



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

2021 saw MCFRS get back on track with “non-pandemic” activities, training, outreach, and engagement. The changes to protect members health and safety will help us respond and protect each other going forward and we can get back to ‘pre-pandemic’ activities and projects. The annual report highlights the return of dispatched incidents to pre-2020 levels, a large infusion of new apparatus, expansion of EMIHS functions, and big enhancements in FY23.



This report highlights the great work, effort, changes, and innovations each one of you took as we came “out” of the pandemic and into the endemic. I ask you to keep being safe, clean, supportive of each other, and ready to answer the residents’ emergency and non-emergency needs.

This is the second annual report for MCFRS. Last year we moved away from an annual strategic plan to an annual report. The change to an annual report ties into the master plan. Work on the revision of the department master plan began at the end of 2021 and was deferred, awaiting completion and input from several supporting documents. The Re-imagine Fire Rescue Equity and Diversity study and the Operations/Deployment and Staffing study are actively underway. These two (2) studies and input from the risk assessment in partnership with IAFF International will be included in the next Master Plan. That plan will set the road map for the department for the next six years, 2023-2029.

The pandemic brought on a lot of change, and that has continued throughout the nation and in the county. One part of the change is my enrollment in the deferred retirement program, and other senior leadership changes. To adjust, we must remain focused on customer service - the customers are the residents of and visitors to Montgomery County - to those that need FRS service. Part of that focus is to:

- ✓ Treat all you interact with, work with, or come in contact with - with **RESPECT**.
- ✓ Ensure your conversations and actions are **RELEVANT** to fire rescue duties while on-duty.
- ✓ Be **PROFESSIONAL** in your actions.

Thank you all for the service, commitment, and devotion you provide each and every day to the residents and visitors of Montgomery County and beyond.

*Scott Gold*

**Fire Chief**



# ABOUT MCFRS

The MCFRS is a combination career and volunteer all-hazards department providing a full complement of emergency medical services, fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, swift water rescue, fire investigation, and fire and life safety resources and education. The MCFRS is comprised of 1,177 career personnel and 82 professional support staff and 750 active local fire and rescue department (LFRD) volunteers and 1,196 LFRD administrative/support personnel<sup>1</sup>. The department operates from 47 work sites, 37 of which are fire and rescue stations (includes two rescue squads), strategically positioned to meet the emergency service needs of the residents, businesses, and visitors in Montgomery County.

## Mission

The mission of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is to protect lives, property, and the environment with comprehensive risk reduction programs and safe and effective emergency response provided by highly skilled career and volunteer service providers representing the County's diverse population.

## Vision

The vision of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is to enhance public safety and support quality of life through direct immersion in our communities, effectively blending outreach and education, and by leveraging our career and volunteer workforce to deliver exceptional services and improve our resiliency to meet increased challenges.

## Values

MCFRS providers are committed to the following principles:

- Deliver services to our customers with impartiality and excellence
- Promote the highest standards of safety and welfare
- Serve with integrity and mutual respect
- Recognize the importance of diversity of our workforce and communities
- Promote the efficient and effective utilization of our resources, and ensure that all organizations and personnel comprising the MCFRS share the responsibility for continuously improving their capabilities, effectiveness, and efficiency
- Be responsible for the honor of our profession and public service
- Promote equity and harmony among career and volunteer personnel
- Maintain and promote open honest communication, creativity, and competence
- Be accountable and ethical
- Continuously improve public confidence and trust

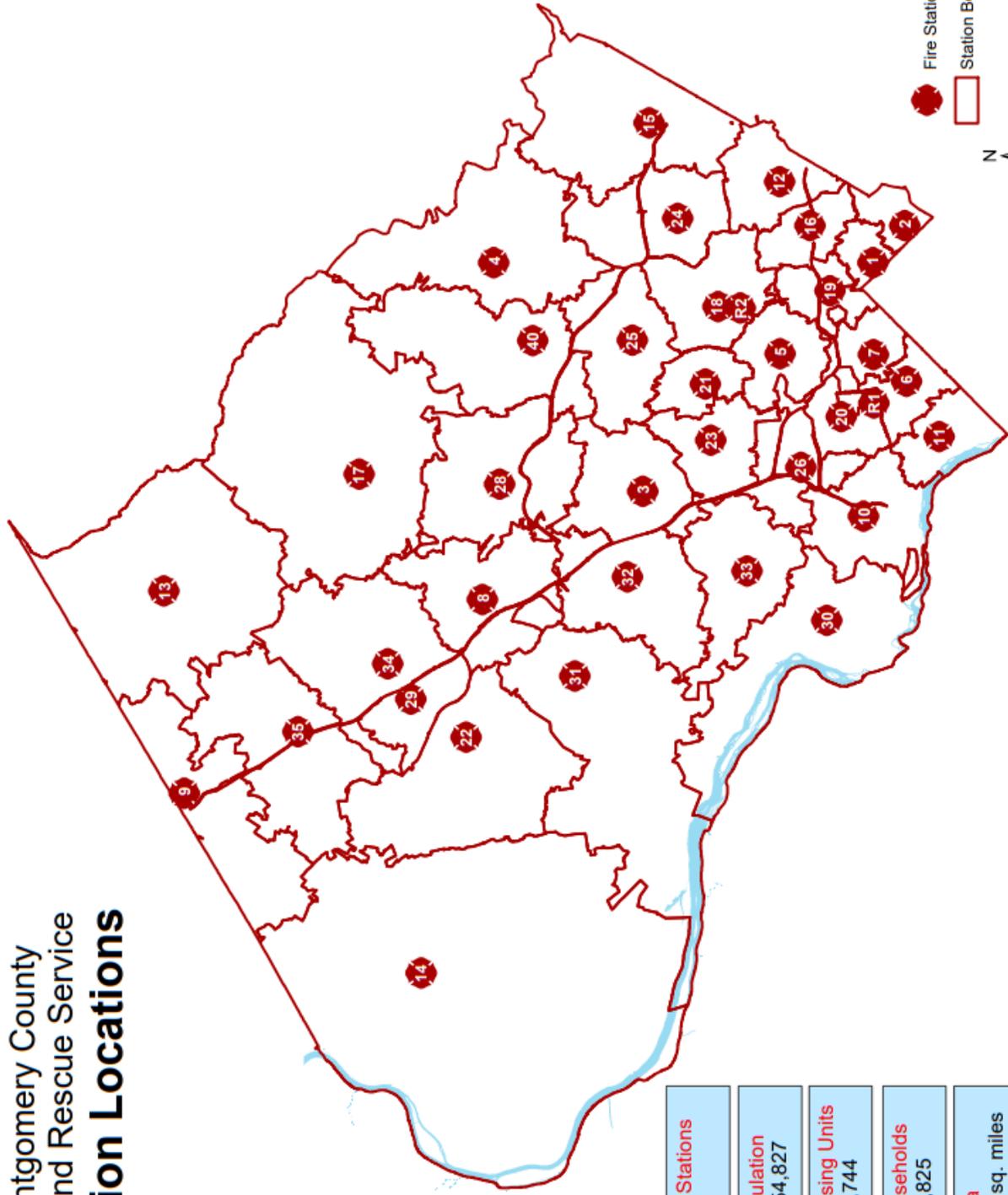
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<sup>1</sup> IECS numbers pulled September 7, 2022.





# Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Station Locations

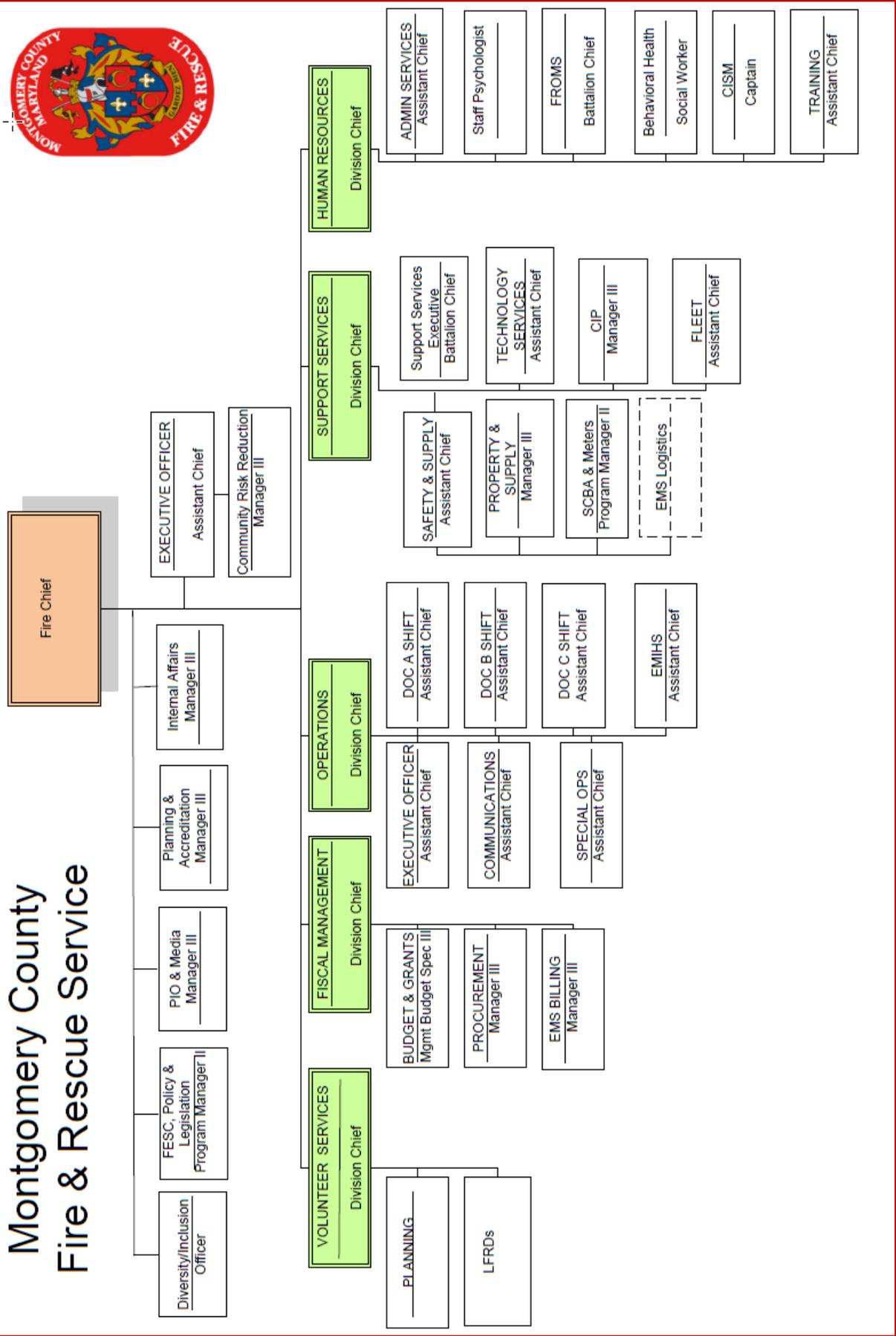


|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
|  | <b>Fire Stations</b><br>37      |
|  | <b>Population</b><br>1,054,827  |
|  | <b>Housing Units</b><br>405,744 |
|  | <b>Households</b><br>372,825    |
|  | <b>Area</b><br>506 sq. miles    |

Data as of July 1, 2021 from US Census QuickFacts

P:\Planning\GIS\Countywide Maps\Mocoby\thenumbers\_letter.mxd Date: 7/25/2022

# Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service



Organizational chart as of 8/2022.  
Readers may click the chart for a more detailed version.



## MCFRS Goals & Objectives

MCFRS members continued to work towards the department's long-established goals in support of its mission in 2021:

- To maintain operational readiness for an all-hazards mission and response capability, including emergency medical services, fire suppression, technical rescue, water/ice rescue, aviation fire-rescue, hazardous materials, and explosive device emergency services through effective deployment and leverage of career and volunteer resources (i.e., staffing and equipment) in a fiscally responsible manner.
- To minimize the number of deaths and number/severity of injuries to our customers through a comprehensive, all-hazards, risk reduction strategy implemented through our comprehensive community outreach program.
- To ensure that MCFRS embraces diversity and continuously recruits the career and volunteer personnel required to effectively deliver our services and programs, and undertakes the steps needed to address the current and projected training needs for career and volunteer leadership and workforce development (e.g., PSTA classes, online training, in-service training, station drills, classes provided by the Maryland Fire-Rescue Institute, etc.) and retain these individuals for long-term service to the community.
- To provide for and enhance the wellness, safety, training, and professional development of our personnel, including implementation of risk reduction strategies to improve occupational safety and to improve the health and wellness of MCFRS personnel.
- To seek, create and maintain strong partnerships with municipal, regional, State and federal agencies, the citizenry, and private and nonprofit organizations and institutions within Montgomery County so that we may enhance our capabilities and responsiveness to their needs/concerns and leverage their collective capabilities to assist us in our life safety, community risk reduction, injury prevention and property protection efforts to keep the community safe.
- To maintain and grow our infrastructure, including facilities, apparatus, equipment, communications systems, and information technology systems to support our mission.
- To establish an organizational commitment to evaluate, develop, and implement new technologies and innovations on a continuous basis that will enhance the effective delivery of services and performance of business processes.



- To ensure the transparency of our business operations and that open lines of communication are maintained with our customers.
- To set a desirable and attainable course for the future through strategic planning and with the establishment and periodic reassessment and refinement of our mission, vision, strategic direction, and objectives.
- To evaluate our progress and strive for continual improvement through accreditation, program appraisals, performance measurement, community feedback and technological enhancements that allow for comprehensive analysis of all aspects of MCFRS operations and administration.

To meet these goals, the MCFRS consistently strives to meet six objectives:

