

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



PUBLIC REPORT 2022-2023

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<https://www.matsugov.us/departments/emergency-services>

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Mission

Our mission is to protect and preserve the lives and property of the people of the Mat-Su Borough employing state of the art firefighting, rescue, emergency medical and incident management competencies.

Vision Statement

Mat-Su Borough Emergency Services providers enjoy an unparalleled level of mission success and respect by the communities they serve.

Core Values

- ◇ Integrity First
- ◇ Service Before Self
- ◇ Excellence In All We Do

The Mat-Su Borough Department of Emergency Services (DES) is charged with the protection of lives and property. The administrative staff is employed to help support all emergency services personnel in providing this critical service to our community. The Department of Emergency Services is comprised of fire protection and emergency medical services; water, technical, off-road, and hazmat rescue services; emergency management and community preparedness programs; Enhanced 911 services and telecommunications; and emergency vehicle maintenance.



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
Department of Emergency Services
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Mat-Su Residents:

Thank you for taking a few moments to learn more about your Matanuska-Susitna Borough Department of Emergency Services. The Mat-Su area is a large and diverse collection of several communities covering 25,000 square miles, an area larger than 10 other US States. As residents of the valley we all share a rustic and very unique slice of Alaska, where many people choose to live and recreate. From being a major transportation corridor, enjoying access to numerous waterways, hundreds of trails and thousands of square miles of remote terrain, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough has something for everyone!

To protect our residents and visitors requires an expansive collection of emergency responders and support staff. Your DES firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMT's), paramedics and rescue technicians are members of our community, often your friends and neighbors. We utilize a combination of paid-on-call and full time responders to meet the emergency response needs of our community, 24/7/365. These selfless individuals serve the community during their greatest time of need.

DES responders serve with Integrity, Selflessness and Excellence. These core values are built into everything we do and serve as the cornerstone of our organization. From our earliest responders who drove surplus military vehicles based out of their own garages, to our current responders working from new state of the art facilities and modern fire apparatus, we are still neighbors serving neighbors. In the true spirit of Alaskans, we all band together to meet the communities needs in time of disasters or emergencies.

The Department of Emergency Service's dedicated professionals proudly keep our expansive community safe from all manner of hazards. As you read the following report we hope to give you, our customer, a better understanding of exactly who we are and how we serve you. Please feel free to contact our administrative offices with any questions.

Sincerely,

Ken Barkley

Director of Emergency Services

Emergency Services Director



Ken Barkley

Serving MSB DES since 1992

Ken Barkley has served with DES as the Director since 2019. Prior to that, he served as Deputy Director of Fire for 6 years, beginning in 2014.

Ken's career started in 1990 with the Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department. He joined the Fort Richardson fire department in 1991 as a full time fire fighter. Ken promoted through the ranks ultimately achieving the position of Training Officer, serving until he retired in 2014. In 1990, Ken became an EMT and has continued to be EMT certified through his career.

Ken taught numerous fire and rescue classes all across the State of Alaska, include several rural villages. Throughout Ken's career, he has managed several disasters including wildland fires, flooding, earthquakes and a severe windstorm.

Ken joined Central Mat-Su Fire Department in 1992 while simultaneously working at Fort Richardson. He worked through the ranks to Assistant Chief before he became the Deputy Director of Fire / Rescue. Director Barkley currently manages one of the largest Emergency Services organizations in Alaska.

Emergency Services Deputy Director



Brian Davis

Brian has served with DES as the Deputy Director of Fire/Rescue since December of 2019. Deputy Director Davis retired after 21 years with the City of Fairbanks Fire Department (FFD) before joining the Mat-Su Borough Department of Emergency Services. Brian served the last 5 years of his career with FFD as a Battalion Chief and had worked his way up through each rank in the department including firefighter, Driver, Captain, Battalion Chief and simultaneously served as a paramedic. During his tenure Brian taught numerous classes spanning 20 years for the University of Alaska Emergency Services Program and for the State of Alaska. Brian was one of the original authors of the Rapid Intervention Technician course offered through the State for firefighters.

Before beginning his career with FFD, Brian started in the fire service as a volunteer with the Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department while completing high school. He served with Chugiak for 5 years while earning an AAS degree in Municipal Fire Protection from the University of Alaska and gaining work experience as an EMT with the Community Service Patrol and in private EMS. With a passion for the fire service, Brian then secured his first full time job as a fire fighter with Chena Goldstream Fire and Rescue in the Fairbanks area, starting in early 1994. This offered the education and experience necessary to start his 35 year career in Emergency Services, and he still serves with excitement and passion everyday.

Emergency Services Deputy Director Emergency Medical Services



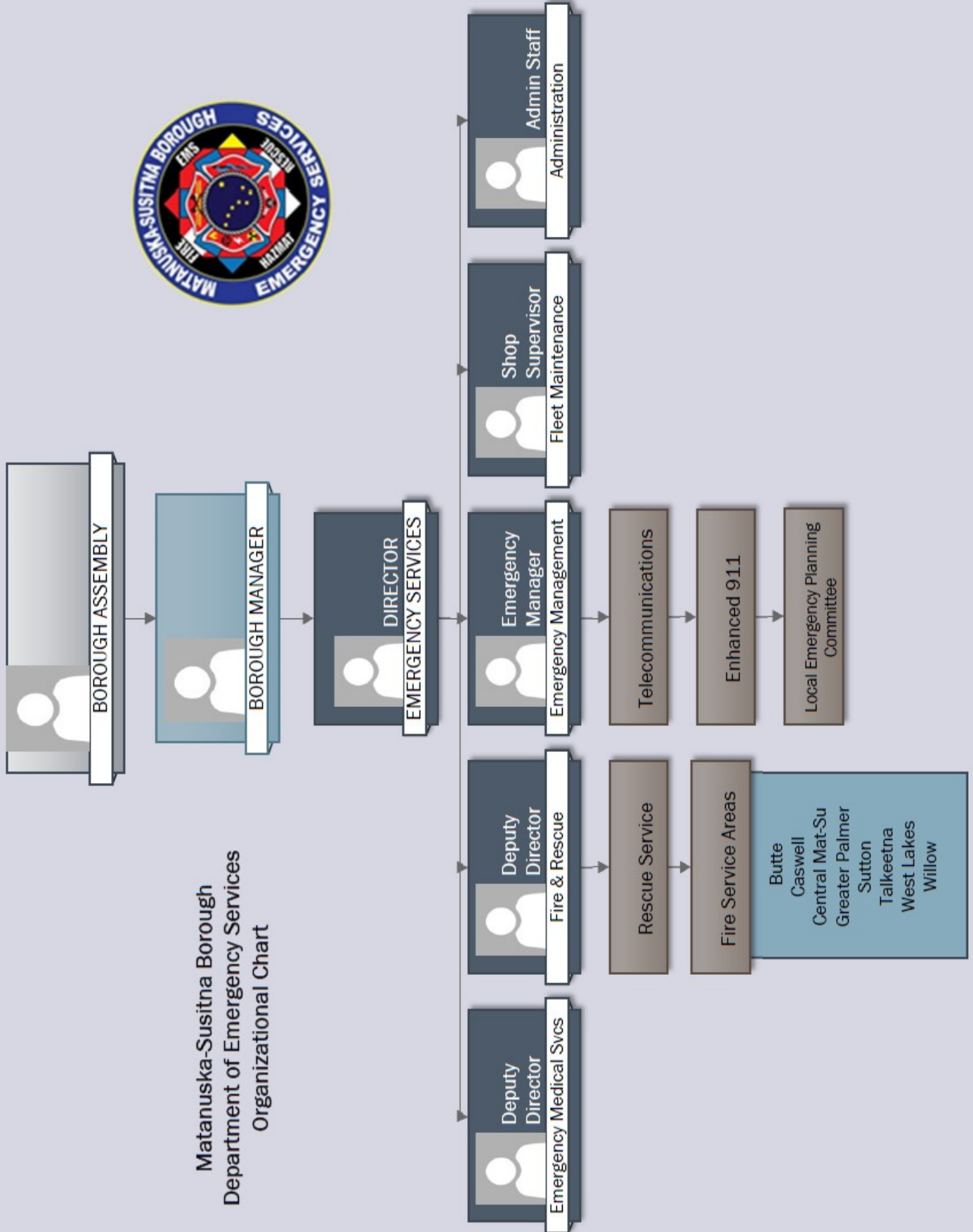
Tracey Loscar
Serving MSB DES since 2015

Tracey has been serving with the Mat-Su Borough EMS since 2015 when she joined as a Battalion Chief. She came from the East Coast, retiring after 27 years of service working for University Hospital EMS in Newark, New Jersey. Her diverse background includes experience in multiple operational and administrative roles throughout her career. She was promoted to Training Supervisor in 2008 and joined the NorthSTAR medevac team as a flight paramedic in 2012. When the opportunity arose she packed up her family and headed west, eventually landing in Palmer, Alaska. In 2018 she was promoted to Operations EMS Chief, leading the department through a period of significant growth and navigating the COVID pandemic. In July of 2021, she became the Deputy Director of EMS.

Placing an emphasis on the high value of quality training, she is a multi-disciplinary educator and was national faculty for NAEMT. She is a columnist and regular contributor to EMS World magazine, where she has served on the Editorial Advisory board since 2010. Tracey is a national speaker on EMS topics, and has been presenting at conferences around the country since 2009.

