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CONCORD FIRE DEPARTMENT 2025 Annual Report

Prepared for the Public Safety Board
by John A. Chisholm, Fire Chief

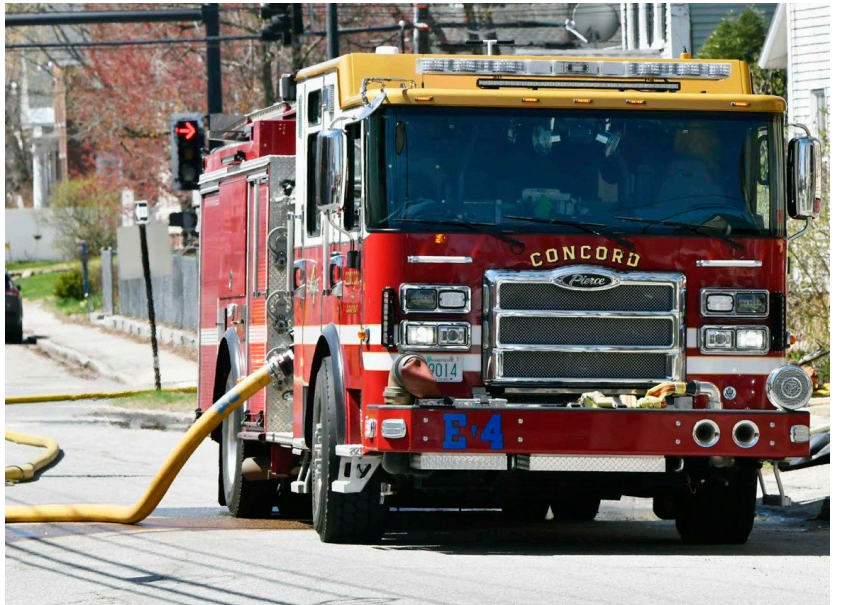
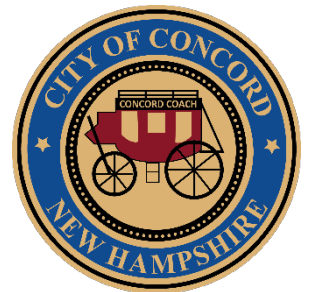


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Abstract

This report is presented to the Public Safety Board to familiarize its members with an overview of the Concord Fire Department's organizational structure, responsibilities, and operations. It also presents trends of key statistics over the past several years and highlights recent accomplishments as well as challenges currently faced by the Department.

For the majority of calendar year 2025, the Fire Department was in a staffing crisis due to recruitment and retention issues. After successfully negotiating new contracts with the unions and implementing a new EMS delivery strategy, the Department signed eight (8) conditional offers at the very end of 2025. This filled all the suppression vacancies at that time, and has alleviated the majority of the recruitment issues. The Department still experiences challenges attracting the desired number of Firefighter/Paramedics. In the upcoming year, the Department will focus on retention efforts.

Fire Administration makes the following recommendations:

1. Reclassification of the Fiscal Supervisor position to a non-contractual position that will function as the Chief Financial Officer for the Department. This will allow a reconfiguration of Headquarters staff to better support the needed operations and workflows and will positively impact employee retention throughout the organization through an increased commitment to training.
2. Begin the phased reinstatement of Engine 1 to better support current emergency call volume as well as plan for the increased calls due to the natural year-over-year increases and the planned surge in residential units within the City of Concord.
3. Addition of one (1) Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to the Communications Center in order to keep pace with increased workload, establish succession planning, and improve continuity of operations.
4. Purchase a second Engine in FY27 so it will arrive in time for the reimplementation of Engine 1 and support the critically aging fleet.
5. Ensure that replacement of the four fire stations stays on the recommended timeline.

Overview of Concord Fire Department

The Concord Fire Department employs 104 members throughout several divisions. A Headquarters Complex consisting of four buildings (Fire Administration, Fire Prevention, Communications, and Cold Storage) is located next door to the Central Fire Station. A training facility which consists of a small classroom building and a custom burn structure fabricated out of several Conex storage containers is located on Old Turnpike Road.

The City of Concord is divided into four (4) fire districts (see Figure 1 and Figure 2, page 2), each containing one fire station. Each Station has a set number of staffed apparatus assigned to it. Under current, normal operating conditions, in-service apparatus and daily staffing levels do not fluctuate. Each time a member is out sick or on annual leave, that position is backfilled using overtime. This model, termed "person-for-person", allows the City to appreciate the same level of service from the Fire Department each day.

Table 1 - Stations and Assigned Staffed Apparatus

| Station | Staffed Apparatus |
|--------------|--|
| 1 (Central) | Tower 1 (3 members); Ambulance 1 (2 members); Battalion Chief (1 member) |
| 4 (Broadway) | Engine 4 (3 members); Ambulance 4 (2 members) |
| 5 (Manor) | Engine 5 (3 members); Ambulance 5 (2 members) |
| 7 (Heights) | Engine 7 (3 members); Ambulance 7 (2 members) |

Figure 1 - Fire Station and Fire District Locations

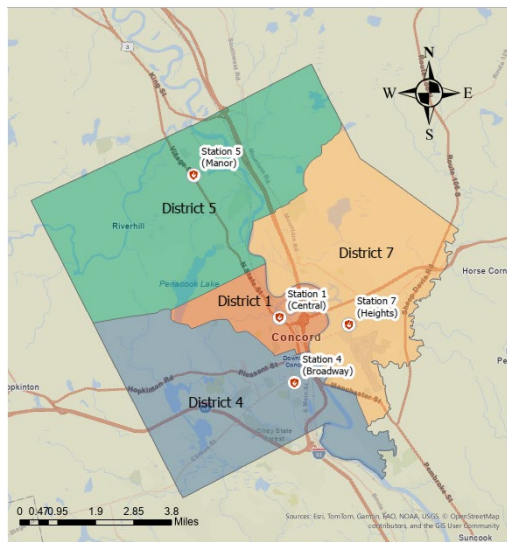
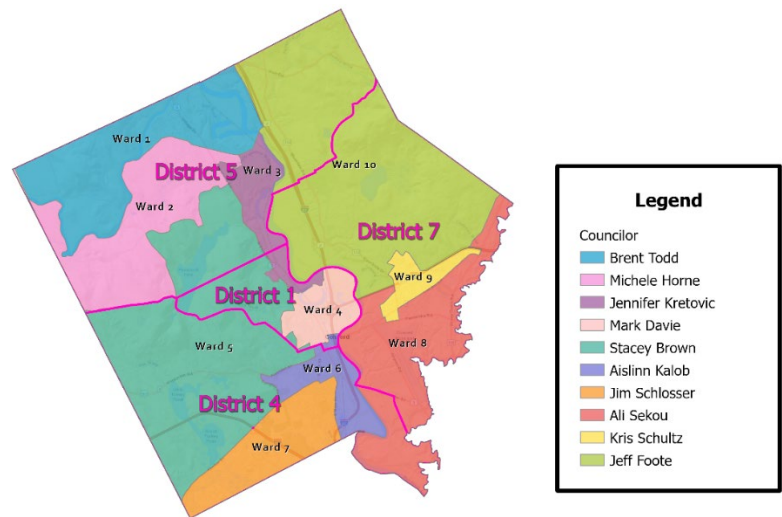


Figure 2 - Voting Wards vs Fire Districts

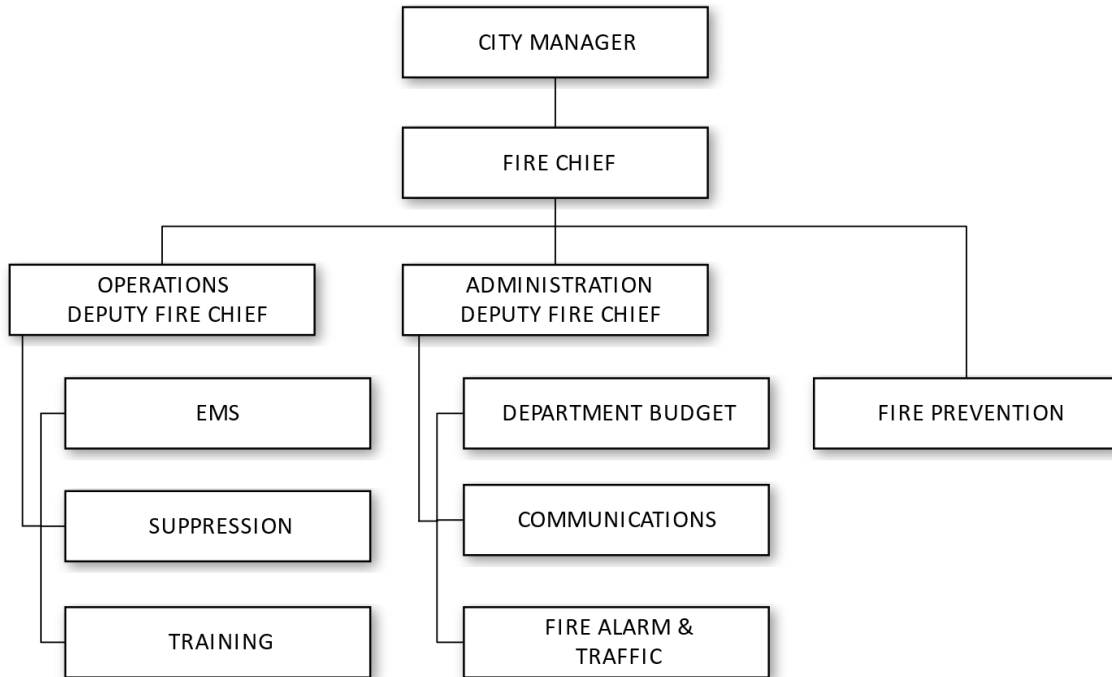


Fire Administration

Members within Fire Administration oversee program areas and are not assigned to first response apparatus. However, it is common for one or more members from Fire Administration to respond to larger emergencies dependent on the acuity or nature of the incident.

As shown in Figure 3, page 3, Fire Chief John A. Chisholm serves as the CEO of the Fire Department and reports directly to the City Manager. The Fire Chief directly supervises three positions: the Deputy Chief of Administration, the Deputy Chief of Operations, and the Fire Marshal. The Deputy Chief of Administration serves as the CFO of the Department and is responsible for oversight of the operational and capital budgets. It oversees the Communications Center, the Fire Alarm & Traffic Division, as well as the Administrative Specialist II and Fiscal Supervisor positions. The Deputy Chief of Operations serves as the COO for the Department and oversees the EMS Division (an EMS Captain and Lieutenant), the Training Division (one Training Captain), as well as the Suppression Division comprising four Battalion Chiefs who supervise the remaining eighty (80) members that staff the apparatus and respond to emergency incidents.