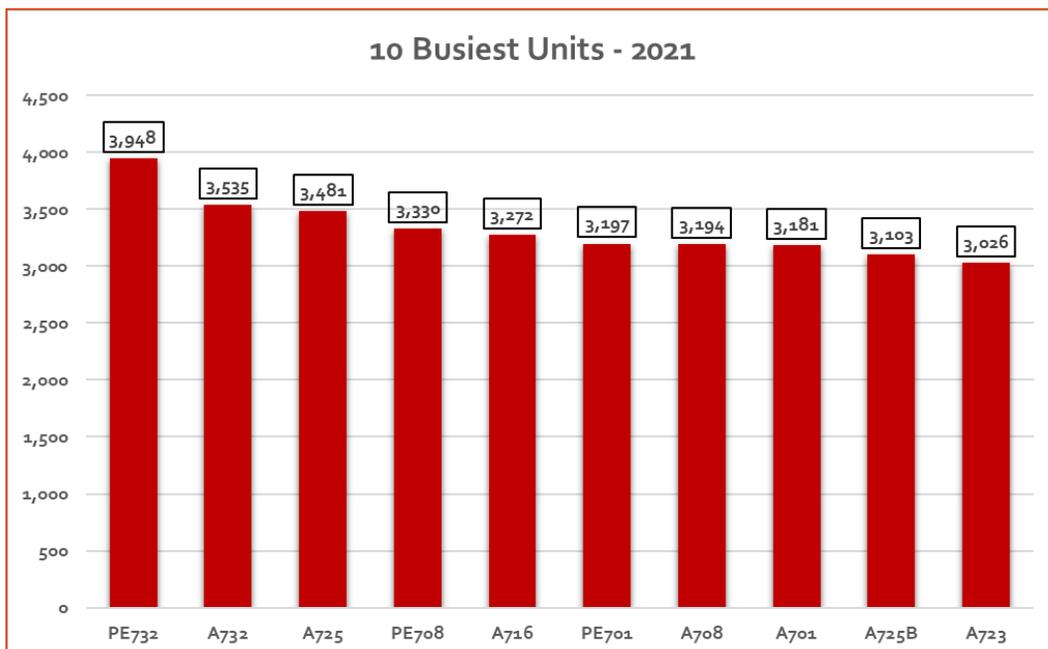
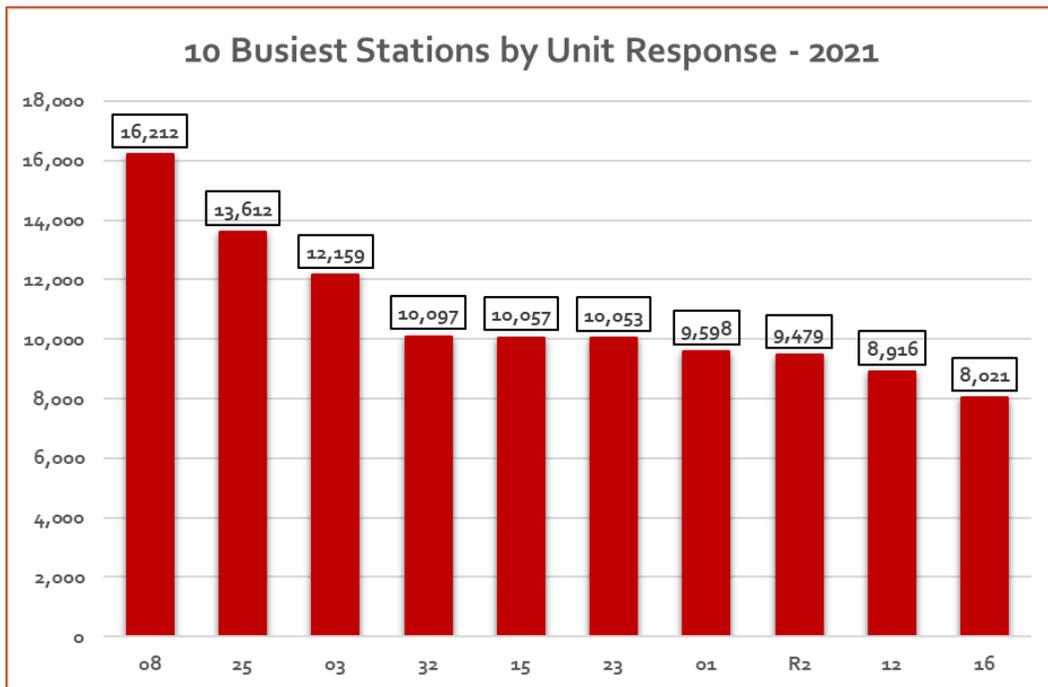
- Achieve and maintain the highest degree of readiness
- Optimize assets to ensure mission success
- Minimize preventable deaths and injuries and their negative impact
- Provide for the wellbeing of the workforce
- Build and maintain relationships with internal and external partners
- Implement change to enhance performance



# MCFRS YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2021

MCFRS went in to 2021 exhausted from the demands of 2020, but with hopeful anticipation that the pandemic was receding. Although there was a slowdown, the emergence of the Omicron variant at the end of the year greatly impacted not only the regional hospitals, but also our personnel and resulted in some short-term [service adjustments](#). It was another year of challenges, but MCFRS personnel continued their unselfish commitment to put the community first and worked tirelessly to staff apparatus, responding to 122,329 dispatched incidents in 2021.



## Achieved and maintained the highest degree of readiness

- Recruit classes 48 and 49 graduated in 2021, putting 62 women and men into fire stations throughout Montgomery County.



FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell visited the Training Academy and met with recruits in October 2021 for Fire Prevention Month.

- In the summer of 2021, Montgomery County began the process of a Public Protection Classification Review by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). ISO analyzes data and information pertaining to fire protection efforts using their Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, then classifies the jurisdiction with a rating between 1 and 10. The County received the final report in early 2022: Montgomery County retained its current classification of 2 for urban, hydranted areas and 4 for rural, non-hydranted areas.
- The Division of Support Services focused on apparatus, equipment, and facilities:
  - Completed two multi-year projects that placed five new Pierce Enforcer 107' tractor-drawn aerials and three rescue squads in service.
  - Placed seven new light duty command and general staff fleet vehicles into service in 2021.



- Finished engineering one new rescue engine and one new tanker and began the multi-year procurement process for five new aerial towers, six new pumpers, and several new ambulances.
- After operating from a temporary facility for 16 years, a Notice to Proceed for construction on Station 35 was issued in November 2021, and [Montgomery County officials broke ground in December](#).
- New apparatus bays doors were installed at several stations.
- CERT was engaged and busy in 2021, offering training in disaster preparedness to residents throughout Montgomery County. MC CERT conducted a successful Teen CERT, two CERT basic courses (including in-person practicums), and five CPR classes.
- CERT also took the leading role with the National Capitol Region CERT consortium, conducting monthly Zoom meetings with CERT leads from the District of Columbia, Fairfax County, Arlington, Alexandria, Prince George's County, Anne Arundel County, and Baltimore. The team also participated in the Anne Arundel/Annapolis CERT training for radio usage and assisted our sister team in Fairfax County with the presentation of CERT CON 2021, which was held virtually and widely attended.

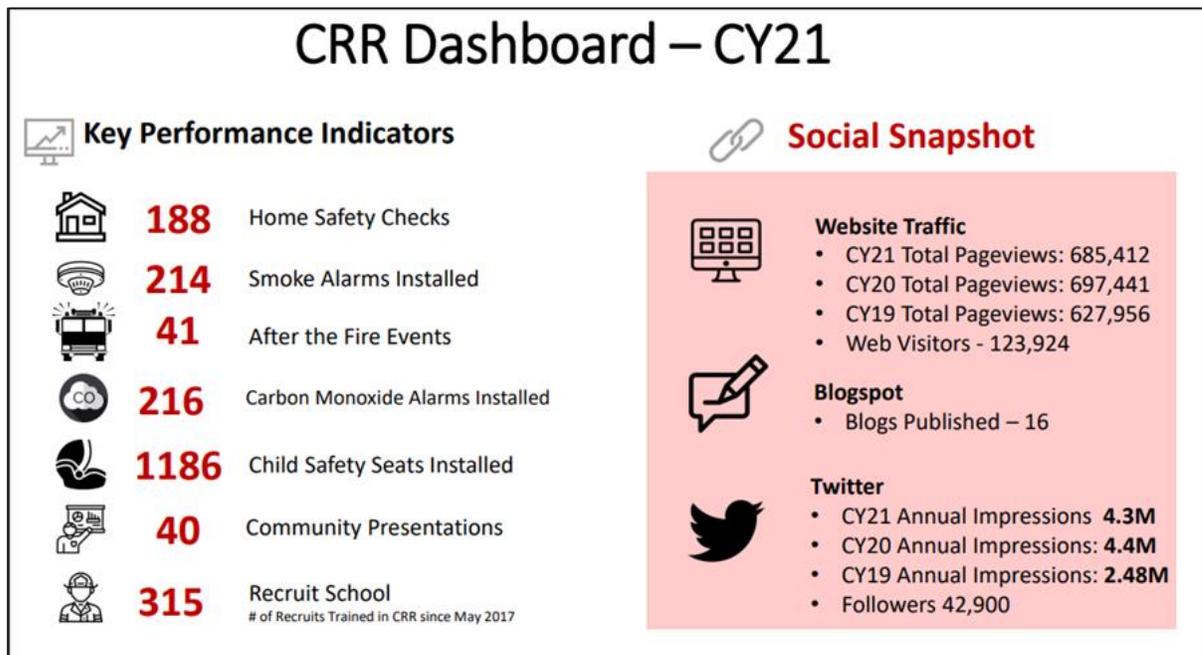
### **Optimized assets to ensure mission success**

- The Technology Services Section has been very busy! In 2021, deployment of a new data platform (FZ55) to transition chief officers away from a desktop environment to a combined mobile data environment was initiated. The new platform allows for enhanced portability and functionality, while also saving a significant amount of money by consolidating into a single machine. Technology Services also played a key role in the acquisition of the A3 system, which will be implemented in 2022 and will allow for text messaging, unit status, and other data features of the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system to be accessed via portable land mobile radios.
- Our Montgomery County CERT Go Team was tasked with multiple support missions in 2021, to include serving as a collection point for PPE from donors and a PPE point of distribution to childcare providers. In addition, the team provided weeks of daily mobility assistance for the Montgomery College - Germantown vaccination site, and this COVID-19 support mission continued into 2022.