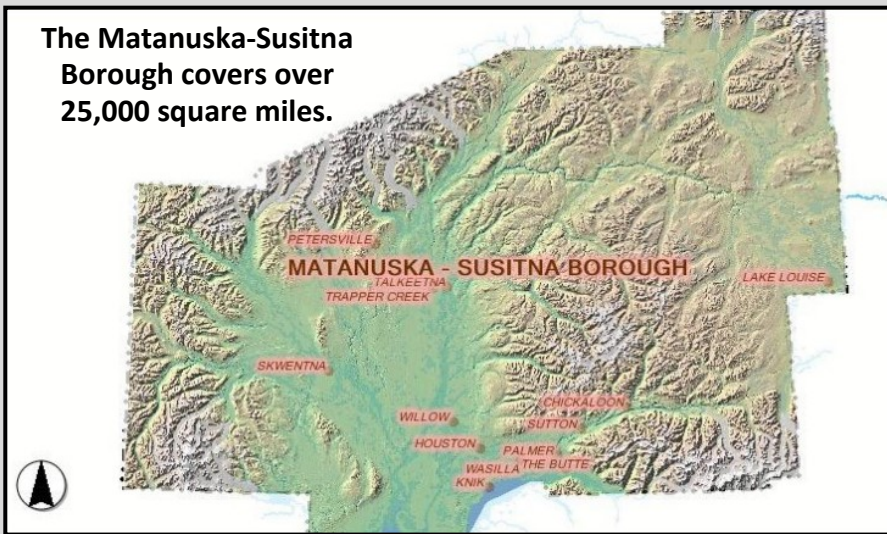
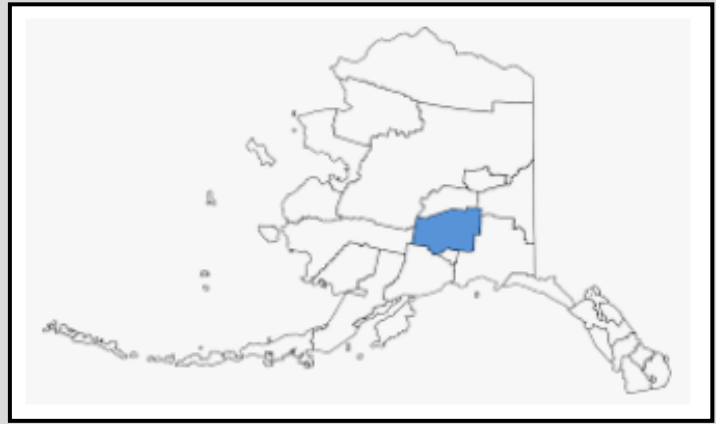


Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Department of Emergency Services
Organizational Chart



Population

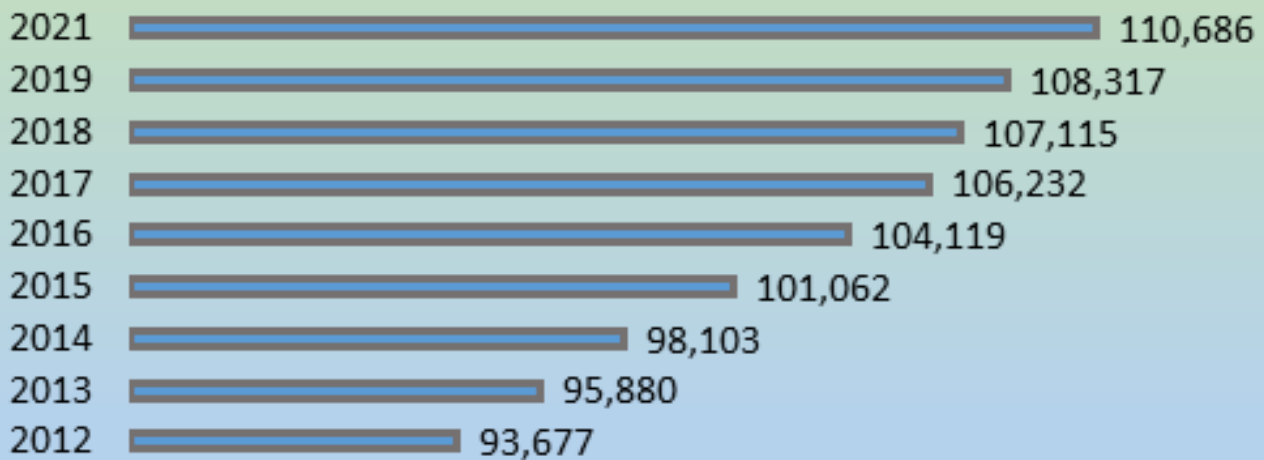
The Alaska Department of Labor predicts a 27% increase in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough population between 2021 and 2035. Population numbers are expected to exceed **130,298** in the next 13 years.



Mat-Su Borough is larger than:

State	Sq. Miles
West Virginia	24,087
Maryland	9,775
Vermont	9,249
New Hampshire	8,969
Massachusetts	7,838
New Jersey	7,419
Hawaii	6,423
Connecticut	4,845
Delaware	1,955
Rhode Island	1,034

Mat-Su Borough Population



Data as shown on the US Census website as of June 2022 for last census period through 2019, and estimated population for 2021

DES History

Emergency services in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough have a long and diverse history. In the early days of the Borough local fire, rescue, and ambulance services were started in the area's individual communities on a volunteer basis, with services provided by the local residents. Over the last 40 years our Emergency Services, now managed by the Borough Department of Emergency Services (DES), has evolved into the modern emergency services organization that serves and protects our residents around the clock.



As the Mat-Su valley grew in population, the need for structured emergency services became apparent to members of the community. EMS started out as roughly nine individual ambulance response groups spread all across the Borough. As the need for a higher level medical care was realized, the "Medic 1" program was born. In these early years a full time paramedic, employed by the Borough, responded on medical emergencies along with the various community EMS groups to coordinate and help provide a consistent higher level of care. Today EMS is an area-wide service provided by a full time department of over 70 people, staffing between 6 and 8 ambulances daily. EMS responds to over 11,000 calls per year and utilizes a mix of full time paramedics, emergency medical technicians, paid-on-call responders and an administrative support staff to accomplish their mission. See the "EMS" section later in this report for further details.

Area fire protection was started out of private barns and garages with make-shift fire apparatus. As the population grew at one point there were roughly 12 different fire departments active across the MSB. At their onset there was little coordination between these departments and no public funding was available to support their operations. In 1982 there was a major arson fire at Iditarod Elementary School in Wasilla that helped spark local change.

In the aftermath of the costly fire the Mat-Su area Fire Chiefs and representatives from the Borough identified significant issues with the operation of our fire services. This self assessment led to the development of plans for mutual aid and better administrative coordination between the various departments. This also led to the eventual establishment of non-area wide funding for fire protection via the official formation of Fire Service Areas (FSA's). Items like common communications, consistent equipment and compatible fire hose were ultimately addressed. Things improved further from there and the eventual merger of several smaller fire departments created the more efficient and larger fire districts we know today.

As run volume and demand for service grew, DES transitioned from an all-volunteer system to a paid-on-call system for responders. Over the last decade full time employees have been added to augment our response force including both administrative and emergency response positions. DES has expanded to an all hazards response agency including fire, rescue, EMS, hazardous materials response, emergency management and the necessary support needed to function such as telecommunications and fleet maintenance.

As the Borough grows, we strive to provide the top notch emergency services our citizens expect and deserve. Our mix of volunteer, paid-on-call, full time, and part time employees work to serve you with our core values of *Integrity*, *Selflessness* and *Excellence*. Some of the very first responders that founded the local fire departments are still active today with DES after nearly 40 years! We look forward to a bright future....

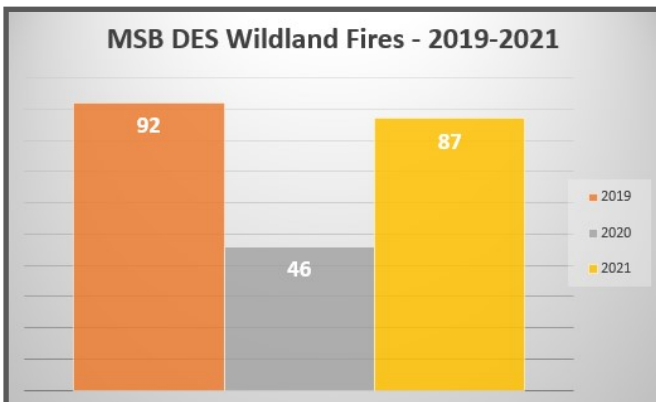
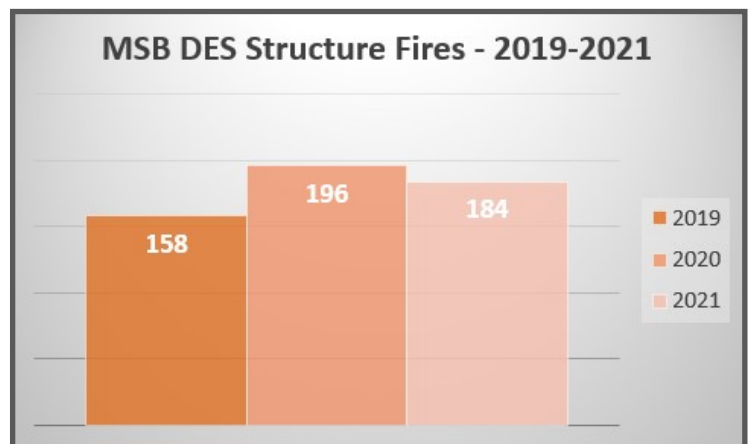
Fire Services



Fire protection is provided (non area-wide) in portions of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough through established Fire Service Areas. In these areas property owners pay an established tax mill levy to receive fire protection. Currently there are 8 functioning fire service areas under DES, each with an advisory board that reviews their department’s annual operating budget and capital improvement projects. The current active service areas are in Butte, Sutton, Greater Palmer Consolidated, Central Mat-Su, West Lakes, Willow, Caswell and Talkeetna. There are also two Cities within the MSB boundaries that each provide fire response to their respective community, Houston and the City of Palmer.

Fire protection includes the response to fire, rescues and related emergency calls, service calls for various types of public assistance, response to Wildland fires, and community fire prevention/public safety education activities. Wildland fire protection is augmented in the summer by the AK Division of Forestry, who also will respond to wildfires including those outside of the established fire service areas.