Figure 3 - Fire Department Organization Chart



Chief Chisholm also serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Concord and is responsible for the upkeep of the City’s Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP), Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), and Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). In this role, he is also responsible for the maintenance and operations of the City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and is the primary liaison with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Public Assistance disaster funding.

Fire Prevention Bureau

The Fire Marshal serves as the head of the Fire Prevention Bureau and supervises an Assistant Fire Marshal. Together they are responsible for all of the fire and life safety inspections, permitting, fire investigations, plans reviews, and the Fire Department’s public education and outreach within the community. An additional Assistant Fire Marshal has been approved in the FY26 budget, and is expected to be in place in February 2026. The need for this additional FTE was cited in the “Current Challenges & Needs” section of the 2024 Annual Report for the Public Safety Board. This addition is greatly needed in the Fire Prevention Bureau, and in the upcoming year, will hopefully allow the reintroduction of some community outreach programs that were decommissioned due to lack of resources.

Inspections & Permits

The Fire Department performs various types of inspections throughout the community to ensure that the State Fire Code, Life Safety Code, and referenced standards are being followed. Each of the 32 school buildings, 3 salvage yards, 12 rooming houses, and 14 hotels must undergo a full life safety inspection annually. All 172 locations within the City that qualify as places of assembly (e.g. restaurants, bars, function halls, public meeting spaces, etc.) must be inspected every 6 months. The Fire Prevention Bureau must also inspect all underground storage tank installations and removals, above and

underground liquid propane (LP) tank installations, foster homes, residential placements, sober living houses, hot work projects, and outside tents greater than 400 ft² installed on commercial property. All new or modified fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, clean agent systems, and commercial cooking ventilation and suppression systems are required to be inspected and undergo acceptance testing by the Fire Prevention Bureau as well. All Life Safety and Fire Code complaints are processed through the Fire Prevention Bureau and must be investigated and resolved.

Fire Investigations

The Fire Department, per NH RSA 154:7a, has the legal obligation to investigate the cause and origin of every fire that occurs within the City. Normally, this responsibility is delegated to the Fire Prevention Bureau. Each investigation results in a report which is made available to the property owner and is used by insurance companies, safety organizations, and law enforcement agencies for various purposes. Some small fire investigations take only a couple of hours to investigate and complete. For larger fires, such as a structure (building) fire, collecting photographs and other evidence, sifting through burned debris, and applying the scientific method to rule out potential causes can take days. The reports can take several months to complete due to interviewing witnesses or suspects and awaiting evidence to return from forensic labs.

The Fire Prevention Bureau has a current back log of twenty-six (26) fire investigations. The addition of the new Assistant Fire Marshal position will help the bureau start to catch up on these obligations.

Plans Reviews

Part of the permitting process to construct a new building, or renovate an existing building, is a Fire and Life Safety plan review. This requires the reviewer to assess the following areas for code compliance: Fire Department apparatus access to the property, water supply, number of exits, egress travel distances, and fire separation ratings. For those buildings that require a sprinkler system, the type and location of each sprinkler head is checked to ensure they are appropriate for the intended use and contents of each area the building. Water supply data and hydraulic calculations are reviewed to verify there is sufficient water volume and pressure available to the system. The location of required valves, tamper switches, seismic bracing, and piping size are also verified. The fire alarm plans are reviewed to verify that all required devices are present and configured correctly so the fire alarm system will function and report to a monitoring agency as intended. Modification and installation plans of commercial cooking ventilation systems also need to be reviewed and approved before any work can be completed.

Community Education and Outreach

The Fire Prevention Bureau is the main entity that performs community outreach and public education for the Fire Department. This includes programs such as smoke detector installation initiatives, visiting schools to teach students about fire safety and the importance of escape plans, as well as other community risk reduction efforts. The Department hopes to start reinstating some of the programs that have been cut in recent years with the addition of the new Assistant Fire Marshal.

Fire Alarm & Traffic Division

The Fire Alarm & Traffic Division is responsible for three distinct functional areas throughout the City, as detailed below. This Division used to be staffed by 3 people at its peak, but over the years its staffing has been reduced, and the work now falls solely on the Fire Alarm & Traffic Superintendent.

Master Boxes and Radio Boxes

The City of Concord has maintained a wired Master Box system for decades. A master box is the familiar red, house-shaped box that is either attached to a building or a pole on the street (street box) where someone can pull a lever to initiate an emergency call to the Fire Department. This system comprises several closed-loop circuits with each box being wired in series to the next box in the circuit. The system proved itself very reliable, but required continuous care of the circuits to ensure their integrity. A single break in a circuit could disable the transmission of all attached master boxes, meaning one point of failure could disable the emergency notification system of up to 20+ buildings/businesses.

Due to the aged infrastructure of the wired circuits and the advent of newer, wireless technology, the wired Master Box system was scheduled for end-of-life in July 2024. All customers with master boxes initially received notification of the requirement to change to a wireless radio box in July 2020. Approximately 38 master boxes still remain on the wired circuit over 1.5 years past its intended retirement date. The Fire Department will no longer make major repairs to the wired circuits. Businesses remaining on those circuits have been notified and take the risk that a circuit failure will cause them to be mandated to implement a fire watch until an automatic notification mechanism is restored. The Fire Alarm & Traffic Superintendent spends much of his time working with customers to transition their master boxes to radio boxes.

Traffic Signal Repair and Maintenance

The Fire Alarm & Traffic Division is responsible for the upkeep and repair of 54 signalized intersections and 29 flashing beacons throughout the City. This includes simple repairs such as lamp replacements, to more involved troubleshooting and programming of equipment housed in the traffic control cabinets such as the signal controller, relays, wiring harnesses, preemption devices, pedestrian push buttons, vehicle detectors, cameras, power supplies, and malfunction management units.

Fiber Network Infrastructure Oversight

The Fire Alarm & Traffic Division is responsible for maintaining the many miles of fiber optic cable that run above and below the City to interconnect City buildings and some schools with network connectivity.

Communications Center

The Communications Center performs primary emergency dispatch functions for twenty-four (24) area fire departments as well as two (2) additional EMS services that, combined, comprise the Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact (CAMAFC). It is supervised by the Communications Captain and is staffed by two members 24/7. Large incidents require the call back of off-duty Fire Alarm Operators to assist.

The Communications Center is the state-wide primary point of contact for the activation of the State of NH Fire Mobilization plan, which serves to send task forces and strike teams of local fire department

resources to any area in the State of NH that becomes overwhelmed by a single catastrophic incident or simultaneous incidents that overwhelm the capabilities of a municipality and its mutual aid partners. The Communications Center also dispatches for the Central NH Regional Hazardous Materials Team.

The costs of the facility and staff of the Communications Center are shared among the members of the CAMAFC. The City of Concord invoices the CAMAFC each year to recoup approximately 66% of the operating costs (salaries and expenses) of the previous year.

Suppression Division

The Suppression Division is the largest division in the Fire Department. It is separated into four (4) battalions. Each battalion represents a cohort of members who work the same schedule. The schedule is 1 day (24 hours) on duty, 2 days off duty, 1 day on duty, then 4 days off duty. This rotation averages 42-hours per week over an 8-week cycle.

Each battalion comprises twenty-one (21) members, as shown in Table 2, to establish the apparatus staffing profile detailed in Table 3.

Table 2 - Battalion Composition

| QTY | Position |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Battalion Chief |
| 1 | Captain |
| 3 | Lieutenants |
| 4 | Firefighter/Paramedics |
| 12 | Firefighter/EMTs or Firefighter/AEMTs |

Table 3 - Typical Apparatus Assignment

| Apparatus | Positions |
|---------------------|--|
| Command Car (Car 4) | 1 Battalion Chief |
| Tower 1 | 1 Officer*, 2 Firefighters |
| Ambulance 1 | 1 Firefighter/Paramedic, 1 Firefighter |
| Engine 4 | 1 Officer*, 2 Firefighters |
| Ambulance 4 | 1 Firefighter/Paramedic, 1 Firefighter |
| Engine 5 | 1 Officer*, 2 Firefighters |
| Ambulance 5 | 1 Firefighter/Paramedic, 1 Firefighter |
| Engine 7 | 1 Officer*, 2 Firefighters |
| Ambulance 7 | 1 Firefighter/Paramedic, 1 Firefighter |

* An Officer is either a Lieutenant or Captain.

The Suppression Division is responsible for many functions within the City as outlined below.

Fire Suppression

The suppression division responds to and mitigates all fires within the City of Concord, whether it is a building/structure fire or wildland/brush fire. This includes smoke and odor investigations and explosions.

The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) recommends that each Engine and Tower company in career fire departments be staffed with four (4) members (NFPA 1710, 2020, p. 5.2.3.1.1 & 5.2.3.2.1). The City of Concord falls short of this and staffs each of its Engines and Tower with only three (3) members due to budgetary purposes. The Fire Department believes this should be reconsidered in the future, and believes staffing should be brought to four (4) members on each of these companies, although it maintains that the reinstatement of Engine 1 (discussed on page 14) should take priority over increasing staffing levels on existing apparatus.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Concord Fire Department provides EMS services to the communities of Concord and Penacook. Each ambulance is staffed with two (2) members. All Firefighters on the Department are certified to a minimum level of an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). An EMT is a basic life-support (BLS) provider that is qualified in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and is trained to perform introductory patient assessments, administer a few medications and medical procedures, and perform rudimentary wound care. Between 2021 and July 2025, with the addition of a new labor grade, all newly-hired employees were trained to at least the Advanced EMT (AEMT) certification. AEMTs are considered advanced life-support (ALS) providers and are able to start IVs, give many more medications than an EMT, and are capable of performing some advanced medical procedures. Paramedics represent the highest level of pre-hospital care and are also ALS providers. They are able to perform more procedures and administer many more medications than an AEMT. Starting in July 2025, due to having implemented a healthy cadre of Firefighter/AEMTs, as well as negotiated changes to collective bargaining agreements, the Department has once again started to hire Firefighter/EMTs.

