

MCFRS Annual Appraisals



2024

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PURPOSE

This document is a compilation of the program appraisals that are required to be completed under the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Model (SAM). These appraisals were completed in accordance with the 11th edition CPSE SAM, which was announced in December 2024. The 11th edition SAM made several changes to the core competencies, including the addition of several new requirements for appraisals, thereby modifying the previous numbering/lettering, as noted below. The appraisals presented herein summarize calendar year 2024.

Category 5, Community Risk Reduction Program, includes those programs that are a direct output of the Community Risk Analysis Standard of Cover document. Fire prevention, education, investigation, domestic preparedness, suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue, hazardous materials, and other services fall under this category (Criteria 5A to 5M).

- 5G, EMS Transportation Program, is new and we believe it was designed for departments that do not own their own transport program. Since MCFRS owns and manages transports as part of our emergency medical services program (5F), a separate appraisal was not completed.*
- MCFRS also does not complete an appraisal for newly numbered 5J, Aviation Rescue & Firefighting, since Montgomery County does not have an FAA-indexed airport and very few aviation-related calls, nor does the department assess 5K, Marine and Shipboard Rescue & Firefighting.*
- MCFRS continues to monitor the wildland/urban interface (WUI) fire calls for service, but since this has not been a serious issue for Montgomery County, nor does the department operate a distinct WUI firefighting program, no appraisal is completed for 5L.*

Category 7, Human Resources, has added a requirement for an annual appraisal.

Category 8, Training and Competency, reflects the department's training and education efforts.

Category 9, Essential Resources, defines those mandatory services and systems required for the department's operational programs to function. Communication systems fall under this category (Criterion 9B). New appraisal requirements were instituted for 9D, Information Technology and 9E, Public Information.

Category 11, Health and Safety, examines the department's health and safety efforts to recognize, address, and analyze the workplace and apply risk management principles with the intent to reduce employee injuries. As the responsibility for health and safety falls across different MCFRS work units, three appraisals were completed for this category: Occupational Medical Services (FROMS), Mental Health, and Safety.

FIRE PREVENTION & CODE COMPLIANCE CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5A - Prevention

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

MCFRS does not have any code enforcement authority, as most other fire departments do. In Montgomery County, the responsibility for code compliance is split between two County departments: the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs' (DHCA).

DPS has the responsibility to license and facilitate all fire and life safety aspects of new and existing construction in Montgomery County. Within DPS, the [Fire Code Compliance Division](#) (FPCC) is responsible for existing buildings, while the [Commercial Building Construction](#) section ensures public safety through the application of structural, electrical, mechanical, fire safety, accessibility and sustainability conservation codes and standards (in commercial construction).

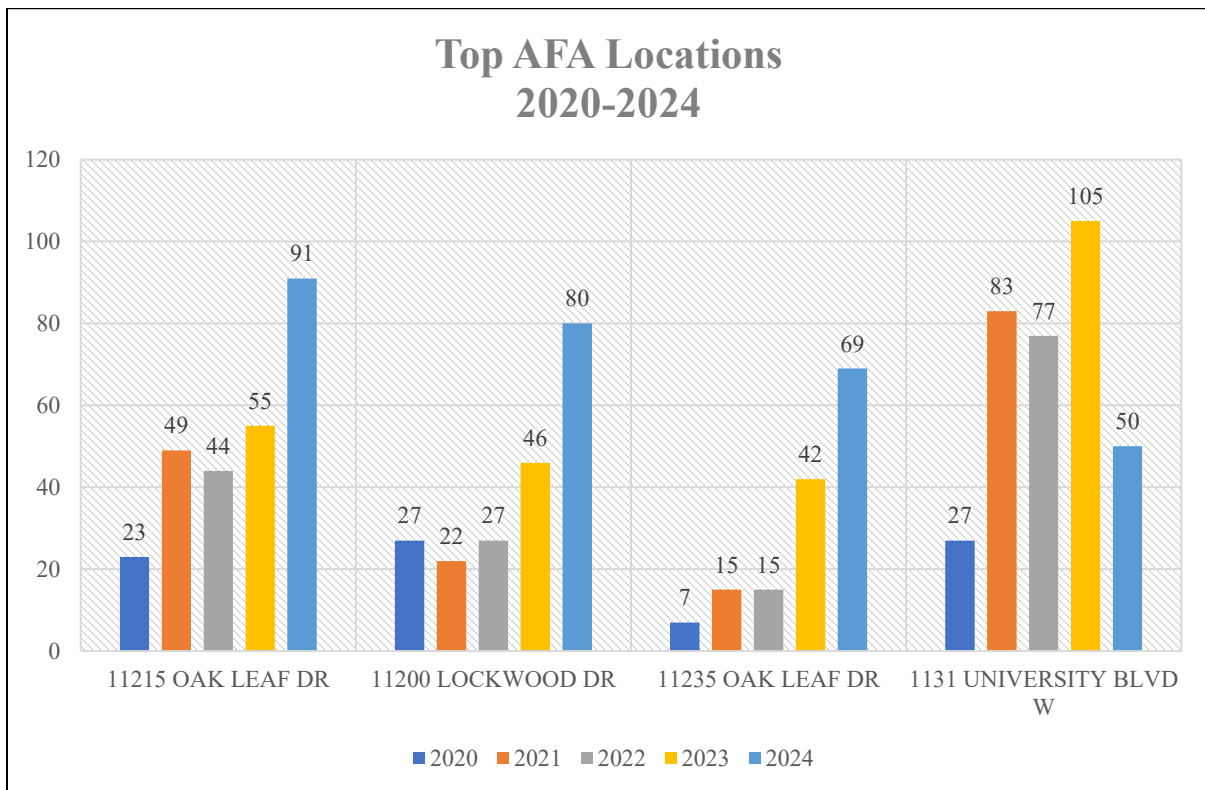
DHCA manages fire prevention and life safety initiatives (window guards, carbon monoxide alarms, etc.) inside residential units.

MCFRS continues to work closely with these partners to address these critical life safety issues in Montgomery County. Although we had previously hoped to implement a solution that would allow for more seamless notifications from MCFRS operations personnel to DPS and DHCA inspectors, that effort was delayed due to technical issues surrounding ESRI licensing within Montgomery County.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

MCFRS continues to closely monitor automatic fire alarm (AFA) calls, particularly as they relate to the unsprinklered highrise buildings (75) in the county. In 2024, unsprinklered highrises accounted for 1% (533 of 11,305) of the AFAs. The top 10 locations for producing AFA calls are shown on the following page. It is important to note that the top four highrises have more frequent fire alarm calls than the remaining locations. **Overall, the Enclave and Warwick Apartments accounted for 54% (290) of the total AFA dispatches at unsprinklered highrises.** This has been a consistent trend over the last five years, although 2024 appears to be a year of improvement for 1131 University Blvd., as shown in the second table.

TOP UNSPRINKLERED HIGHRISES FOR AFAs (2024)	
11215 Oak Leaf Dr.	91
11200 Lockwood Dr.	80
11235 Oak Leaf Dr.	69
1131 University Blvd W	50
4601 N Park Ave.	15
11700 Old Columbia Pike	14
8750 Georgia Ave.	13
3301 Hewitt Ave.	12
8712 Colesville Rd.	9
7610 Maple Ave.	8



On a positive note, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich signed Bill 7-24, also known as the [Landlord-Tenant Relations - Tenant Protection and Notification Bill](#), into law on August 8, 2024. This legislation strengthens tenant protections while focusing on fire safety standards for high-rise rental properties. MCFRS supported this bill and our partners at DPS and DHCA throughout the legislative process and will be instrumental in continuous monitoring of AFAs at these locations. Separately, our Community Risk Reduction team works tirelessly with our partners to ensure a comprehensive approach to fire safety, particularly in high-rise buildings; the efforts of that team are described in the appraisal for 5B – Public Education.

Another important accomplishment by DPS in 2024 was the adoption of the 2021 NFPA 1 and 2021 NFPA 101 Fire and Life Safety Codes with [Executive Regulation 14-24](#) superseding

Regulation Nos. 7-16 and 8-16. This Executive Regulation adopts the 2021 NFPA 1 Fire Code and 2021 NFPA 101 Life Safety Code and referenced NFPA Standards with local amendments, thereby updating the fire safety code in Montgomery County.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

From an operational perspective, MCFRS continues to monitor service delivery and in 2025, plans to convene a *Thought Partnership* -- a group of diverse personnel to evaluate our response posture relative to automatic fire alarms, and the possibility of pursuing and enforcing nuisance false alarm legislation.

Furthermore, we will monitor legislation introduced early in 2025 that will continue to put pressure on landlords in Montgomery County by strengthening consumer protections for renters by removing exemptions for landlord-tenant issues under consumer protection law. [Bill 6-25](#) has widespread support among the Council and from the County Executive, as well as organizations such as AIM, CASA, and numerous other tenant associations. It would provide another avenue for the County to combat those properties that chronically fail to meet basic tenant obligations, including life safety protections.

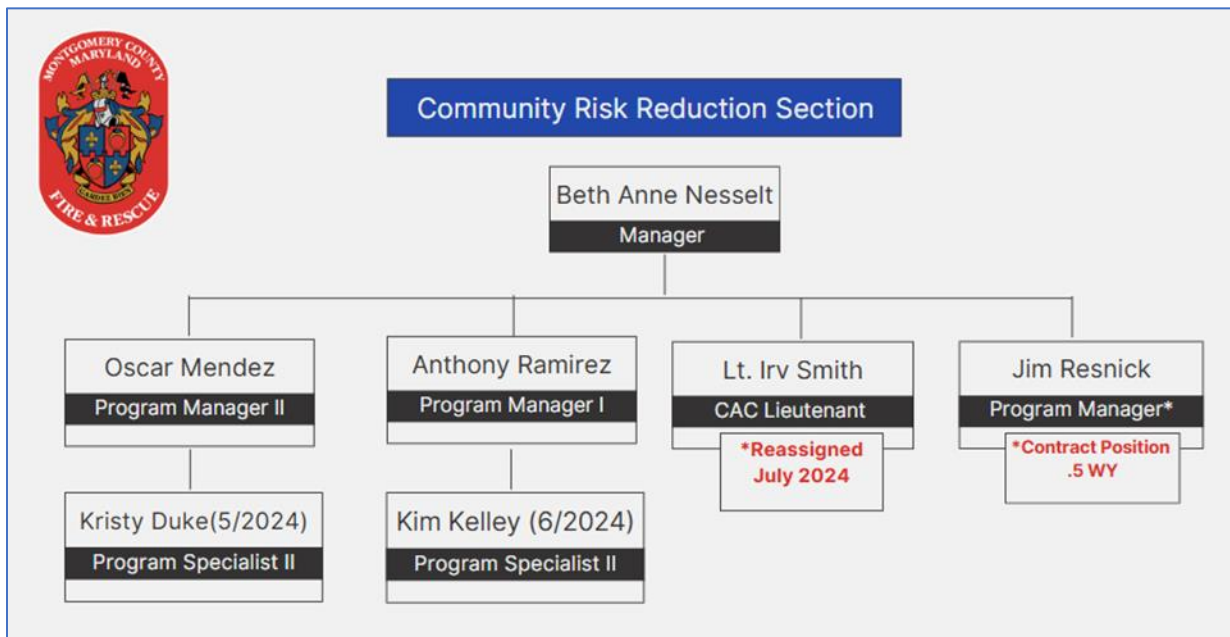
COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION & COMMUNITY ACTION CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5B – Public Education

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

In 2024, the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) team achieved major milestones in advancing community safety and resilience, laying a strong foundation for even greater impact in CY25 and beyond. The FY24 budget allocated resources for two new civilian positions, one focusing on seniors and the other on children and youth, both of which were filled in May and June, 2024. Additionally, the creation of a Community Action Coordinator (CAC) position, tasked with overseeing education and outreach programs such as hands-only CPR/AED, Stop the Bleed, and Narcan, further bolstered the department's CRR mission.



With the addition of the new, strategically positioned roles, the team has expanded its capacity to address emerging risks and needs. Key foundational programs set for 2024-2028 will continue to build on this momentum to prioritize and drive targeted outreach and education ensuring programs reach those at highest risk in the community.

The CRR team has consistently demonstrated its commitment to supporting the department's growth by actively pursuing external funding opportunities, such as grants and partnerships, to supplement its budget. Despite the addition of three full-time positions—marking a 100% increase in staffing—the overall budget has remained unchanged. This underscores the team's dedication to efficiently utilizing available resources while ensuring the continued success and

impact of our vital safety programs. However, to sustain and expand these efforts, additional funding is essential to fully support the team's growing needs

CRR programs continue to adopt a multidisciplinary approach that draws on the collective expertise of public health, social services, housing, fire code compliance, and emergency management. This integrated approach ensures a range of resources and solutions are applied to address community risks.

CRR continues to build upon existing partnerships and tailor programs to prioritize and deploy resources where they are needed most. By addressing the social determinants of health and reducing risks through targeted education and innovative programs, CRR contributes directly to improving community health and well-being. The CRR team was selected by Johns Hopkins University Public Health officials to be featured on an international podcast during “[National Public Health Week](#).”

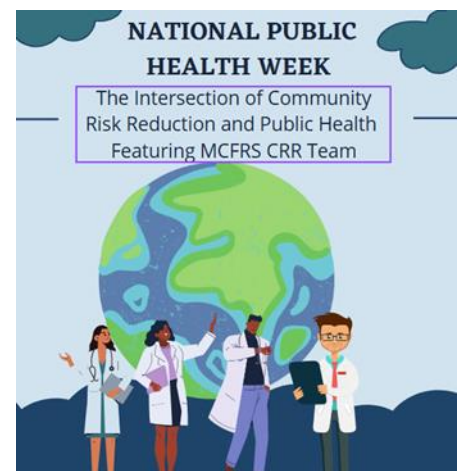
Thursday, April 4. 10 a.m.-Noon via Zoom

The Intersection of Community Risk Reduction and Public Health

Presenters: Beth Anne Nesselt, Lt. Irvin Smith, Oscar Mendez and Anthony Ramirez

This session promises to shed light on critical connections between community risk reduction and public health, with a focus on the invaluable insights garnered from the Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service's experience. Speakers will share innovative strategies, collaborative approaches and best practices aimed at enhancing community well-being and safety.

The event is free, but registration is required.



The CRR Manager and team are committed to continuous learning and professional growth, actively seeking opportunities to expand our knowledge and skills. Staff regularly attend conferences and workshops (in states where travel is permitted), staying at the forefront of emerging trends and best practices in community risk reduction. New employees are encouraged to take specialized courses, earning credentials such as the USFA's Strategic Community Risk Reduction certification and a 40-hour National Child Passenger Safety Technician certification. This culture of ongoing education ensures the CRR team remains adaptable, informed, and ready to implement the most effective strategies to enhance community safety and resilience. By prioritizing learning, the team is empowered to innovate and evolve alongside the ever-changing landscape of public safety.

Through our work, CRR empowers residents, businesses, organizations, and other stakeholders to actively participate in risk reduction efforts, fostering greater community engagement and ownership of safety. By involving everyone in the process, CRR helps build social capital, reduce vulnerabilities, and strengthen the bonds that hold communities together.

In addition to improving safety and well-being, CRR plays a crucial role in reducing costs by preventing emergencies before they occur. Through proactive prevention, education, and preparedness, CRR efforts help mitigate the personal, emotional, and financial burdens that arise from fires, injuries, and other emergencies. By investing in these forward-thinking measures, we reduce the need for costly emergency responses and recovery efforts.

With a focus on data-driven assessments, strong community partnerships, and targeted plans, CRR is redefining the way MCFRS builds community resilience, helping to create safer, more prepared communities and reducing the long-term impacts of emergencies. Notice. Relate. Adapt.

New Law: Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich signed Bill 7-24, also known as the Landlord-Tenant Relations - Tenant Protection and Notification Bill, into law on August 8, 2024. This legislation strengthens tenant protections while focusing on fire safety standards for high-rise rental properties. The lead implementation roles for Fire Code Compliance and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs are central to the bill's implementation and success, with the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) team working closely alongside these key departments to support effective implementation. As the community often associates fire safety solely with the fire department, CRR is focused on collaborating with Fire Code Compliance and Housing to ensure a comprehensive approach to safety, particularly in high-rise buildings. The CRR team's involvement helps ensure that fire safety, fire prevention, and education measures are robust and aligned with the county's broader safety goals, while clarifying the shared responsibilities across departments for implementation. **Bill 7-24 and the link to the full staff report can be found [here](#).**

CRR continues to deliver immense value to both our community and department by advancing safety, resilience, and well-being. Through collaborative efforts, we empower individuals while fostering long-term sustainability in the face of potential risks. This year, CRR continues to focus on proactive strategies that identify and address risks before they evolve into emergencies.

Our work spans across numerous high-impact programs, including tailored outreach for at-risk senior and aging-in-place populations, comprehensive fire safety education, home safety appointment program, and more. We also remain committed to ensuring the safety of families through car seat checks and senior-specific safety initiatives. In addition, our Hands Only CPR training for civilian first responders continues to expand the reach of life-saving knowledge in our communities.

Recognizing the diversity of our community, we have made it a priority to provide programs and information in alternative languages, ensuring that critical safety information reaches everyone, regardless of language barriers. By strengthening preparedness and providing vital resources, CRR plays a key role in safeguarding lives and building a resilient community.

The CRR team employs a proactive, adaptable approach to enhancing community safety by

consistently noticing emerging risks relating to diverse populations and adapting strategies to meet the evolving needs of Montgomery County. Through a combination of targeted outreach, partnerships, and real-time interventions, the CRR team has integrated fire safety into the broader community framework.

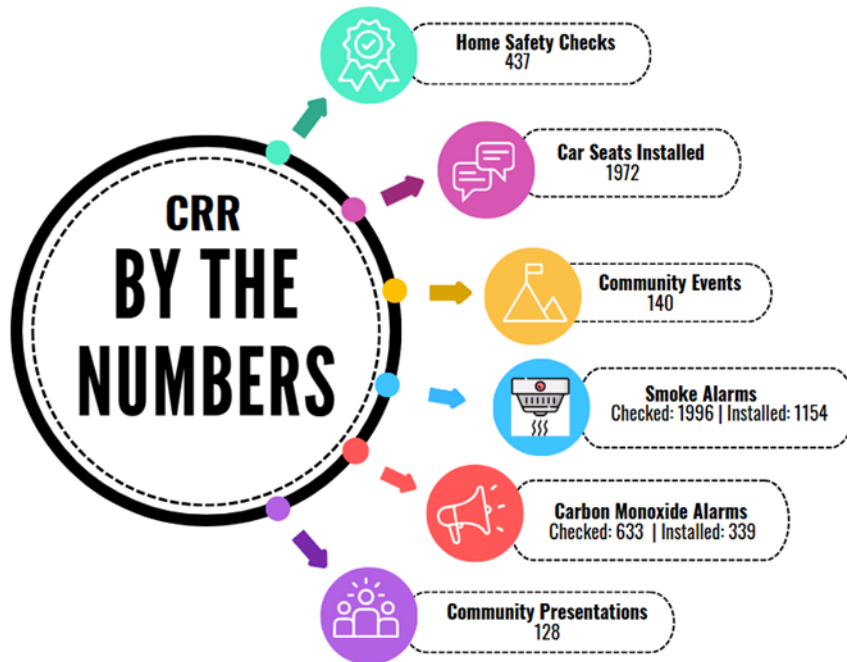
A few select examples of innovative strategies include collaborating with programs like **Meals on Wheels**, where team members deliver fire safety education, check and install alarms directly to vulnerable populations while also training Meals on Wheels staff about fire safety. For non-sprinklered high-rise buildings, the team has focused on **High-Rise Safety Initiatives**, ensuring building owners and tenants are aware of CRR's services and informed and prepared to respond to emergencies. Additionally, the CRR team partners with the **Newcomers Center** to assist new immigrants, offering fire safety education tailored to diverse cultural backgrounds and language needs, while fostering an inclusive approach to safety.

Home Safety Checks are one of CRR's signature programs allowing for personalized education where residents live and the ability to make real-time changes to increase safety (installing smoke alarms, electrical overload dangers, etc.) and make referrals to other agencies for additional support, ensuring no one slips through the cracks. This hands-on approach is further strengthened through collaboration with **Mobile Integrated Health**. In **Title One and Community Schools**, the team implements safety education programs, targeting at-risk youth to instill life-saving knowledge early on. Throughout the summer months, CRR partners with the **Department of Recreation summer camps** to deliver fire safety programs to children in a fun and engaging way, helping to make fire safety an instinctive part of everyday lives.

Through these and other initiatives, the CRR Fire Safety Team continuously adapts its approach, responding to community needs with flexibility and a deep understanding of local risks. By noticing potential hazards, relating to diverse groups, and adapting in real-time, the CRR team is able to create safer, more resilient communities across Montgomery County.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

The CRR Section continues to be a driving force in shaping the department's strategic framework for community risk reduction, public education, and outreach. In 2024, CRR focused on advancing our mission to enhance community safety through proactive initiatives and targeted education and engagement. Our two new positions ("CRR strategists") played a pivotal role in adding capacity and driving impactful programs and partnerships, ensuring that the department's outreach efforts are more comprehensive and effective than ever before.



