatus |
| 2972 | MAIN | 2006 | Mercedes FireMog - Type 3 | Updated Emergency Lighting and new plumbing installed 2022 |
| 2976 | SUB | 2013 | F-550 4x4 Brush - Type VI | |
| 2951 | MAIN | 2001 | F-550 4x4 Tech Rescue / EMS | Received recent Engine and Suspension Maint. |
| RWC-1 | MAIN | 2012 | Kawasaki Rescue Watercraft | Purchased Used from Nahlem Bay F&R |
| RWC-2 | MAIN | 2012 | Kawasaki Rescue Watercraft | Purchased Used from Nahlem Bay F&R |
| 2961 | MAIN | 2008 | F-250 4x4 - Type 3 Command | Duty Officer Vehicle / Utility |
| 2962 | MAIN | 2007 | GMC Yukon - Type 3 Command | Div. Chief Staff Vehicle |
| 2963 | MAIN | 2018 | Ram 1500 - Type 3 Command | Fire Chief Staff Vehicle |

2921
City Owned



2961
City Owned



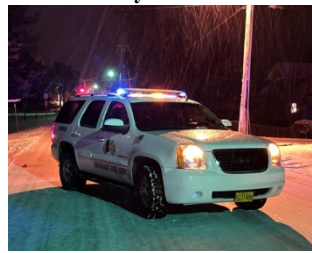
2923
City Owned



2951
City Owned



2962
City Owned



2935
District Owned



2972
City Owned



2963
City Owned



2976
City Owned