## Minimized preventable deaths and injuries and their negative impact

- The Emergency Medical and Integrated Healthcare Services (EMIHS) expanded the Leave-Behind Narcan program in an effort to minimize opioid overdose deaths, which have increased considerably over the last couple of years. Pre-assembled Narcan kits were placed on every frontline apparatus and department vehicle; kits are kept at every station and include additional information on County resources for those suffering from addiction.
- The Community Risk Reduction Section worked tirelessly behind the scenes and in the community to engage residents through multiple outreach, prevention, and education programs and initiatives to minimize deaths and injuries.



## Provided for the wellbeing of the workforce

- A Fire Chief's General Order issued in April 2021 ordered that low-priority fire incident call types would be dispatched as routine responses, which reverses the practice of responding "emergency" with lights and sirens to these less serious fire alarms and minor hazardous conditions and service calls, thereby reducing the risk of injury to our personnel and the general public.
- The Division of Support Services continued work under the *Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program* to add mechanical vehicle exhaust removal systems to all permanent indoor parking spaces in any fire stations that currently do not have them.
- The Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) shop completed a long, 2-year project of hydrostatic testing all MCFRS cylinders. The shop simultaneously

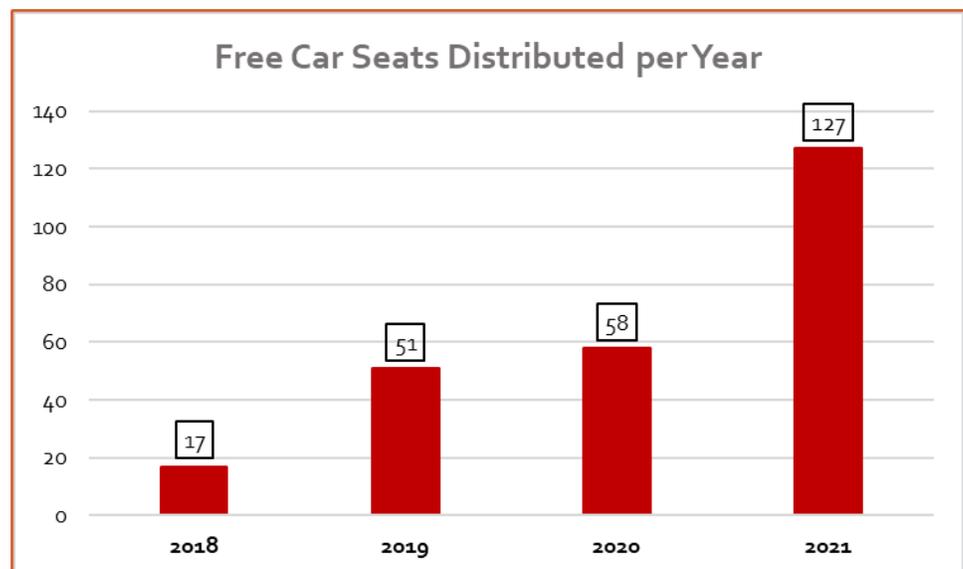


completed more than 8,000 work orders that included SCBA repairs, maintaining meters, docking stations, and breathing air compressors.

- The Property and Supply Section initiated a wear trial of a lighter, more flexible PPE pant and coat.
- Several projects from the Level of Effort Capital Improvement project list were also completed or initiated:
  - HVAC replacement at Station 8.
  - Resurfacing at Station 29, incorporating new federal ADA site requirements.
  - Station 4 had an update on its life safety systems.
  - Planned generator replacement at Station 11.
  - Construction began at Station 30 to accommodate female facilities.

### **Built and maintained relationships with internal and external partners**

- In December 2021, MCFRS announced a partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and the University of Maryland Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program to present “Fire Fit, Fire Smart” Bootcamp for girls, ages 13-18. The six-week empowerment program was designed to help girls develop strength, confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills, while increasing their knowledge of fire safety and fire service careers.
- The Community Risk Reduction Section personnel engaged child safety partners throughout the County and the state, including the Safe Kids Montgomery County Coalition, the Safe Kids Maryland Coalition, and the Montgomery County Child Fatality Review Team, with the goal of reducing preventable deaths among children. Additionally, through partnerships with various social services and nonprofit agencies, CRR distributed 127 free car seats to families in need in 2021. This program has been growing, and CRR is looking for additional grant funding opportunities and to strengthen the partnerships, to reach those families most in need.



- The Facilities Maintenance Section developed a partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation for sourcing appliance repair, resulting in a cost savings for the MCFRS.
- The Facilities Maintenance Section also entered into a partnership with the Department of Finance, Division of Risk Management for joint investigations related to health and safety at all FRS facilities.
- MCFRS received 1000 smoke alarms in an ongoing public-private partnership between the department, Lowe's, and Pepco's Emergency Services Partnership Program. This longstanding initiative has provided smoke alarms for distribution and installation by MCFRS members in Montgomery County for the last 17 years.



## Implemented change to enhance performance

The MCFRS is always seeking ways to create efficiencies and make improvements to enhance performance.

- EMIHS implemented an EMS Quality Management Plan ([Policy #21-04AM](#)) to enhance the quality of patient care and customer service provided by personnel, and to correct any anomalies or deviations from the existing standard of care.
- In January 2021, the CRR Section applied for and was selected to take part in the NFPA's Community Risk Assessment pilot project to build and refine a digital tool that combines data stories and helps users understand their community's risk story through visualizations. Known as [CRAIG 1300](#), this community risk assessment tool aligns with NFPA 1300, helps highlight the strengths and challenges within the community so leaders can prioritize and develop a plan for all hazards that pose a risk to residents and property, and is now a permanent MCFRS resource. It has been introduced to recruits in the academy during the Community Risk Reduction Bootcamp block, giving them the opportunity to explore and learn all about the communities they will be assigned to and the risks that are present.