Technical Rescue

The Concord Fire Department is responsible for all technical rescues that occur within the community. The different disciplines for which the Department is responsible include confined space rescue, trench rescue, high- and low-angle rope rescue, ice rescue, swift water/flood rescue, collapse rescue, large animal rescue, and industrial/machinery rescue. Each listed rescue discipline requires a separate certification, specialized training, and equipment. Many surrounding communities do not have the equipment or expertise to provide these specialized rescues within their jurisdiction, so the Concord Fire Department would likely be called as a regional resource.

Hazardous Materials Responses

The Concord Fire Department responds to all hazardous materials (HazMat) incidents within the City of Concord. If the incident requires specialized equipment or tactics, the regional Central NH Hazardous Materials Response Team is activated. The majority of this team is made up of members of the Concord Fire Department, and the equipment is housed within the City of Concord on Fire Department property. While the HazMat team is a separate entity, with its own funding, the City of Concord has the distinct advantage of a very rapid response due to the proximity of team members and the specialized vehicles and equipment.

Calendar Year 2025 Statistics

Figure 4 - Count of Incidents by Fire District

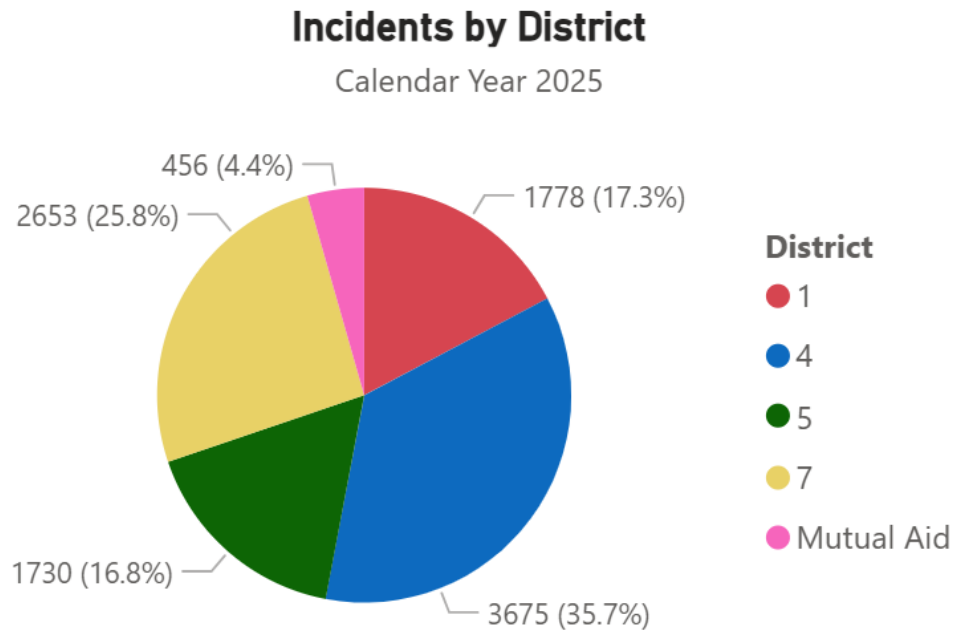
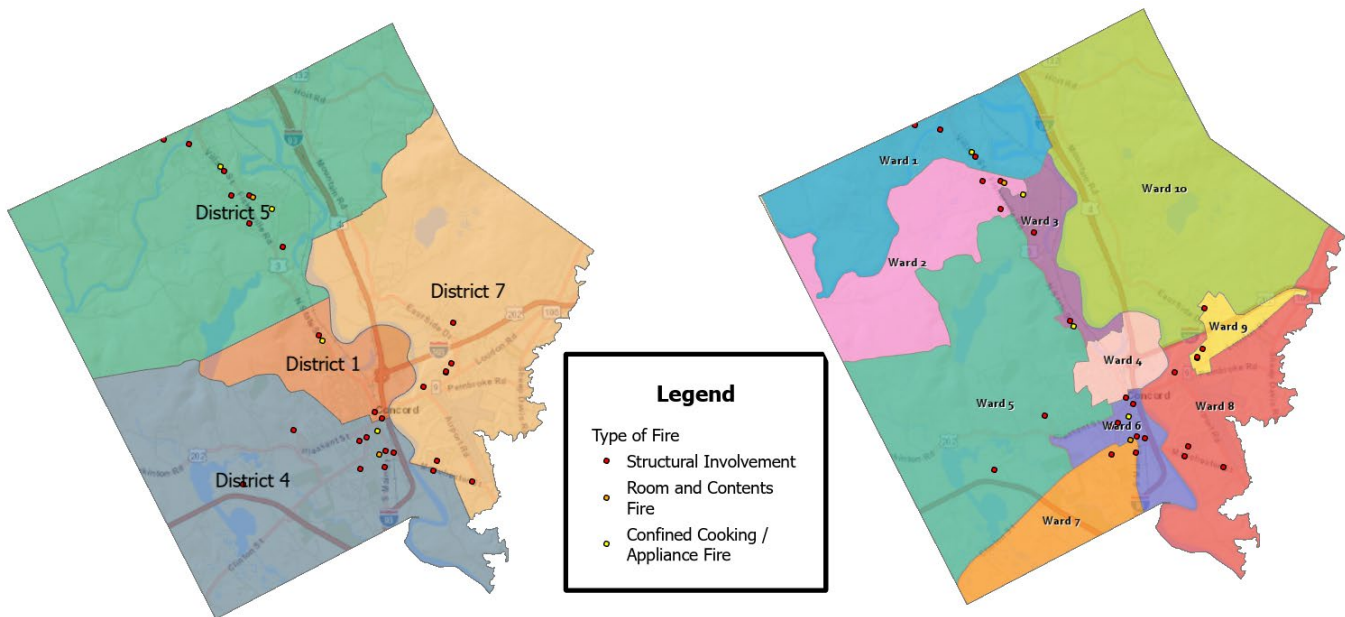


Figure 5 - Structure Fires in Calendar Year 2025



During calendar year 2025, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) replaced the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) with the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). This was done to modernize national fire and emergency response reporting. This changeover includes an

entirely new dataset against which all Fire Departments must report. The Concord Fire Department was one of the earliest adopters in the State of NH, and transitioned on October 1, 2025. Due to this transition, service indicator comparisons historically reported by the Fire Department cannot be directly made against all previously reported categories. Statistics have been separated into 3 tables. The first (Table 4) contains indicators that can be directly compared despite the change in reporting requirements. The following two tables show the NFIRS data for the first three-quarters of the calendar year (Table 5), and the new NERIS data categories for the last quarter (Table 6, page 10).

Table 4 - Commonly Reported Service Indicators

| <u>SERVICE INDICATORS</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2024</u> | <u>2025</u> | <u>% Change (2024 to 2025)</u> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1. Total Emergency Calls for Service | 10,370 | 10,280 | 10,292 | + 0.12 % |
| a. EMS Calls – Advanced Life Support (ALS) Intercepts | 57* | 60 | 51 | - 15.0 % |
| b. EMS Calls – Other EMS/Rescue Calls | 7,555 | 7,313 | 7,213 | - 1.37 % |
| c. Building Fires | 40 | 33 | 72 | + 118.18 % |
| d. Civilian Fire Deaths | 0 | 1 | 1 | No Change |
| 2. Number of Patients Transported | 6,183 | 5,961 | 5,945 | - 0.27 % |
| 3. Percent EMS Response within 5 minutes (BLS Standard) | 62.7 % | 53.1 % | 50.9 % | - 4.24 % |
| 4. Percent EMS Response within 9 minutes (ALS Standard) | 95.1 % | 92.4 % | 92.9 % | + 0.54 % |
| 5. Percent Fire Response within 5 minutes | 50.0 % | 40.3 % | 39.1 % | - 2.98 % |
| 6. Average # minutes per call | 35.9 | 36.3 | 35.8 | - 1.38 % |
| 7. Percentage of overlapping calls | 49.7 % | 51.3 % | 49.80 % | - 2.92 % |

Table 5 - NFIRS Data (January 1, 2025 to c. September 30, 2025*)

| <u>SERVICE INDICATORS</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2024</u> | <u>2025* (incomplete)</u> |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | | | |
| d. Other Fires | 130 | 163 | 114 |
| e. Overpressure, Explosion, Overheat (no fire) | 25 | 10 | 10 |
| f. Hazardous Conditions (no fire) | 179 | 223 | 140 |
| g. Service Calls | 853 | 940 | 785 |
| h. Good Intent Calls | 626 | 592 | 507 |
| i. False Alarm and False Calls | 897 | 972 | 709 |
| j. Severe Weather and Natural Disasters | 5 | 22 | 10 |
| k. Special Incident Types | 4 | 12 | 11 |

Table 6 - NERIS Data (c. October 1, 2025* to December 31, 2025)

| SERVICE INDICATORS | | 2025* (incomplete) |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Fire | Outside Fire | 30 |
| Fire | Wildland Fire | 0 |
| Fire | Structure Fire | 20 |
| Fire | Transportation Fire | 4 |
| Fire | Special Fire | 0 |
| Hazardous Situation | Hazard Non-Chemical | 24 |
| Hazardous Situation | Hazardous Materials | 25 |
| Hazardous Situation | Overpressure | 0 |
| Hazardous Situation | Investigation | 21 |
| Medical | Illness | 1246 |
| Medical | Injury / Trauma | 460 |
| Medical | Other | 22 |
| Public Service | Citizen Assist | 158 |
| Public Service | Alarms (Non-Medical) | 52 |
| Public Service | Disaster / Weather | 2 |
| Public Service | Other | 7 |
| Rescue | Outside | 1 |
| Rescue | Structure | 4 |
| Rescue | Transportation | 0 |
| Rescue | Water | 0 |
| No Emergency | False Alarm | 167 |
| No Emergency | Good Intent | 114 |
| No Emergency | Cancelled | 63 |
| Law Enforcement Support | | 13 |

Figure 6 - Responses by Unit by Year

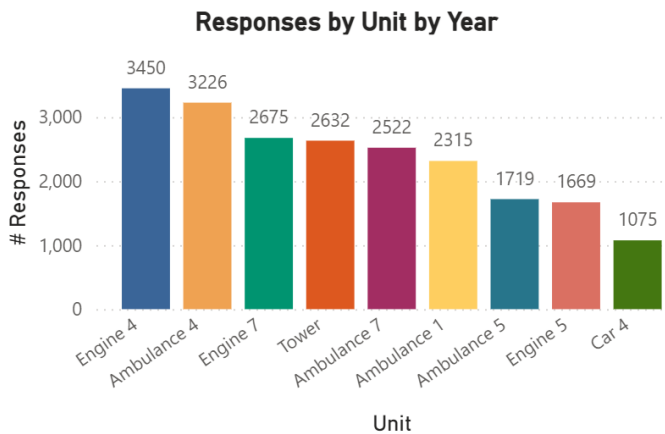
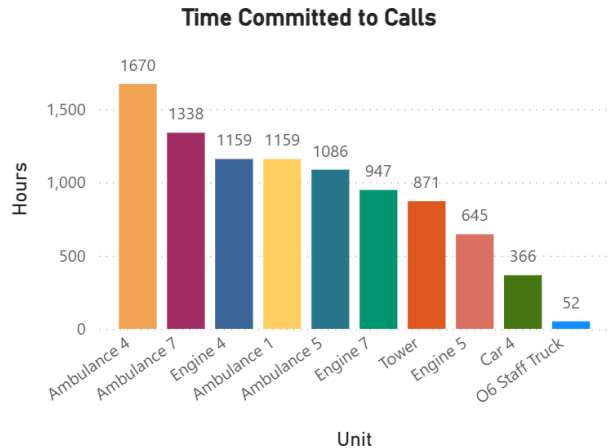


Figure 7 - Hours Committed to Calls by Unit



2025 Milestones and Accomplishments

Calendar year 2025 saw many accomplishments and events for the Concord Fire Department.