Over the past year, CRR has made significant strides in advancing its mission to enhance community resilience and safety. We successfully implemented several key initiatives aimed at strengthening our outreach, education, and proactive measures across Montgomery County. Select highlights:

1. **After the Fire Program:** The Department's "After the Fire" program has proven to be one of the department's most impactful initiatives. We expanded post-incident outreach efforts to provide critical safety information through a "CRR After the Fire Dashboard." Notably, a recent survey revealed that 70% of homes visited lacked working smoke alarms, underscoring the vital need for these proactive measures. These efforts have not only mitigated immediate risks but also contributed to long-term community resilience.

The CRR "After the Fire" Dashboard has been recognized as a best practice by the [Center for Public Safety Excellence \(CPSE\)](#) through our accreditation process, highlighting its innovative approach to advancing fire safety and CRR initiatives. Featured at the 2024 Metro Chief's Conference, the dashboard sparked valuable discussions about the future of CRR practices. MCFRS firefighters and others previously struggled with accurately recalling and interpreting code, often relying on guesswork. However, the After the Fire dashboard has significantly improved consistency in code awareness, ensuring that all personnel are aligned with the

correct standards and have key information at their fingertips about social vulnerabilities in the communities they serve. Originally developed as a dynamic tool to promote CRR education, consistent code awareness, and data-driven insights both "up the chain" to leadership and "down the chain" to recruits, it has generated widespread interest from fire departments worldwide. Many are eager to replicate this dashboard to foster continuous learning and strengthen CRR principles within their own organizations. Leading this effort has underscored our commitment to driving meaningful innovation in public safety, and the dashboard continues to serve as a powerful model for cultivating a culture of proactive risk reduction in communities everywhere.

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION CASE STUDY – "After the Fire"

The Opportunity
Sometimes collective intuition forming around similar, repeated questions aligns with an opportunity for change and leads a fire department toward true innovation, moving from "a thing we do, to a way we do things." Such was the case with the "After the Fire" program developed by the Montgomery County, MD Fire and Rescue Service.

The Action
When Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) Community Risk Reduction staff began receiving questions a few years ago from operations members to better prepare for community risk reduction (CRR) activities after structure fires, department staff identified that a new community risk assessment tool could provide timely and accurate community information to crews while they were performing outreach and communicating with impacted community members. And, while this was the initial use of this increase in information, the department now presents tailored response area information – beginning in recruit school and extending through the Career Officers Leadership Academy (COLA) classes – orienting its members to risks within each community the department serves.

The Outcome
The department went from a relatively limited provision of information and materials during post-fire canvases to a huge suite of CRR information: in-person, online and in social media. While the "After the Fire" program is focused, the department recognized that its data collection and presentation should span the entire spectrum of identified community risks and has worked to provide this to the public.

DEPARTMENT INFO

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
POPULATION SERVED (USPS)
TOTAL UNINSURED PERSONAL EPTS TOTAL
CAREER AND VOLUNTEER
TOTAL CIVILIAN PERSONNEL
FIRE STATIONS 27
ISO CLASS 24
GOVERNOR/STATE DEPARTMENT AND COUNCIL
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EPTS SERVICE PROVIDED ALL
ANNUAL BUDGET \$27 MILLION

2. **Internal Resilience through Recruit Probationary Packet:** We introduced the CRR Recruit Probationary packet, which began with Recruit Class 54 in June 2024. This initiative has been highly successful in equipping recruits with knowledge on CRR tools and strategies. Recruits have developed skills in public speaking and have shared their learnings—such as CRAIG1300, PSAs, and insights from the USFA’s online course—with their fire station, ensuring that CRR practices are ingrained across all personnel. This approach has enhanced internal resilience and knowledge-sharing within the department.

RECRUIT CRR PROBATION PACKET

Click on QR Code or visit: www.mcf.rs.org/mosaic
Select: MCFRS Personnel Tab at top
Select: Recruit Toolbox

- Select: CRR CRAIG1300 Dashboard**
 - 1. Complete the CRAIG1300 Activity for your assigned Fire Station. It is in the CRR Recruit online Toolbox
 - 2. Share this info about the Community with your Shift.
 - 3. Show your shift how to access the CRAIG1300 Dashboard on QuickLinks
- Select: Athena App Training Video**
 - Check your station's RMS computer to access the Athena App
 - Check apparatus Scrim phones to confirm the Athena App is available
 - Complete an Athena Report for a station community outreach event
- Select: CRR Videos**

Watch the following videos on the CRR website and work with your COC to show them to your shift:

 - Close Before You Doze Video
 - High Rise Safety Video
 - Take CHARGE Battery Safety Video
 - Plan Your Escape: Single Family Home Video
- Select: Educational Resources**

Watch the Four "Sound Off" Videos for Kids

 1. Review Lesson Plans and related material
 2. Show Your Shift where the videos and materials for school-based programs are located on CRR website
 3. Available in English & Spanish
- Safety First**
 - Check YOUR home's smoke and CO alarms
 - Check your parents or an older relative or friend's smoke alarms. Complete an Athena Report for YOUR home safety check
 - Show a relative the "Close Before You Doze" video
- Select: MCFRS Blog Post**
 - 1. Read Smoke Alarm Article
 - 2. Read CO Alarm Article
 - 3. Be familiar on Code Requirements
- Select: File of Life FOL Program**
 - Read Article
 - Ensure your station has a supply of FOL Packets
 - Be familiar with the FOL program and the benefits it provides to both the community and first responders.
- Select: Car Seat Program**
 - Read about Maryland's Laws
 - Be familiar with what locations and when the car seat program is offered
 - Know how to refer someone to the program and how to sign up
 - Read the Featured Car Seat Safety Tips article
- Select: Smoke Alarms and Supplies**
 - Be familiar with how your station orders supplies and where they are supplied.
 - What supplies are kept on apparatus?
 - Does your station need supplies?
 - If "YES" work with your COC to place an order
- Final Item: Contact CRR Team**

Send Email to: bethanne.resault@montgomerycountymd.gov when you complete the CRR packet to schedule a 10 minute conversation to discuss what you learned and answer any Q's. CONGRATS from CRR!

3. **Collaboration with MCPS and the Department of Recreation:** CRR continued its collaboration with MCPS and the Department of Recreation’s summer camps to deliver fire safety education to children in an interactive and engaging format. These efforts ensure that

fire safety becomes second nature to the next generation, building a safer community for years to come.

4. Empowering Diverse Communities Through Education, Outreach, and Partnerships

The CRR team is committed to ensuring that critical safety information reaches all corners of our diverse community. By translating essential resources into seven languages and converting them into accessible handouts, the team has successfully removed language barriers, ensuring that vital information reaches populations that might otherwise be overlooked. Beyond written materials, CRR actively engages communities through strategic partnerships, including regular appearances on an all-Spanish Council radio show. These collaborations amplify safety messages and promote CRR programs, particularly to immigrant communities, non-English speakers, and other vulnerable populations. The team also works closely with County departments and organizations serving non-English speaking residents, strengthening collective efforts to deliver timely, accurate, and accessible safety information. Through these outreach and educational initiatives, the CRR team is empowering diverse and at-risk communities to take informed actions to protect themselves and their families.

The Athena App and Incident Dashboard have revolutionized how we can access and monitor CRR activities and in real-time. This innovative, GIS-enabled app provides up-to-the-minute data on where crews are performing critical CRR tasks, such as conducting "After the Fire" outreach, ensuring that command staff have immediate visibility into ongoing operations. The app allows for seamless uploading of pictures and other relevant data directly into reports, enhancing situational awareness and improving communication across teams. Its intuitive interface ensures that firefighters can quickly access the tools and information they need in the field, making it not only fast and easy to navigate but also incredibly powerful. The Athena App continues to be a sophisticated resource that equips crews with the capabilities to perform their work more effectively and efficiently, elevating the department's ability to capture key data and engage in proactive community resilience efforts.

As we continue to build on these successes, CRRs focus remains on enhancing our ability to educate the community, "get ahead of the 911 call" to avert a needed emergency response, while proactively strengthening community resilience. We are committed to leveraging resources and refining our strategies to ensure that we remain a leader in fire prevention, safety, education, and community resilience.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) team is committed to reducing vulnerabilities and improving resilience within Montgomery County by addressing both internal and external challenges. Through a combination of targeted community programs, strategic partnerships, and internal capacity-building efforts, CRR is enhancing safety, promoting preparedness, and fostering a culture of proactive risk reduction.

Externally, CRR focuses on reaching vulnerable populations across the county with tailored programs and services designed to reduce risks and strengthen community resilience. By

addressing social determinants of health, fire safety, and emergency preparedness, CRR engages with diverse groups—such as seniors, immigrants, and families in Title One schools—to empower residents and organizations with the knowledge and resources needed to protect themselves and their communities. Key initiatives like **Meals on Wheels**, **High-Rise Safety Focus**, and **home safety checks** (CRR’s signature program) are just a few examples of how the team is meeting real-time needs, reducing fire hazards, and making referrals to other support agencies. Through these efforts, CRR ensures that no one is left behind, providing tailored solutions that improve resilience for both individuals and the broader community.

Internally, CRR is equally dedicated to building the capacity of its own team and the larger public safety infrastructure. This includes investing in the ongoing development of both new recruits and rising or current officers. The **Recruit Training Program** is designed to instill a strong foundation in community risk reduction principles, ensuring that new firefighters are equipped with the knowledge to assess and mitigate risks effectively from day one.

Likewise, **Officer Training** programs empower leadership with advanced CRR strategies and the ability to manage complex community safety challenges. These training efforts are critical in ensuring the department is continuously evolving and adapting to meet the needs of the community.

As part of our ongoing commitment to innovation, CRR is always looking for ways to improve and adapt. The addition of two new staff positions focused on specific, high-priority areas—seniors and children/youth—will help expand our capacity to meet the unique needs of our most vulnerable populations. These positions allow us to explore new strategies, reach more individuals, and continue evolving our approach to fire safety and community risk reduction.

We are constantly trying new methods, testing innovative programs, and adapting to the evolving needs of our community. Whether through the expansion of our services, incorporation of new technology, or adjustments to training, CRR remains dedicated to finding effective solutions and pushing boundaries to improve public safety.

By reducing vulnerabilities through targeted outreach and building internal capacity to respond to emerging risks, the CRR team is driving long-term improvements in community safety and resilience.

Setting clear goals and benchmarks is key to measuring the success and impact of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) efforts. Outlined below are goals that align with CRR’s focus on reducing vulnerabilities, improving resilience, and building capacity both internally and externally.

Goals

1. Enhance Community Education and Engagement

- a. Increase the number of residents reached through community outreach programs (e.g., Meals on Wheels, Home Safety Checks, Title One Schools, etc.).

- b. Expand partnerships with community organizations, schools, and businesses to increase fire safety awareness and risk reduction efforts.
- c. Improve fire safety knowledge among vulnerable populations such as seniors, children, immigrants, and high-risk communities.

2. Increase Internal Capacity and Training

- a. Provide continuous professional development and educational opportunities for CRR staff.
- b. Expand CRR training programs for new recruits and current or rising officers to ensure they are well-versed in CRR principles and can effectively address community risk.
- c. Integrate CRR requirements into the promotional process. For example, require that the USFA course “Introduction to Strategic CRR” be completed before or within a period of time following a promotion.
- d. Create a comprehensive “learning” package for MCFRS personnel, modeled after the Recruit Probationary packet, to ensure all personnel are fully informed about the new tools and CRR programs available.

3. Reduce Fire Incidents and Fire-Related Injuries/Deaths

- a. Continue to track the number of homes assessed during **home safety checks** while focusing on gaining access to data that provides critical insights into the factors leading up to each fire and the actions taken by individuals prior and during the incident. This information is essential for identifying patterns, improving prevention strategies, and enhancing our understanding of fire risks if CRR is going to be successful.
- b. Monitor incident data for high-risk structure fires involving non-sprinklered high-rises and continue to provide education to multifamily properties.

4. Increase Resource Efficiency and Sustainability

- a. Monitor the effectiveness of new staff positions (e.g., those focused on seniors and children/youth) and assess their impact on targeted outreach and program delivery.
- b. Seek additional funding through grants and partnerships to support CRR initiatives, as permitted by Montgomery County Ethics.

Benchmarks

1. Community Outreach and Education

- a. **Short-term:** Reach a minimum of 10,000 residents annually through safety programs and outreach events.
- b. **Medium-term:** Conduct at least 500 **home safety checks**.
- c. **Long-term:** Increase the number of community partners by 25% and increase fire safety knowledge by 30% as measured through pre- and post-surveys.

2. Training and Internal Development

- a. **Short-term:** Provide fire safety and CRR-specific training to 100% of new recruits and 75% of current officers within one year.

- b. **Medium-term:** Offer at least two specialized CRR training programs for officers annually.
- c. **Long-term:** Develop a CRR training certification program and have 80% of CRR staff complete advanced training within two years.

3. Collaboration and Partnerships

- a. **Short-term:** Establish at least 10 new partnerships with local businesses, health organizations, and community groups.
- b. **Medium-term:** Develop joint initiatives with Mobile Integrated Health to integrate fire safety into community health and education services.
- c. **Long-term:** Create a collaborative framework that connects CRR efforts with local housing authorities, social services, and mental health agencies.

4. Resource Efficiency

- a. **Short-term:** Ensure the two new staff positions are fully integrated and achieve a measurable increase in outreach efforts.
- b. **Medium-term:** Research opportunities for additional funding through grants or partnerships over the next 2-3 years.
- c. **Long-term:** Increase program effectiveness, aiming for a 15% increase in programs year over year.

Additional Resources

[2024 Car Seat Annual Report](#)

[CY24 Website Analytics](#)

[FY24 Supplies provided to MCFRS Fire Stations](#)

[CRR & Housing Opportunities Commission](#)

FIRE & EXPLOSIVES INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5C – Fire Investigations

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUT

In 2024, FEI began restructuring, transitioning from the civilian manager, who left the department at the beginning of the year, to a battalion chief as the unit leader. Two captains will serve as FEI supervisors and two lieutenants will serve as assistant supervisors. The remaining law enforcement investigators (four lieutenants, and two master firefighters) will be augmented with origin and cause, non-law enforcement specialists consisting of three master firefighters (one currently on daywork) and three firefighter IIIs. Negotiations are ongoing to align the FEI investigator schedule to all day work or a day work and shift schedule hybrid for the maximum benefit of an investigative unit. The new schedule is set to be implemented in April of 2025.

Body worn camera implementation occurred in September of 2024. The body worn camera policy has been updated and is being reviewed. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) was re-visited and should be finalized in 2025. In addition, FEI policies continue to undergo significant review and revision, to ensure alignment with MCPD and Maryland Office of the State Fire Marshal. The intent is to have FEI policies available online by the end of 2025.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

Fire and Explosive investigators were involved in 316 incidents in 2024. Of these, 234 were fire-related and 65 explosive-related. The remaining calls were simply notifications or involved assisting other agencies.

Of the 234 fire-related incidents, 117 were dwelling fires, 33 vehicle fires, 18 commercial building fires, one house of worship fire, and six were burn injuries. The remaining incidents involved other structures, outside fires, personal property fires and attempted arsons.

Of the 234 fire-related incidents, 71 were intentionally set fires that were investigated by FEI personnel. Of those, 25 involved dwellings, 14 were vehicles, and five were commercial buildings. The remaining incendiary fires involved other structures, outside fires, personal property and attempted arsons. One of the incendiary dwelling fires was also a fatal fire (suicide). The estimated overall dollar loss associated with incendiary fires investigated by FEI in 2024 was \$8,142,376.

Of the 65 explosive-related incidents, eight were bomb threats, eight were explosions, 18 were suspicious packages, and 23 involved the recovery of explosive materials. There was one ERT callout that turned into a 1st degree arson (counted in dwelling fires above).

The estimated total dollar loss for incidents investigated by Fire and Explosive Investigators was: \$37,906,696. The top 10 dollar-loss fires make up much of that number at \$22,850,000. Of those, three were incendiary. Two of those cases have been closed by arrest (1 adult, 1 juvenile). The remaining case is still open. The highest dollar loss fire was accidental (church at 16325 New Hampshire Avenue), with an estimated loss of \$6,250,000.

Overall, Fire and Explosive investigators charged 26 individuals, 14 adults and 12 juveniles, with various degrees of arson, malicious burning or reckless endangerment charges.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

- FEI continues to work on the development of a vehicle replacement plan this year, as well as identifying a site for a permanent base of operations where office and living/sleeping quarters are co-located.
- FEI is still exploring the possibility of beginning the CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) accreditation process this year.
- We are onboarding three Firefighter III as origin and cause specialists (non-law enforcement) and will be full staffed by July 2025. We will also be making an announcement for one or two MFF positions (also non-law enforcement) that will hopefully start with the unit by May 2025 and be fully staffed by September 2025.
- FEI has noticed an opportunity in which a mental health consumer (adult and juvenile) is involved in fire incidents, and further outreach is needed to keep the community safe or the home (apartment, house, etc.) is a target hazard. Thus, the team will explore opportunities to further develop a relationship with the Crisis Center to explore options or programs to handle individuals experiencing mental illness.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5D – All-Hazards Preparedness Program

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

MCFRS All-Hazards Preparedness continues to operate through internal and external resources. Many of the program items have not changed and remain distributed across the organization holistically but are assigned to the Special Operations Section for management including the following:

- Operations Support
- Special Event Planning
- Emergency Operations Center
- Internal IMT and National Capital Region – Incident Management Team (NCR-IMT)
- Aviation
- OEMHS Liaison
- MCPD Special Operations Liaison
- MWCOG Fire Intelligence and Maryland Active Assailant Interdisciplinary Workgroup (MD-AAIWG)
- Fire and Explosives Investigations – EOD Response

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

Major Incidents in 2024

- Multiple Winter Weather events
- NCR-IMT Support to Hurricane Helene and Marine Corps Marathon
- Tornado 06.05.2024
- Tropical Storm Debby 08.08.2024

Special Events

- Montgomery County Agricultural Fair
- POTUS Visit
- VPOTUS Visit
- Election Day Response Planning
- 15 Other Large-Scale Events to include Festivals, Parades, Outreach activities

County Initiatives

- CY24 had a change from OEMHS partners in how they handle Emergency Management for incidents and EOC staffing. MCFRS worked with OEMHS to develop rosters that meet the needs of MCFRS shiftwork and OEMHS staffing needs. Both EOC and Operations

Support rosters saw changes due to personnel movement within the department and retirements.

- Continued work internally and with MCPD and other stakeholders for active assailant and acts of violence response.
- MC Emergency Operations Plan with MCFRS primary and support functions approved and placed in-service by OEMHS.
- Continued work on severe weather response plans to include coordination with DOT for snowplow assignment to MCFRS during major winter events.
- Continued use and enhancement of weather programs to assist with incidents and events. Coordination with PSTA for the use of Baron Weather is ongoing.
- Ongoing coordination for MCFRS sUAS response internally and with MCPD partners. Attempted to work through county government budget enhancement process to build out aviation capability but unable to follow through due to no budgetary support during CY24.
- Began joint training on a quarterly basis in the third quarter of CY24 with MCPD ESU and FS23 on ERT response items. This enhanced capability and understanding of response roles remains ongoing. There have been logistical issues observed in coordination between the departments due to shift schedules and personnel/availability.
- Continued planning efforts to increase Operations Support personnel roster but did not complete during CY24.

State Initiatives

- Continued involvement with Maryland Active Assailant Interdisciplinary Workgroup.
- Coordination with MDEM for tabletop and full-scale exercises.

Federal Initiatives

- Continued coordination with MCAC for security threats and coordination of VIP visits and special events.
- Continued coordination with MWCOC subcommittees for planning and response to specific hazards.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

- Increase Operations Support personnel roster to enhance capability for no-notice event and special event planning. Planned completion of selections at end of CY25 first quarter and begin internal training in second quarter of CY25.
- Continue coordination with OEMHS on emergency management related items where MCFRS has a primary or support role.
- Continued work with MC OEMHS on COOP planning efforts to include MCFRS changes to personnel and processes.

- Continue work on active assailant response with MCPD and other county government stakeholders. The goal is to complete policy development and training during CY25. Working through coordination and planning processes along with funding options for response equipment to include ballistic protection for all frontline apparatus and the ability to respond to active assailant incidents or incidents with acts of violence, reducing risk and enhancing capability.
- Continue coordination with MCPD Special Operations on response capabilities to Emergency Response Team (ERT) responses. Currently, FS23 is the only designated capability and there is vulnerability with only one station designated to assist.

OPERATIONS DIVISION CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5E - Suppression

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

MCFRS' existing structural firefighting force is qualified in the all-hazards mission of the department. In accordance with Montgomery County Executive Regulation 16-05, there are 1,258 active career members on the Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS) list.