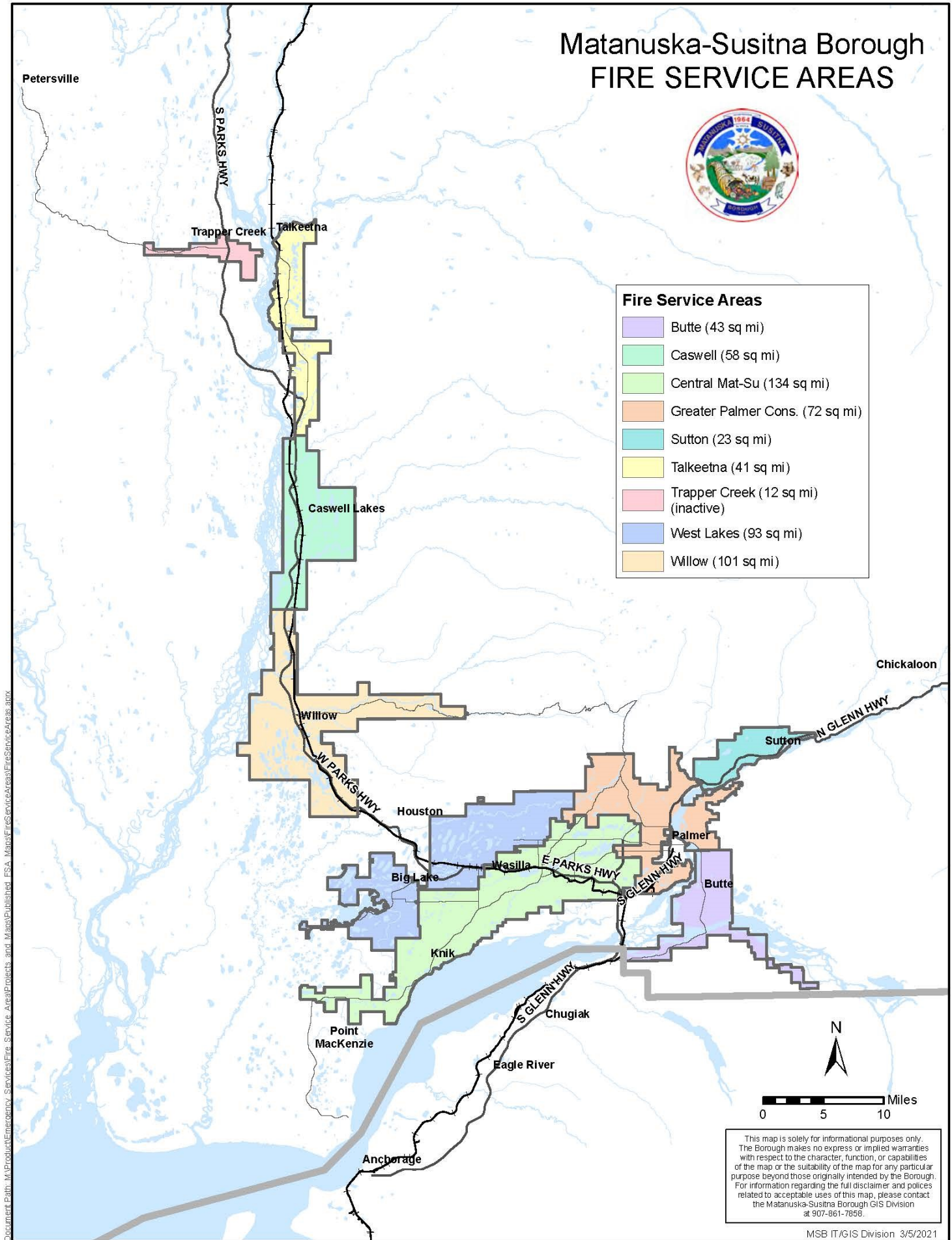
It is important to note that many areas do not have an established fire service area and therefore do not have a fire department to respond on many types of emergencies.



Matanuska-Susitna Borough FIRE SERVICE AREAS



Fire Service Areas	
	Butte (43 sq mi)
	Caswell (58 sq mi)
	Central Mat-Su (134 sq mi)
	Greater Palmer Cons. (72 sq mi)
	Sutton (23 sq mi)
	Talkeetna (41 sq mi)
	Trapper Creek (12 sq mi) (inactive)
	West Lakes (93 sq mi)
	Willow (101 sq mi)



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Butte FSA



The Butte Fire Department was founded in 1953 for the purpose of community fire protection. The department started with eight volunteer members and a surplus 1948 Chevy fire engine from Anchorage. This truck was housed at a sawmill off the Old Glenn Hwy until the first fire station was established in the 1960's off George Plumley Rd. In the early days the Butte Fire Departments primary funding came from spaghetti feeds and civil support. In 1978 a new public safety building, station 21, was constructed and housed one engine and two water tenders. Today the Butte Fire Department is made up of about 30 paid on call responders and a full time Fire Chief, responding from two public safety buildings covering 43 square miles. The department operates Three Engines, Four Tenders, Two Brush Trucks, Three Command Vehicles, and 5 ATV/UTV's to assist in off road rescues. Butte Fire often responds outside their service area to aid in rescues at the Knik Glacier and Jim Creek recreation areas.

Fire Chief	Michael Shipton
FSA Size	43 sq. mi.
Responders	28
2021 Incidents	354



Central Mat-Su FSA



The Wasilla Fire Service Area No. 1 and Lakes Fire Service Area No. 22 operationally merged in 1986 to form the Central Mat-Su Fire Department. The two legally consolidated in 1991 to form the Wasilla-Lakes Fire Service Area No. 130. In 2016 the Fire Service Area was changed to the Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area.

The Central Mat-Su Fire Department provides fire protection for over 130 square miles, which is identified as the Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area . The area primarily encompasses the core area of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough starting on the east at the intersection of the Parks and Glenn Highway, west on the Parks Highway to Vine Road, north to Mile 7 Wasilla-Fishhook Road and south to Mile 6 Point MacKenzie Road. CMSFD protects the entire City of Wasilla. The population of the service area is approximately 59,000, which is approximately 50% of the total population of the borough. The Central Mat-Su Fire Department operates from eight (8) fire stations and each station has assigned officers and personnel totaling over 100 members.

Central Mat-Su Rescue responds to over 2,150 calls each year. This includes structure fires, wildland fires, motor vehicle crashes, medical assists and a variety of other technical and off-road rescue incidents. The CMSFD also has deferred Fire Code authority for their district, which is covered later in the report.

Fire Chief	Michael Keenan
FSA Size	134 sq. mi.
Responders	96
2021 Incidents	2192



Sutton FSA



On October 29, 1976, Phillip O'Neill donated a track of land to be used for Sutton's first Fire Station, located at 11317 Jonesville Rd. Station 1-1 was officially established and began servicing the community at that time. Harold "Mac" McKibben became Sutton's first Fire Chief, and training began for the communities new fire fighters. Many of Sutton's community leaders signed up to be trained and actually served as the areas very first responders. The first station wasn't very big and could only house one older fire engine.

Near this same time, the Borough was awarded a large State grant to build new fire stations in several of its communities. Construction began for a new fire station on the Glenn Highway at milepost 61. This station was big enough to hold 3 fire trucks and an ambulance. The old fire station was then given back to the community and became Sutton's first library. Later, the library outgrew the space and a new library was built for them. When the Sutton Library moved to its new location the old building was transferred to Mat-Su Borough EMS to house an ambulance. Sutton Fire is responsible for rescue responses for a large portion of the Glenn Highway stretching east almost to Lake Louise.

Fire Chief	Brian Carver
FSA Size	23 sq. mi.
Responders	10
2021 Incidents	46



Willow-Caswell FSA



Willow organized fire protection began in 1983 with residents forming a committee to organize a Fire Service Area. Willow Volunteer Fire Department was established with 10 volunteers and a 1943 Chevrolet fire truck. Harry Craviotto was named as the first chief.

In 1985 the FSA was expanded to 115 square miles covering Willow Fishhook Rd to Twelve Mile Lake, the Parks Hwy from Mile 61 to Mile 75 and westward on Long Lake Rd. to Florence Lake. A fire engine and a 3,000 gallon tanker were purchased. A station was built, that exists today, as Station 12-1 at Mile 69.9 Parks Hwy.

The Willow Fire Service area continued to grow and expand to its present day 159 square miles with its northern border at Mile 80.5. Currently there are 5 fire stations and 1 admin building, all with underground water storage tanks. Apparatus Inventory includes 5 Engines, 5 Tenders, 1 Rescue, 2 Brush Trucks, 2 Command Vehicles and 4 utility vehicles. There are 3 snowmachines and 2 ATVs with equipment for off-road rescue.



Memorable events include local floods in 2006, 2012 and 2019. The Sockeye Fire in June 2015 destroyed 7,220 acres, 55 homes and 44 other structures. The McKinley Fire in August 2019 ravaged 3,288 acres, 52 homes, 3 commercial buildings and 84 other structures in the Caswell Fire Service Area.

Caswell FSA was established in January of 2009. It encompasses 57.88 square miles from Mile 80.5 to Mile 95.5 of the Parks and eastward into Hidden Hills and Caswell Lakes Subdivision. Station 13-1, built in 2013, is a modern facility with 1 Rescue Engine, 2 Tenders, 2 Brush Trucks, 3 utility vehicles and an off-road rescue ATV.

Although they are separate Fire Service Areas, Willow and Caswell operate together as one department with 159 square miles to protect. Currently, there are 21 Responders which are Volunteer Paid On Call. The Chief and a Fire Service Assistant are full time Mat-Su Borough employees.

Fire Chief	Richard Boothby
FSA Size	159 sq. mi.
Responders	21
2021 Incidents	310



West Lakes FSA



West Lakes Fire Department is a paid-on-call department that proudly provides, fire, rescue, fire prevention and education services to an estimated population of 24,000 residents residing in Big Lake and Meadow Lakes. The West Lakes Fire Service area is roughly 93 miles². West Lakes also is home to the MSB Hazardous Materials team and a fire boat protecting Big Lake.

The West Lakes Fire Service Area No. 136 is the product of combining Big Lake Fire Service Area No. 33 and Meadow Lakes Fire Service Area No. 34 in 2009.



Meadow Lakes Fire Service Areas were separate fire departments that offered automatic aid to each other's communities for many years. The departments began training and cooperatively supporting each other in the mid 80's. By the 90's they were cohesive partners working together to meet the emergency needs of both communities through stable partnership and mutual objectives.