Personnel

1. The Concord Fire Department promoted 1 Deputy Chief, 1 Battalion Chief, 1 Captain, 1 Assistant Fire Marshal, and 1 Lieutenant.
2. The Fire Marshal position was reclassified from the rank of Captain to Battalion Chief.
3. The Concord Fire Department had several separations from the Fire Department including 1 Deputy Chief, 1 Battalion Chief, 1 Firefighter/Paramedic, 1 Firefighter/AEMT, 3 Firefighter/EMTs, and 1 Administrative Specialist II.
4. The Concord Fire Department hired 6 Firefighter/AEMTs, 1 Fire Alarm Operator, and 1 Administrative Specialist II.

Accomplishments

Training Division

- The Training Officer position was vacant for 27.1% of the calendar year and without a permanent assignment for 61.6% of the year.
- Supported battalion training with live burns, swift water rescue training, elevator rescue training, and downed firefighter rescue training.
- Completed one (1) recruit school and two (2) separate new Firefighter orientations.
- Administered a Captain's promotional process.

Suppression Division

- Transitioned from NFIRS to NERIS fire records reporting system in October 2025.
- Received and deployed PFAS-free structural firefighting gear.
- Deployed new thermal imaging cameras for all riding positions.
- Deployed new ammonia detection meters.
- Secured a 14' inflatable raft and two (2) new boat trailers.
- Took delivery of a custom-built Technical Rescue trailer.
- Took delivery of a shelter that will store the swift water rescue trailer.
- Issued newly designed badges to all personnel.
- Replaced four (4) swift water rescue dry suits.

Emergency Medical Services Division

- Took delivery of ten (10) new cardiac monitors in December 2025 (to be rolled out in 2026).
- Secured cyanide poisoning treatment kits (Cyanokits) for all front-line ambulances.
- Purchased and deployed new IV pumps for all ambulances.
- The EMS Officer and EMS Lieutenant became certified Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Instructors.
- Provided CPR training to seven (7) new Concord Police Department employees.

- Coordinated with outside agencies (nursing homes, NH State Prison, urgent care centers) to streamline agency interactions and common operational expectations.

Communications Center

- The Communications Captain was certified as an APCO Communications Center Manager.
- Purchased “Frontline – QA Tracker” quality assurance/improvement software which will be implemented in 2026.
- Deployed a CAD test environment to facilitate new employee training and operational change testing.
- Two Fire Alarm Operators (FAOs) were certified as Public Safety Telecommunicators, one FAO was certified in Fire Service Communications, and one Lead FAO received a certification in Comprehensive Quality.

Fire Prevention Bureau

- Completed several adult educational sessions at apartment buildings throughout the City in association with the State of NH Fire Marshal’s Office.
- Provided public education at Lowe’s safety day that included a live fire demonstration of a home sprinkler suppression system in coordination with the State Fire Marshal’s Office.
- Provided public education and demonstrations at National Night Out.
- Mentored a Saint Anselm College Criminal Justice intern.

Fire Alarm & Traffic Division

- Installed Centrac Traffic Control Software on Manchester Street to create improved traffic flow using a coordinated traffic corridor.
- Placed 186 new radio boxes online to support the effort to decommission the wired Master Box circuits.
- Coordinated the installation of fiber-optic cable to support the future City of Concord Horse Barn Museum.

Current Challenges & Needs

Focus on Retention

In the previous annual report to the Public Safety Board, the need for a large focus on recruitment was highlighted. The Department is currently better positioned, as it has seen great success in filling its existing Firefighter vacancies. This achievement was possible after meaningful negotiations with its bargaining units. The largest recruit school in recent history was held with eight (8) newly-hired employees in addition to three (3) other recent hires in January 2026. Since then, overtime is no longer needed to backfill these vacant positions. The Department will soon see the downstream relief of burnout reduction of existing members once the new members are able to assist with overtime shift coverage starting in April 2026.

As the Department shifts its focus away from recruitment, retention efforts now become vitally important.

Training and Professional Development as Retention Tools

Fire Administration has heard the clear message over the past few years that Department members strongly desire training and professional development. Members report that access to these opportunities are linked to job satisfaction, confidence, a positive Department culture, and good morale – all of which are key factors in retention.

Instead of being able to attract experienced firefighters from other departments, most new applicants are newly certified and often lack prior career department experience. This has shifted the training burden onto existing crews, who must support probationary members while responding to a high volume of calls. Daily training has moved from advanced, low-frequency skills to entry-level topics, creating a cycle where crews focus on onboarding new hires rather than maintaining their own proficiency. As probationary members graduate, they have been replaced by other inexperienced employees, leaving many crews unable to train on advanced skills. This causes frustration, lowers morale, and slows professional growth for seasoned staff, while also increasing risk to the community as call complexity rises but training hours for high-risk incidents decrease.

A compounding factor is that new probationary employees often arrive with fewer skills than past recruits. In June 2020, the State of NH Division of Fire Standards and Training & Emergency Medical Services (FSTEMS) reduced the Firefighter I and II curricula by 31% in total hours and 39% in in-person training, shifting much to online modules (Phillips, 2020). A recent evaluation of the changes published by NH FSTEMS states that, “many students emphasized the value of hands-on learning, often finding online modules less engaging or effective” (Dodge, 2024, p. 8). As a result, hiring departments must spend additional time providing hands-on practice and other educational support. NH FSTEMS is working to revise the curriculum through a visiting committee, but improvements have not yet been realized.

The need for increased training support is not limited to the needs of new employees. Veteran members increasingly seek specialty certifications, management classes, and development of administrative and soft skills. A commitment to funding tuition, backfill, and training technologies to ensure members are able to develop themselves is important. Research across the fire service and emergency medical services indicates that workforce development, particularly training and professional development, plays a significant role in improving retention and organizational stability. Systematic reviews of the first responder workforce consistently identify burnout, job dissatisfaction, and insufficient organizational support as primary predictors of intent to leave a job, while increased opportunities for continuing education, leadership training, and professional development are associated with improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover risk (Huang G, Hung WK, Ngolombe R, Maona C, Chiona BC, Banda KJ, 2025). Investment into technology such as high-fidelity training mannequins, software, and video debriefing systems support high-quality simulation training, which has been shown to improve workforce retention in EMS (Miller, 2025). Simulation technologies can be equally applied to fire topics.

Fire Headquarters Reorganization

Over the past six years, Fire Administration has experienced significant turnover. Since March 2020, there have been four separate Fire Chiefs, four Deputy Chiefs of Administration, three Deputy Chiefs of

Operations, four Administrative Specialists II, three Training Officers (which is now vacant), and two Fiscal Supervisors. This instability has caused a decrease in operational efficiency as the constant cycle has necessitated newly promoted employees to learn their new role while teaching their former role to their successor. This has exacerbated the fact that “administrative staffing for Concord Fire Department is approximately one third the staffing levels that would ordinarily be anticipated” (Emergency Services Consulting International, 2022, p. 53). The dynamic nature of Fire Administration has necessitated the Training Officer position to be used as a “catch all” to assist with or carry out projects that would not normally be assigned to that position. Due to this, the Training Officer’s focus has largely been pulled away from its primary purpose, causing strain and frustration throughout the Department.

As previously discussed, a commitment to training is now paramount to build proficiency in newly onboarded employees, as well as focus on professional development to support retention and positively affect Department morale. The needed focus on training will require a realignment of the duties assigned to the existing Headquarters positions.

The proposal is to elevate the Fiscal Supervisor into a non-contractual position that will eventually serve as the Chief Financial Officer and report directly to the Fire Chief. This CFO role is currently assigned to the Deputy Chief of Administration. This reconfigured position would oversee the Department’s operational and capital budgets, accounts payable and receivables, as well as reporting and reconciliation of EMS revenue. This position might eventually have the capacity to assist with grant research and writing for both the Department and Emergency Management, a function that could yield great benefits.

In the proposed change, the Deputy Chief of Administration would be renamed to the Deputy Chief of Professional Standards, and would oversee the Training and EMS Divisions. The position would take over the promotional planning, and software systems administration that have been recently assigned to the Training Officer. This would allow the Training Officer to solely be focused on training. Furthermore, this position would become the Privacy Officer and Compliance Officer for the Department. These functions are better suited for a Deputy Chief position, rather than the EMS Officer, a Captain’s level position, to which they are currently assigned. The Deputy Chief of Professional Standards would also oversee the Department’s continuous quality improvement programs and Department investigations.

Need to Reinstate Engine 1 and its Associated Staffing

Engine 1 was placed in service in 2003 and was subsequently decommissioned in 2009 due to an economic downturn, and has never been restored. Restoring Engine 1 and its associated staffing is important as Concord Fire Department is already at operational capacity handling the current emergency call volume within the City.

The City has seen unprecedented growth in residential units over the past year, which is slated to continue. The impact of this growth has not yet been fully seen, but is expected to be realized as the units are completed. A detailed discussion and analysis of expected growth and projected impacts was included in the 2024 Annual Report to the Public Safety Board, which remains relevant.