Firefighting personnel respond from 37 fire/rescue stations within Montgomery County. There are also five federal fire departments that provide automatic aid in the County, and several neighboring counties offer mutual aid.

Frontline apparatus staffing is guided by Policy 25-08AMII and includes the following: 35 paramedic engines; 16 aerial ladder trucks (one of which is an aerial tower at NIH, AT751, counted as part of the daily complement); 6 rescue squads (heavy extrication capable); 13 brush trucks; 4 brush engines; and 8 tankers.

The section is planning to increase the staffing of special services from three personnel to four. Paramedic Truck 725 is now staffed 24/7 with four personnel, one of which is an ALS provider. The future staffing increases of remaining ladder trucks/aerials are being prioritized based on vulnerabilities and resiliencies of the community they serve. The prioritization also aligns with communities that have significant concentration of unsprinklered residential high-rise buildings.

The section's leadership changed significantly with transfers and retirements, which resulted in a new Division Chief, Executive Officer, and Battalion Chief. The leadership developed an 18-month strategic plan that focuses on improving service delivery, efficiency of operations, and an evaluation of current practices to ensure they align with the community of present. This process ensures that the section notices change and threats, understands why there was a shift, and adapts service delivery to those changes.

In 2024, residential high-rise fires resulted in the addition of floor-below nozzles as a tactical option for high-rise firefighting operations. This tool is available on six trucks (T706, T715, T716, AT719, AT723, AT724) close to many of the unsprinklered high-rises in Montgomery County. Additionally, field testing and training programs for smoke curtains and floor below nozzles were developed. Training for both is intended to roll out in CY2025.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

MCFRS firefighting personnel were dispatched to 19,741 fire calls in 2024 (3% increase from 2023) in which 890 (8% increase from 2023) were full assignments. The number of structure fires declined 3.5% in 2024 (522 total).

Despite the low occurrence of fires in Montgomery County, approximately 750 occupants were displaced due to fire in 2024 and six individuals perished as a result of fire, one of which was a vehicle fire, and another which was intentional/incendiary. Five of the fire victims were over the age of 50. Smoke detectors were not present in three of those instances, and hoarding conditions and mobility issues also played a factor. MCFRS personnel performed a total of 14 saves while operating on fires in 2024.

A total of nine after action reviews were completed on fire incidents in 2024, including a few large structure fires and fires in rural, non-hydranted areas requiring water supply operations.

The PSTA also used the *From the Command Post/Boss Talk* platform to present and discuss several fire incidents, including the [Old Hundred Road woods fire](#), [Clarksburg Square 2-alarm fire](#), [New Hampshire Avenue church fire](#), [Enclave 2-alarm fire](#), and [the Pepco transformer fire](#).

At the end of 2024, MCFRS instituted a work group to begin reviewing the Incident Response Policy (IRP). The team tasked with this process met to outline the objectives, which include fixing known policy failures and addressing those situations where the policy isn't flexible or well-defined enough. The highrise appendix will be the initial focus of the team. This is expected to be a multi-year process, given the magnitude and complexity of the IRP.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

In addition to ongoing analysis of resource deployment and the review of the IRP, MCFRS initiated a "box alarm process evaluation" at the beginning of 2025, with the intent of building a sustainable process for the quasi-objective evaluation of our actual performance on reported structure fires. When that process is complete, MCFRS will re-evaluate its current performance measures and benchmarks.

Due to the number of ongoing issues at some of the non-sprinklered high-rises, MCFRS will increase battalion-sponsored community outreach in these and other vulnerable communities, in coordination with the Community Risk Reduction section, to convey fire/life safety information and improve the resilience of these residents. Additionally, MCFRS personnel will be trained on the tactical application and use of smoke curtains and floor below nozzles.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL & INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE SERVICES CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5F – Emergency Medical Services

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

Personnel

The Emergency Medical and Integrated Healthcare Services (EMIHS) Section leadership includes:

- Assistant Chief – Section Chief
- Two (2) Battalion Chiefs
 - Operations
 - Quality Management
- Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program Manager
- Physician Medical Director

Subordinate administrative staff includes:

- Two (2) Captains
 - Quality Assurance (QA)
 - Quality Improvement (QI)
- Two (2) MIH Firefighter/Paramedics
- Office Services Coordinator (OSC)
- Two (2) Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services employees are embedded within MCFRS as part of the MIH team
 - Licensed Clinical Social Worker*
 - Clinical Health Nurse
- Multiple uniformed assistant QA Officers and QI Process Owners conduct EMIHS work as a collateral duty

*The LCSW position was vacant for all of CY2024

Subordinate operational staff include 14 field EMS Duty Officers (EMS DOs):

- Seven (7) Captains (EMS703 and EMS704)
- Seven (7) Lieutenants (EMS701 and EMS705)

The EMS DOs liaise with our local hospitals and field personnel to facilitate effective EMS delivery. They respond to calls and provide critical on-scene support on high acuity and multiple patient incidents.

In July 2024, operational restructuring resulted in an increase from three (3) to four (4) full-time field EMS Duty Officers (EMS DOs) as follows:

- EMS702 was removed
- EMS701 was added
- EMS705 was added

- Two (2) dedicated EMS700 positions were eliminated
- EMS700 duties were shared by the field EMS DOs, and the functional hours of EMS700 were changed from M-F 0700-1700 to all days, 0900-2100. This better aligns with peak incident volume.

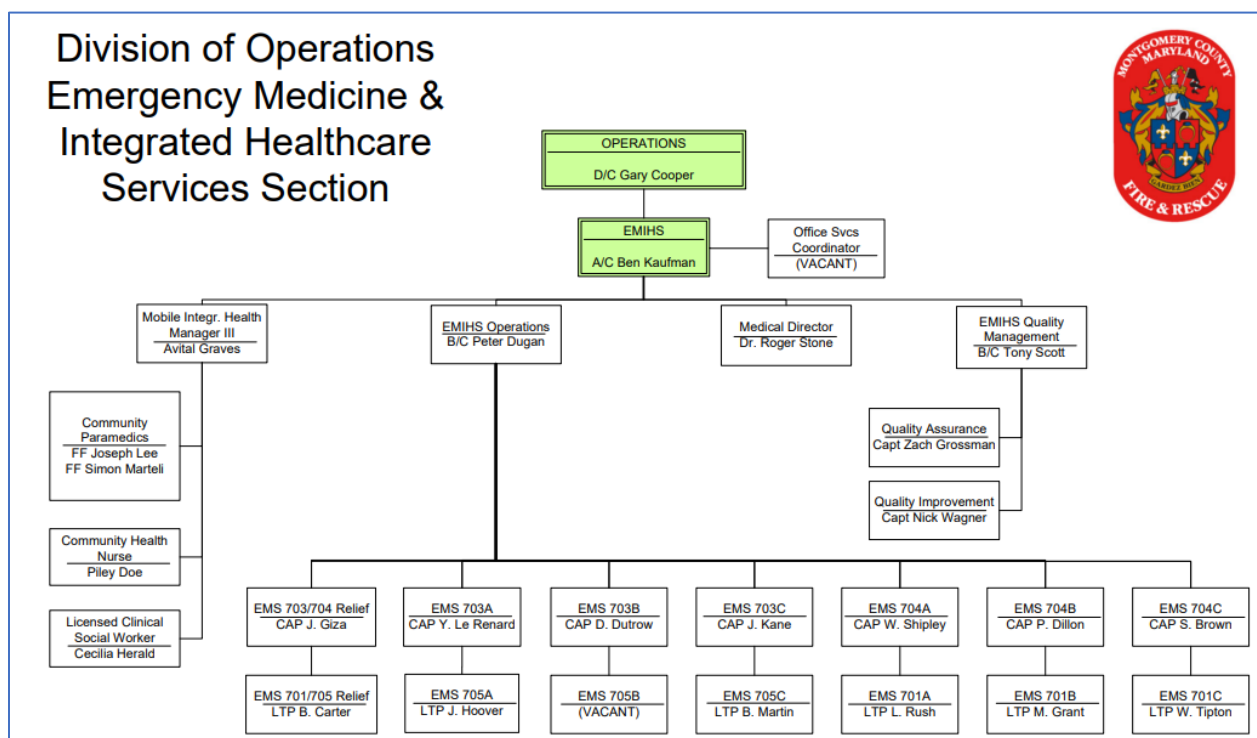
Facilities

- Administrative staff operates from Public Safety Headquarters (PSHQ)
- EMS701 operates from FS19
- EMS703 operates from FS32
- EMS704 operates from FS25
- EMS705 operates from FS34

Apparatus

- Four staff vehicles are assigned to each of the three chief officers and the medical director.
- Four operational vehicles are assigned to each of the four EMS DOs.
- One vehicle is shared by the MIH team who conduct patient visits and other operational business.

The Quality Management officers continue to expand their reach by involving street-level clinicians in our case review process and quality improvement projects.



Local SOPs

- Added O2-MAX CPAP Device (replaced the PortO2Vent)
- Added norepinephrine
- Added a use case for Point of Care Ultrasound to include termination of resuscitation
- Updated the IV pump medication list
- Added Low-Titer O-Positive Whole Blood Administration (EMS DOs)
- Added iGel (replaced the King LTS-D) supraglottic airway
- Updated the ALS airway bag and inventory
- Discontinued KEDs and removed them from inventory
- Deployed advanced ventilators (EMS DOs)
- Comprehensive expansion of EMS DO incident alerting and response expectations

Published Clinical Practice Guidelines

- [2024-01 CPAP Settings – O2-MAX CPAP Device \(revised as 2024-08\)](#)
- [2024-02 Norepinephrine Infusion](#)
- [2024-03 Point of Care Ultrasound – POCUS](#)
- [2024-04 IV Infusion Pump](#)
- [2024-05 Low-Titer O-Positive Whole Blood Administration \(with attachments\)](#)
- [2024-06 Advanced Airway Management](#)
- [2024-07 Discontinuation of KED Use](#)
- [2024-09 Advanced Ventilator Use \(revised as 2025-04\)](#)

Relevant [Maryland Medical Protocol Changes](#)

- Modification to the treatment of allergic reaction/anaphylaxis
- Modification to the treatment of asthma/COPD
- Modification to the assessment of burns – removed the Rule of Nines
- Modification to the transport destination for patients with smoke inhalation
- Addition of calcium chloride for patients receiving two or more units of whole blood
- Addition of droperidol for the treatment of nausea and vomiting
- Addition of medication dosing guidelines for jurisdictions using IV pumps
- Inclusion of a maximum dose of ketamine for CPR induced awareness
- Addition of norepinephrine for the treatment of hypotension/shock
- Modification to the treatment of pediatric stroke with oxygen
- Addition of TXA for hemorrhagic shock due to postpartum hemorrhage
- Extensive modifications to the adult VF/VT algorithm

Training and Certifications

- Overhauled and rebranded ALS continuing education
- Published 11 “5 Minute drills” for station personnel
- Published eight “Sticking Points” for ALS clinicians
- Published four “Hot Topics in EMS” podcasts
- Credentialed seven new EMS Duty Officers

- The personnel assigned to all three staff chief positions were reassigned due to promotions and transfers
- Attended and presented at the NAEMSP Conference in January
- Attended the Gathering of Eagles Conference in June
- Attended and presented at the National Sobering Collaborative Conference in October
- All uniformed staff and the Medical Director are members of the National Association of EMS Physicians
- All chiefs are members of the IAFC

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

All aspects of the EMS system are surveilled and measured utilizing many dynamic data sources and reports as its primary method for determining the effectiveness of the EMIHS Section and identifying variances. The data is aggregated and presented within Power BI. [This is a list of links to the 2024 monthly dashboards](#), each of which includes public facing performance data which provides a mechanism for section evaluation and trend identification that may be affecting service delivery.

Both the total EMS dispatches for CY2024 and the total number of patients transported have continued to increase post-COVID (see Figure 1). It is notable that the demand for EMS service continues to far outpace population growth. Contributing factors for this disparity may include:

- Decreased access to all types of primary care and behavioral health services
- Decreased sub-acute bed availability
- Premature hospital discharges
- Aging population
- The convenience of comprehensive assessment and care at the ED

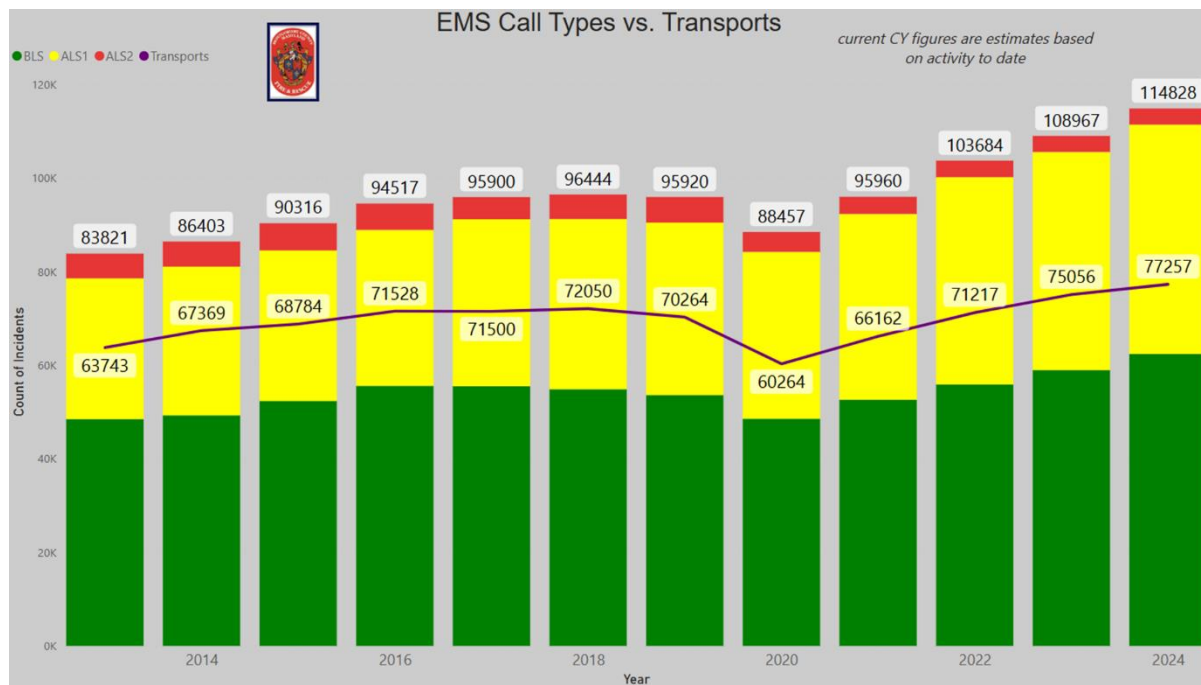


Figure 1. Dispatches and Transports by Year

During CY2024, the EMIHS Section continued its comprehensive approach to managing EMS patient throughput at receiving hospitals. Each EMS DO liaises with either one or two county hospitals (see Figure 2), which often requires multiple in-person visits per day to deconflict long wait times. The Clinical Disposition Officer (EMS700) monitors hospital status, designates receiving hospital destinations, and provides clinical and operational oversight of the EMS system.

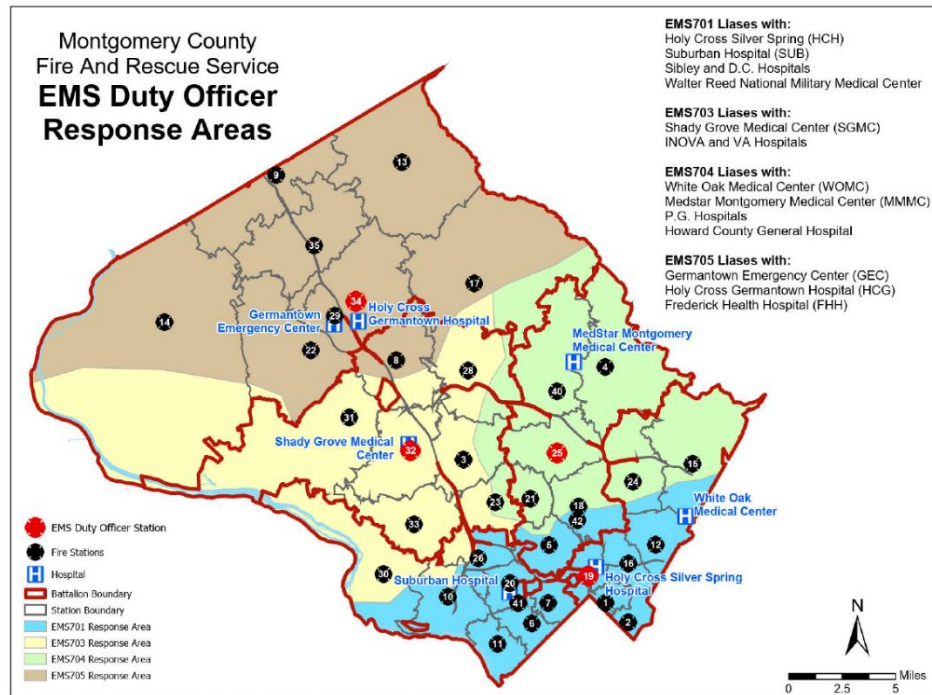


Figure 2. EMS Duty Officer Response Areas

The annual operational centric data relating to the analyzation of unit call volume, unit response, response times, etc. can be found on the MCFRS accreditation page [here](#).

The EMIHS Section continues to monitor, assess, and provide interventions, when necessary, to many operational and quality management processes and performance measures to sustain the highest level of performance possible while being pioneers to the latest research of clinical intervention, technology, and pre-hospital advancement. Operational data focuses on many traditional and non-traditional fire department performance indicators while the quality management data encompasses more healthcare and patient centric performance indicators which are utilized between both internal and external stakeholders.

Observed Trends:

- CY2024 EMS call volume has surpassed all previous years.
- CY2024 data shows that the outcomes associated with our return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) rates and the number of CPC 1 and 2 patients have remained stable with normal variation.
- CY2024 data shows stable median hospital drop time and EMS incident cycle time with normal variation.
- CY2024 data shows stable performance with our first pass success of video laryngoscopy.

- CY2024 data reflects continued efforts to reduce lights and siren responses with over 25% of EMS dispatches being handled with routine driving.
- CY2024 data reflects a remarkable 22% response rate to our customer satisfaction survey and consistently high praise (see Figure 3).

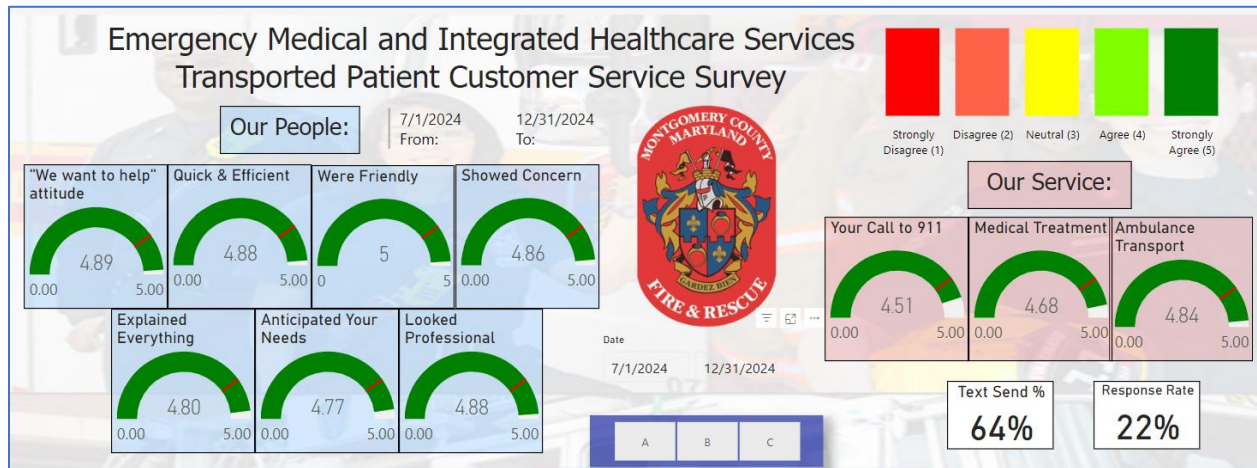


Figure 3. EMIHS Transported Patient Customer Service Survey

MCFRS continues to transport eligible and willing patients to alternative destinations. Overall program volume increased from CY2023 (27) to CY2024 (91) distributed as follows:

- Stabilization Room: 71 patients
- Kaiser Permanente Advanced Urgent Care: 15 patients
- MedStar Urgent Care: 5 patients

This restructured EMS Duty Officer deployment improved supervisory coverage to socially vulnerable communities in Silver Spring and Germantown. This became especially important with the additional clinical skills the EMS DOs bring including ultrasound, blood and advanced ventilators. This deployment supports and enforces our plan for improving care equity. These graphics depict improvement in the 10 minute response time from the stations when reconfiguring from three EMS DOs (Figure 4a) to four EMS DOs (Figure 4b).