The Miller's Reach wildland fire began on June 2, 1996 near the City of Houston and spread through both Big Lake and part of Meadow Lakes fire service areas, destroying 344 structures and causing more than \$10 million in damage. The Miller's Reach fire was, at the time, the most destructive in Alaska history consuming more structures than all other wildfires in Alaskan history combined. It was then that the departments cemented their mutual-aid relationship and worked toward combining. In 2009 it was official, Big Lake Fire Dept. and Meadow Lakes Fire Dept. became West Lakes Fire Department. The new West Lakes Patch reflects the partnership by the coupled hose.

Fire Chief	Tawnya Hightower
FSA Size	93 sq. mi.
Responders	42
2021 Incidents	713



Talkeetna FSA



In the spring of 1974 the first steps were taken to form a fire department in Talkeetna. On November 1, 1974 Talkeetna Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated and recognized by the State of Alaska. A total of 40 members and associate members made up the very first roster. An agreement between Talkeetna FAA and Talkeetna Fire permitted a 1962 Howe Jeep FC fire engine and a 300 gallon tank on a trailer, stationed at the FAA building, to be used by the new fire department. The original service area was property within 3 miles of Talkeetna village and areas along the Talkeetna and Susitna rivers. The first Chief was Richard J. Jones. At the time, the area had 365 residents.

In 1976, Talkeetna Fire Hall (Station 11-1) was built with state funding, donations and sales of fire extinguishers and smoke alarms. The FAA fire truck and water tank were officially transferred to the fire department. The department sponsored the first EMT training in the area and by 1977 had acquired an ambulance donated from the City of Anchorage. The fire department continued to be funded by membership, donations, and by renting space to the National Park Service and other organizations.

July 1, 1979 the Mat-Su Borough formed the Talkeetna Fire Service area #24. It was voted on and approved with the hope of being able to acquire additional funding sources and expand the fire service area to mile 6 of the Talkeetna Spur.

Fire Chief	Eric Chappel
FSA Size	41 sq. mi.
Responders	15
2021 Incidents	200

In the Mid 90's the FSA built a second station at MP 99 Parks Highway, allowing for better coverage of the Sunshine area. In recent years a water refill site was installed at mile 6 of the Talkeetna Spur. TFD has worked to modernize trucks, tools and offer more advanced training for responders.

Currently Talkeetna Fire is a paid on call fire department serving areas along the Talkeetna Spur Rd from mile 95 to about 100 of the Parks Highway. TFD averages 12-16 active responding members and operates



out of 2 stations that house 2 Engines, 1 Rescue Engine, 2 Water Tenders, 1 Brush Truck and 2 Rescue Trucks. TFD not only extinguishes fires, but educates the public and provides on and off road rescue services to the northern Susitna valley. Responders are trained as Fire fighters, Rescue Technicians, Medical First Responders, Wildland fire fighters, Hazmat team members, and water rescue team members. Talkeetna's FSA has about 3000 residents plus thousands of seasonal visitors that services are provided to.



Greater Palmer FSA

Palmer Fire & Rescue is a department of the City of Palmer. Through a long-standing services contract, Palmer Fire & Rescue provides fire and rescue services to the Greater Palmer Consolidated Fire Service Area. The relationship balances having both Borough funded functions and services provided by the City of Palmer.

The earliest record found describing fire protection in the Palmer area is a Fire Notice issued by Fire Warden Father Merrill Salzman on October 3, 1935.



On October 17, 1935, a fire call rang out across the colonist's tent camp at about eight o'clock in the morning. A fire started around the stove pipe and was eating away at one end of the tent of the Red Cross nurse, Madeleine de Foras. Crews responded with backpack pumps to extinguish the fire.

Palmer Fire & Rescue (PFR) responds to all fire and rescue emergencies in the City of Palmer and the Greater Palmer Fire Service Area. PFR also provides mutual aid and works regularly with the other Matanuska-Susitna fire departments and the Department of Forestry to assist with the delivery of services.

Over the years firefighting has advanced; however, the spirit of community has remained forever strong in our members. The way we alert our staff has changed, from a siren to pager and smartphones; however, our personnel still answer the call whenever requested to help our community.

Fire Chief	Chad Cameron
FSA Size	Gr. Palmer - 72 sq. mi. City of Palmer— 5.1 sq. mi.
Responders	55
2021 Incidents	Gr. Palmer—601 City of Palmer—276



City of Houston

The Houston Fire Department is a municipal fire department for the City of Houston, Alaska, and is independent of the Mat-Su Borough DES. Houston Fire Department is the third oldest fire department in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and is currently an ISO Class 5/10 fire department. Houston Fire Department serves the area within the City of Houston and provides mutual aid assistance with other fire departments of the Mat-Su Borough. Houston Fire is also a co-operator with Alaska Division of Forestry for wildfire emergencies. HFD actively participates in a training partnership with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Emergency Services so that all personnel are aware of each other's knowledge and skills. Houston participates with the Mat-Su Borough DES on several joint committees related to training and area wide risk reduction. There is a strong partnership between HFD and their Borough partners to provide seamless emergency services to our collective community.



In addition to all-hazard emergency response, we provide management and staffing of the city's animal control division and assist in the parks and recreation department. Houston has two fire stations and has primary responsibility for protecting 54.7 road miles and roughly 22 square miles of land within the city limits.

Fire Chief	Christian Hartley
FSA Size	22.4 sq. mi.
Responders	18
2021 Incidents	312



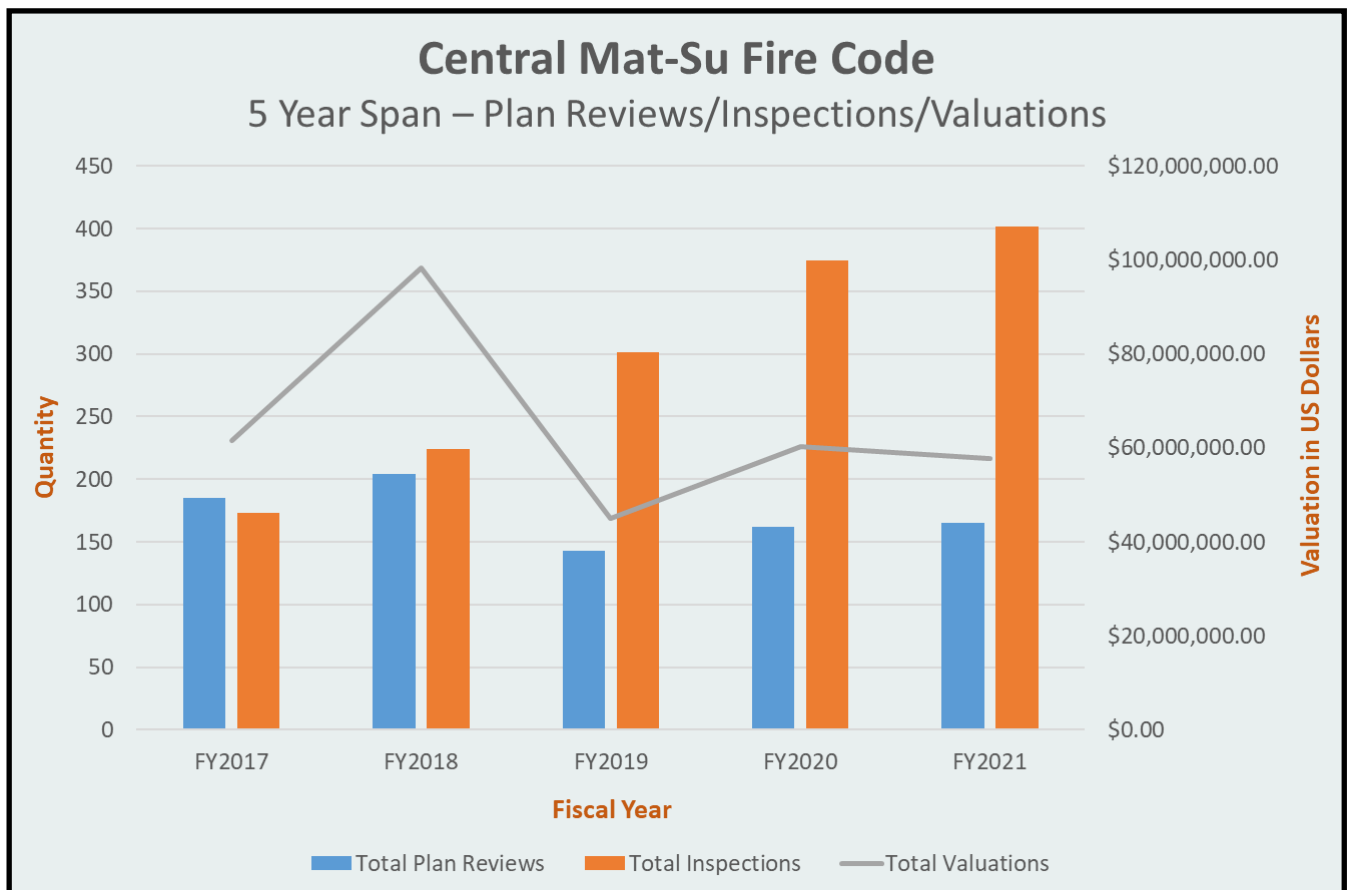
Fire and Life Safety



Plan Reviews and Inspections

The Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area provides a customer based approach to Fire and Life Safety for their service area. The Division of Fire and Life Safety is responsible for several functions, helping to make the fire service area a safer place to live and work. This division performs building plans review and approval for all new commercial buildings and residential buildings of 4 families and more within their FSA. Assuring that buildings are designed and built according to the adopted building codes is an investment in our future as well as providing safer buildings to live, shop, play, and/or work in today.

Fire and life safety inspections of existing buildings like schools, hospitals, large commercial buildings, large mercantile establishments, etc. are provided. This gives the opportunity to assist building owners and managers by educating them on safe practices and pointing out fire and life safety items that need some sort of corrective action taken. The expertise provided during these inspections is one way to help buildings remain safe for everyone over time.



Fire and Life Safety (Con't)

The Fire and Life Safety Office is open for anyone requiring assistance with a project or potential building project within the Central Mat-Su Fire service area. Folks are encouraged to come in and talk to the fire marshals prior to moving forward with a project. This helps to bring up and resolve challenges that may crop up on people with limited knowledge of code requirements.