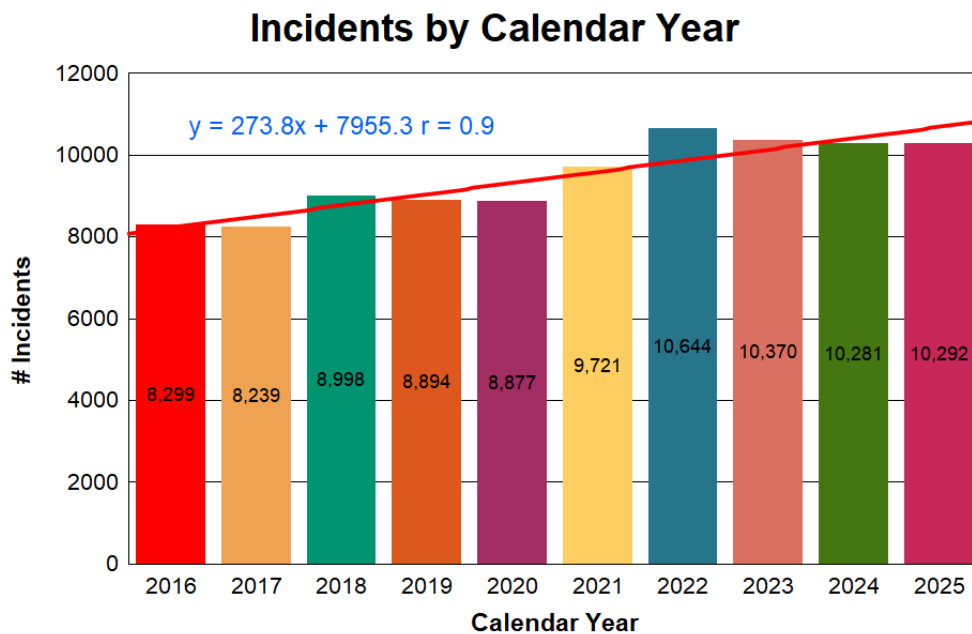
Reinstating Engine 1 will not only provide better fire suppression ability for residents and businesses in District 1, but it will also help restore equity to the Village of Penacook (District 5). Restoring Engine 1

would also have some smaller beneficial effects such as reducing the number of responses of the Tower, as well as reducing the reliance of the City on call back of off-duty members. Each of these topics are detailed below.

Operational Capacity

The Concord Fire Department is currently at operational capacity. The average year-over-year increase in call volume is just under 275 calls per year, based on simple regression analysis and extrapolation of the previous 10 years as shown in Figure 8, below. The amount of calls that occur simultaneously also has an increasing trend as depicted in Figure 9, page 17. This means that once an emergency call is received, at least one, if not multiple other calls will need to be mitigated. It is important to understand that this refers to separate simultaneous emergencies, and does not merely refer to a single emergency needing more than one apparatus. Each emergency may require multiple companies.

Figure 8 - Incidents by Calendar Year



On-duty crews handle many other responsibilities between emergency calls. Each front-line apparatus must be checked to ensure that all of the supplies that are needed are present. For each emergency call, at least one report must be generated. If the incident involved a request for EMS, which comprises over 70% of the calls, two separate reports must be authored. The time it takes to complete the required reports ranges from 10 to 45 minutes per call, depending on its complexity. When a crew transports a patient to the hospital, it takes time to decontaminate, disinfect, and restock the ambulance. Crews also must perform maintenance on power equipment and other tools to ensure that they are operational when needed on a call. Crews often need to switch into the spare apparatus and prepare and deliver the front-line apparatus to the repair facility (COMF), as the high call volume takes a toll on the apparatus which must be frequently maintained. The on-duty members also must complete daily station cleaning and maintenance to keep up with the aging facilities. The crew must also stay current with training requirements.

Manchester Fire Department is the largest fire department in NH and handles more incidents than any other fire department in the state. It responded to 29,105 calls for service in 2025 (Manchester Information, 2026). Its busiest suppression unit is Engine 11, which the Department states responds to approximately 3,000 calls per year (City of Manchester, n.d.), and the Manchester Professional Firefighters Association further states that it handled 3,099 calls in 2025 (Manchester Professional Firefighters Association, 2026). To compare, as shown in Figure 6 on page 10, Concord Engine 4 responded to 3,450 calls – over 11% more than Manchester Engine 11. A comparison of the second-busiest engine in these Departments from the same sources, shows that Concord Engine 7 (2,675) handled 15.5% more calls than Manchester Engine 5 (2,316). A similar comparison of least-busy Engines shows that Concord Engine 5 (1,669) responded to 73% more than Manchester Engine 8 (965).

A comparison to Nashua Fire Department, the only other department in the State of NH larger than Concord Fire Department, yields similar results. Concord Engine 4 (3,450) responded to 12.1% more calls than Nashua's busiest, Engine 4 (3,076) (Infonh, 2026). A comparison of second-busiest engines shows Concord Engine 7 (2,675) beat out Nashua Engine 1 (2,477) by 8%. Comparing least-busy engines show the two departments are very similar, with Concord Engine 5 (1,669) outpacing Nashua Engine 3 (1,668) by only a single call. Nashua Fire Department's total call volume was 13,285 incidents compared to Concord Fire's 10,292 (Table 4, page 9). This 29% higher call volume was handled by over twice the number of apparatus – 6 engines and 3 ladders, versus Concord's 3 engines and 1 tower.

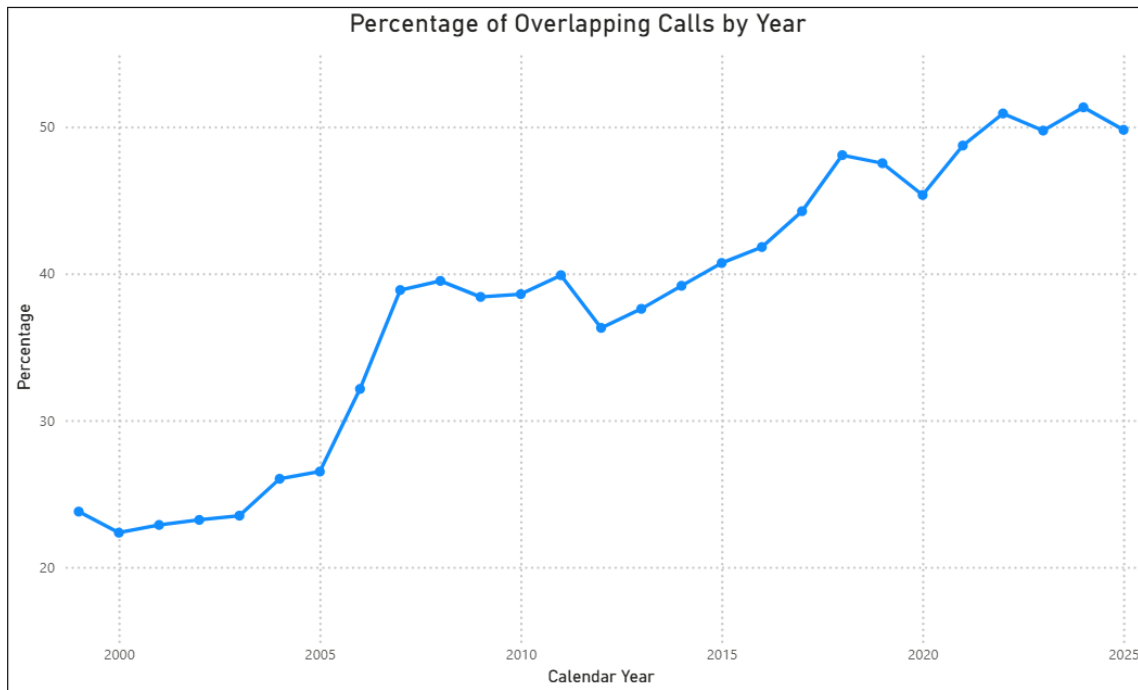
Concord's Firefighter's demand of handling incidents per apparatus is significantly higher than the two largest fire departments in the state. This translates into increased stress and fatigue on our members as well as much less time to train while on duty. Not only is single-company training frequently interrupted, but more importantly, on-duty crews are almost never able to train together to practice multi-company drills due to consistently being pulled away to answer emergency calls. These drills help crews practice the closely coordinated actions that are required to extinguish a fire. If the timing of these tasks is not well-orchestrated, the fire can be pulled or pushed into unaffected areas of the building, or even worse, into the survivable space occupied by trapped victims.

The need for multi-company, coordinated training is not specific to only fires. This is also needed in other disciplines such as technical rescue. This lack of access to training leads to lower proficiency, decreased morale, and increased stress and burnout. Restoring Engine 1 would not only increase operational capacity during large incidents, which would lead to higher community safety, but would also allow companies better access to vital on-duty training. In order to facilitate the training required to keep crews proficient with these skills, off-duty training, paid with overtime, is now used for an increasing amount of training each year. This off-duty training is also used to fulfill the required continuing education to maintain Emergency Medical Services (EMS) certifications.

It is not only training that has been affected by the constant operational overload of the apparatus. The call volume in the City has escalated to the point where the Department no longer performs all of the functions it historically has. For example, for the past several years, on-duty crews have no longer been able to update building pre-plans and ensure that crews are familiar with the contents and layout of buildings within their district. The Knox boxes located on the side of businesses are no longer routinely maintained to ensure they open when they need to be accessed during an emergency or that they contain the appropriate keys. Crews have been unable to contact property owners or representatives at several recent structure fires because updated information was not available. The program to keep

current building contacts waned over the past several years due to call volume. This causes crews to remain on scene longer, reducing protection available to the remainder of the community, while delaying notification and restoration efforts by the proper authority.

Figure 9 - Percentage of Overlapping Calls by Year



Restoring Engine 1 would help with the issues discussed above. It would reduce the responses of Engines 4, 5, and 7 in Central’s district, allowing them more uninterrupted time to train, perform building pre-plans, maintain Knox boxes, perform station duties, etc.

First Due Water for District 1 (and Backup for District 5)

Ever since Engine 1 was decommissioned, District 1 has not had a staffed fire engine. This means that the historic downtown area, including private residences, depends on water for fire suppression to arrive on engines from other districts. A study (Emergency Services Consulting International, 2022) commissioned by the City of Concord in FY22 and presented to City Council on February 14, 2022 noted the following deficiency and recommendation, “a suppression unit should be staffed at Central Station 1. The lack of a suppression unit capable of providing a fire water flow, equivalent for the building types contained within that district, at Central Station 1 allows for a substantial risk within the historic downtown area” (p. 4).