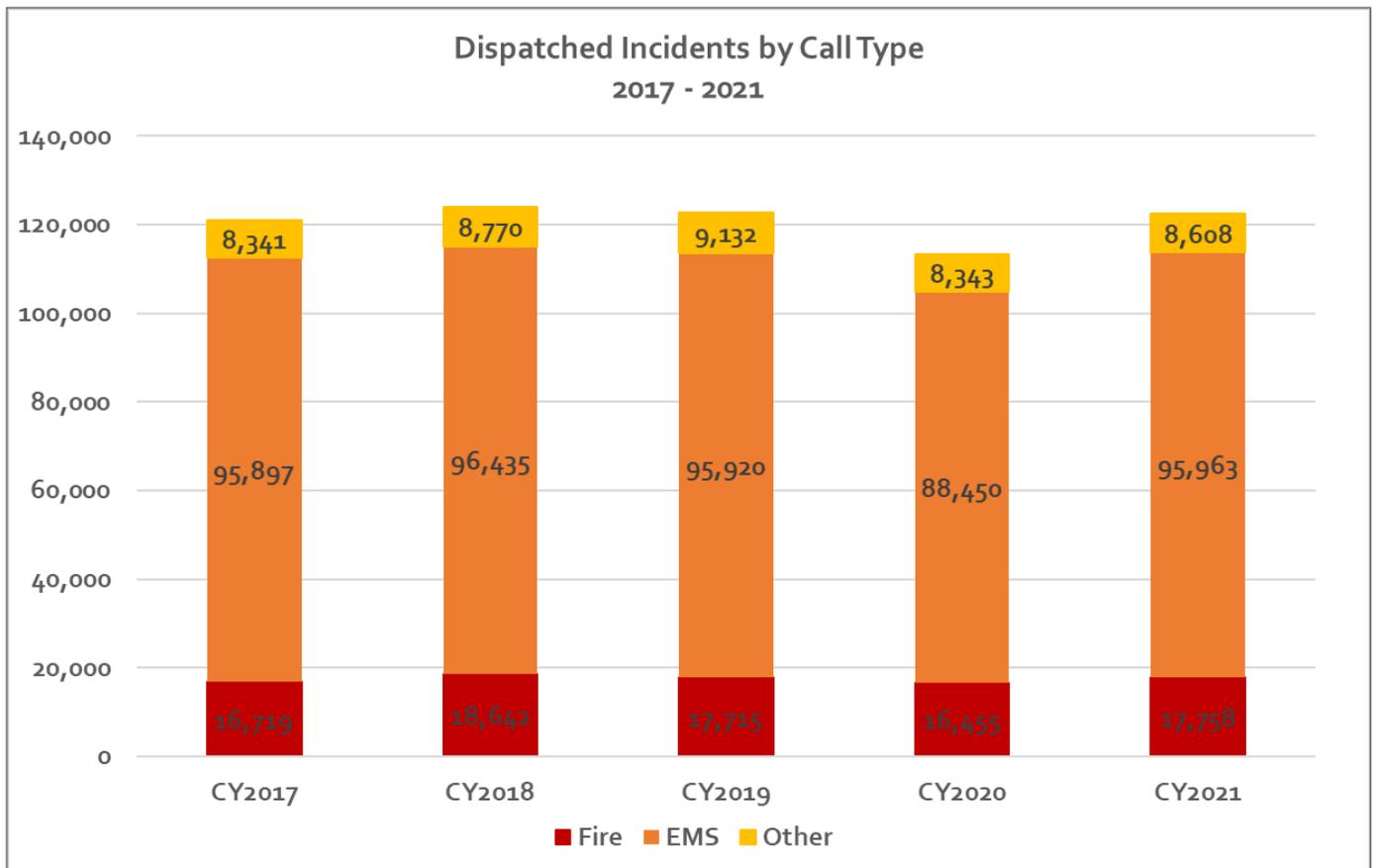
- The Safety and Logistics Sections were merged to create the MCFRS Safety & Supply Section to bring enhanced efficiency to the department.
- The executive office within Support Services established a new, semiannual business meeting with station commanders, which resulted in several new business practices.
- The CIP Section worked with DGS and the Office of Sustainability on lighting retrofits at stations to completely replace outdated lighting fixtures with new, energy efficient lights.
- The Admin Services Section streamlined hiring and administrative processes and developed multiple methods for tracking admin services cases.
- The LOSAP/PIMS section kept very busy in 2021. In addition to processing LOSAP points lost due to Covid-19, the section also processed Covid-19 checks sent to volunteers who rode during periods of the pandemic. And with the help of past MCFRS employee and Wheaton VRS member, Pat Patterson, the office has begun the process of making all newly created files and records electronic. Electronic documents will be stored on the County's servers, which are backed up regularly, making them less susceptible to loss.

LOSAP  
Coordinator  
John Hardison  
and Wheaton  
VRS member  
Pat Patterson  
review files.



# MCFRS STATISTICS AND RESPONSE TIMES

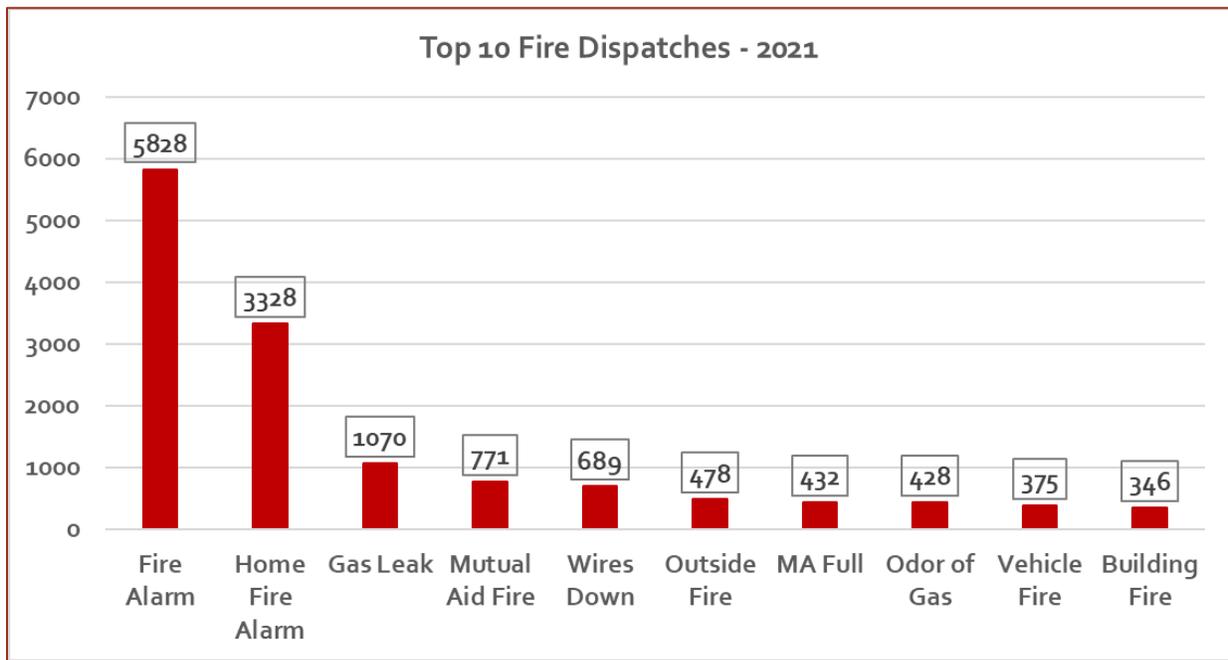
Call volume in 2021 returned to pre-pandemic levels; dispatched incidents were 8% higher than dispatched incidents in 2020, and call volume was up 1.1% over the last five years.



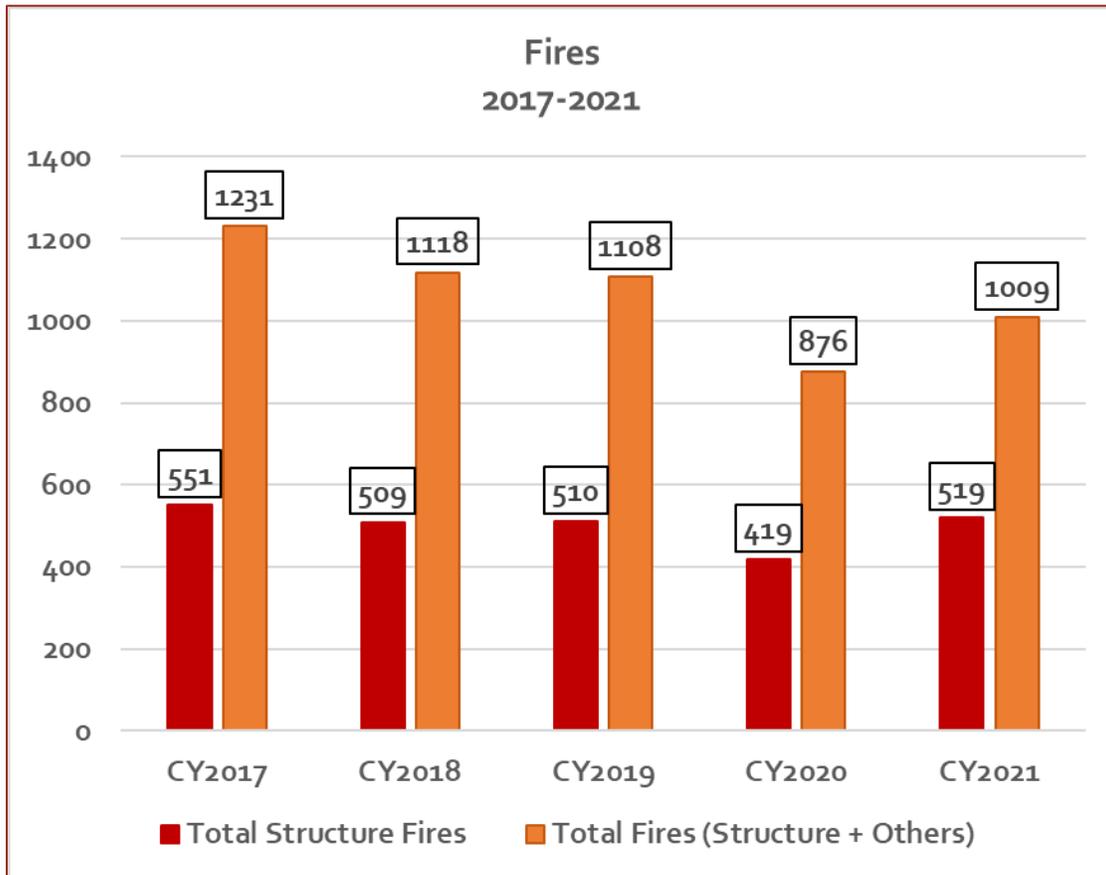
Data retrieved 5/6/2022 using Crystal Reports. Call volume includes 5,487 mutual aid calls.