In 2006, the State of Alaska Fire Marshal's Office granted the Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area a deferral in order to provide the Fire and Life Safety functions listed above on a more local level. This means that these functions can be provided to residents on a much more local level. Local Fire Marshals have a better understanding of the needs and challenges that face builders and businesses locally. They are available to customers for consults, inspections, general questions and so on. The deferral helps keep local things local.

A critical function of the Fire and Life Safety Division is the public education program. An example of this is the annual visits to local schools to present important safety messages for students to bring home and share. Smoke alarms are provided for folks in need and smoke and carbon monoxide alarm education for anyone who asks. You may see the Fire Marshals at local events throughout the year presenting information and expertise on a variety of fire and life safety topics. Fire station tours are another great way to interact with customers and provide information on safety topics.

“Protect Life and Property” is part of our mission and these are just a few ways we accomplish that.



Rescue Services

Rescue services are considered an area wide function of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Rescue services are frequently required along with EMS and fire responses to protect lives. Rescue services include response to motor vehicle accidents, entrapments, assisting EMS crews on medical emergencies, water rescue, off road rescue, and certain technical rescues



that occur. DES and local fire departments partner to cross train firefighters as rescue technicians and provide EMS training so we can best assist the public during their time of need. In the Mat-Su Borough rescue related emergencies account for roughly 60% of a fire departments call volume. Fire department personnel and equipment are staged strategically throughout the Borough and are often able to respond first to medical emergencies and render aid.

The MSB has a dedicated water rescue (Dive) team that is independent

of the fire departments and responds to all manner of water related emergencies anywhere in the Borough. This team is comprised of Divers, Swift Water Rescue Technicians, Ice Rescue Technicians and responders are also cross trained in rope rescue. The team operates a diverse complement of specialty boats, rafts and aluma-skis to support this mission. Annually the water rescue team responds to a variety of emergencies that range from overturned boats/kayaks, missing swimmers, persons trapped in ice or in the mud, to assisting on other rescues that are only accessible via boat or watercraft (Jim Creek).



Water Rescue Chief	Gary Klink
Total Area covered	25,258 sq. mi.
Responders	21
2021 Incidents	29

Fire and Rescue Training

DES is comprised of 8 fire service areas, not including the Cities of Houston and Palmer. Each of these service areas are responsible for the fire and rescue responses to their respective community, which takes a substantial amount of training and education. Across the MSB this is achieved with a mix of full time (career), paid-on-call, and volunteer members. No matter which category a responder falls into, there are rigorous training requirements that must be met to safely serve as a firefighter.

Departments have a dedicated Training Officer to coordinate, organize, and document required training. Training is occurring almost constantly across the Borough as a responders education is a never ending process. All departments train at least once weekly, and all have additional specialty courses conducted regularly throughout the year.

A new recruit firefighter can expect up to 400 hours of training including the MSB Basic Firefighter class, Hazardous Materials Operations, MSB Rescue Technician and State of Alaska Firefighter 1. As a responder progresses in their career with us there are many other internal and external training opportunities such as MSB Medical Fires Responder, Fire Apparatus Driver-Operator (FADO), Fire Service Instructor and eventually progressing into leadership classes such as Fire Officer.

Across the Borough our responders enjoy access to numerous learning opportunities and have access to

some world class training props and facilities. Central Mat-Su Fire Department's facility located off Knik Goosebay Rd serves as our regional training center and is a world class facility boasting well equipped classrooms, a wet lab, inside training areas for use during inclement weather, two burn towers and numerous on-site props. All departments collaborate to share facilities, props and instructors for the betterment of all our responders.



National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

The National Fire Protection Association sets standards that address most aspects of a fire and rescue department's activities including operational responses, training, personnel and equipment. These standards are regarded as the standard industry practice (aka "best practice") and are often adopted by regulatory agencies such as OSHA. Meeting NFPA standards is often a driving factor behind planning projects and purchases for DES. Being in compliance with these standards is an important organizational goal as they are designed to improve service to the community and for the safety of responders and the public we serve. When an organization fails to follow NFPA standards and recommendations it often opens the door for law suits and liability. It is typically in the departments and the communities best interest to meet these recommendations when feasible. DES relies heavily on these standards in both operations and long term planning.



Insurance Services Office (ISO)

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluates fire departments all across the country and grades them on how prepared they are to respond to fires in their community. This rating is often used to help insurance companies set home insurance rates. The better the rating, the cheaper insurance rates may be for home and business owners. It is important to note that this is not the only criteria used to set rates, but is still a factor with many insurance companies.



A company called ISO (Insurance Services Office) creates ratings for fire departments and their surrounding communities. These ratings calculate how well-equipped fire departments are to put out fires in their community. ISO provides this score, often called the "ISO fire score," to homeowners' insurance companies. Insurers then use it to help set homeowners insurance rates. The better equipped your fire department is to put out a fire, the less likely your house is to burn down. That makes your home less risky, and therefore less expensive, to insure.

An ISO fire rating, also referred to as a fire score or Public Protection Classification (PPC), is a score from one to 10 that indicates how well-protected your community is by the fire department. In the ISO rating scale, a lower number is better with 1 as the best possible rating, and a 10 means the fire department did not meet ISO's minimum requirements.



Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) Overview:

The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) is a manual containing the criteria used in reviewing the fire prevention and fire suppression capabilities of individual communities or fire protection areas. The schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire protection system and develops a numerical grading called a Public Protection Classification (PPC).

How the FSRS works:

The FSRS lists a large number of items (facilities and practices) that a community should have to fight fires effectively. The schedule is performance based and assigns credit points for each item. Using the credit points and various formulas, ISO can calculate a total score.

To receive certain PPC ratings, a community must meet minimum criteria. After a community meets those criteria, the PPC rating depends on the community's score on the point scale.



Insurance Services Office (ISO) (Cont'd)

The FSRS considers three main areas of a community's fire suppression system: emergency communications (911 call processing, dispatch and alerting), fire department (including operational considerations), and water supply. In addition, it includes a Community Risk Reduction section that recognizes community efforts to reduce losses through fire prevention, public fire safety education, and fire investigation.

Fire Department:

ISO reviews the distribution of fire companies throughout the area and checks that the fire department tests its pumps regularly and inventories each engine and ladder company's equipment according to NFPA 1901. An important element is the distribution of fire stations within the community. ISO scores apply to properties within a 5 mile radius of a fire station, which helps us plan future station placement based on growth. They also review the fire company records to determine factors such as:

- Training of personnel
- Numbers of personnel who attend/participate in training
- Firefighter response to emergencies (staffing- personnel and apparatus)
- Maintenance and testing of the fire department's equipment

Water supply:

Part of the score is based on the community's water supply. This part of the survey focuses on whether the community has sufficient water supply for fire suppression beyond daily maximum consumption. ISO surveys all components of the water supply system. They also review fire hydrant inspections and frequency of flow testing. Finally, they count the number of fire hydrants that are no more than 1,000 feet from the representative locations. Where there are no fire hydrants, the fire departments ability to shuttle water for a sustained period is tested. This is common in the Mat-Su except for core areas.

Community risk reduction:

The Community Risk Reduction section of the FSRS offers a maximum of 5.5 points, resulting in 105.5 total points available in the FSRS. The inclusion of this section for "extra points" allows recognition for those communities that employ effective fire prevention practices, without unduly affecting those who have not yet adopted such measures. The addition of Community Risk Reduction gives incentives to those communities who strive proactively to reduce fire severity through a structured program of fire prevention activities.

The areas of community risk reduction evaluated in this section include:

- Fire prevention
- Fire safety education
- Fire investigation

You now understand the very basics of ISO, how it affects you and why we care about it!

ISO Ratings By Fire Service Area

<u>FSA</u>	<u>ISO Class</u>
Butte	5/10
Caswell	5/5Y
Central Mat-Su	4/10
Greater Palmer	5/10
Sutton	8B
Talkeetna	4/4X
West Lakes	4/10
Willow	6/10