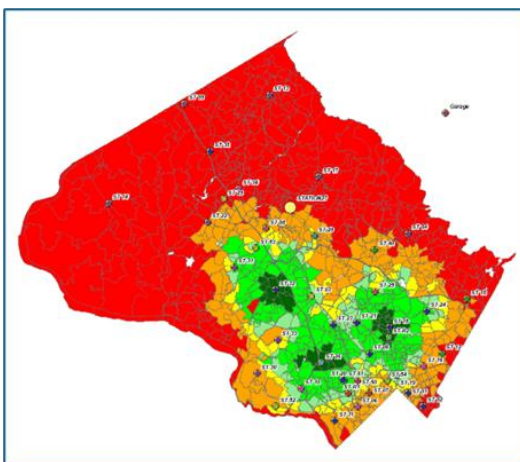


Figure 4a. 10-minute response coverage with three EMS DOs

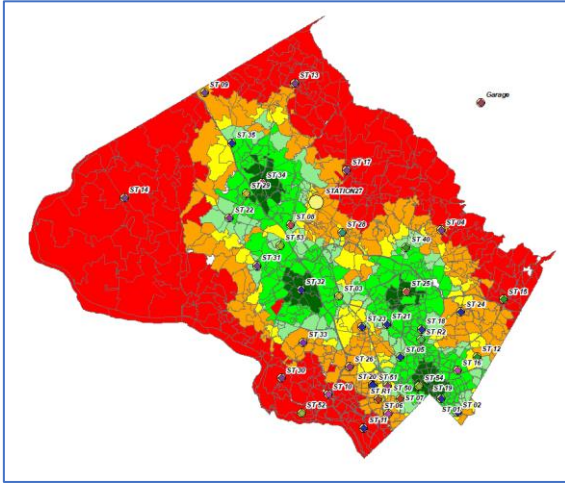


Figure 4b. 10-minute response coverage with four EMS DOs

The whole blood program kicked off on August 8 after months of planning, training, and a unique partnership arrangement between Suburban Hospital and Inova Blood Donor Services. Blood transfusions have been shown to significantly improve outcomes for patients suffering from severe hemorrhage. Whole blood transfusions offer several advantages over traditional therapy, including improved clotting function and oxygen delivery, which are crucial for patients experiencing significant blood loss. In CY2024 EMS Duty Officers transfused 31 units of blood to 28 patients, far outpacing the estimated 40 annual patients. The program uses cutting edge technology to monitor the cold-chain storage requirements for blood products (see Figure 5).

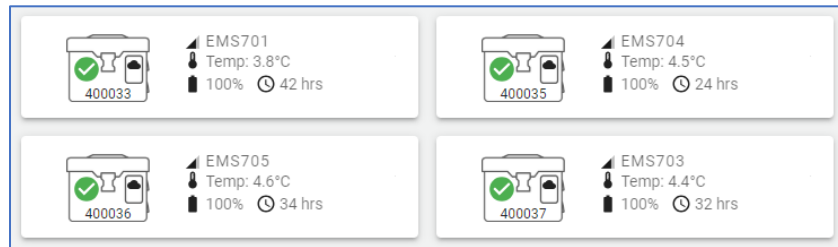


Figure 5. Cold-chain storage dashboard

The norepinephrine protocol and advanced ventilator programs are designed to close the gap between the relatively large number of patients who achieve return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) and the relatively low number of patients who survive their hospital admission neurologically intact. Norepinephrine is a medication that better controls the blood pressure, and the advanced ventilator better controls the oxygen levels and breathing. Both of these adaptations demonstrate innovative ways we are attempting to improve patient outcomes. It is too early to report any meaningful data on these efforts.

Members of the EMS Section continue to participate at MIEMSS committee meetings and lead the discussion on state protocol changes. MCFRS has a continued national presence by sharing data, presenting research, and innovation. The Medical Director remains a frequent attendee on weekly conference calls with the national consortium of EMS Medical Directors. Many other jurisdictions look to MCFRS for initiative and strategy.

Section leaders are active participants of the MIEMSS Protocol Review Committee. There are meaningful state protocol changes forthcoming in CY2025 as a result of work conducted in CY2024. Specifically, a comprehensive protocol to manage maternal hypertensive emergencies is the direct result of tireless research, authorship, collaboration, and revision by our medical director and members of the quality management team.

The peak time (0900-2100) Clinical Disposition Officer (EMS700) ensures clinical oversight for EMS calls, extending beyond instances where an EMS Duty Officer is physically present. This improves not just the decision making for the hospital destination but also for the care that is provided onscene and while in transport. Examples include directing trauma upgrades, referrals to Children's, stroke care, downgrade oversight, and encouraging the utilization of alternative destinations. Staffing this position with a clinically focused, credentialed EMS Duty Officer continues to be effective as it provides supervisory oversight of every incident and improves the overall quality of care.

The Section continued 100% case review of intubations in a continued effort to improve first pass success. A uniformed paramedic serves as a quality improvement process owner who reviews all recorded video intubations performed with the AirTraq, a non-displacement, channeled intubation device. This review process involves annotating procedural videos and sharing that performance feedback with the ALS clinician. This process produced a measurable and consistent improvement through CY2024 (see Figure 6).

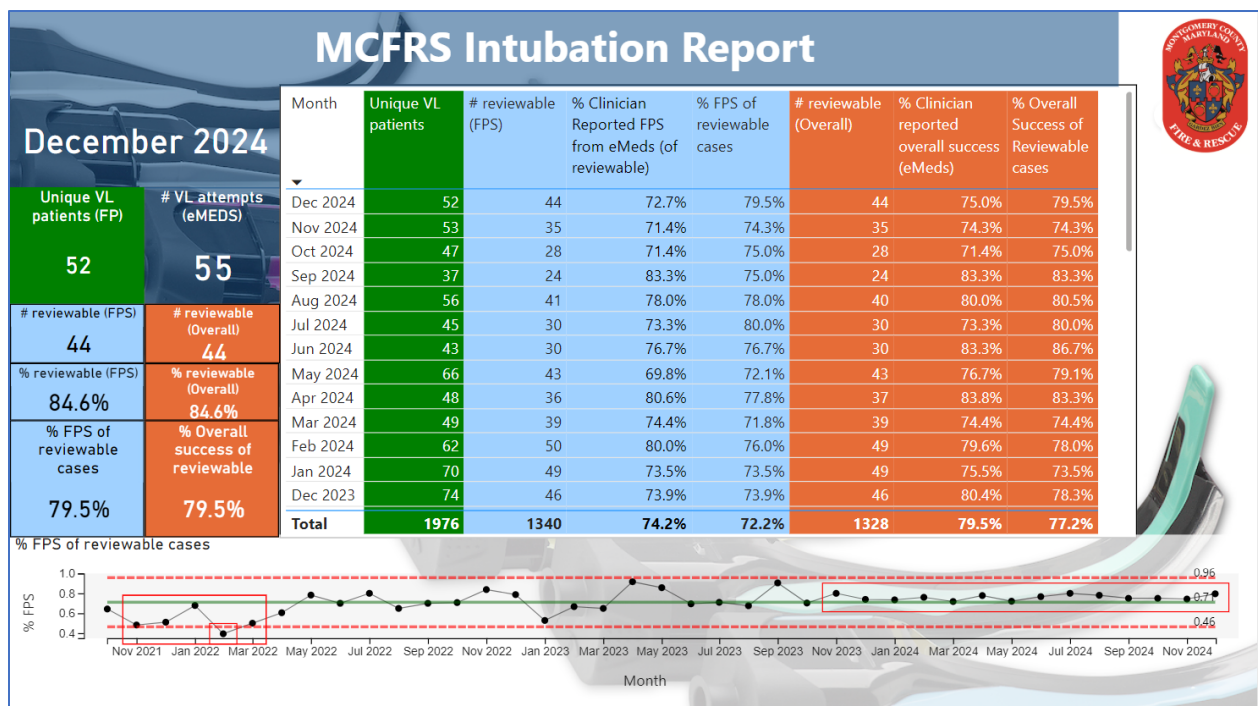


Figure 6. Intubation report

The EMIHS Quality Management Battalion Chief oversees the daily operations of system surveillance and feedback. MCFRS self-monitors and assesses systemic quality performance as it pertains to the nexus of medicine using the EMS Quality Management Plan as its guide. These efforts include real time surveillance using Firstwatch triggers, chart review of 100% of critical processes using process owners and the Firstwatch Firstpass system, customer satisfaction surveys, and myriad other inputs. In CY2024, the Quality Assurance Office investigated 803 total inquiries, of which 13 were considered complex as defined in the QM plan.

The Mobile Integrated Health unit continues to process a high number of requests for service and refer patients to partner agencies. MIH worked to improve our outreach efforts to the field and provide additional educational opportunities, including facetime with the incoming recruit classes. Referrals to the MIH team were up to 1,533 in CY2024 with 979 patients enrolled in the program.

Twice a year, MCFRS hosts an EMIHS Provider Recognition Ceremony to acknowledge outstanding achievements in clinical care. It is an opportunity for clinicians to meet and interact with patients who have had significant events, including many survivors of cardiac arrest. These emotional ceremonies are exceptionally gratifying for these patients, our providers, and the staff who work behind the scenes to create an environment where these outcomes are possible.

MCFRS was awarded the Mission: Lifeline GOLD award by the AHA for applying the most up-to-date evidence-based treatment guidelines for our critically ill patients (see Figure 7). The GOLD level requires multiple consecutive years of excellence.



Figure 7. Mission: Lifeline Award

Our Medical Director and uniformed EMIHS leadership published and presented an abstract at the 2024 National Association of EMS Physicians conference in Austin, Texas titled,

“Limited Use of Prehospital Ultrasound to Answer a Binary Question: Transportation versus Termination Decisions Based on an Ultrasound of Carotid Artery during Prehospital Cardiac Arrest Resuscitation”. This publicized the feasibility and benefits of our point of care ultrasound program. Our Medical Director also led two widely attended speaking engagements to a national audience. One was titled, **“So we’re subspecialists now, but will EMS Medicine always be a part-time gig?”** The other was on a shared stage with Maryland’s EMS Medical Director and was titled, **“We’re Down with DTT, EDs Set Us Free! Direct to Triage protocol and process that get our units back on the street”.**

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

- Publish a comprehensive EMS Incident Response Policy
- Stay abreast of operational and clinical factors
- Adopt a prevention screening program for patients who are vulnerable to falls
- Update performance metrics to purge outdated measures, align with the latest applicable NEMSQA measures, and to gain coherence across the system
- Contribute to the body of evidence that supports the advancement of prehospital medicine

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5H – Hazardous Materials

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

Personnel

There have been no changes to the process for being a member on the Hazardous Materials Team. Team leadership experienced decline in personnel overall through retirements, transfers and resignations.

Hazardous Materials Team Members (HMm) – 112 (declined by 6)

Hazardous Materials Officers (HMo) – 18 (declined by 2)

Hazardous Materials Unit Drivers (HMU) – 44 (declined by 3)

Hazardous Materials ALS Providers – 37 (declined by 2)

Hazardous Materials Trainees (HMT) - 14

Apparatus and Staffing

CY24 Hazardous Materials Team dispatch and deployment models remain the same as CY23 with apparatus, personnel and station locations. A new, smaller Hazardous Materials Support Unit is being readied for use in CY25. Decon720 remains out of service due to outdated equipment with no estimated time for return to service. Utility 728 was placed out of service in CY24 due to mechanical issues and is in need of replacement with no estimated timeframe.

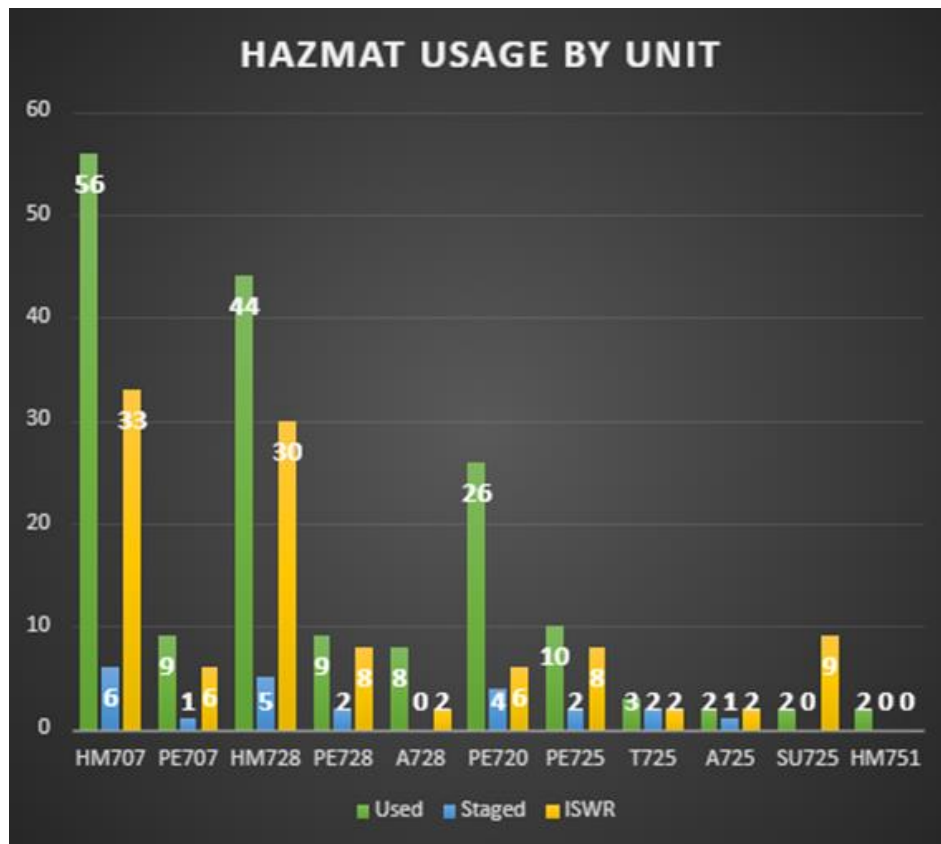
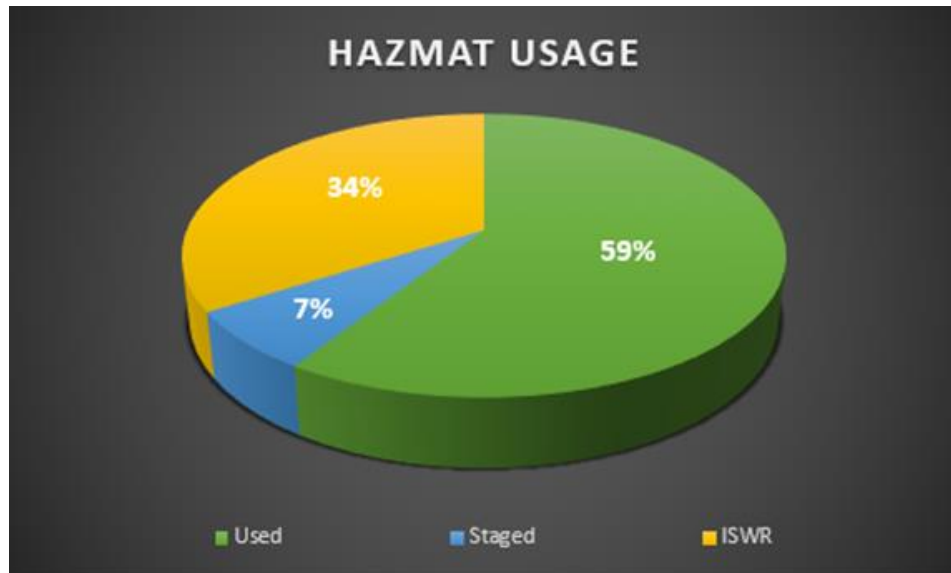
Administrative and Budgetary Items

In CY24, the Hazardous Materials Team continued to be supported by internal funding processes and MWCOG Hazardous Materials Subcommittee grant funding. In the second half of CY24, MWCOG had discussions with all member jurisdictions leaders and began planning processes on moving away from UASI grant funding to support Type 1 Hazardous Material Teams. This process will continue in CY25, and team leadership will be engaged with department, county and MWCOG stakeholders as a transition occurs.

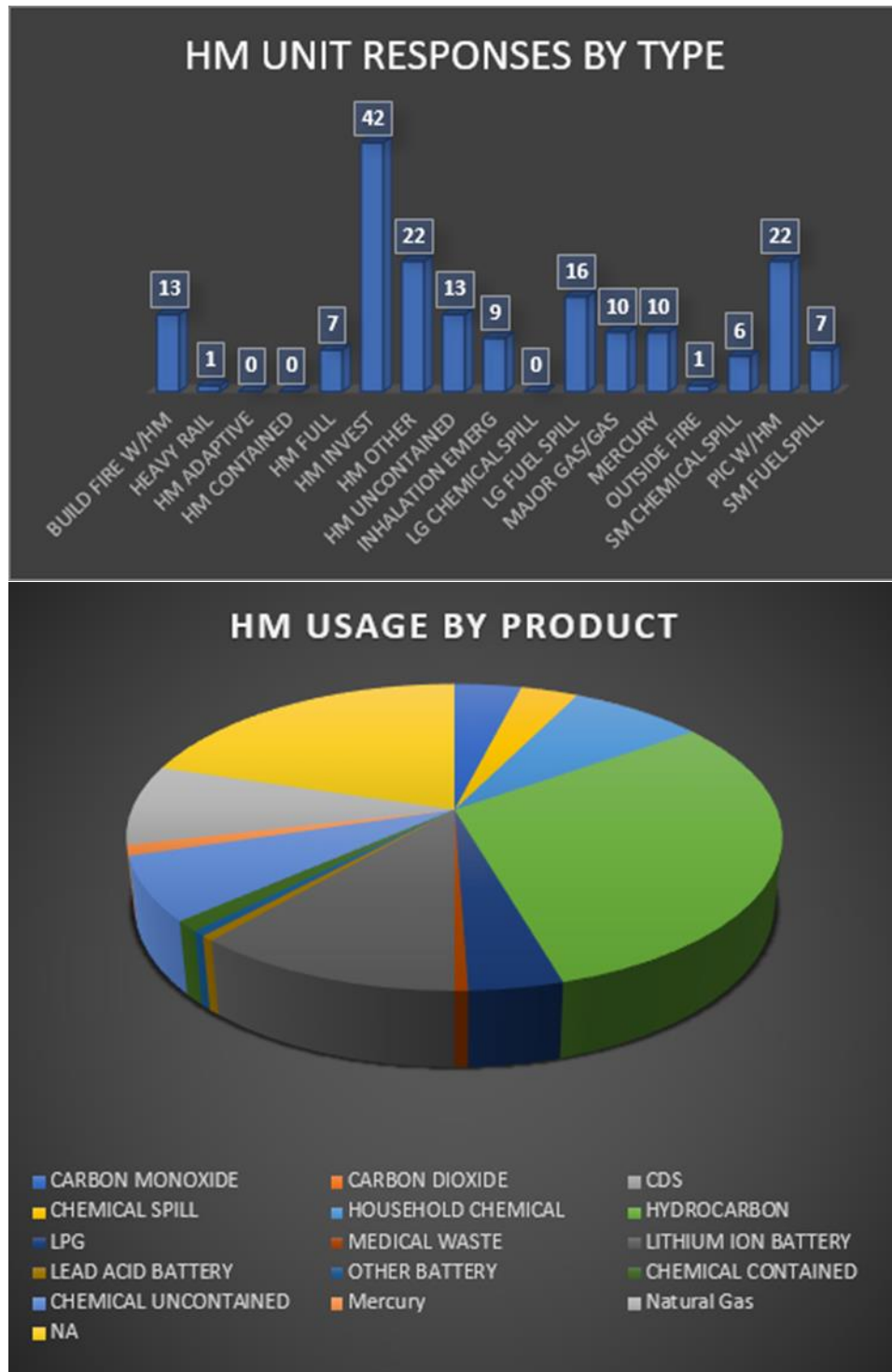
3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

Response Statistics

- a. Hazmat Team Responses – 176 (increase from 151 incidents in CY2023); hazmat usage– 69% (increase from 14% in CY2023)
 - i. *Note – CY2023 does not include Hazmat Team Consult data. Hazardous material incidents handled without the Hazmat Team are not included (i.e. Outside Gas Leaks, Inside Gas Leaks, Small Fuel Spills, etc.)*



Note – HM728 was out of service for approximately 1.5 months in March and April for maintenance. Data does not account for other OOS times or dual-dispatch status of units.