A recent example to illustrate this issue was seen at a fire located at 26 Penacook Street on November 10, 2024. A passing truck stopped in front of the Central Fire Station and sounded its air horn to alert crews inside that the duplex across the street was on fire. Central companies (Tower 1, Ambulance 1, and the Battalion Chief) arrived within seconds to find heavy fire on the back of the building. The volume of fire in one side of the duplex was too heavy for the Tower crew to make entry to attempt any search for victims. On the other side of the duplex, part of the first floor was searched, but crews could not ascend the stairs and search the second floor or remainder of the first floor due to the heavy fire

present. It took two (2) minutes for Engine 4, from the Broadway district, to arrive with water so the fire attack could be started and allow those areas of the building to be searched. It should be noted that Engine 4 happened to be on the road nearby when the call was dispatched, and estimated they arrived two (2) minutes sooner than they normally would have if they were in their station.

A more recent example of the importance of restoring Engine 1 occurred on November 13, 2025. Engine 5 was out of district when a structure fire occurred on Elm Street in Penacook. Engine 7, based out of the Heights Station, was the first arriving Engine and took 14 minutes to arrive. Tower 1, based out of the same Station that would house Engine 1, arrived 3.5 minutes sooner than Engine 7. If Engine 1 were in service, it would allowed water to arrive to the seen 3.5 minutes sooner than it did.

A rule of thumb used in the fire service is that a growing fire (incipient stage) takes between 30 seconds to 1 minute to double in size, depending on the conditions present in the burning container or structure. These delays in getting water to a scene, in the examples given above, potentially caused the fire to double or quadruple in size. This increases risk to life of potentially trapped occupants, increases damage and therefore time to rebuild and reoccupy the building, as well as increases costs for repair.

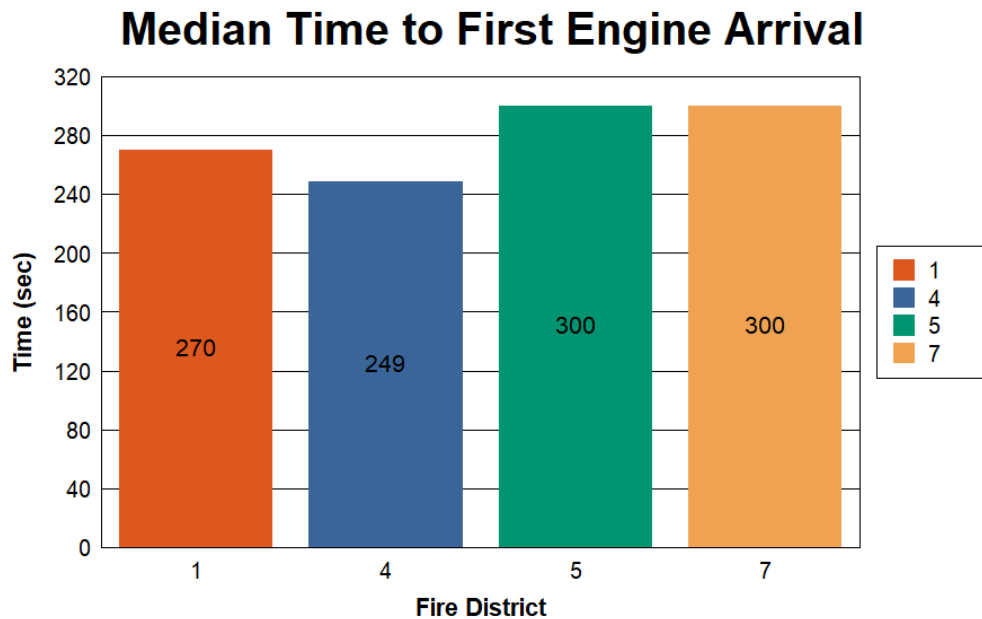
There have been 98 structure fires in District 1 and 99 in District 5 since the closure of Engine 1 in 2009.

Second Due Water for District 5

Reinstating Engine 1 would benefit residents and businesses in District 1 and significantly improve safety in Penacook (District 5), beyond the previously discussed impact on backup engine arrival times when Engine 5 is unavailable. At a structure fire, the first-arriving engine initiates fire attack by entering the building with a hose line after laying a 4-inch supply line toward the nearest hydrant. The second-arriving engine connects that line to the hydrant to establish a continuous water supply. Until then, the attack engine relies on its onboard tank. Engine 5 carries 750 gallons of water, and a standard 1¾-inch attack line can flow up to 200 gallons per minute, providing only about 3 minutes and 45 seconds of water during a heavy fire. This makes rapid arrival of the second engine critical. If no hydrant is available, particularly in rural areas of the city, the second engine must supply tank water to the attack engine and establish a more complex water supply operation while also deploying a second hose line to support fire attack or assist with victim removal.

As stated above, the time it takes to get the first-arriving engine on scene is very important. As can be seen in Figure 10, page 19, while District 5 traditionally has the longest initial response times in the City, it is comparable to the other districts. It should be noted that these times represent the median time of the first-arriving engine to actual structure fires between January 2015 and March 2026, an eleven-year time span.

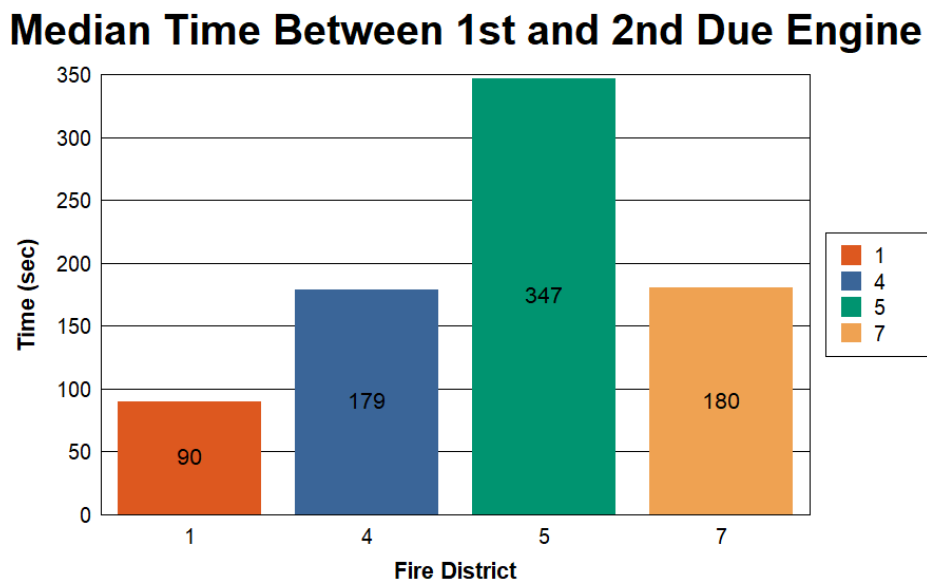
Figure 10 - Median time for First Fire Engine Arrival by Fire District



This chart shows the median time (in seconds) to the arrival of the first fire engine to structure fires since January 1, 2015.

The disparity between districts becomes clearly evident when the statistics of the second-arriving engine is examined. Figure 11 depicts the time (in seconds) that it takes for the second-arriving engine to arrive *after* the attack engine is already on scene. Similar to Figure 10, above, this examines only responses to actual structure fires in the eleven-year span between January 2015 and March 2026.

Figure 11 - Median Time between First and Second Due Engines by Fire District



Reported time is the median time in seconds between the first and second arriving engines for structure fires since January 1m 2015.

It is evident that the residents and business in District 5 (Penacook), do not receive a service level equitable to the remainder of the City. The Fire Department is trying to correct this with the reinstatement of Engine 1. The current inequity is further highlighted by the fact that, if Engine 5 is busy with another incident and a fire in that district occurs, the first-arriving water will come from Station 4 (Broadway) or Station 7 (Heights) as discussed above. Having Engine 1 in service would significantly reduce the time to first water on the fire in this scenario.

Hydrant vs. Non-Hydrant Districts

By reestablishing Engine 1, the City will increase the amount of water immediately available for fire suppression, which would significantly improve the ability of the Fire Department to mitigate fires. While much of the City is serviced by fire hydrants, a significant portion of its buildings are not. Due to hydraulics and other operational considerations, a fire hydrant only protects the buildings within a 1,000-foot radius of it. It is inefficient to try to pump water more than 1,000 feet through the 4" supply line. If a building is within this distance, it is said to be in a hydrant district. Any building outside of a hydrant district falls within a rural water district. Approximately 12.6% of the buildings in the City of Concord fall in a rural water supply district, as shown in Figure 12, page 20. Figure 13 and Figure 14, page 21, show buildings in the City of Concord color-coded by water supply district type and the area of the City protected by fire hydrants, respectively.

Rural fire operations are more complex because water must be supplied without nearby hydrants. Engines may relay pump water from one apparatus to another, or crews may establish a portable water tank where tanker trucks shuttle water from remote sources. In this system, multiple tankers cycle continuously to keep the portable tank full while the attack engine pumps water onto the fire. Because establishing this rural water supply takes time and coordination, having more water available on staffed apparatus can significantly improve the outcome of a fire.