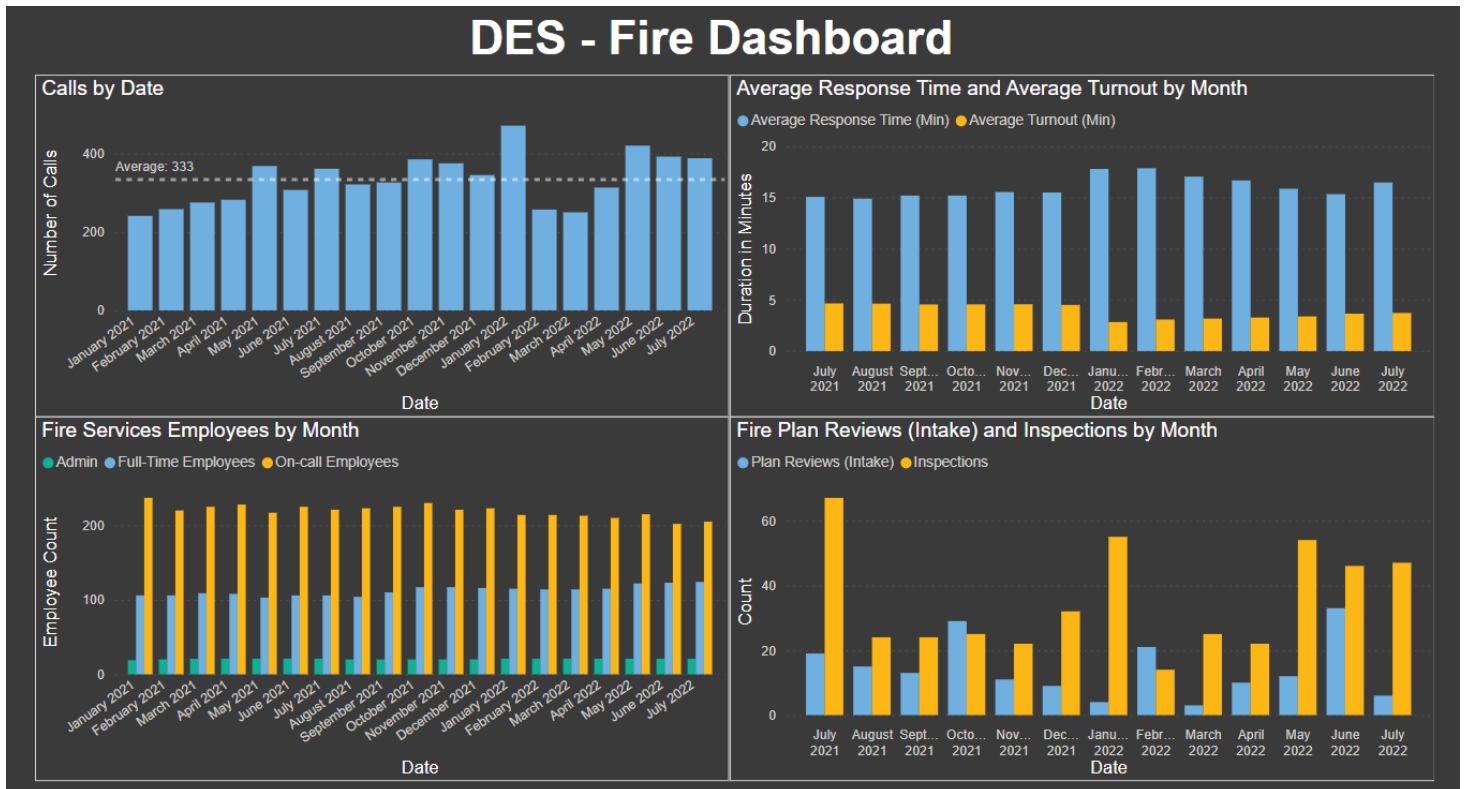
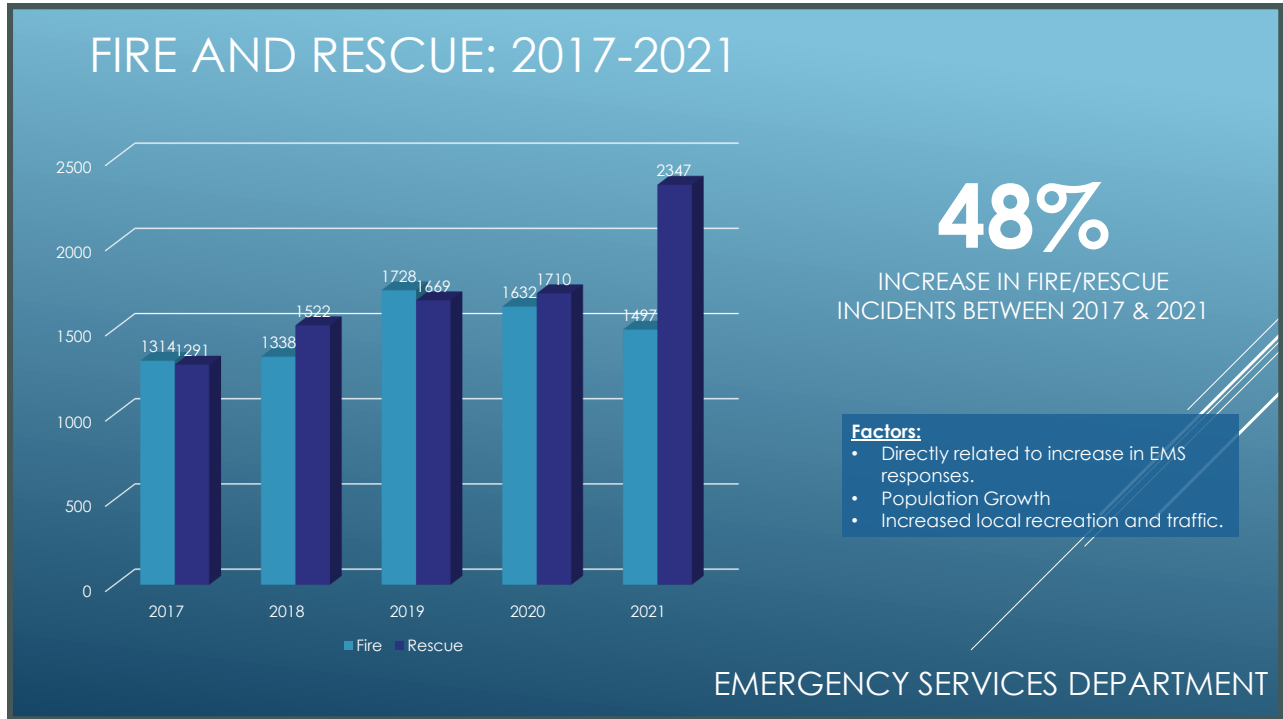


Fire Service Area Mill Rates

<u>FSA</u>	<u>Mill Rate</u>
Butte	3.155
Caswell	3.196
Central Mat-Su	1.950
Palmer (Greater)	0.900
Sutton	4.113
Talkeetna	2.914
West Lakes	2.063
Willow	2.637



Fire & Rescue Call Volume Trends and Key Performance Indicators



Hazardous Materials Team



The MSB Department of Emergency Services is also responsible for responses to Hazardous Materials Incidents within the Mat-Su Borough. A tremendous amount of hazardous substances are transported by truck and rail through our community everyday. The Hazardous Materials Team is based with the West Lakes Fire Department, housed at Fire Station 73. The Haz Mat Team operates as a Level B Hazardous Materials Team which focusses on Incident Stabilization and decontamination of contaminated victims and rescuers. This service relies heavily on a staff of on-call responders and industry specialists. The team works as part of a structured

statewide response system, and works with DEC and other response agencies as needed. If personnel are interested in joining the Haz Mat team they should contact our administrative office.



History of MSB EMS



As the Mat-Su Valley began to expand as a population center, so did the need for emergency services. Clusters became communities and from these small population centers came the various service areas within the larger Borough. From the 80s into the early 2000s, this resulted in the development of 10 individual departments – each manned by local members from the community. They had no public funding, few resources and little coordination, but like good Alaskans they persevered in their goal of helping their neighbors. In order to provide a higher level of service, DES hired 5 on-call Paramedics whose role would be to support these local agencies and provide advanced prehospital care where they could. These dedicated people were often available around the clock, and it became obvious that more was needed. EMS requires technical proficiency and clinical competency, which requires hours of training and practice. The structure of offering service via ten different services, each with its unique delivery model, resulted in inconsistent services. While there were a few full-time employees, the majority of responders were still on-call only. In an attempt to improve coordination, the departments were organized into two larger districts: “Core” meant the Wasilla area, and “Rural” indicated those departments in areas further out from the population center. As population and call volume increased, regular coverage for many areas of the

Borough struggled constantly. In an effort to stabilize the delivery of service to the community, in 2015 DES decided to operationally consolidate the ten ambulance services under one umbrella agency, Mat-Su Borough EMS.

The following few years were spent improving the operations and standards of care. Ambulances and equipment were standardized throughout the Borough. Medical protocols were reviewed, updated



and re-constructed. Response models and organizational structure were updated and implemented. The 911 dispatching process was updated, streamlined and moved under MatCom. Even with the regular improvements there were still significant gaps in call coverage, especially in the rural areas. The on-call (or volunteer) service model could no longer keep up with the marked increases in population and call volume. In 2019 the Assembly took two significant steps to improve the delivery of EMS in the MSB. It approved the building of Station 11-9, to cover the Northern Susitna Valley and it approved 25 full-time EMS positions. The ability to have dedicated EMS coverage 24/7 happened with their support. This marked a major turning point in MSB EMS’s ability to provide care to the community. Training and competency became a cornerstone, promoting a culture of excellence. Equipment was standardized and logistics were streamlined, reducing costs. In 2020 the Assembly approved an additional 16 full-time positions, giving MSB EMS the ability to maintain operational coverage of 6-8 ambulances 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

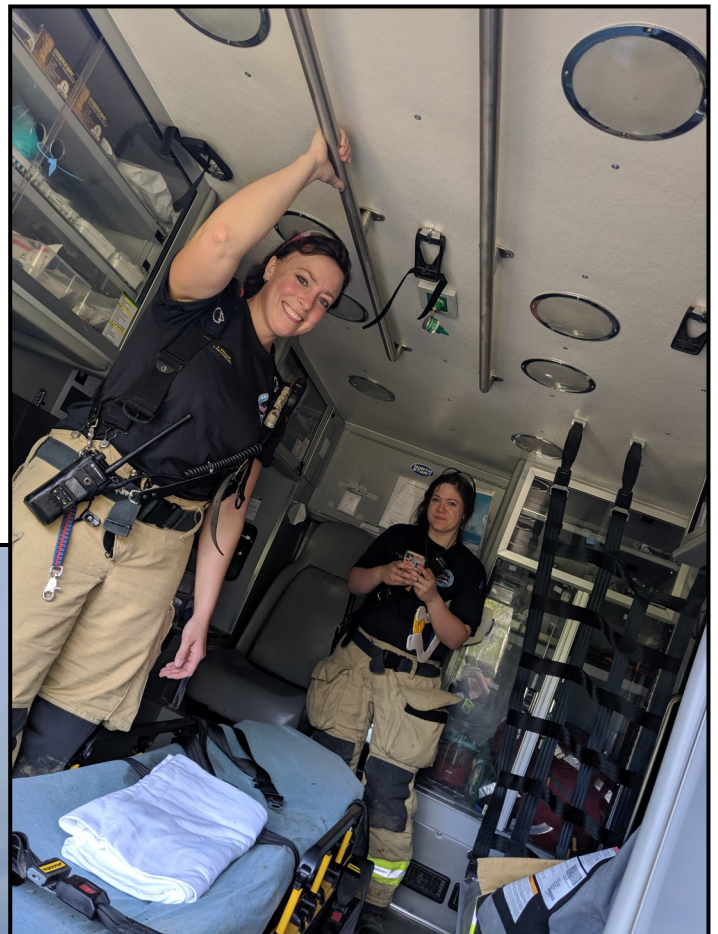


Emergency Medical Services

EMS services are an area-wide service available to the community in all areas of the Mat-Su Borough. These services are provided as part of the established general mill levy that pays for borough provided services. The EMS department is responsible for staffing ambulances assigned to various locations across the borough and providing Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support and transport services to those in need. This is provided by a mix of Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians, administrative and support personnel. Our EMS services are provided primarily by full time medical professionals and augmented by additional paid-on-call responders. MSB EMS runs under the direction of a contracted Physician Medical Director and written medical standing orders to provide unparalleled medical care to those who live or visit our vast response area. The Mat-Su Borough is an area equivalent in size to the State of West Virginia which presents unique challenges for the Department of Emergency Services. EMS is integrated into every level of our responses.