In 2021, there were 881 incidents dispatched as Fire Full Assignment (FFA), a 9.9% increase from the previous year. These are the most serious fire-related incidents, as the 911 call taker has learned from the caller that smoke or flame is visible within or outside a structure, making the incident more urgent and life-threatening.



MCFRS recorded 1009 total fires in 2021, a 15.2% increase from 2020. Of those, 519 were structure fires.



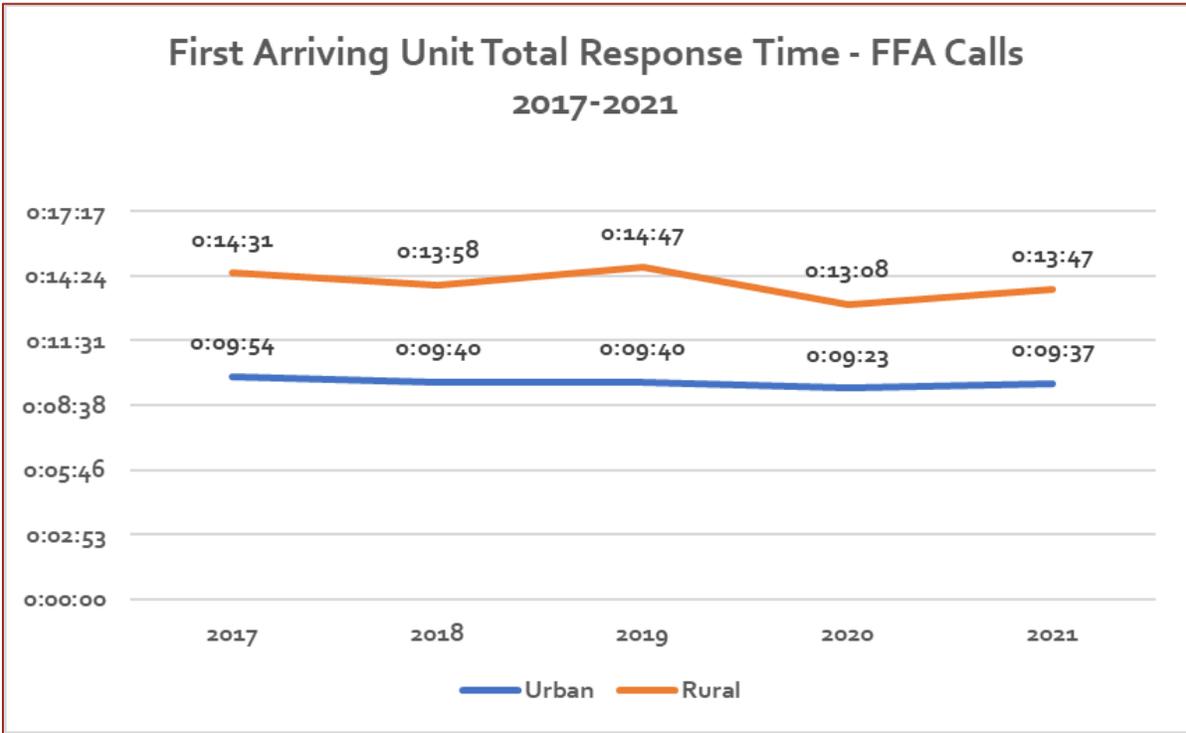
|                       | CY2017       | CY2018       | CY2019       | CY2020       | CY2021       |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Structure Fires | 551          | 509          | 510          | 419          | 519          |
| Structure Fire Loss   | \$21,886,402 | \$27,715,197 | \$27,955,161 | \$23,149,245 | \$28,021,532 |

|             | Fire-Related Civilian Injuries | Fire-Related Civilian Deaths | Fire-Related Firefighter Injuries | Fire-Related Firefighter Deaths |
|-------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>2021</b> | 22                             | 7                            | 56                                | 0                               |

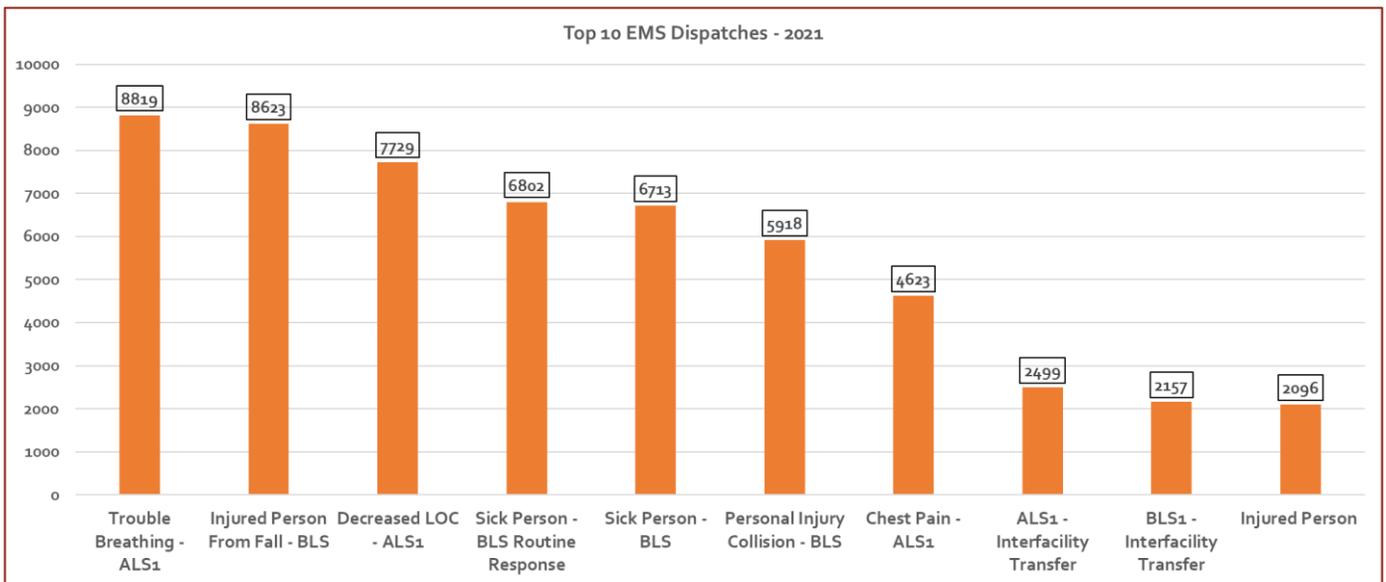
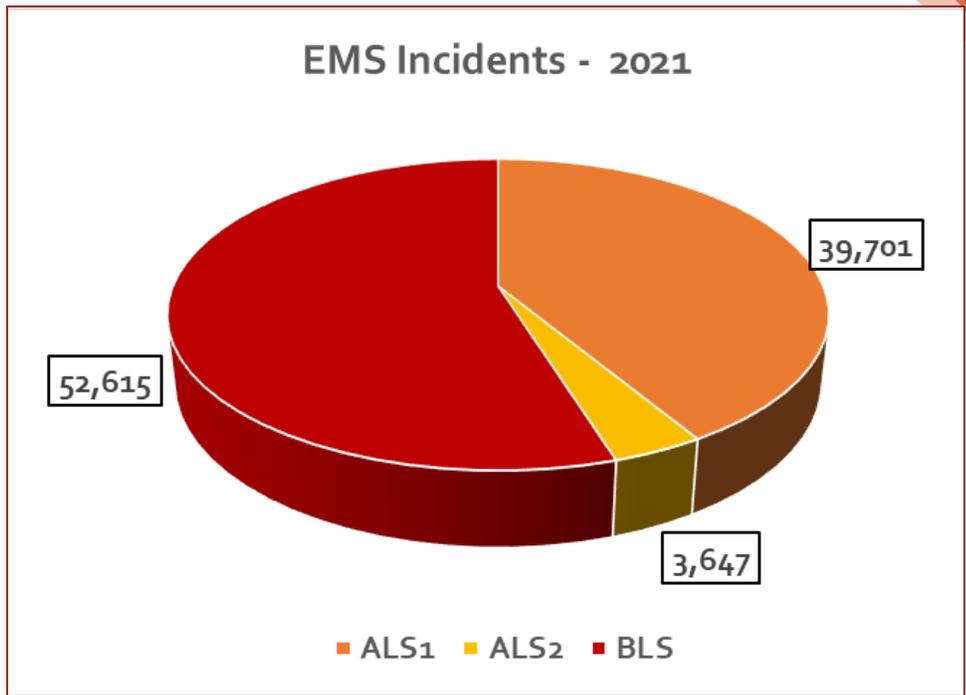
*Five of the seven fire fatalities involved residents over the age of 65, emphasizing the importance of outreach and education to Montgomery County's senior population.*