Figure 12 - Percentage of Buildings in Hydrant vs. Rural Water Supply District

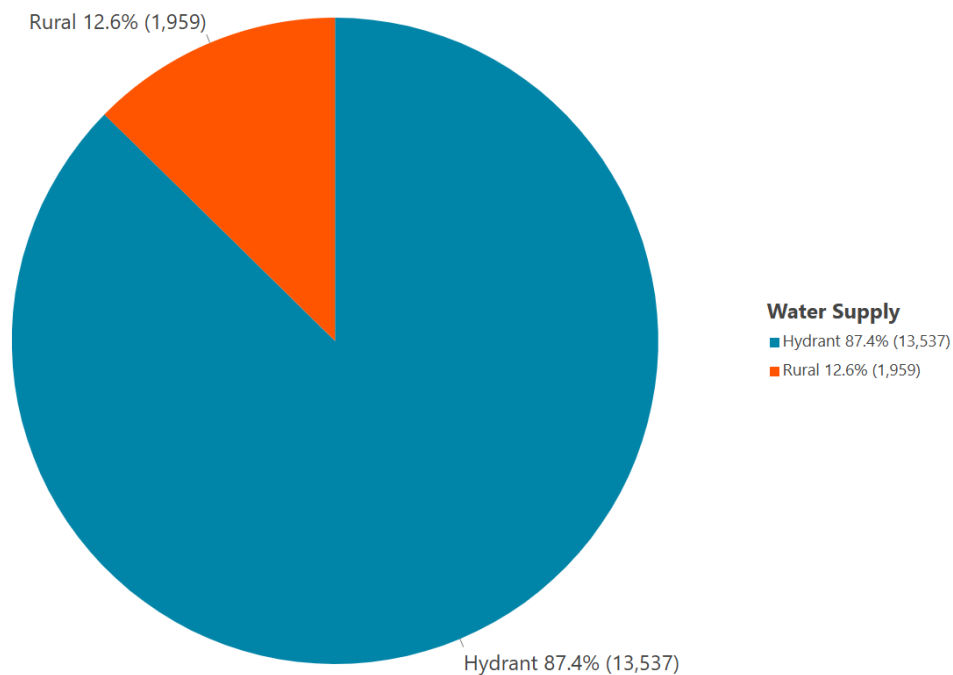


Figure 13 - Occupancies by Hydrant vs. Rural Water District

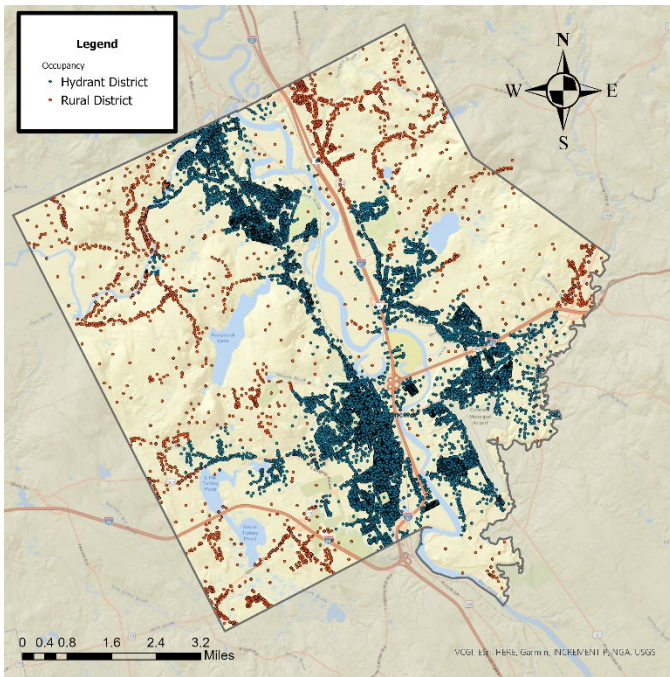


Figure 14 - Hydrant District (within 1000 ft of Fire Hydrant)

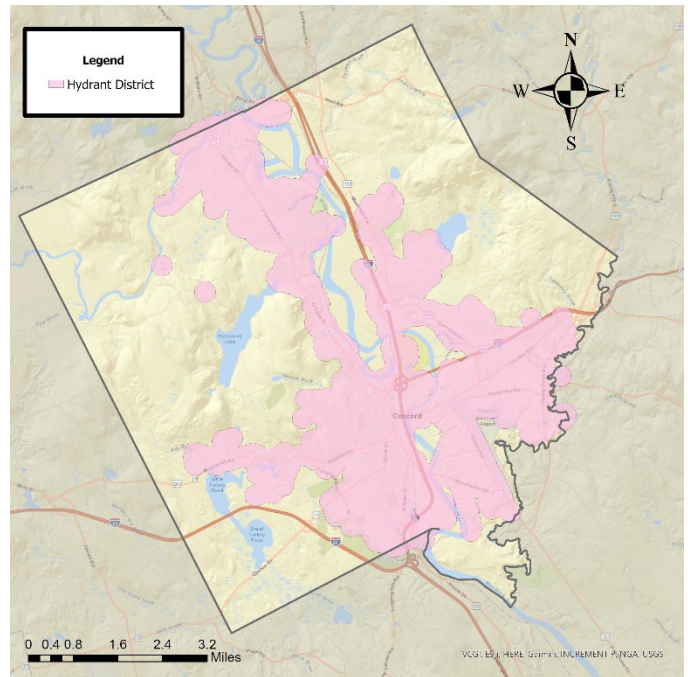
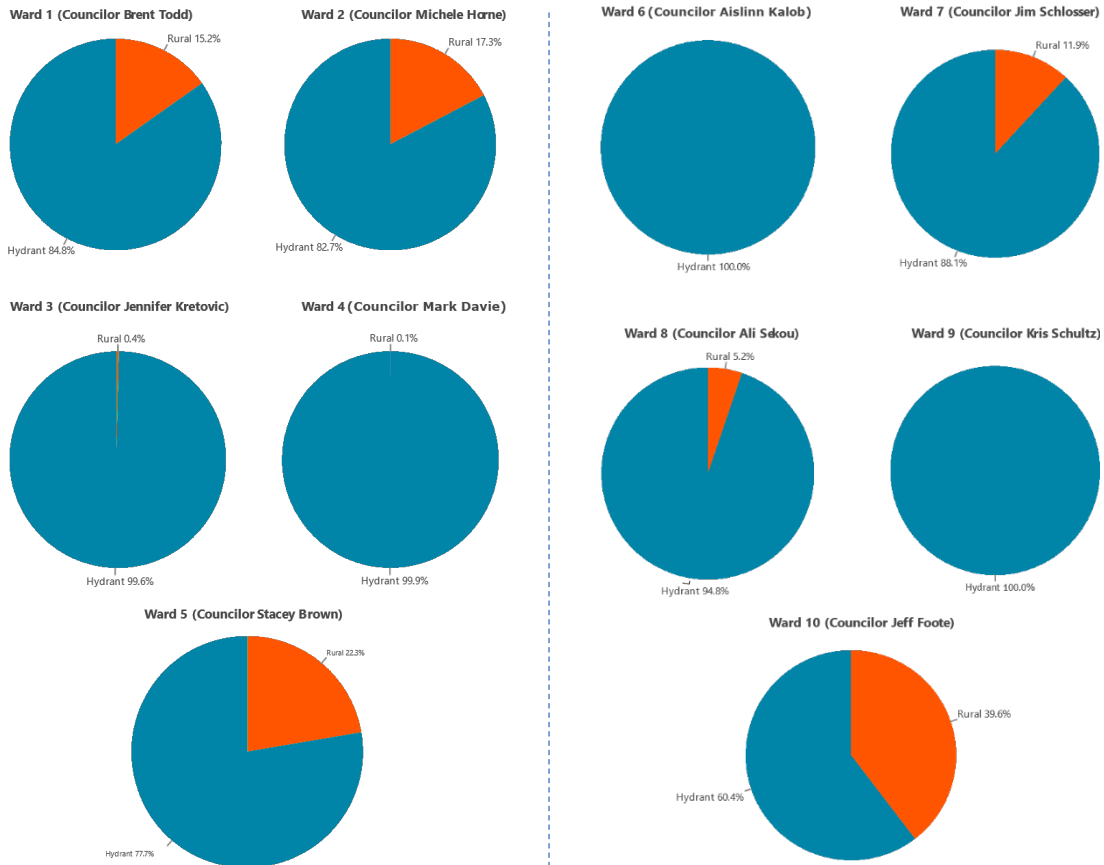


Figure 15 - Percentage of Occupancies in Rural vs. Hydrant District by Ward



City Employee Call Back not as Reliable

Restoring Engine 1 and its staffing would also help address the significant decline in off-duty personnel returning to the City during major incidents, such as structure fires. These members traditionally reported to stations to cover additional emergencies while on-duty crews handled the primary incident. This decline appears to stem from two main factors.

First, during the early stages of the recruitment and retention crisis, the Department expanded its residency requirement to allow employees to live up to 75 road miles from Fire Headquarters. While this increased the potential hiring pool, it also lengthened commute times, making off-duty personnel less likely to return to the City for a few hours to assist during incidents.

Second, newer employees tend to place greater emphasis on time off and work–life balance than has historically been typical in the profession. As more senior members retire or resign, this trend is expected to become more pronounced. Reinstating Engine 1 would help mitigate this issue by allowing some apparatus to clear incidents sooner and return to service to cover other emergencies within the City.

Reduce Tower 1 Responses

Each district engine responds with the ambulance to many medical calls based on the call acuity determined by the State of NH E-911 emergency medical dispatch algorithm. Engine personnel assist with preparing equipment, lifting or moving patients, and providing patient care on high-acuity calls. Since Engine 1 was decommissioned, these responses in District 1 have been assigned to the Tower company, increasing wear on the Department’s most specialized and expensive apparatus. Reinstating Engine 1 would return these calls to an engine company and reduce unnecessary use of the Tower.

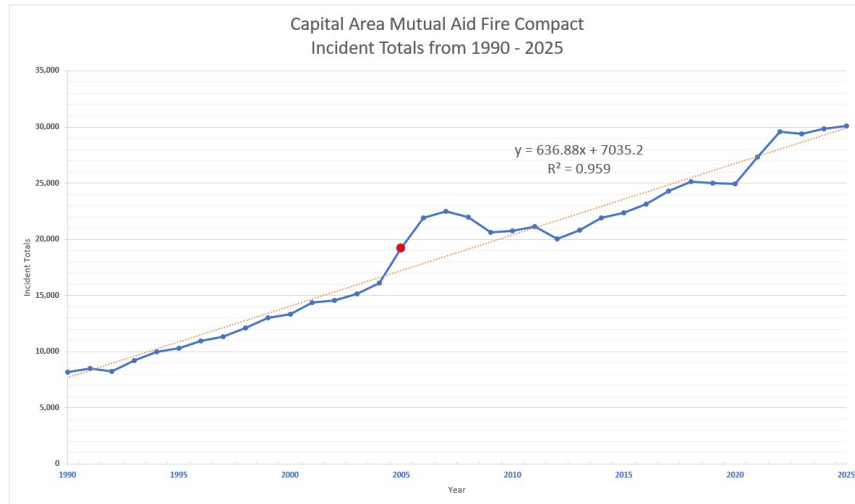
Because Concord staffs only one Tower company, it is the first-due aerial apparatus citywide and carries critical specialized equipment, including vehicle extrication tools and other technical rescue resources. It is also the primary apparatus used for rescues from windows during fires. If no victims are visible upon arrival, the Tower’s main role becomes conducting rapid interior search and rescue. These searches are performed without a hose line so crews can move quickly. If the Tower is unavailable because it is committed to another incident, engine crews must attempt both fire attack and search operations simultaneously, reducing effectiveness in both tasks and potentially forcing difficult decisions about prioritizing rescue over fire suppression. When both an engine and the Tower are present, the engine advances the hose line to control the fire while the Tower performs search and rescue. Because these apparatus serve distinct and critical roles, keeping the Tower company available for specialized incidents is essential.