EMS Chief	Mike Thompson
Total Area covered	25,258 sq. mi.
Responders	80
2021 Incidents	11,090



2004

10 Individual Departments
5 Paramedics (Borough-wide)
On-Call only

2015

Departments are operationally consolidated as under one umbrella agency – MSB EMS.
Majority of staff still On-Call only.
Regular coverage for many areas begins to struggle.

2010

Departments remain independent but are organized into two larger districts: "Core" (Wasilla-area) and "Rural" (North and East).

2019

In response to increases in population and call volume, Assembly approves 25 FT positions.
Station 11-9 built in Sunshine and staffed, to offer immediate area coverage in the Northern area.

2020

Assembly approves 16 FT positions.
Training and logistics continue to be streamlined, reducing costs and implementing internal training.
COVID response begins.

2021

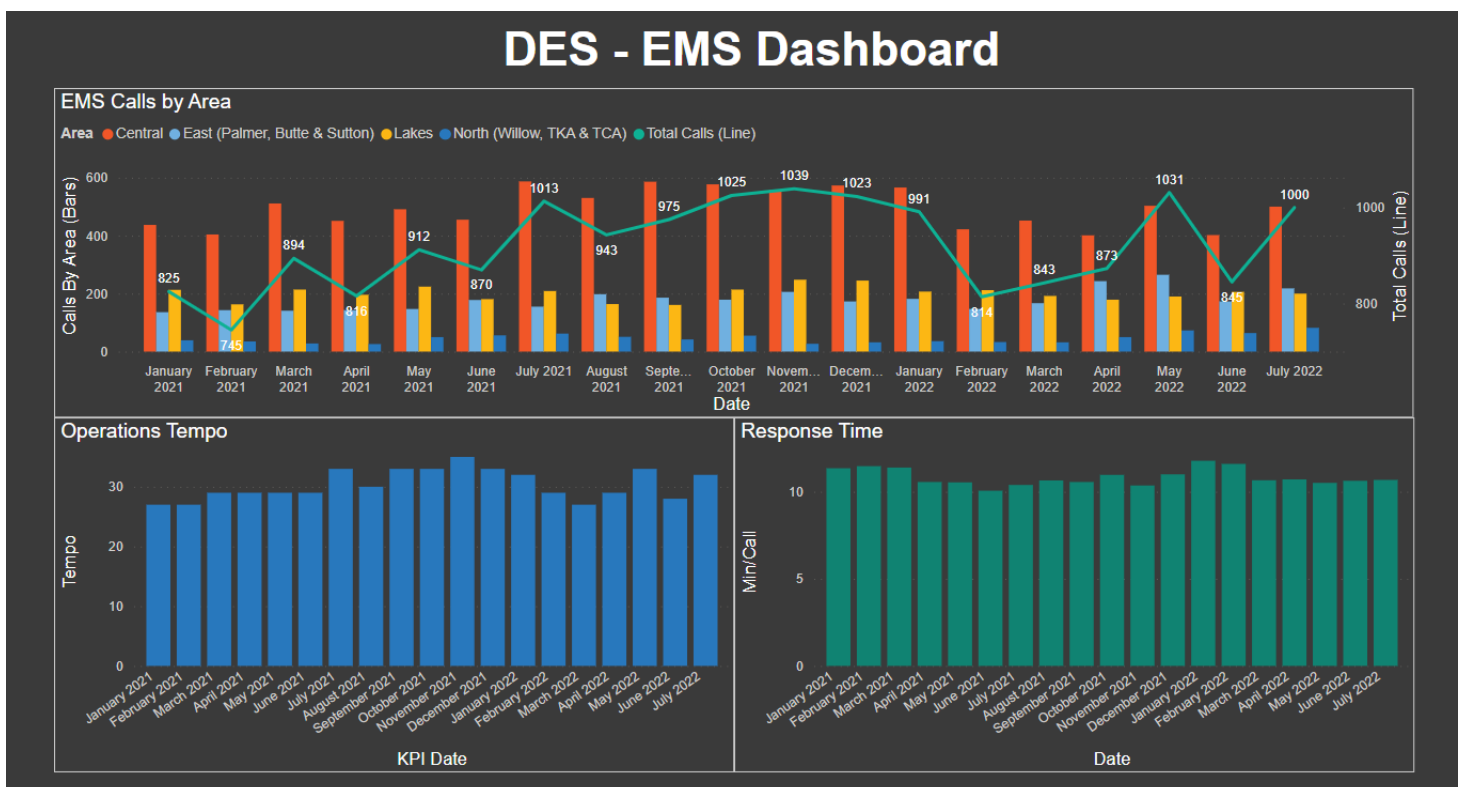
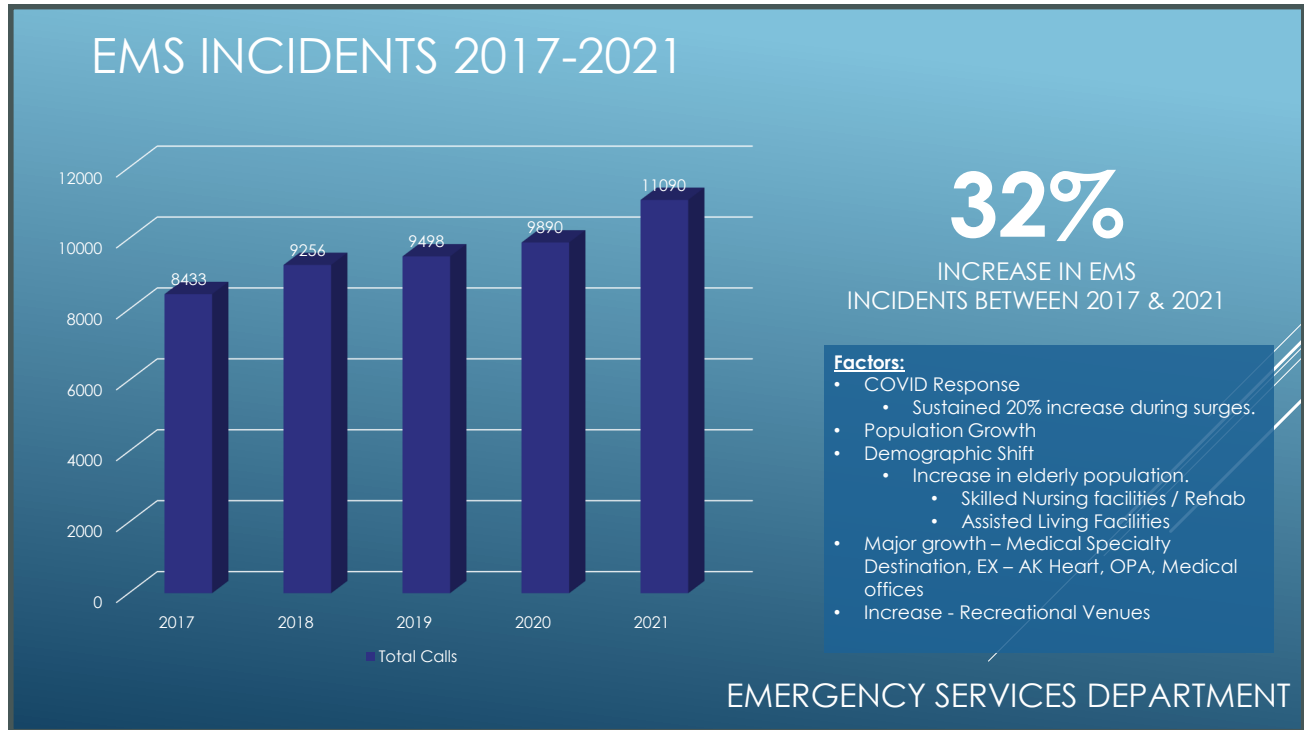
Pandemic response dominates operations.
The timely addition of the additional positions allows EMS to maintain normal operations throughout.

2022

Fully staffed, internally trained.
100% Nationally Registered
Data-driven deployment
Location-based dispatch.

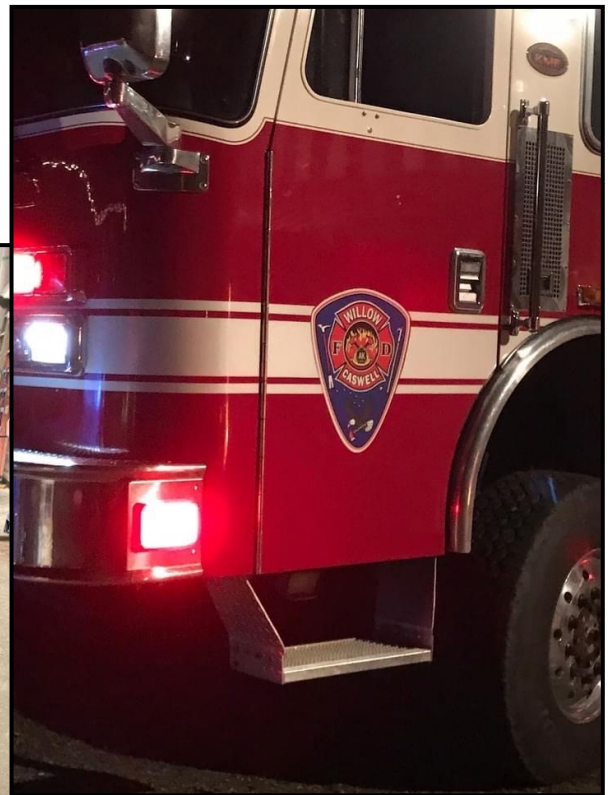
Evolution of EMS

EMS Call Volume Trends and Key Performance Indicators



DES Fleet Maintenance

The MSB Department of Emergency Services includes its own Fleet Maintenance department to keep our diverse fleet of emergency vehicles and equipment running smoothly. Fleet is responsible for preventative maintenance, repairs and required inspections of over 100 large fire and rescue apparatus as well as over 450 other combined vehicles and pieces of emergency equipment. Our skilled mechanics work on our large apparatus and other response vehicles including ambulances, command vehicles, boats, off-road vehicles and trailers. Our current staff of five full time mechanics, including our shop foreman, are all certified Emergency Vehicle Technicians and operate out of a modern maintenance facility co-located at West Lakes Fire Station 7-3. The mechanics, along with administrative staff and several part time mechanics, are responsible for keeping all of the DES and City of Houston emergency vehicles and equipment in a safe operating condition 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Occasionally, Fleet Mechanics are even called into duty while on emergency scenes. Without the Fleet Maintenance department, Emergency Responders would not be able to respond safely to our community.