CY24 Outcomes

- Completed checkoff process - 11 Hazmat Team members (HMm), 0 Hazmat Officers (HMo) and 1 Hazmat Drivers (HMu)
- Left or removed from team - 9 Hazmat Team members (HMm), 3 Hazmat Officers (HMo) and 1 Hazmat Drivers (HMu)

- Purchase of smaller Hazardous Materials Support Unit to replace one (1) large unit. Equipment layout and planning completed for unit but not placed in-service due to ongoing internal program discussions related to location and use.
- Completed update and enhancement of Hazardous Materials Standard Operating Guidelines
- Ongoing assistance with MC Health and Human Services for radiological response plans.
- Placed in-service new in-suit communications for hazardous materials response enhancing safety and reducing risk to Hazmat responders.
- Completed tabletop response exercises with Washington Gas, OEMHS, and other stakeholders
- Improved data collection and continued to evaluate enhancements with MCFRS IT.
- Hosted and attended state-wide Hazardous Material meetings with other team leaders to discuss and evaluate current trends, responses and training efforts.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

- a. Work with MWCOG to review and establish funding parameters moving forward and begin movement to local funding of many items by CY26
- b. Evaluate program metrics and work with Operations Division for staffing of a single Hazardous Materials Unit with assistance of Hazardous Material Support Companies and a Decontamination Support Company strategically located throughout the County
- c. Monitor process and timeline related to build of new primary Hazardous Materials Unit currently in process at manufacturer
- d. Continue evaluation of equipment to enhance hazardous materials response.
 - i. MWCOG will be funding a new FTIR meter for all member jurisdiction Type 1 Hazardous Materials teams and MCFRS Hazmat will increase operational resilience, increase community impact and reduce risk with this and potential other equipment changes.
- e. Receive and place in-service MDERS funded CBRNE training simulation system. Use of equipment will increase the value of training and community impact while enhancing resiliency of responders to respond to incidents using simulated real-life hazards without the dangers or significant processes of obtaining actual chemicals.
- f. Hazardous Material Officers Program
 - i. Train current HMm officers to become Hazardous Material Officers building depth for attrition
 - ii. Create annual check-off process for Hazardous Material Officers to meet NFPA 470 AHJ guidelines
- g. Finalize data input into equipment tracking program and begin utilization by team members for day-to-day and long-term equipment maintenance and tracking.
- h. Enhance Hazardous Materials logistics with a permanent position or build-out of depth personnel to assist.
- i. Work with other Special Operations teams and management on initiatives to evaluate and adjust staffing, training and response profiles related to hazardous materials response.

- j. Enhance hazardous material reporting processes where data can be better applied to all metrics
- k. Training Initiatives
 - i. Hazardous Materials Technician Course with 10 MCFRS personnel – Fall 2025
 - ii. Full-Scale Exercise with MCFRS FEI Bomb Techs and Astra Zeneca – Fall 2025
 - iii. Development of Hazmat specific 5-minute drills for first responders with additional guidance for specific hazards (CNG, Batteries, etc)
 - iv. Training with county and out of county partners – All year
 - 1. MCPD Emergency Support Unit
 - 2. NIST Fire Department and Radiation Health
 - v. Including Federal agencies in our training days – All year
 - 1. FBI WMD response at Aberdeen Proving Grounds
 - 2. NIH lab overview and response
- l. Continue to build working relationships with county and out of county partners through routine communication and involvement in activities
- m. Continuous evaluation of risks and threats to residents and visitors of Montgomery County through the use of response activities, lessons learned, response data and partnerships with other agencies and community stakeholders
- n. Work with-in Special Operations teams to develop a single policy manual with appendices focused on TRT, SWRT, and HMT. The single policy manual will contain core SOPs/SOGs such as risk assessment, training plan review/submission, etc. While the appendices will focus on items specific to each discipline.
- o. All Special Operations Teams leadership (TRT, SWRT, and HazMat) met to discuss methods to streamline and enhance team operations. As a result of this meeting, a proposal packet was developed and submitted to the Operation Chief for review. With his consent, all team leadership are working on plans to implement several of these proposals by July 1, 2025.
 - i. Remove Special Operations from Fire Station 25 and locate Hazardous Materials support personnel in the northern area of the county.
 - ii. Implement certification requirements prior to transfer to a Special Operations station.
 - iii. Bring all Special Operations teams into alignment regarding pay and add pay stipends to those seeking to become a TRTo, HMO, or SWBO.
 - iv. Standardize the handling of annual task books and recertification across all Special Operations Teams.
 - v. Reconfigure the “non-consolidated” team member pool for all Special Operations teams to reduce overall team size while increasing opportunities for team participation and retaining knowledge and experience.
 - vi. Simplifying pay structure by eliminating certification pay and moving all parties to assignment pay.

TECHNICAL RESCUE

CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

5I – Technical Rescue

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

Personnel

The number of personnel within the Swift Water Rescue Team (SWRT) and Technical Rescue Team (TRT) continued to ebb and flow as personnel were promoted, transferred, joined, and retired. 2024 saw an increase in almost all personnel areas as well as several leadership changes due to promotions and retirements.

TRT saw an increase in TRTo, TRTm, and TRTp positions while there was a decrease in TRT-Tr. This is to be expected as new members complete their task books and move from Trainee status to full team members.

The SWRT staffing remained unchanged for the most part, despite the continued focus on increasing the number of Swift Water Boat Operators (SWBO).

Ancillary special operations personnel for operations level boats saw a decline, while the UTV operators saw an increase.

The TRT, SWRT, and UTV positions for CY2024 are shown below.

- Technical Rescue Team Officers (TRTo) - 19 – increase from CY23 (17)
- Technical Rescue Team Member (TRTm) - 99 – increase from CY23 (91)
- Technical Rescue Team Paramedic (TRTp) - 14 – increase from CY23 (8)
- Technical Rescue Team Trainee (TRT-Tr) - 26 – decrease from CY23 (35)
- Swift Water Task Force Leader – 1- no change CY23
- Swift Water Officers – 10 – no change from CY23
- Swift Water Boat Operators (SWBO) - 33 – no change from CY23
- Swift Water Boat Crew (SWBC) - 71 – decrease from CY23 (72)
- Swift Water Trainee (SWTR) - 27 – increase from CY23 (26)
- Operations Level Boat Operators – 140 – decrease from CY23 (143)
- Operations Level Boat Crew Members – 205 – decrease from CY23 (208)
- Utility Task Vehicle Driver/Operators - 221 – increase from CY23 (212)

In anticipation of upcoming promotions, interviews were conducted for TRT team leader and deputy team leaders. Mid-year, the Deputy Team Leader was promoted and replaced by an interviewee. At the end of 2024, the Team Leader announced he would be stepping down and another interviewee was selected to fill the vacancy. Additionally, the Battalion Chief of Special Operations indicated that he would be transferring in early 2025 and his replacement was selected early, allowing an overlap, succession planning, and knowledge transfer.

Equipment & Other Resources

All special operations sections implemented a variety of new equipment.

TRT

The new tractor drawn technical rescue unit was received, underwent equipment mounting, and placed in-service. This process included several months of design/layout as well as the implementation of revised Policy 20-05 to train and certify drivers on the new TR731, 15 in total.

Grants were written and awarded in the last quarter of 2024 to update and implement battery-operated breaching equipment, expand the Paratech LongShore System, and purchase additional Paratech Guardian Seismic Monitoring systems. These initiatives were completed in collaboration with the Prince George's County TRT, further promoting interoperability. This equipment will be purchased in the first quarter of 2025.

Separate funding was secured to conduct a joint TRT Mobilization Exercise between MCFRS and PGFD. The planning for this MobEx began in 2024 with an anticipated full-scale exercise in April 2025.

SWRT

The SWRT was able to purchase the wash down pumps indicated in the CY2023 appraisal, but overtime restrictions prevented their installation. Additionally, the SWRT conducted performance testing on a new boat platform as the Chesapeake platform will no longer be produced.

Additionally, the SWRT purchased a Blue ROV, a submersible capable of 3 knots and operating at a depth of 100 meters. This submersible is equipped with grapple arm and 1080p video output when tethered to a 150-foot tether. CY2024 included demonstration, purchase, testing, and upfitting of the unit. The unit is currently deployable, but future enhancements in CY25 will increase its functionality.

Policy Development

TRT began conducting reviews of its policies to deconflict them with the proposed changes coming to TRT on July 1, 2025. This includes the Response SOG (17-03) and Team Membership (17-01).

Due to a near-miss incident with the SWRT in July, an internal investigation was conducted. As a result, a revision of several policies will begin in the first quarter of CY25, along with the development of new risk assessment and mayday policies that span all Special Operations teams.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

Initiatives

Each of the Special Operations teams was able to accomplish several of their initiatives, though not all objectives were fully achieved.

SWRT

In CY24, SWRT aimed to send personnel for external training opportunities regarding rescues from vehicles in flood waters, as well as developing a replacement cycle for dry suits to establish a small cache of spare equipment. Unfortunately, both of these objectives were unable to be completed due to funding and logistical challenges.

In CY24, SWRT also aimed to develop and host joint training sessions with the Maryland State Police for helicopter operations, develop an outreach program focusing on the Potomac Paddlers group, and develop and host nighttime training operations with a consistent instructor across all three shifts. All three of these objectives were achieved and received a great amount of positive feedback.

TRT

TRT was hoping to upgrade and replace components of the rope rescue equipment cache that was reaching the end-of-life, as well as to develop a kit to be used for tower rescue. This process was started, but unable to be completed due to budget constraints. This remains an objective for CY25.

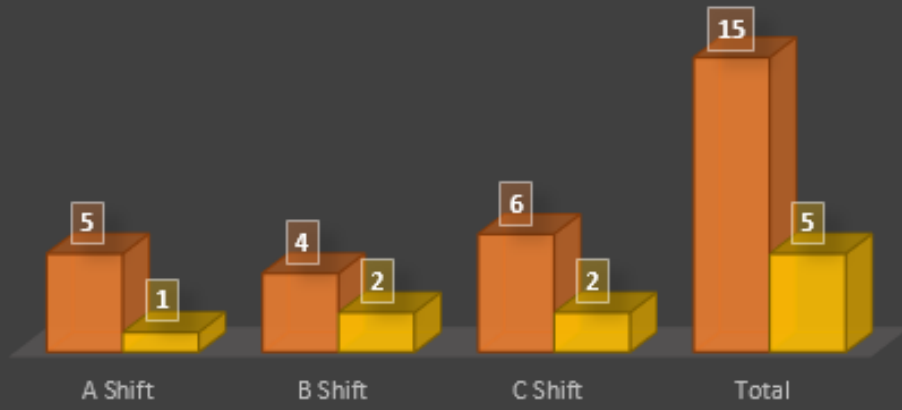
TRT was able to continue progress on its objective of offering more TRT related courses, both through internal mechanisms and external. In addition to the normally scheduled Confined Space Rescue Technician and Rope Rescue Technician program (100+ hours combined), TRT also hosted an “Urban Structural Anchoring” program (4 hours), Wide Area Search Operations (24 hours), and invited an external vendor from the International Window Cleaner Association to deliver industry information on common practices and rescue strategies.

Call Statistics

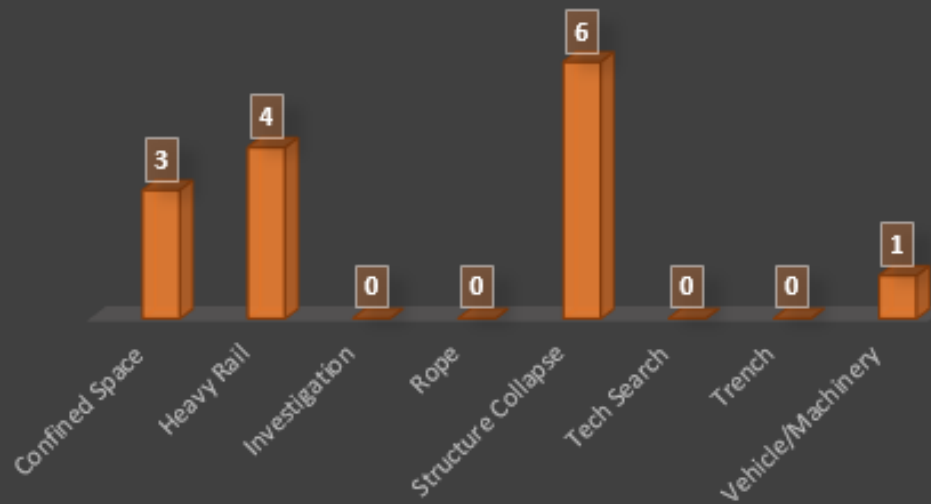
TRT saw a significant decline in responses in 2024, with only 15 calls, compared to 29 in 2023. There is no known direct cause for the reduction.

TRT RESPONSES BY SHIFT

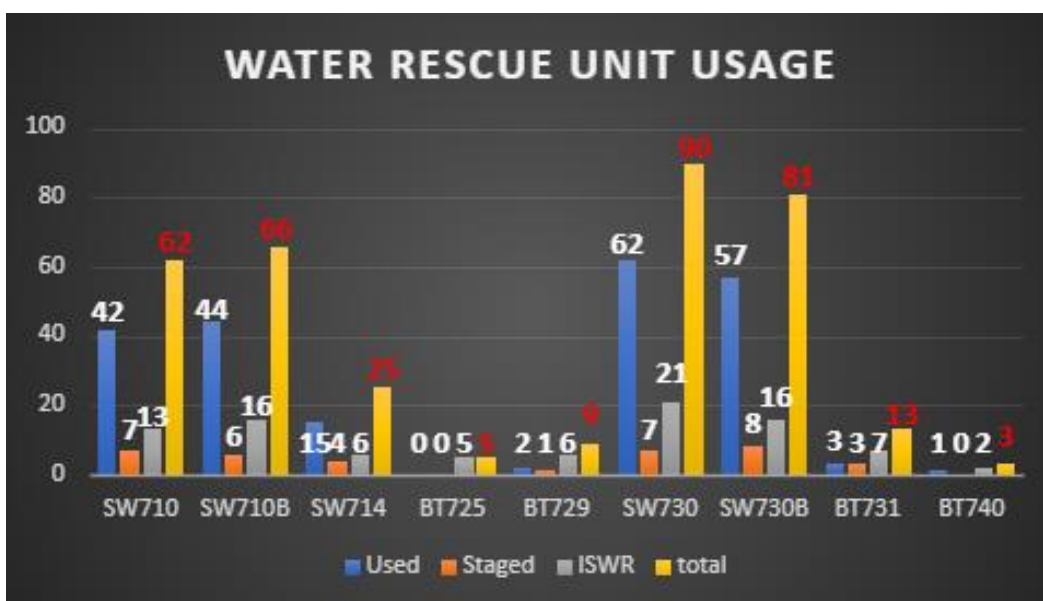
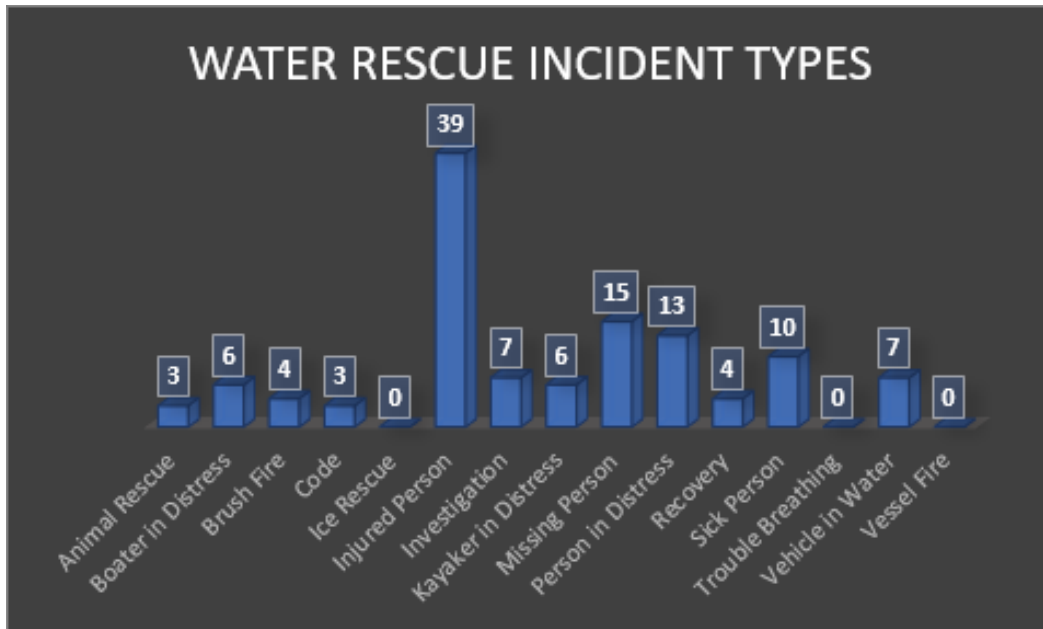
Responses Engaged



RESPONSE TYPES



SWRT remained consistently busy with call volume in 2024.



4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

All Special Operations teams' leadership (TRT, SWRT, and HazMat) met to discuss methods to streamline and enhance team operations. As a result of this meeting, a proposal packet was developed and submitted to the Operation Chief for review. With his consent, all team leadership are working on plans to implement several of these proposals by July 1, 2025.

- Remove Special Operations from Station 25.

- Reconfigure TR700 (formerly TR731, which has been replaced by a tractor-trailer) to support extended and expanding incidents.
- Implement certification requirements prior to transfer to a Special Operations station.
- Bring all Special Operations teams into alignment regarding pay and add pay stipends to those seeking to become a TRTo, HMO, or SWBO.
- Standardize the handling of annual task books and recertification across all Special Operations Teams.
- Increase TRT staffing requirements at FS31 and FS29 to account for the loss of FS25.
- Reconfigure the “non-consolidated” team member pool for all Special Operations teams to reduce overall team size while increasing opportunities for team participation and retaining knowledge and experience.
- Simplifying pay structure by eliminating certification pay and moving all parties to assignment pay.

In CY25, Special Operations has the following objectives:

- TRT – continue with the replacement and upgrade of rope equipment that has reached end-of-life.
- TRT – Alter training cycles to encompass more focused training drills and periodic, longer training days focused on newer members.
- TRT – Complete the full-scale exercise with PGFD.
- SWRT – Develop a Swift Water Boat Operator class in coordination with the PSTA.
- SWRT – Meet with managers from the apparatus section, schedule the purchase of the new boat platform, and ensure it is on a consistent maintenance/replacement cycle.
- All – Develop a single policy manual with appendices focused on TRT, SWRT, and HMT. The single policy manual will contain core SOPs/SOGs such as risk assessment, training plan review/submission, etc., while the appendices will focus on items specific to each discipline.

MARYLAND TASK FORCE 1

CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

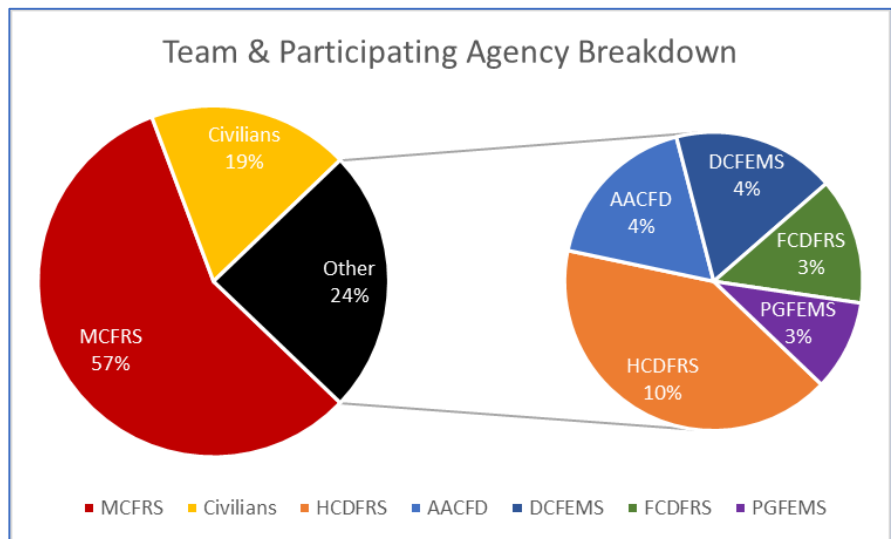
5M – Urban Search and Rescue

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

Maryland Task Force One (MD-TF1) is part of the National Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Response System, established by FEMA to organize federal, state, and local emergency response teams as federal disaster response task forces. MD-TF1 is one of twenty-eight USAR task forces available for deployment by FEMA. The teams were initially established to aid in structural collapse rescues and now respond to all hazards, including flooding, hazardous materials, and medical emergencies. The teams can also be pre-positioned when there is the threat of a disaster, such as an impending, severe weather event or terrorist attack.

MD-TF1 is one of seven teams equipped with a Hazardous Materials (HazMat) Equipment Push Package (HEPP) Cache. The HEPP is a stand-alone, FEMA-created resource that provides personnel equipment to operate in hazardous environments for an additional 12-36 hours. The exact time depends on the severity of the environment and the number of individuals utilizing the equipment. This self-contained mobile entity is comprised of four MD-TF1 members, two Logistics members and two HazMat members, providing additional equipment during emergency operations at local, state, and national levels.

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services (MCFRS) serves as the Sponsoring Agency for MD-TF1. Additionally, the team is comprised of civilians hired as temporary employees of MCFRS and five Participating Agencies. In 2024, the team filled vacant positions and on-boarded new members, achieving a full-roster with 210 members that support three Type I deployments of 70 members each. This increase in personnel from Participating Agencies reduces the staffing burden on the Sponsoring Agency during local incidents when the team is activated or deployed.