One additional FTE for Fire Communications

As previously stated, the Communications Center performs the primary emergency dispatch functions for the Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact (CAMAFC) which currently includes twenty-four (24) area fire departments as well as two (2) additional EMS services. Figure 16, page 23, shows the total number of emergency incidents dispatched by the Communications Center by calendar year. The number of calls steadily increases at a predictable rate (currently ~ 635 additional calls per year). In 2005 (shown as a red circle), a second fire alarm operator was added to each shift (for a total of 4 additional employees) to keep pace with the amount of work needed to handle the volume of calls that were being processed

by the Center. This additional staff ensured that two trained personnel were in the Communications Center at all times.

Figure 16 - CAMAFC Incident Totals by Calendar Year



The Communications Center has not seen an increase in the number of Fire Alarm Operators working to handle the call volume for over 20 years, despite the steady rise in volume. The Center once again needs to increase its staff to handle its current call volume. Rather than increase each shift by one person, for a total of four new FTEs, Fire Administration recommends the addition of a single FTE that will work a peak-load shift schedule (Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm). Figure 17, below, shows a heat map of all CAMAFC calls for service in calendar year 2025, separated into weekdays and hours of the day. This peak-load shift (shown outlined as a dashed box) would capture the majority of high-volume times. This would allow sufficient resources to handle the call-volume while minimizing the implementation cost.

Figure 17 – Capital Area Mutual Aid Incidents by Weekday & Time for Calendar Year 2025

| Time 24 Hr | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Grand Total |
|-------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|-------------|
| 0 | 81 | 96 | 71 | 80 | 68 | 83 | 86 | 565 |
| 1 | 89 | 76 | 69 | 60 | 67 | 71 | 87 | 519 |
| 2 | 73 | 70 | 65 | 65 | 61 | 83 | 80 | 497 |
| 3 | 65 | 59 | 79 | 64 | 56 | 65 | 63 | 451 |
| 4 | 52 | 72 | 78 | 68 | 59 | 57 | 61 | 447 |
| 5 | 66 | 68 | 74 | 78 | 65 | 80 | 79 | 510 |
| 6 | 79 | 111 | 103 | 108 | 100 | 112 | 81 | 694 |
| 7 | 126 | 161 | 146 | 156 | 139 | 140 | 118 | 986 |
| 8 | 146 | 198 | 184 | 221 | 191 | 175 | 166 | 1281 |
| 9 | 188 | 246 | 226 | 227 | 210 | 207 | 186 | 1490 |
| 10 | 193 | 218 | 247 | 266 | 241 | 234 | 203 | 1602 |
| 11 | 197 | 227 | 269 | 251 | 227 | 249 | 185 | 1605 |
| 12 | 194 | 226 | 255 | 242 | 252 | 256 | 212 | 1637 |
| 13 | 214 | 246 | 222 | 242 | 222 | 236 | 225 | 1607 |
| 14 | 174 | 248 | 225 | 243 | 204 | 235 | 220 | 1549 |
| 15 | 206 | 241 | 248 | 228 | 232 | 257 | 187 | 1599 |
| 16 | 182 | 223 | 209 | 208 | 228 | 226 | 197 | 1473 |
| 17 | 210 | 213 | 195 | 215 | 185 | 234 | 193 | 1445 |
| 18 | 188 | 212 | 197 | 188 | 209 | 216 | 198 | 1408 |
| 19 | 175 | 169 | 163 | 171 | 165 | 173 | 185 | 1201 |
| 20 | 161 | 182 | 151 | 139 | 129 | 179 | 181 | 1122 |
| 21 | 128 | 125 | 129 | 151 | 139 | 137 | 158 | 967 |
| 22 | 115 | 127 | 108 | 121 | 111 | 153 | 140 | 875 |
| 23 | 121 | 82 | 68 | 95 | 101 | 130 | 100 | 697 |
| Grand Total | 3423 | 3896 | 3781 | 3887 | 3661 | 3988 | 3591 | 26227 |

* The grand total in Figure 17 does not match the corresponding incident total for 2025 in Figure 16 because Figure 17 lists unique occurrences rather than a separate occurrence for each agency that responded to the same incident.

Fire Administration recommends that the new position holds the rank of Lieutenant and serves as second-in-command of the Communications Center. This role would assist with administrative projects when call volume allows and would establish a succession pathway, ensuring continuity when the Communications Captain position turns over—a need highlighted by three recent turnovers.

The Center’s administrative workload has grown as fast as the emergency call volume. The new GIS-based CAD system offers significant operational advantages but requires ongoing maintenance to keep data synchronized with the State of NH 911 Call Center. In addition, requests from the 26 CAMAFC department chiefs for data and reports have increased to support evidence-based financial and operational decisions.

Because the proposed position’s salary is shared among CAMAFC member agencies, the City of Concord would cover only about one-third of the cost, as the remainder would be recouped from CAMAFC in the following fiscal year. Additionally, recent interest from approximately 10 new agencies in joining the Compact could further reduce Concord’s financial burden.

Facilities

Need Additional Heated Storage Space

The Fire Department has made a strong commitment to keeping its fleet of apparatus current. As new apparatus become larger to support increased service delivery capacity, the available room within the fire stations for other storage has decreased. The Department has already purchased several temporary shelters in order to house apparatus and equipment outside, that would normally be stored within a heated space. Storage space for apparatus, trailers, and equipment within the Fire Department facilities has reached a critical point and storage within other City-owned properties will need to be found until new, appropriately sized stations are constructed.

All Fire Stations Need Replacement

On August 21, 2020, the H.L. Turner Group Inc. published a series of “Facility Conditions Assessment” reports for City-owned buildings, including all Fire Department stations. The reports found limited or no opportunity for station expansion due to adjacent properties or terrain, and identified widespread failures in ventilation, terminal heating units, and plumbing systems. In 2024, Manor Station suffered a catastrophic drainage failure, causing raw sewage to back up into the kitchen and requiring costly emergency repairs.

The City’s Fire Station Location Study, delivered in January 2022 by ESCI, assessed the four stations and Fire Headquarters Complex, rating all five facilities as “poor” (Emergency Services Consulting International, 2022, p. 39). This assessment, informed largely by the H.L. Turner reports, noted issues with roofs, HVAC, plumbing, fire safety, and electrical systems (p. 40), as well as floorplan layout, cancer prevention engineering, and facility security.

While the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) does not issue national guidance for the maximum age of a fire station, it does identify a station as “aging” at 40 years old (Foley, 2019, p. 3). This is due to common design concerns (NFPA Research, 2021) as well as the likelihood they will, “have problems that cannot be addressed through repair and maintenance alone” (Foley, 2019, p. 1). The age of all Concord Fire Department Fire Stations exceeds this threshold, as seen in Table 7, page 25.

Table 7 - Dedication Year and Age of Concord Fire Department Fire Stations

| Station | Dedication Year | Age of Building |
|--------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 (Central) | 1979 | 47 Years |
| 4 (Broadway) | 1980 | 46 Years |
| 5 (Manor) | 1974 | 52 Years |
| 7 (Heights) | 1966 [with addition in 1976] | 60 Years [50 Years since addition] |

In addition to aging infrastructure and utility failures, the Fire Stations lack adequate space for current and future apparatus and equipment. Fire Administration strongly recommends adding Engine 1 to maintain service levels, which would require moving the reserve Tower from Station 1, as no other bays are available. Displaced apparatus would need to be stored in city-owned buildings offsite.

As previously stated, equipment storage has exceeded station capacity, leading to cluttered bay floors and forcing some items into trailers, portable garages, or outdoor storage. Despite these challenges, the need for Engine 1 outweighs temporary space limitations.

A new Central Fire Station complex is included in the City’s CIP #594, with site evaluation, design, and permitting funded in FY26. Property acquisition is planned in FY28, with design and permitting in FY29, and construction beginning in FY30. Given the multi-year timeline and Station 1’s current constraints, timely funding and prioritization are critical.

Fire Administration further recommends a staggered 5-year replacement schedule for the remaining three stations, with a new station beginning construction every two years. Station 4 (Broadway) should be replaced last, as it is the youngest (56 years in FY36) and its location may shift depending on potential expansion and the addition of a fifth station, allowing the City to monitor growth and plan accordingly.

Table 8 - Recommended Fire Station Replacement Schedule

| Step | Station 1 Central | Station 7 Heights | Station 5 Manor | Station 4 Broadway |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Site Evaluation / Design | FY26 | F28 | FY30 | FY32 |
| Property Acquisition | FY28 | FY30 | FY32 | FY34 |
| Design & Permitting | FY29 | FY31 | FY33 | FY35 |
| Construct & Furnish | FY30 | FY32 | FY34 | FY36 |

Summary

The Concord Fire Department has a long-standing history of providing excellent service delivery to the communities of Concord and Penacook. It continues to uphold itself to the high standards for which it is known and remains at the forefront of both fire protection and emergency medical services. Due to several factors, the Concord Department faces challenges which will require deliberate action and a planned approach to operations and funding to ensure that it can continue to successfully complete its mission.

Fire Administration strongly believes that Engine 1 and its associated staffing must be reinstated in order to keep pace with the current and growing emergency call volume and the expanding residential capacity of the City. The Department must now sharply focus on retention efforts to maintain its workforce. This should be done with a strong commitment to supporting training and professional development. An urgent reorganization of positions within Fire Headquarters is needed to support this and ensure organizational health, correct alignment of job responsibilities to talent, and ensure efficient operations. One additional FTE is needed within the Communications Center in order to appropriately handle current call volume as well as ensure continuity of operations and healthy succession planning. A plan to rebuild or relocate the four existing struggling fire stations must be solidified and honored, and planning for the addition of a fifth station and apparatus should be added to the City's CIP and master plan.

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