| Fire Full Assignment (FFA)<br>(90th percentile) |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | 2020           |                | 2021           |                | Benchmarks     |                |
|   | Urban          | Rural          | Urban          | Rural          | Urban          | Rural          |
| Phone to Dispatch                               | 0:04:02        | 0:04:34        | 0:03:48        | 0:03:25        | 0:03:00        | 0:03:00        |
| Turnout   | 0:01:31        | 0:02:14        | 0:01:38        | 0:02:25        | 0:01:20        | 0:01:20        |
| Travel  | 0:05:34        | 0:08:25        | 0:05:53        | 0:09:58        | 0:05:45        | 0:10:45        |
| <b>Total Response - FAU</b>                     | <b>0:09:23</b> | <b>0:13:08</b> | <b>0:09:37</b> | <b>0:13:47</b> | <b>0:09:15</b> | <b>0:14:15</b> |



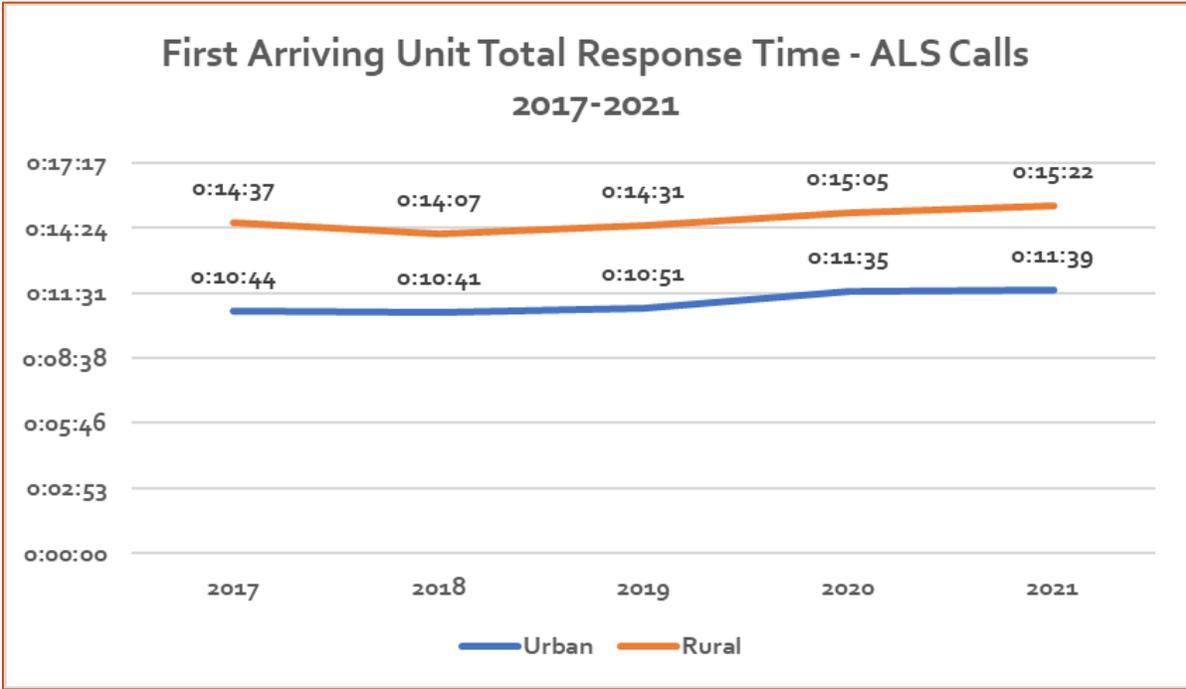
EMS-related incidents comprised 78.4% of the call volume in 2021, while fire-related incidents accounted for 14.5% of the call volume. ALS incidents accounted for 45.2% of EMS calls in 2021. The slight increase in ALS calls can be attributed to an increase in ALS1 calls, specifically, patients with trouble breathing and those with decreased level of consciousness (LOC).



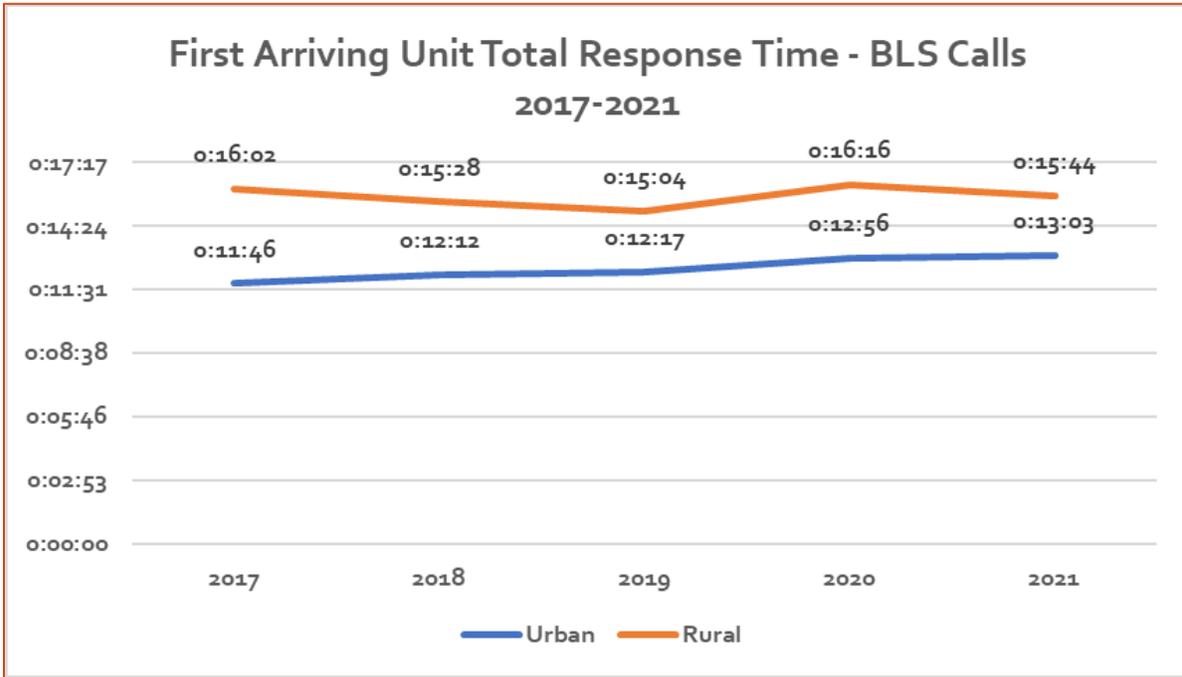
***The Fiscal Management Division processed patient care reports associated with 66,468 ambulance transports and collected \$18.59 million in ambulance transport revenue.***



| Advanced Life Support (ALS)<br>(90th percentile) |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | 2020           |                | 2021           |                | Benchmarks     |                |
|  | Urban          | Rural          | Urban          | Rural          | Urban          | Rural          |
| Phone to Dispatch                                | 0:04:04        | 0:03:49        | 0:03:45        | 0:03:59        | 0:03:00        | 0:03:00        |
| Turnout  | 0:01:39        | 0:01:47        | 0:01:37        | 0:01:41        | 0:01:20        | 0:01:20        |
| Travel   | 0:06:38        | 0:10:35        | 0:06:38        | 0:10:18        | 0:06:00        | 0:10:00        |
| <b>Total Response - FAU</b>                      | <b>0:11:35</b> | <b>0:15:05</b> | <b>0:11:39</b> | <b>0:15:22</b> | <b>0:10:15</b> | <b>0:14:00</b> |