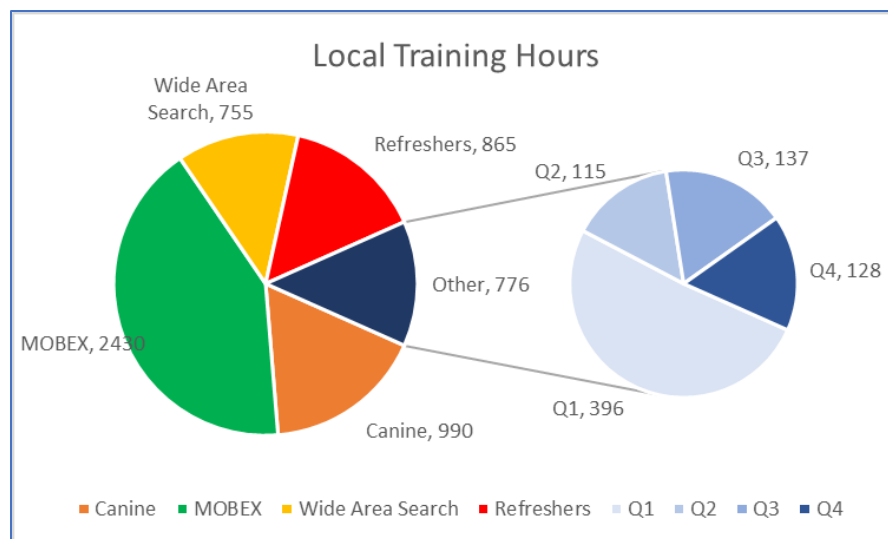


Team Members Breakdown:

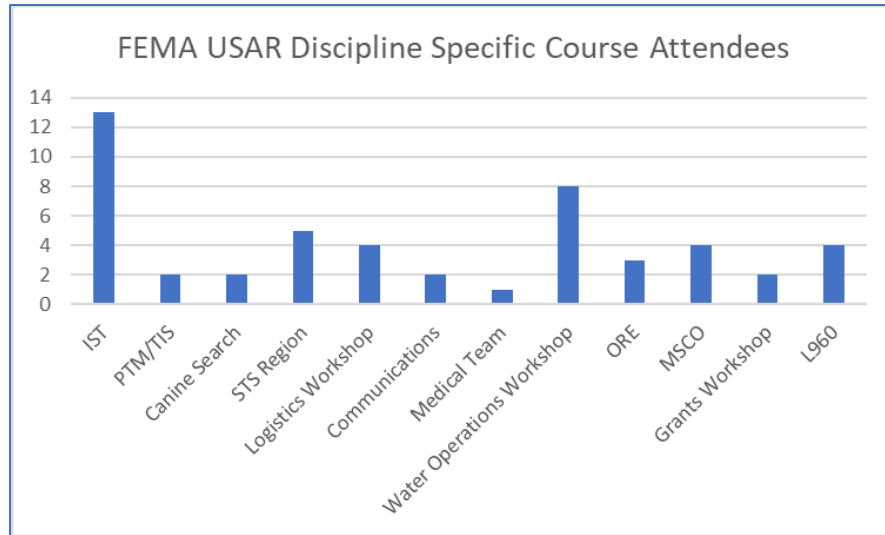
Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Services (MCFRS)	120
Civilians (Physicians, Engineers, Police, & Other Professionals)	39
Anne Arundel County Fire Department (AACFD)	9
District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DCFEMS)	9
Frederick County Division of Fire & Rescue Services (FCDFRS)	7
Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services	21
Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services (PGFEMS)	5

Applications for the FY2023 Supplemental Funding and the FY2024 Cooperative Agreement (CA) were submitted and awarded. The FY2020 CA was closed out. Due to extensions and the three-year Period of Performance, funding remaining at the close do 2024 included the following CAs: FY2021, FY2022, FY2023, and FY 2024. Once the Notice of Funding Opportunities for 2025 are released, MD-TF1 will apply for the FY2024 Supplemental Award and the FY2025 CA.

MD-TF1 provided 5,816 hours of training to its members. These training sessions enhance team members' knowledge of USAR operations and standards, serving as valuable professional development for first responders and other task force professionals. These training opportunities are federally funded, benefiting MCFRS, task force members, and the communities that they serve.



MD-TF1 sent its members to 50 national training opportunities. Members were able to attend crucial FEMA training events to support response capabilities to incidents both within the local community and across the nation. Additionally, MD-TF1 hosted the Water Operations Workshop in August 2024 to provide training to Water Qualified individuals from across the FEMA USAR System, including eight members of MD-TF1.



Additionally, MD-TF1 utilized funding to provide individualized storage for the team members' 24-hour and 10-day bags, which established a more efficient and effective method of loading personnel gear in the event of deployment. The installation of this additional storage in the B-Suite freed up valuable space in the C-Suite for storage and maintenance activities of the MD-TF1 vehicle fleet and cache.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

The MD-TF1 team remains fully deployable, as confirmed by the 2024 Annual Readiness Evaluation. Despite causing personnel shortages during training, activations, and deployments, this program continues to serve as a crucial resource at the county, state, and federal levels. The team's search and rescue expertise and capabilities play a vital role in incident mitigation and outcomes, making it an essential asset for emergency response efforts.

The team was deployed ten times to five incidents in 2024:

- New Mexico Wildfires, June 2024 – IST Communications: 2 members
- Hurricane Debby. August 2024 – Type III: 45 members, IST Supervisor
- Hurricane Francine – IST Communications: 2 members
- Hurricane Helene – IST Communications, IST Liaison, Type III: 45 members
- Hurricane Milton – NRCC(x2): 3 members, Type III: 45 members

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

MD-TF1 is strategically planning to allocate resources for participation in National Training Opportunities and leadership meetings scheduled for 2025. These engagements are pivotal for advancing the team's expertise and proficiency in USAR operations. In addition, the team is slated for an Airlift exercise, civilian refresher courses, and quarterly training to be delivered by the team and its qualified instructors.

The Task Force is currently preparing its Semi-Annual Progress reports and Self Evaluation Tool. The team is committed to implementing all the recommended changes from the Annual Readiness Evaluation results from July 2024.

Applications for the Training Manager, new Training Assistant, and Canine Handler positions have undergone thorough review, and all applicants have been notified regarding the interview process and the status of their applications. Interviews are set to occur in January 2025, and leadership is optimistic that these critical roles will be filled by the end of the first quarter.

In addition to successful recruitment efforts, MD-TF1 has several projects that are in the procurement stage. Funding has been approved for the purchase and installation of a generator, ensuring that the Dover Road Warehouse remains operational 24/7, particularly during severe weather events. The two newly purchased vans are currently being outfitted with essential communications equipment and safety enhancements for the working dogs. Both of these projects are expected to be complete by the end of the second quarter.

Additionally, the team is transitioning to MyDB Solutions, as recommended by the FEMA USAR System, for maintaining personnel and training records. This implementation is expected to streamline reporting and auditing processes with FEMA, thereby improving overall efficiency and compliance. Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) is currently working with the vendor to transfer data needed to effectively operate the software and the task force is preparing the training files to be uploaded. Once the data has been uploaded and transferred, the administrative team will receive hands-on training from the vendor to ensure a seamless transition from hard-copy training files to electronic recordkeeping and maintenance of the team's personnel files.

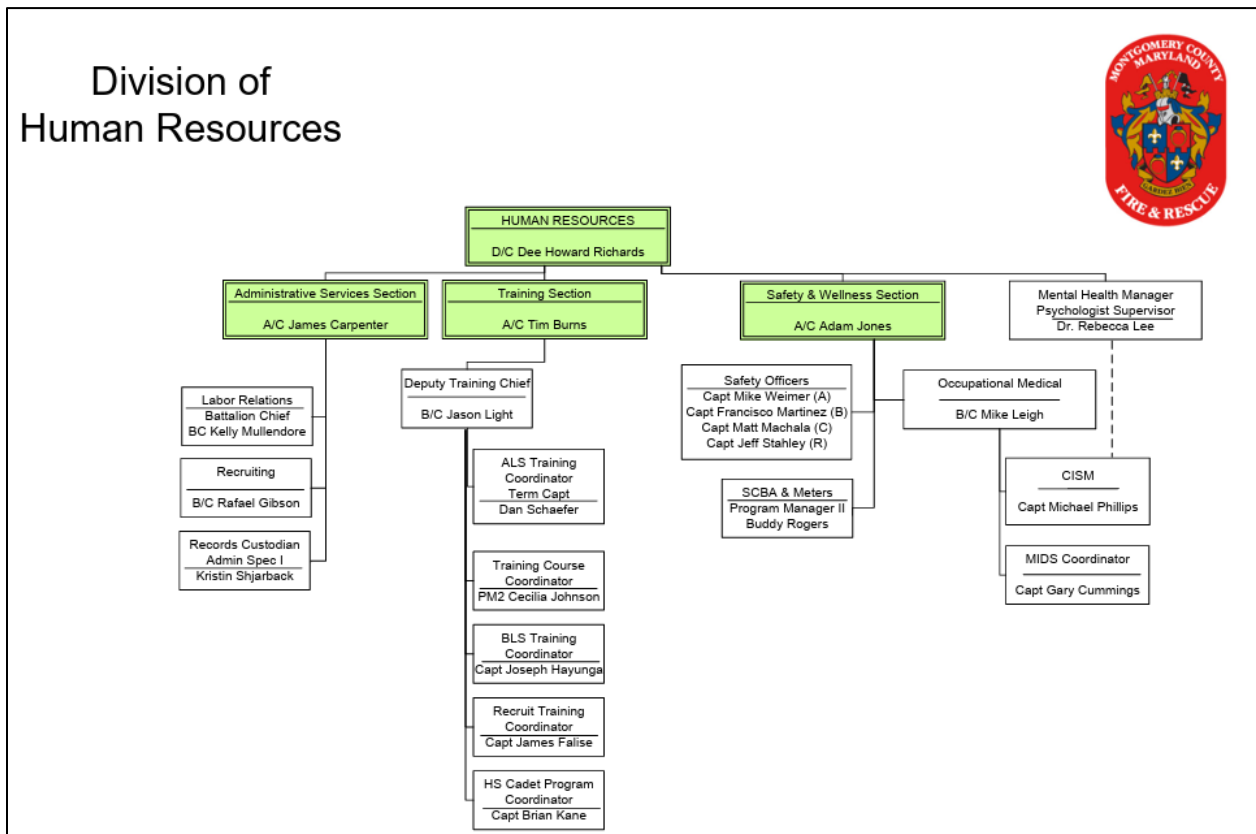
DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

7A – Human Resources

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

The Division of Human Resources includes those organizational entities responsible for recruiting, hiring, promotions, records management, and payroll administration. This appraisal is the first for this category under the Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Model (FESSAM) 11th edition, and will focus specifically on the Administrative Services Section, as the other sections complete appraisals under Categories 8 and 11. This initial appraisal will establish the section's baseline staffing, policies and procedures.



Staffing

Administrative Services includes the following units, which are managed by an Assistant Chief and are a mix of career and civilian personnel:

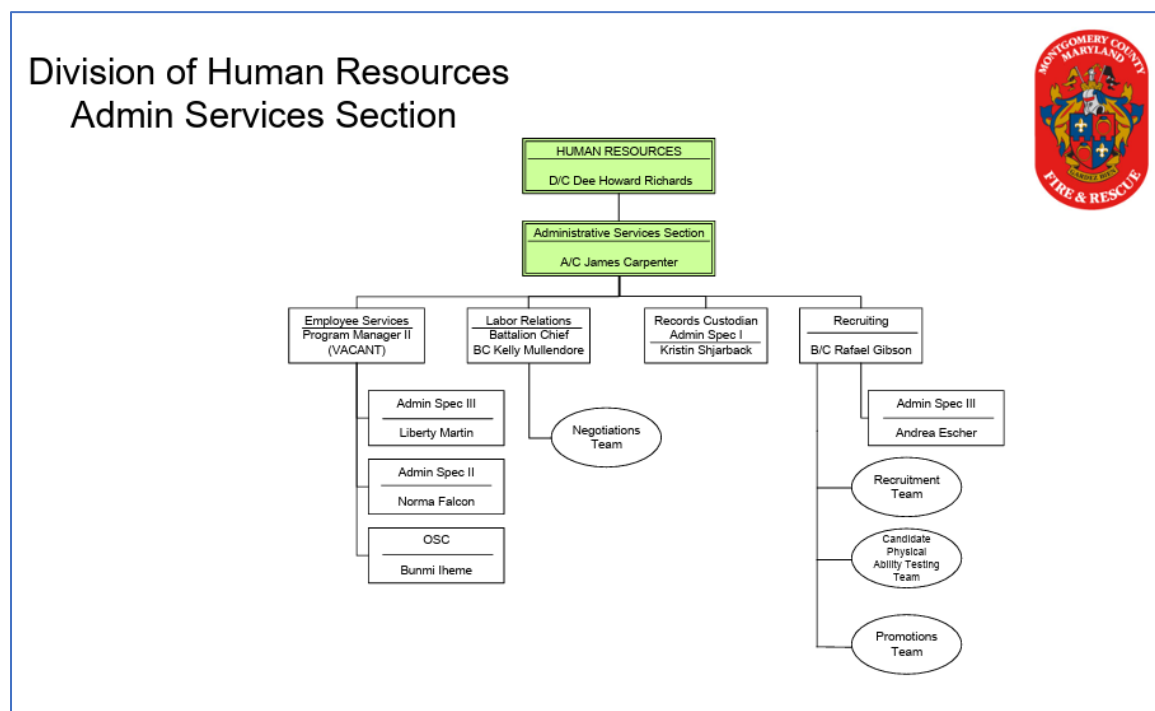
Employee Services: This unit is managed by a Program Manager II (currently vacant) and is staffed by two administrative specialists (II and III) and an office services coordinator (OSC). This team handles payroll, including out-of-class compensation processing, special

duty differential processing, and language pay; coordinates benefits through the County's OHR; manages all electronic and hard copy personnel files; and manages and administers the personnel database, Oracle, and the Promotional Candidate Application Process (PCAP) system. In the absence of the program manager, they also handle new hire onboarding, interview scheduling, and NEOgov data entry for hiring career and civilian personnel.

Labor Relations: A battalion chief handles the responsibilities of this unit, which includes coordination with the County Office of Labor Relations and the Office of the County Attorney as a department representative for labor negotiations and grievance resolution.

Records: MCFRS has one administrative specialist I serving as the records custodian. She also handles all subpoena processing for employees, and all MPIA (Maryland Public Information Act) requests.

Recruiting: Recruiting is managed by a battalion chief and supported by an administrative specialist III (new in 2024), along with auxiliary uniformed staff serving on the recruitment, promotions, and candidate physical ability mentoring teams.



MCFRS recognizes that the staffing level in this division is not ideal for a department of our size; efforts to add more professional staff have not been funded and the division actually lost a position in FY24, when a vacancy was reassigned to the County's Office of Labor Relations. MCFRS will continue to seek opportunities to increase resources in this division.

Policies

The Division of Human Resources works closely with the County's Office of Human Resources, the Office of Labor Relations, and the Office of the County Attorney to ensure personnel policies are compliant with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The [Montgomery County Personnel Regulations](#) (MCPR) provide the overarching policies, practices, and procedures, that must be utilized for personnel administration within MCFRS. Additionally, [Montgomery County Code](#) mandates that the County utilize collective bargaining with the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 1664 ("the Union"). The [collective bargaining agreement](#) (CBA) between the parties affects or controls some areas of personnel administration procedures and practices. Additionally, the MCGEO Contract for represented, non-uniformed employees and MCVFRA's DNA (Directly Negotiated Agreement) also control some areas of personnel administration procedures and practices for non-uniformed and volunteer members.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

- In mid-2024, MCFRS added a civilian to the recruitment team and detailed a firefighter to assist; the focus of this team was to increase engagement with potential candidates *within* Montgomery County. Between June and December 2024, this new team attended 94 recruiting events, compared to only 43 in the first five months of the year, and increased the total number of in-county events by 10.3% between 2023 and 2024.
- The recruiting team also held the first ever onsite application day to help potential candidates begin and become more familiar with the application process; approximately 60 people were in attendance. Overall, MCFRS received a total of 1,697 applications for career employment in 2024 (899 for RC56, 798 for RC57).
- Facilitated 59 competitive promotions throughout the department, including two assistant chiefs, three battalion chiefs, 16 captains, 17 lieutenants, and 21 master firefighters.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

In CY25, Administration Services will be working towards the following objectives:

- Development of divisional system health indicators for monthly managers' meetings.
- Development and implementation of a recruitment strategy.
- Identification of improvements or work efficiencies in the hiring process.
- Work with the Office of the Fire Chief Internal Affairs and Investigative Programs manager to streamline and reduce hurdles to applicants in the hiring process
- Recruitment and hiring process for two recruit classes.
- Development of an employee awards/recognition policy/process.
- Begin research and preparing for contract negotiations for IAFF and MCVFRA in Fall of 2025.

PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING ACADEMY CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

8C – Training and Competency

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

The Fire/Rescue Training Academy (FRTA) is continually working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our staffing model. We remain primarily staffed by a “skeleton” of full-time staff who are supplemented by long-term details and overtime. There was a leadership change at the PSTA in May of 2024 which resulted in a period of learning and goal setting, then finally substantive changes towards the end of the review period.

In July of 2024, our full-time staff was enhanced by one Fire/Rescue Captain FTE High School Cadet Program Coordinator. This position is not necessarily a new addition, but rather, it replaces a long-term detail (11 months/year) from operations. The addition of this dedicated FTE to the HS cadet program has been instrumental in the progress of the HS Cadet program that will be detailed below.

We reduced the number of FTE details from operations being used to support the HS Cadet by one instructor, in addition to the one reduced by the addition of an FTE course coordinator. Prior to the 2024-2025 academic year, we had one (1) lead instructor detailed for the firefighting program plus two (2) instructors for EMT. This academic year, we have been able to run the program successfully with one (1) instructor for each program, supplemented by overtime adjuncts on an as-needed basis. Further analysis at the end of the academic year may prove that the fiscal impact of the change was minimal; however, the reduction of details from operations is a net win due to shortages in operations experienced day-to-day as evidenced by forced holds.

Towards the end of CY2024, the “In-service training coordinator” position was retitled under the “Office of Fire/Rescue Professional Development.” The captain FTE previously charged with solely in-service training has been refocused as a program manager for this office with the goal of developing training and education aimed at the entire workforce and their development as employees over their career. Driver’s training and the Fire/Rescue Simulation lab were moved under that program, resulting in one FTE long-term detail being returned to operations from the driver-training program at the end of CY2024. The reorganization under Fire/Rescue Professional Development and reassignment of some of the workload of the driver training office to the course coordinator, the registrar and the OSC all made the return of that FTE possible.

In the academic year that began in late summer of 2024, we are only running two (2) initial paramedic training courses, one on shiftwork and one nights and weekends due to low numbers of applicants who successfully met entry requirements. This smaller number of classes will

result in fewer graduates; however, it also means that we have been able return one (1) FTE to operations who previously taught a shift work paramedic class. The current complement of initial paramedic training courses requires zero (0) long term details from operations and is done by instructors on overtime, primarily.

The PSTA also made progress in maximizing physical facilities throughout the year, including a reorganization and relocation of staff within current spaces. We sacrificed one of two conference rooms in favor of an office for the high school cadet program, converted and retooled the Assistant Chief's office to include a meeting space for smaller meetings, relocated EMS logistics, the recruit training office and ALS programs, all to promote consolidation and improved workflow. Furthermore, we sought and obtained approval from the Department of General Services to relocate the lactation room from a large classroom space to a smaller, quieter, more remote breakout room off the ALS simulation lab. Our belief is that this space is superior for a lactation room because of its isolation, privacy and smaller footprint. We are in the process of repurposing the larger classroom space that was formerly designated for this purpose.

The "Command Development Simulator" was rebranded as the "Fire/Rescue Simulation Lab" and it received a complete reworking with new technology through an ERS grant. This grant expanded our abilities in that space to run larger scale simulations with either more actors or students in four (4) fully functional radio/simulation positions. We also expanded our livestream and digital media capabilities by cross purposing the lab for live broadcasts, video podcasting and video production. This simultaneous expansion and consolidation improved efficiency and co-located the live broadcast portion of our productions with studio space for pre-recorded sessions, improving the efficiency of the digital media team and freeing up office space that is now used by ALS programs. The "firetruck cab" and the command car are now both fully functional and interchangeable depending on the scenario and target audience we are looking to develop and/or test in the space.

We expanded the capabilities of the burn-buildings with window simulators purchased through the academy's restricted donation account that is funded primarily by vehicle donations. These window simulators position the existing windows and trainees can "break glass" by popping out reusable lexan pieces and they are able to clear reusable sashes by striking them. They were first used by RC56 in training and seemed to provide great educational benefit during scenarios.

We have enjoyed an excellent relationship with the apparatus section that has allowed us to maintain our current apparatus complement while enhancing our operation through the addition of lights and sirens to the academy bus. This functional enhancement expands the cadre of personnel who are eligible to drive it. Prior to this modification, the bus required a person with a commercial driver's license (CDL) and passenger endorsement to drive; however, the bus is now considered an "emergency vehicle" and can be driven by fire department personnel who do not possess a CDL.

PSTA staff worked with the Division of Finance's Procurement Section to obtain a maintenance contract on the Fireblast system used in our burn buildings at the academy. Our understanding is that the systems must be inspected every five (5) years and that there is no current contract in place. That contract should be finalized soon and maintenance will be scheduled in synchronization with current classes to minimize disruption. There are also required fixes and upgrades that must occur once a contract is in place.

Recruit Training Staff advocated for and secured a contract for weekly cleaning and disinfection of the gym area floors as a health and safety issue. Prior to COVID, there was a contract in place to have this process completed, but that contract expired during COVID and was never reinstated. Funding for this extra cleaning process was a joint effort between MCFRS and Montgomery County Police. Our belief is that this preventative measure will prevent the occurrence of staph infections and other communicable diseases transmitted in this space where roughly 120 students are exercising and contacting the floor on a near daily basis.

The PSTA secured funding for some physical upgrades to our facilities in CY2024, as well. We were able to replace two (2) sets of water fountains in the classroom hallway that were either leaking or not being used with ADA-compliant water fountains and bottle-fillers. This upgrade, while seemingly insignificant, greatly contributes to the efficiency of classroom operations while enhancing our students' ability to meet our mandate of adequate hydration. Prior to this upgrade, students had to venture all the way from their classroom to the gym area and compete for time at the solitary set of bottle fillers for the entire academy. There was often a line of recruits waiting by the gym to fill their water bottles during class. Now, there is ample equipment adjacent to their classrooms and much less competition to use them. Overall, the \$20K outlay to make this happen has returned exceptional benefits to the PSTA.

We also obtained a significant outlay of unbudgeted funding to add an upgraded electrical connection in the apparatus bay to provide charging capability for the EMS e-van that we obtained through grant funding in a prior year. The e-van arrived without charging infrastructure and our current e-vehicle charging stations are in the lower level of the parking garage. The e-van does not fit in the lower level of the parking garage. We were originally charging the van using existing 120V electrical service; however, recharging the van after a day's use took several days. When we went to use the van for an in-field educational initiative which required daily use over six weeks, we realized that the current setup was inadequate. The EMS e-van now has adequate electrical service in the engine room at the PSTA to support more rapid charging that facilitates daily use and full recharge overnight.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

Throughout CY2024, the PSTA continued to offer core courses, including graduating two (2) recruit classes (RCs 54 and 55), three (3) initial paramedic training courses and numerous initial EMT and Firefighting training courses. Additionally, we completed a robust schedule of ancillary training including EVOC courses, courses required for promotion and development, and EMS recertification. Command officer professional development courses continued, highlighted by chief officer seminars that covered "Protecting our own" from the

National Fallen Firefighter's Foundation and another discussing lithium-ion battery fires. Additionally, we completed two (2) two-semester high school cadet courses, one each in firefighting and emergency medical services.

We have established a goal of creating a path-to-hire for high school cadets. During CY2024, we made significant progress in realizing that goal. OHR is exploring a job classification that will allow us to hire cadets into a new job classification without a non-provisional driver's license, which is one of the major stumbling blocks. We are looking to set the minimum qualifications for this new job classification at 18 years of age, high school diploma, driver's license and US citizen or legal authority to work in the US. We were able to work with MCPS to establish a testing and admission process for students applying for the 2025-2026 academic year that includes:

- Testing: Applicants will be required to take the same test from IO solutions that all other applicants take.
- The top 40 scorers will move to an interview and selection process.
- 18 will be selected for the Firefighting program (HS Juniors).
- They will progress to the full background check and be backfilled by alternates selected through the interview process.
- Candidates successfully completing the background check will progress to a full medical screening; those not successfully completing this phase will be backfilled by alternates who successfully complete the background check.
- We will ultimately seat a total of 18 candidates who have completed a large portion of the hiring process.

Candidates for this academic year will not be guaranteed employment; the process is being established and piloted this year pending OHR creation of the new job-class. This structured admission process is in lieu of the MCPS-designed lottery system previously used that weaned roughly 120 applicants down to 18 by chance alone.

The PSTA also hosted other ancillary events, to include CPAT mentoring for prospective employees, the summer-rise program for high school students interested in learning more about fire and rescue, a drone technology showcase and competition sponsored by the National Institutes of Standards and Technology, and other fire and rescue related demonstrations for both the local and national news.

Driver's training continued to be one of the most productive subdivisions of the training academy by continuing to offer initial EVOC training at all levels, being the initial testing and certification entity for new drivers and gaining a new responsibility for remediation plans coming out of the CIRC (collision incident review committee).

CY2024 saw the first offering of a "daywork friendly" nights and weekends EVOC-A class. To keep with the spirit of this offering, the PSTA gave enrollment preference to the two daywork assigned personnel who applied. Following the start of the class, we were forced by

the IAFF local to disenroll these two students because we deviated in our enrollment procedure from established past practice and these two students were not the most senior to apply. Hence, we were forced to run our contractually obligated daywork friendly class with zero (0) dayworkers. It is our intent to give the local notice of an intent to change practice for enrollment in daywork friendly EVOC classes to prioritize enrollment for daywork assigned students so that there is some benefit from having these classes.

ALS and BLS programs successfully shepherded one half and one third of our EMS clinicians (respectively) through the required continuing education necessary for recertification and/or re-licensure. ALS programs continued its innovative professional development program that seeks to synchronize the needs of EMIHS operations with educational delivery through a combination of asynchronous monthly videos, quarterly skills review and semi-annual core classes at the PSTA. The ALS workforce seems to be aligning their thought processes to this model and we have had >95% compliance with the continuous engagement professional development model. Some of those non-compliant have been individuals unable to participate due to long-term, medically induced duty status, while others have self-selected to drop their ALS credentials due to an unwillingness to participate. There are others whose non-participation remains unaddressed; however, that issue lies with EMIHS operations and the MCFRS Medical Director. The PSTA has provided ample educational opportunities for everyone. BLS programs also began a quarterly BLS drill publication required by the MCFRA directly negotiated agreement. This program has been well received by those who have used it; however, we may need to improve our advertisement and marketing to the entire workforce.

In CY2024, we were faced with a realignment of rescue courses by the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI) that was going to change course titles and affect the MCFRS Certification Standards for Training, Experience, and Credentialing Requirements executive regulation (36-08AM). We developed an innovative solution for the problem of frequent course name changes by outside accrediting bodies and difficulty in changing executive regulation that, we believe, is in keeping with the intent of the regulation. We have decided to offer a core group of MFRI courses as one MCFRS course entitled “Practical Rescue”. As course names and curricula change, the MCFRS Chief Training Officer will determine which MFRI courses encompass the MCFRS Practical Rescue course. Since the terminology “Practical Rescue” already appears in the executive regulation, there is no need to modify it. This solution allows us to be flexible as MFRI makes changes, all the while offering what our students need in terms of education. Additionally, because we are still offering MFRI courses, our students will still obtain those certifications at the state (and national, if desired) level.

Learning from outside the four walls of Montgomery County is important. We are sensitive to the construction of an echo-chamber where the organization unknowingly stagnates because we have a closed-loop of communication among our internal experts. Throughout CY2024, we offered three (3) seminars, some at a cost to the PSTA, that sought to bring in outside voices to our stream of education. The first two, previously mentioned, involved chief officer seminars from NFFF and a company that provides education on lithium-ion battery fires. The third offering was planned and acquired in CY2024, but did not happen until February of 2025.

This program was presented as a Challenges in the Streets episode aimed at preventing in-custody deaths and featured a nationally recognized speaker. This offering was opened up to our Montgomery County Police (MCP) and two MCP instructors were members of the live studio audience.

We also worked with MCP to offer basic water rescue training to a number of patrol officers. MCP noticed a vulnerability among their patrol officers in response to a sentinel event involving a missing autistic child in Gaithersburg. I was approached by the director of the MCP academy and asked to authorize some instructors to provide training in this space. Fire/Rescue instructor costs were shared by MCFRS and MCP and we believe the benefits were bi-directional for both organizations, not only in the obvious training and skills obtained by the MCP officers, but also in the bolstering the cooperation and working relationships between our personnel and MCP patrol.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

Training and education stand as the primary way to reduce vulnerability and improve the resilience of the workforce. To that end, the PSTA has been charged by the fire chief with developing an educational plan targeting the entire workforce, which we are addressing through the newly formed Office of Fire/Rescue Professional Development. Furthermore, we are examining everything that we offer at the PSTA with a critical eye to maximize value and align our offerings with the basic tenets of the master plan.

Beginning with RC57, we plan to incorporate MFRI Life Safety Educator I into the curriculum so that our recruits will leave the PSTA with a life safety credential and have the opportunity to “lead up the chain” in this space. The offering of this course to recruits will not only be a pilot for RC57 to determine its feasibility and effectiveness, but it will also serve as proof of concept for further offerings and possible requirements for the balance of incumbent employees. If we find that the curriculum offers employees valuable knowledge and skills translatable to direct improvements in community resilience, the plan will be to incentivize and offer the course to everyone. The current, fixed, 26-week length of recruit school required us to exchange this offering for other programs in the curriculum. Part of the proof of concept will be to (albeit subjectively) evaluate whether the exchange of these courses had a net increase in value in recruit education.

Further development and buildout of Fire/Rescue professional development continues to be a priority for the PSTA. Activity in this space is grounded in a new partnership between operations and PSTA leadership where the PSTA AC and BC are fully embedded in operations section chief meetings, collaboration with the OPS XO and Battalion Chief, and a new alignment of the PSTA towards responsiveness to operations needs and requests. The model for this relationship and professional development already exists at the PSTA between EMIHS Operations/Quality Management and ALS professional development. Our plan is to leverage that existing link as a model for what we do in F/R professional development.

Initiatives in this area that we seek this year include, but are not limited to:

- Driver recertification/skills demonstration program
- Additional EVOC-A classes to support TDA deployment at FS15
- Continuation of the Acquired Structure Training program, regardless of the availability of an acquired structure – beginning with “floor below nozzle” training in February and March 2025.
- Packaged drills that can be distributed to Battalion Chiefs or station officers that take the groundwork out of the ever-present “I want to train, I just don’t have any ideas” mindset. These would focus on basic yet infrequently performed evolutions able to be completed anywhere in the county.
- Open simulator days, where we agree to provide simulator operators/instructors for Battalion Chiefs and/or station officers to use the simulator for two 3-hour blocks one day a week, on a first-come first-served basis.
- Quarterly live-burn days, either at the PSTA using fire-blast or at partner facilities where we agree to, once a quarter, provide opportunities for instructors and equipment to participate in live-fire training for each shift and volunteers.
- Continued realignment, consolidation and updates to training required for promotion ensuring our efforts are maximized to offer what people need throughout promotional cycles.

As the PSTA continues to increase its offerings while reducing the need for long-term details without additional staff, it is important that we maintain the staff using the current model of overtime expenditure to support what we need to do. Many of the new initiatives we are contemplating are resource intensive from a manpower perspective and, absent FTEs, will require OT hours to enact. To this point, the OT expenditures at the PSTA have not been challenged and they are all monitored and approved by PSTA leadership on a weekly basis. Continued goodwill from executive leadership in MCFRS is crucial to providing them with what they want from the PSTA.

We continue to collaborate with the apparatus section on the buildout of the dedicated PSTA fleet available for training. In CY2025, we hope to increase our engine complement to three (3) from two (2), with a goal of obtaining a Pierce engine in the future to be able to feature one of the newer front-line engines as a training model. We are also looking to raise our functional aerial complement to two (2) rather than one (1). Replacement of the PSTA bus is in progress with at least one (1) decommissioned but newer ride on bus, and finally, replacement of the old and unreliable roll on/roll off truck with a newer vehicle seems to be making headway.

We are currently looking to expand our simulation capabilities by building an ambulance simulator in one of the 2nd floor classrooms. We have plans and cost estimates; we are seeking a funding source currently. The cost of this project exceeds the financial capabilities of our restricted donation account and its donated cars/scrap metal funding stream.

During COVID, the basis for command officer professional development shifted from an in-person focus to primarily remote learning. Our goal is to offer more high-quality command officer professional development in CY2025 with some level of mandatory in-person learning, depending on when we can launch that program.

The development of a true path-to-hire for high school cadets is progressing well. In CY2024, we established a process that aligns cadet admission with our normal hiring process. Looking forward, the students who go through this process in Spring 2025 will begin in the fall of 2025 and we plan to offer them CPAT mentoring in the Summer of 2026. If we can get the necessary job class established, we will be executing the selection process in the Spring of 2026 with the intention of hiring the students when they graduate in June of 2028, putting them through an abbreviated recruit training program that capitalizes on the courses and certifications they have already obtained through the cadet program.

Building full-time staff to save long-term details from operations continues to be a goal. In CY2024, we had some success with the addition of one (1) FTE and the realignment of some other responsibilities. Creation of new budgeted positions while maintaining 100% employment in our civilian ranks is key to success in that effort. We remain hopeful that we will be successful in that goal for CY2025, at least incrementally.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

9B - Communications

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

The Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) maintains control of the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC). MCPD assumed all 911 call taking responsibility in February 2020 and has been working towards consolidation of the center, to relieve MCFRS of dispatching responsibilities. MCFRS maintains fire dispatch responsibilities, and full consolidation is not expected to occur in the next couple of years, due to recruitment and retention challenges faced by MCPD.

The MCFRS Emergency Communications Section is led by a Fire and Rescue Assistant Chief, with a direct support staff of three (3) personnel, one (1) Fire and Rescue Captain, overseeing Operations and two (2) Fire and Rescue Lieutenants, serving in professional standards, Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement, and Training positions. A dedicated CAD System manager is also employed by MCFRS to maintain the Fire & Rescue portion of the CAD system. Thirty-nine (39) personnel are currently assigned to the center with a Daily Minimum Staffing set at eight (8) personnel. Each uniformed FRS Dispatcher and Supervisor is trained on the P25 radio system, CAD, and VESTA phone system.

The MCPD has been training incumbent employees in Fire Dispatch since 2021. In 2024, they held four (4) Fire Dispatch classes, training a total of 24 personnel. During CY2024, fourteen (14) personnel were credentialed as Fire Dispatchers. In July 2024, MCFRS held the second MCPD FRS Dispatch Supervisor class with four (4) personnel. The total number of MCPD personnel to complete the initial Fire Rescue Supervisor is eight (8). All eight (8) are currently in the OJT portion of their training; none have completed the process and become credentialed Fire Rescue Dispatch Supervisors yet.

MCFRS did not conduct a Radio/Dispatchers/Operator training in CY2024; no “new” F/R dispatchers were certified.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

The MCPD continues to have a high number of vacancies among the Public Safety Emergency Communications Specialists (PSECS), despite hiring 30 people in 2024. They have only filled 134 of the originally funded (pre-FY25) 198 positions (now 171). This leaves 51 positions vacant (24 after FY25).

The average answer time in 2024 was 14.13 seconds (4.13 seconds – 41% increase from 2023), with a 90th percentile answer time of 42.10 seconds.

In 2024, the MCFRS personnel dispatched to 142,238 incidents, a 4.4% increase over 2023.

Phone to Dispatch Times 2018 - 2024							
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
ALS2	0:03:18	0:03:26	0:03:31	0:03:35	0:03:35	0:03:36	0:03:45
FFA	0:04:01	0:04:06	0:03:59	0:03:46	0:03:26	0:03:49	0:03:35

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

MCFRS and MCPD will continue to move forward with consolidation, despite the current hiring challenges of civilian Communications Specialists faced by MCPD.

- a. MCFRS personnel are currently precepting twenty-two (22) MCPD civilian fire rescue Dispatchers.
- b. MCFRS personnel are currently precepting eight (8) civilian supervisors who are being trained as FRS dispatch supervisors.

MCFRS will run two (2) MCFRS uniform Fire Radio/Dispatch classes, one (1) in January and one (1) in September 2025. The FRS uniform dispatcher classes will be used to fill vacancies created by transfers and promotions that occur before the consolidation

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

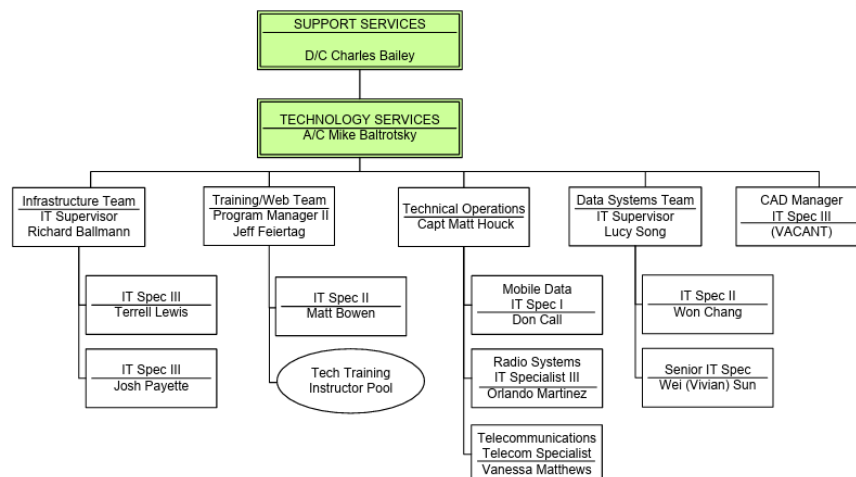
9D – Information Technology

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

FRS technology (FRSIT) is a multi-faceted program that encompasses multiple technologies, including land mobile radio (LMR), computer aided dispatch CAD), geographical information services (GIS), networking, enterprise computing (EC), and records management systems (RMS). These programs exist in various organizational domains and are inherently cross-functional. For example, the FRS GIS component is ultimately supervised by the Planning and Accreditation Manager, though its primary impact is on CAD data reliability. In a similar manner, CAD operation is a direct function of the emergency communication centers under the Division of Operations; however, the expertise in the backend of CAD lies in the Division of Support Services. A final example is while LMR is used almost exclusively by the Division of Operations, it's maintenance and configuration is managed exclusively by the FRSIT Section. FRSIT also maintains a series of application servers, in support of a variety of functions, to include RMS, injury, insurance reporting, LMR and cell-based radio interfaces.

The FRSIT Section has remained essentially unchanged over the past few years. While the Section does generate overtime spending, much of that spending was reduced over previous fiscal years by hiring civilian staff to manage functions such as mobile data computing and telephony.

Division of Support Services Technology Section



External influences weigh heavily on section resources. Most of the systems that FRSIT maintains are joint systems. For example, the LMR component involves a range of stakeholders, including the police department, the County Department of Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS), emergency management, and public transit. This dense matrix of interdependency requires the ability to quickly notice the potential impact of changes, understand the dialectically interlocking nature of our relationship with partners, maintain effective relationships, and ultimately, when necessary, adapt FRS processes in ways that maximize value across the spectrum of stakeholders.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

The measurement of effort in the IT section is primarily done through evaluation of work completed via the Technology Service Request (TSR) System. This system is mandated by Fire Chief General Order 21-2 and provides the basis for IT management in the MCFRS. The metrics below represent the result of that effort and other ancillary efforts within the Technology Section.

Unit	Measure	Performance
Web/TTL		
	% uptime for Web and Tech Training systems	100%
	# of alerts and notifications sent to the department, within 24 hours of notification of issue or problem.	66
	# of TechTraining classes offered to department	70
	# of new forms created for the department	75
	% of customer satisfaction based on TSR CS results.	96%
Enterprise		
	# of Computer deployments per quarter	52
	# of course completions by employee/year	3.66
	% of customer satisfaction based on TSR CS results.	91%
Data/RMS Team		
	# of data requests developed by the team	129
	# of projects developed by the team	8
	% of TSR's completed, within 14 days of receipt (policy time reference)	98%
	% of report delivery within 2 weeks (policy definition) delivery of the reports	95%
	# of data systems upgraded	9
TechOps		
	% of FC700 AND FC1 systems uptime	97.5%
	# of systems deployed/maintained within the performance period	4721
	# of regional and national meetings/collaborations	262

	# of LMR subscribers touched, issued, reprogrammed and maintained within the performance period	5779
	% of uptime for all Fire Station Alerting systems and components	91%
Telecommunications		
	% of uptime for station PBX systems	100%
	# of cellular devices maintained and issued	1265
	# of telecommunications devices (tablets, aircards etc.) maintained and issued.	Tablets: 646 Modems: 134 MiFi: 8 Hotspots: 8 Routers: 10
	% of CAD and ancillary systems maintained by the department	100%
	# of new response ID's created, tested and accepted by ECC operations	2
	% of uptime for station CAD computers	100%

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

- In accordance with TEBS, replace Windows 10 with Windows 11. This will require the touching of over 500 endpoints to include ALL personnel computers, station computers, mobile data computers and the like. This will be a major effort for all of technology lasting until at least the end of the year.
- Maintain the rolling (replacement) program of technology upgrades. The MCFRS IT section, in coordination with TEBS, is undertaking a multi-year effort to replace all computing endpoints which have reached the end of life or service. This initiative began in CY22 and will continue through CY26. To date, approximately 85% of the endpoints have been replaced. This upgrade includes new devices in a mobile computing environment, replacing all seat (non-shared) desktops with laptop devices.
- Maintain a 100% inventory accountability of all Enterprise systems in the department. MCFRS IT has struggled with the maintenance of an accurate inventory due to the lack of centralized IT purchasing and management in the department. With the implementation of general order 21-2, the department centralized these efforts, therefore demanding a stronger inventory management practice. Since then, the IT section has been working to migrate the disparate systems into a centralized asset management system and has made significant progress. Over the next year, the MCFRS IT section will migrate into another AMS, which will be the central management system for all MCFRS assets. This will further strengthen the organization and its accountability of all assets including IT systems.
- Implement a significant data infrastructure improvement. The MCFRS relies on significant server infrastructure to support its records management, personnel and scheduling systems. These systems require significant upkeep and constant attention, replacement and

maintenance. In 2024, the department finished a multi-year server upgrade to modernize the legacy servers and move all records systems to the new infrastructure. Moving forward, the department will focus on moving these systems to cloud-based infrastructure, in coordination with all other county departments in the same overall effort. This will be a multi-year effort, moving systems slowly to ensure uptime and overall compatibility.