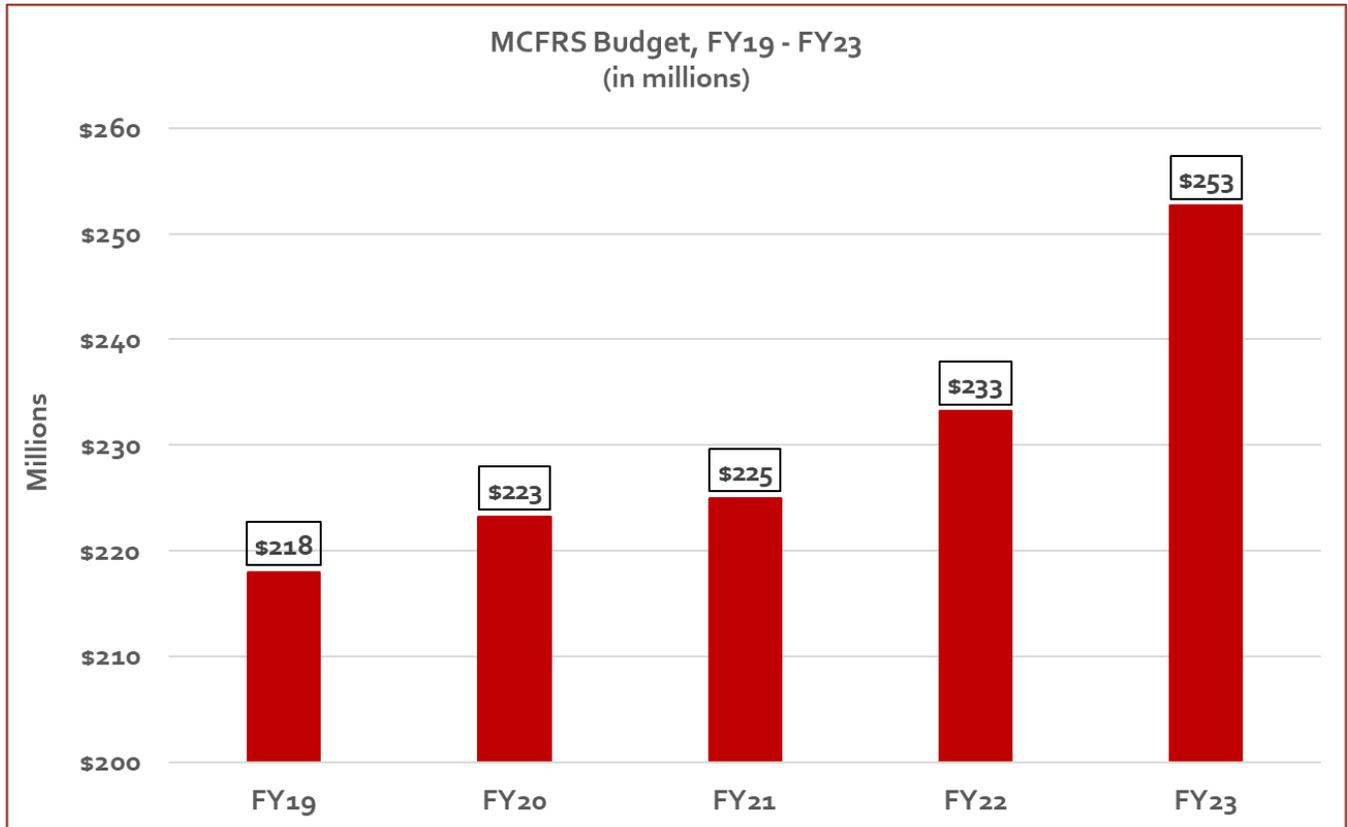


| Basic Life Support (BLS)<br>(90th percentile) |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|   | 2020           |                | 2021           |                | Benchmarks     |                |
|   | Urban          | Rural          | Urban          | Rural          | Urban          | Rural          |
| Phone to Dispatch                             | 0:04:22        | 0:04:23        | 0:04:24        | 0:04:25        | 0:03:00        | 0:03:00        |
| Turnout                                       | 0:01:38        | 0:01:50        | 0:01:37        | 0:01:45        | 0:01:20        | 0:01:20        |
| Travel  | 0:08:07        | 0:11:29        | 0:08:09        | 0:10:39        | 0:07:00        | 0:11:00        |
| <b>Total Response - FAU</b>                   | <b>0:12:56</b> | <b>0:16:16</b> | <b>0:13:03</b> | <b>0:15:44</b> | <b>0:12:00</b> | <b>0:15:00</b> |



# FY23 WORKPLAN

At the time of this report's publication, FY23 has already begun and there is a lot going on! The MCFRS approved budget for FY23 is 8.3% higher than the FY22 approved budget.



This FY23 budget includes the following initiatives:

- Enhancements to EMIHS, to include:
  - Adding an EMS duty officer position to enhance advanced life support (ALS) field supervision.
  - Adding a permanent EMS System Capacity Officer (EMS700) to coordinate patient transport to hospitals and balance emergency department loads.
  - Increasing the capacity of the Mobile Integrated Health Program by adding two paramedics to support the existing social worker and registered nurse on home visits, complement the County's Mobile Crisis Team, and better address the needs of frequent 911 callers.
  - Adding a paramedic chase car to enhance ALS service delivery.
  - Adding a battalion chief in EMIHS to evaluate EMS system performance and assist in optimizing resource deployment.
- Enhancements to improve service delivery and reduce uniform backfill overtime in EMS logistics and the small tools function through the addition of professional staff in the Division of Support Services.



- Night and weekend career staffing at Sandy Spring Fire Station 40 to support volunteer staffing and to address failures to respond.
- Funding to support Bethesda Chevy Chase Rescue Squad operating expenditures.
- Increasing the support capacity for MCFRS personnel with several other professional positions, including an administrative specialist and therapist for Mental Health.

In addition to these initiatives, the MCFRS will be working on the following activities in FY23:

- The Division of Human Resources is immersed in recruitment and hiring activities, including the administration of entrance exams and CPAT mentoring/testing, as we aim for Recruit Class #51 to start in September and Recruit Class #52 to start in January 2023. The FY23 budget funds up to 84 recruit positions.
- Promotional examinations for the ranks of master firefighter and lieutenant will be administered.
- The Community Risk Reduction Section will be introducing Fire Safety “Sound Off” in MCPS Title One schools, a national program initiative featuring classroom learning and parent/caregiver presentations.
- CRR will also be focused on developing more materials and programs to increase the number of bilingual community presentations and distribution of translated materials on key safety topics.
- The Planning & Accreditation Section will be focusing its efforts on coordinating the numerous tasks that need to be completed prior to the onsite accreditation assessment, anticipated to be scheduled during the summer of 2023. Although these efforts started in FY22, there is a significant amount of preparation required before the onsite can be scheduled, to include drafting a Self-Assessment Manual that must address 11 categories of performance indicators and competencies.





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safety tips on our [blog](#)!

Looking for a career?  
Stop by our [Recruitment page](#)!

Let's  
keep in  
touch!