- Evaluate the current scheduling/staffing product (Telestaff), and work with other county agencies in an effort to transition to whole-county based product while taking into account policies and agreements that require specialized rules and staffing requirements with the full intention to transition to new product when Fire and Rescue needs have been met.
- Establish a data dictionary of all data systems to provide to MCFRS personnel conducting data analysis. The MCFRS has a significant subset of data throughout its records management systems. This effort will document the data types, reasoning and normalization of the same in an IT data dictionary. This will allow data analysts to understand what the specific data elements mean and why they are captured for the department.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

9E – Public Information

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

The MCFRS Public Information Office is located within the Office of the Fire Chief. The PIO ensures transparency, trust, and engagement with the public and media. The PIO facilitates timely and accurate communication during emergencies, public safety campaigns, and routine operations to enhance public awareness and safety.

MCFRS has one dedicated PIO (Manager 3), supplemented by a team of auxiliary (uniformed battalion and assistant chiefs) PIOs trained in crisis communications, media relations, and social media management. All frequently participate in ongoing professional development in crisis communications, digital media strategy, and community engagement. Much of the success of the PIO can be attributed to the relationships and partnerships established by the manager over the years, including collaborations with the County's Public Information Office, local media outlets, community organizations, and other government agencies, which helps to amplify our messaging (see exhibits 1 and 2).

The PIO relies on a host of modern communication tools, including social media platforms (Twitter and Nextdoor are used by the department), content management systems, and emergency notification systems, such as Alert Montgomery.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

The PIO's impact was widespread, internally and externally. The PIO worked to increase public awareness of wellness, fire safety, emergency preparedness, and department initiatives, resulting in more informed and more resilient residents who know how to respond during emergencies.

The PIO ensured coverage of emergency incidents relayed information to residents and media outlets quickly (see exhibits 3 and 4).

Enhanced media coverage highlighted the department's services, as well as successes and challenges. This increased trust and positive perception of the department within the community and strengthened those relationships (see exhibit 5).

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

In 2025, the PIO will be focused on the following objectives:

- 1) Strengthen emergency communications. Ensure the public receives real-time, accurate information during emergencies, through social media, news briefings, and emergency alerts.

- 2) Enhance public education campaigns.
 - a. Expand community outreach programs, including wellness initiatives, fire prevention month, smoke alarm and After the Fire campaigns, and CPR & Stop-the-Bleed training.
 - b. Develop strategic & targeted messaging for vulnerable populations, such as seniors, young children, people with different abilities and non-English-speaking communities.
- 3) Increase community engagement.
 - a. Host regular open houses, participate in town halls, volunteer group and association meetings and business, community, and governmental safety workshops.
 - b. Launch 'Meet Your Local Firefighter' campaigns & organize local firefighter visits to schools and other community activities to humanize the department and foster connections with residents.
- 4) Leverage digital media
 - a. Create engaging, multimedia content for social media platforms to reach diverse audiences.
 - b. Develop a monthly video newsletter to share department updates, safety tips, and community highlights.
- 5) Develop a strategic communications plan. Formalize the department's approach to conveying information and engaging with stakeholders.
- 6) Measure and evaluate effectiveness.
 - a. Use analytic tools to track social media reach and engagement.
 - b. Conduct surveys to gauge public perception of PIO messaging.

Exhibits

- 1) [Partnering with DPS to teach hands-only CPR, March 2024](#)
- 2) [MedStar & Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority CPR/AED training, June 2024](#)
- 3) [Piney Meetinghouse Road Tank Fire, March 2024](#)
- 4) [Clarksburg Fire, August 2024](#)
- 5) [Coverage of MCFRS Awards Ceremony](#)

SAFETY & WELLNESS – FIRE & RESCUE OCCUPATIONAL MEDICAL SERVICES CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

11A – Health and Safety

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

The primary mission of the Fire and Rescue Occupational Medical Services (FROMS) is to provide occupational health and wellness screening (including cancers) for the active members of MCFRS, based on the NFPA 1582 medical standards.

FROMS is staffed with a battalion chief who manages the daily operations, including liaison functions, with multiple agencies and contractors; functions as the county-wide infectious disease officer; and ensures the scheduling of physicals to meet the twelve-month requirement of annual physicals for 1,200 uniformed personnel. A captain is assigned to oversee the clinic, manage the Medically Influenced Duty Status Program (MIDS), and coordinate the contracted medical staff and Workman's Compensation Provider Company MCSIP and CorVel. One firefighter is assigned to the section on a minimal-overtime basis to manage service and required repairs of physical fitness equipment.

A new captain position is also now staffed at FROMS and serves as the Peer Support team leader. This position works with the Mental Health staff psychologists and LCSW professional civilian staff to ensure the mental wellbeing of our members. This captain is also trained and serves as a back-up to the MIDS captain with managing the clinic day-to-day.

The Concentra Athletic Trainer (PhD) has had a positive impact on personnel health and injury prevention, with considerable time and interaction with operations personnel. On-duty station visits assist personnel with injury complaints to develop targeted therapy plans for the members to prevent worse aggravating injuries. The trainer is also doing station and shift rounds, working with the cadets, recruit classes, and assisting career and volunteer members with developing health and fitness plans.

Moving forward, we hope to aggressively pursue cancer prevention with continuous education and practical action in coordination with the safety section.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

In 2024, FROMS provided 576 appointments for NFPA physical appointments of MCFRS career personnel, 60 support staff, and 610 appointments for follow-up on injuries and return to work clearances. The section also completed approximately 1,100 volunteer appointments and additional clearances for the volunteer staff.

Cancer screening for department personnel continued, assisted by a provision in the IAFF Collective Bargaining Agreement providing blood and ultrasound cancer screenings for career members reimbursement. This program is managed by IAFF Local 1664, with the FROMS Battalion Chief administering reimbursement. In calendar year 2024, we identified 13 new cases of firefighters with cancers under the Firefighter's Presumptive Cancers list in Maryland State Law. There are already eight identified in 2025.

With the addition of the CISM Coordinator, an influx of in-house and field responses has occurred, including support at a Line-of Duty incident. Most notably, the addition of "brain injury" to the injury class for Corvel has significantly eased the strain of bringing personnel to treatment. The examinations done at FROMS have uncovered at least 12 significant outcomes/cases for more advanced medical care. Record keeping and analysis was done of the membership to anticipate the increase in the EST requirement, which was significantly better than expected.

In the past year, FROMS and Concentra have successfully solidified the processes and expectations for the role of Athletic Trainer. In 2024, Dr. Tanler (PhD) completed 96 station visits, including an observation experience with the swiftwater rescue team to determine the cause of frequent injuries at trainings. She constructed and led an injury prevention exercise and strengthening program and delivered educational presentations to RC54 and RC55, neither of which lost any recruits to injury over the course of the 28-week academy. She continued developing monthly health and wellness newsletters that are shared to all fire rescue personnel and participated in delivery of a "Challenges in the Streets" episode on "The Role of an ATC with Fire Rescue." Dr. Tanler also made an educational presentation on injury prevention for internal, national paramedic continuing education created by the department, and provided ATC services to 81 fire rescue personnel. Over 400 functional movement screen (FMS) tests for field personnel were completed, and various educational posters on joint mobility and sleep health were created and posted in stations across the department. Dr. Tanler has begun the next phase for creating an in-house health and wellness educational workshop for the entire department with hopeful fruition and roll out in late Spring 2025.

The MCFRS also spent more than \$46,000 to replace and maintain exercise equipment at all our sites.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

FROMS continues to have a backlog in physicals and ideally would like to add funding for two Concentra medical staff (Medical Assistants) to create increased appointment capacity, allowing for more daily examinations to cut the daily backlogs in recruit and incumbent physicals, as well as MIDS-related PRN visits. This was not funded in FY24 or FY25 and is unlikely to be funded in FY26 due to budgetary constraints at the County level, so strain on the system will continue.

The current workload of the single FROMS Captain includes managing a daily average of eighty MIDS cases (equivalent to a full Operations Battalion). Utilizing the newly added CISM Captain has assisted with the daily workload of the FROMS Captain; however, this has had an impact on the ability for the CISM Captain to focus on increasingly identified mental-behavioral health job tasks. With a new scheduling system, and the need for redundancy and assistance in creating a manageable workload, we anticipate requesting additional support staff (lieutenant or captain). Our goal with increased staffing is to allow for all 1,200 career and 1,000 volunteers to receive an NFPA physical every 12-14 months.

We have advocated for an FCGO or contract change through the Montgomery County Office of Human Resources to update our medical standards to the 2022 NFPA 1582 standards from our current 2013 standard. MCFRS is alone in the COG region in still using this older standard. The implementation of the current 2022 NFPA physical fitness standard will need to be reviewed (pending an even newer version). Routine physicals should also implement the standard of care to include brief mental health screening by the attending physician, independent of FROMS staff.

The national standards for “EMS Only” (volunteer) personnel have been reviewed to remove the fit-test requirements; however, FROMS is still held to enforcing SCBA fit testing until existing Executive Regulations can be updated in 2025 with the County Council. Another initiative being investigated is the possible use of a department therapy service dog to assist in both acute CISM and ongoing stress circumstances.

MCFRS has ironed out our processes for bloodborne and respiratory exposures, and in 2025 we intend to meet with our local medical facilities to develop a standardized reporting method for reporting and treating members who are suspected of being exposed.

FROMS is committed to the health and safety of all fire and rescue personnel in Montgomery County, beginning with illness and injury prevention in the field where the personnel are, and at the FROMS facility where physician-level care is provided for injuries and full-time health screening to augment that of a primary care provider, specific to the firefighter/EMS role. In doing so, we have already made a significant contribution toward mental and behavioral health, and early identification and intervention of illness, allowing personnel to return to work or retire in as healthy a state as possible. We will continue to monitor research and best practices for fire rescue to consistently offer and provide the best possible care and advocacy for MCFRS personnel.

MENTAL WELLNESS PROGRAM CY2024

1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

11A – Health and Safety

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

The Mental Wellness Program (MWP) consists of three fulltime employees (Staff Psychologist, Staff Therapist, Administrative Aide) and one part-time employee (Staff Therapist). In early 2024, the MWP added the full-time position of Psychologist Supervisor, which created an opening for the Staff Psychologist position. The MWP anticipates the Staff Psychologist position to be filled in FY25, which will bring the MWP complement to four full-time employees and one part-time employee.

The programming in 2024 remained consistent in offering individual, family, and couples therapy for FRS staff, volunteers, and their family members, and assistance in connecting with clinicians/providers outside of FRS. The MWP attempted to start group support sessions in 2024 but was unsuccessful.

The department added nine new PS-CISM team members in 2024, which brought the total to 49 members. The team held hybrid quarterly meetings and maintained a bi-monthly newsletter that discussed various mental wellness topics or other mental health issues related to first responders.

The PS-CISM team also created sub-teams with the intent of targeting outreach efforts for recruits, rookies, members facing retirement, and those who are injured/light duty/off duty, as well as department-wide education on available county services. Furthermore, the PS-CISM team created an option for the department to send a text to the team in addition to calling the hotline or emailing the team. The hotline functioning also improved after switching to a Google based platform to facilitate the calls cycling through each member of the PS-CISM leadership.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

In 2024, the MWP had 151 new service requests for individuals, couples, or family counseling. The additional staff added in mid-2023 helped the team increase the number of contacts. There were also 37 requests for assistance in connecting with external clinicians including therapists, primary care physicians, psychiatric providers, neurologists, and other medical providers. The team also facilitated training for the recruit classes and COLA class and will continue to facilitate training in 2025.

The PS-CISM team provided contact for over 202 different incidents in 2024. This number is an underestimate of the services offered by the PS-CISM team, as there may be some instances that were missed in documentation or from less formal interventions. The proactive approach appears to be making a positive impact on the reception of PS-CISM overall in the department.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

The MWP intends to make new attempts at gaining interest/developing comfortability in the department to participate in group support sessions at the mental wellness suite in 2025.

The MWP will also be considering a request for an additional full-time psychologist to assist with new service requests and to facilitate trainings for the department on various mental wellness issues.

And lastly, the MWP is in the process of switching to a third-party telehealth and medical records platform.

SAFETY & WELLNESS SECTION CY2024

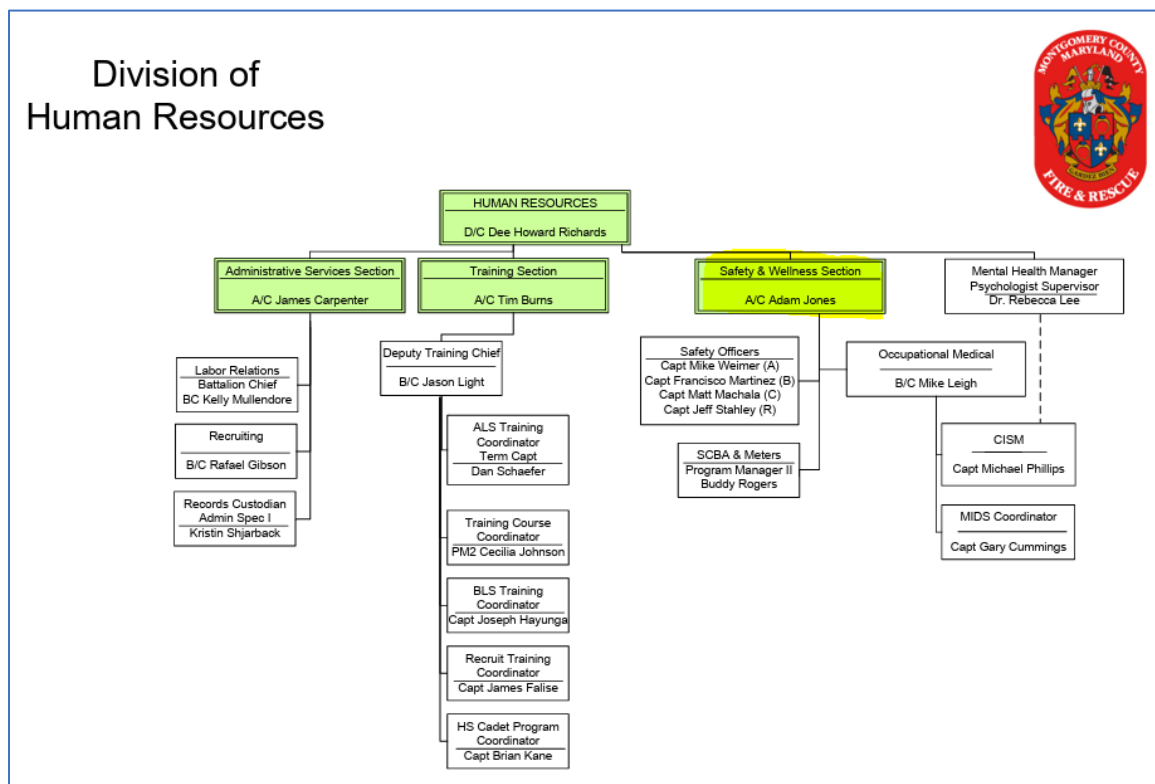
1. CRITERION & PROGRAM AREA

11A – Health and Safety

2. PROGRAM AREA RESOURCES & INPUTS

The responsibility for operational safety lies within the Safety Section. Through early 2025, Safety was arranged organizationally within the Division of Support Services and was also responsible for oversight of supply and logistics. Safety is now aligned with Wellness and is part of the Division of Human Resources. The SCBA and Meters unit also moved and continues to report to the Assistant Chief of Safety.

FROMS and Mental Health complete separate appraisals for their respective programs.



The mission of the Safety Office is to focus on operational risk management and reduce risk to the lowest achievable level by focusing on compliance with all MCFRS policies and procedures. Safety officers must be knowledgeable about the full range of operational and administrative policies.

Safety700 is a daily required staffing position and is staffed 24 hours per day. The Safety Office continues to be staffed by three shift work captains (24/48 schedule), and there are several

backup safety officers (captain or above) who contribute to backfill. Special Operations (e.g., technical rescue and hazmat teams) maintain specialized incident safety officers specifically for their operations.

There were no operational or policy changes in 2024.

3. PROGRAM AREA OUTPUT, OUTCOMES, & IMPACT

There were 448 injuries sustained by personnel in 2024. Nearly 30% occurred during the course of delivering emergency medical services (not lifting/moving a patient, which accounted for only 41 injuries). Sprains/strains were the most common type of injury (32.6%).

There were 159 total collisions in CY2024; 119 were preventable. The tables below show a summary of collisions by shift, battalion, and breed.

Shift	Collisions
A	32
B	39
C	45
Daywork	17
Volunteers	26

Battalion	Collisions
B1	37
B2	20
B3	40
B4	34
B5	14
Other	14

Breed	Collisions
Transports	57
Engines	45
Aerials	21
TDAs	11
Squads	7
Support	16

The Safety Office (DC700A and SA700A) conducted a training/meeting with every station discussing collisions. During these sessions, we presented data, root causes and expectations moving forward. A-Shift also sends a safety message via the DOCLOG application at least once per quarter, and a safety message to all A-Shift Battalion Chiefs as trends or situational awareness is needed. Furthermore, the CIRC process has evolved to provide recommendations with remedial training to improve driving.

Additionally:

- The Safety Office also developed and implemented a “Risk Assessment Worksheet,” with the instruction to complete the worksheet for any incident that required a task force or greater response, special operation incidents, and any call a safety officer chooses. This worksheet is to be attached to the safety officer daily report.
- The Safety Office developed and implemented a “Safety Office Investigative Reporting Guide” to create a standard reporting/investigation process across all shifts.
- Safety collaborated with Battalion Chiefs to develop battalion-based training. This resulted in increased visibility for the safety officer, improved relationships within the battalions, increased efficiency in job tasks, and managed expectations.
- Safety also collaborated with BC703 to develop and implement a training program with MCPD, Gaithersburg City, and Rockville City police departments. This increased visibility for the safety officer, fostered relationships with police departments that FRS runs with, increases efficiency in job tasks, and manages expectations.

- In July 2024, the safety officers began completing a daily safety activity report on SharePoint to record the number of incident responses, safety violations, RMAPS, collisions, and injuries. This process was developed to help measure system health: increases in any particular area over the baseline (to be developed over time) would require further review by management and intervention and/or corrective action implemented as needed.
- Safety continues to monitor new gear products as they become available, being careful to balance PFAS reduction with reports of accelerated degradation of the outer shell. Also working on alternatives to turnout gear for lower acuity incidents.
- The joint Health & Safety Committee evaluated and approved floor below nozzles and smoke curtains and began evaluation of particulate filtering hoods.
- 2139 SCBA flow tests were completed; overall, 4968 work orders were fulfilled.
- There were more than 200 compressor-related station visits last year, including 27 compressors that had preventive maintenance at least once, and approximately 55 service calls for repairs.

4. INITIATIVES & OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the Safety Office in 2025 include the following:

1. Implement tracking of PPE compliance on the fire ground in year one, with a sub-objective of implementing a tracking system to monitor the compliance. [\[link\]](#)
2. Increase compliance in safety officer daily reporting with a 90% compliance by the end of the year.
3. Improve RMAP data input access within six months:
 - a. FSID
 - b. Apparatus identifiers
4. Initiate a Volunteer Safety Officer program

The primary vulnerability that next year's objectives aim to reduce is the exposure to unnecessary employee harm. This is evident in the effort to improve compliance with existing policies. We do not anticipate challenges in staffing, apparatus, policies or programs in the Safety Section. We are not trying to do anything different. The focus this year is improving compliance with existing rules.

Anticipated challenges to the department from a safety perspective include:

- Cost of gear replacement
- Lack of a safety culture (i.e., inconsistencies across shifts)