Telecommunications

A Division of Emergency Management, the DES Emergency Telecommunications branch is the implementation and maintenance working arm of our communications system. Our communication technicians are constantly monitoring, improving, trouble shooting and building our day to day and disaster communications technology and systems. Communication responsibilities include responder alert system paging, radio communications, radio maintenance and programming, state interoperability, dispatch radio support, Animal Care, Solid Waste, repeater site operations, disaster communication response, and integrating emerging technologies. Resources of Telecom include over 1000 radios, 12 operating telecommunication sites, 3 field deployable command units, 1 portable communications tower, and 1 Emergency Management Field Command vehicle. This mobile command post is capable of emergency 911 call delivery and managing large incidents. Over the course of the last 5 years, this group of professionals has increased the number of communications sites owned and maintained by the Borough, eliminating many costly repeater site contracts, and has made steady progress towards a more powerful and more resilient communications system, to deliver these services to our main customers, local FSA's and EMS, both internally to the MSB and partnering agencies. In short, this division is responsible for keeping all of the radios, communications capabilities and equipment used by DES in a safe, operating condition, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Our Telecommunications team is led by our communications specialist, Zack McRae, who is assisted by one other full time employee and 2 part time employees. These personnel meld together many technologies including hardware, software and information technology (IT) skills to provide our responders with a robust and dependable communications network. Communications is an essential function of emergency communications, especially in an area as vast as the Mat-Su.



Emergency Management

Under Emergency Manager, Casey Cook, the Mat-Su Borough has an Emergency Management team running a world class Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This team is responsible for all large scale planning, preparedness, response and recovery operations in the MSB. These duties include preparedness grants, preparedness activities and outreach to the community, as well as emergency telecommunications and E911, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). A major portion of this responsibility is the staffing and operations of the Emergency Operations Center, and the training required for DES, MSB and partnering agency employees to be able to staff an efficient and professional EOC when needed. EOC operations includes, but is not limited to, mass notification, incident planning and coordination, logistics, finance, purchasing, documentation and liaising with partnering agencies throughout the MSB and the State. Major disaster recovery is also managed out of the EOC to include 3 open Presidentially declared disasters currently. This involves working as the recovery chair and collaborating with MSB project managers and internal customers, the State of Alaska, FEMA and other Federal agencies, to repair or rebuild schools, roads, bridges, etc., and all the required paperwork and programmatic needs in order to recover and receive reimbursements for those disaster projects. The EM team is also the first point of contact for individual MSB residents in dealing with disasters after being declared by the State.



The Emergency Manager is assisted by a skilled and dedicated team of 2 full time Emergency Telecoms staff and 16 part time EOC Specialists, each with specific areas of expertise. It takes all of this hard-working team to keep our Borough functioning and providing essential services, even during times of widespread disaster.



Major Events



Miller's Reach (1996)

Wildfire that destroyed over 37,000 acres and 454 structures. It caused millions in private property losses and cost \$16 million to fight.



Erosion (2012)

Overflow from the Matanuska River, swollen from heavy snowpack, erodes properties along the river.



Cyber Attack (2018)

Malware attack in August of 2018 crippled the MSB IT systems, preventing normal service for weeks.



Flooding (2006)

Episodes of significant local flooding resulted in interruption of services and evacuation.



Sockeye Fire (2015)

7,200 acres burned; 100 structures destroyed. Road closures effected commerce, rail traffic and tourism. Over 100 residents and 1,000 animals evacuated and sheltered.



Cook Inlet Earthquake

7.1 earthquake in 2018. Large scale incident that highlighted the importance of coordination, communications and public information.



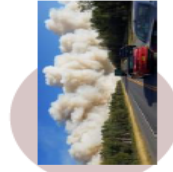
COVID (2020, 21, 22, ??)

Supporting local response to the SARS CoV-2 pandemic. Data tracking, treatment and testing coordination, supply chain management, vaccination support (PODs).



Willow Creek Flooding

2020 – Evacuation and rescue of stranded residents and multiple animals. Supply chain management and access control for residents spanning multiple days.



McKinley / Deshka Fires

In 2019, over 4,600 acres burned. Approximately 100 people sheltered, over 2,000 evacuated, 52 residences and 139 buildings destroyed. *First use of evacuation call center in the EOC.



Windstorm (2022)

The fourth longest "Bora" event in Alaska history. Over 48 hours of Category 1 winds, resulting in major damage across MSB.

Community Emergency Response Team

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations. CERT volunteers also help their communities by providing emergency preparedness information and promoting safety at local events.



Between 2004 and 2008 the MSB hosted numerous CERT Train the Trainer classes for people from across the state. After the train the trainer courses numerous CERT classes were facilitated for the public in the MSB by Bea Adler. There was also a successful effort to train borough staff and form CERT teams in the borough admin building. People did not typically stay involved after receiving the training until 2015 when teams were established that met and trained regularly. Currently there are 6 teams in the MSB - Willow, Palmer-Wasilla, Talkeetna, Glacier View, Butte and Trapper Creek.

In 2019, MSB Emergency Management staff and CERT volunteers took the My Preparedness Initiative (MyPI) AK train the trainer course and became a part of the AK Cohort of the National MyPI program. A comprehensive 3 component youth emergency preparedness and leadership course that includes CERT basic training. This spring/summer of 2022, 2 MyPI AK courses were held in the Mat-Su Borough, one in Wasilla and the other in Willow, with a total of 26 students.

Future goals for MSB CERT include the formation of more teams, increased inter-team trainings and hosting a state-wide CERT symposium.



For more information about CERT training in the Mat-Su Borough contact Talon Boeve at

talon.boeve@matsugov.us

Or

907-861-8316.

Local Emergency Planning Committee



A Local Emergency Planning Committee, or LEPC, is a voluntary organization which is established in an Emergency Planning District designated by the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). Both SERC and LEPCs were established to meet the requirements of the Federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (SARA Title III) for emergency response planning. The Mat-Su LEPC is required to receive annual Tier Two (Chemical Inventory) Reports from local industries. The LEPC uses this information to perform hazard assessments for Borough communities.

The primary objective of the Mat-Su District Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is to increase the public's awareness and knowledge about hazardous chemicals present in the community and about the release of these chemicals into the environment. The LEPC's initial task is to develop an emergency plan to prepare for and respond to chemical emergencies. The plan is then reviewed annually, tested, and updated.

Since the Mat-Su LEPC has an "all hazards" focus, such planning has been broadened to include ensuring borough-wide preparedness for natural and manmade disasters in addition to chemical-related incidents. Other natural and man made disasters that are included in preparedness planning are earthquake, flooding, fire, and severe weather. The LEPC works diligently to develop and maintain Borough-wide emergency planning to prepare for and respond to chemical and all-hazard emergencies, annually review, test, and update the plan, and works to increase public awareness of hazardous chemicals present in the community, and the need for personal safety preparedness and plans.

Communities served by the Mat-Su LEPC include the Cities of Houston, Palmer, and Wasilla, as well as all of the Borough's many unincorporated and rural areas. The Mat-Su LEPC boundaries coincide with the boundaries of the Mat-Su Borough.

The Mat-Su Borough District LEPC is a borough managed advisory board and is open to the public. Information regarding meeting dates and times can be found on the Mat-Su Borough website.

Enhanced 911 Service



911 service is a vital part of our nation's emergency response and disaster preparedness system. In October 1999, the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 (911 Act) took effect with the purpose of improving public safety by encouraging and facilitating the prompt deployment of a nationwide, seamless communications infrastructure for emergency services. One provision of the 911 Act directs the FCC to make 911 the universal emergency number for all telephone services.

The FCC has taken a number of steps to increase public safety by encouraging and coordinating development of a nationwide, seamless communications system for emergency services. The FCC has designed and established transition periods to bring the nation's communications infrastructure into compliance.

In order to deliver emergency help more quickly and effectively, the carriers and public safety entities are upgrading the 911 network on a regular basis. For example, most 911 systems now automatically report the telephone number and location of 911 calls made from wireline phones, a capability called Enhanced 911, or E911.

The FCC also requires wireless telephone carriers to provide 911 and E911 capability, where a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) requests it. Once it is implemented fully, wireless E911 will provide an accurate location for 911 calls from wireless phones.

Other FCC rules regulate 911 for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), mobile satellite services, telematics, and Text Telephone Devices (TTYs). The 911 requirements are an important part of FCC programs to apply modern communications technologies to public safety.

The Matanuska Susitna Borough currently contracts with Mat-Com, the City of Wasilla's Dispatch Center, for dispatch services for EMS, fire and rescue. Mat-Com is continually upgrading their systems and services to comply with the ongoing FCC mandates. Mat-Com and Palmer Dispatch are both Public Safety Answering Points within the Mat-Su Borough that are eligible to utilize the Enhanced 911 revenue to upgrade their systems and pay for expenses as per Alaska Statute 29.35.131—911 Surcharge.

Public Education & Community Risk Reduction

Every year DES fire, rescue, EMS and Emergency Management departments fulfill requests for participation in a wide range of activities and events held throughout the community. These requests come from businesses, classroom teachers, schools, specialty groups, churches, and community members to name a few. Annually our fire or rescue departments visit local elementary schools to conduct fire & life safety presentations to the students. In addition to the elementary schools, departments also visit numerous day care facilities to go over a range of age appropriate fire & life safety topics to preschool age children. When visiting these smaller facilities, apparatus are brought on-site for the children to see in a friendly setting and become comfortable with firefighters.

Smaller groups and organizations request station tours and fire safety education for the purpose of helping the group's members. Elementary schools also request DES presence at the school's "safety fair" where families come to learn about how to keep their family and home safe. Engaging with these groups of children offer important opportunities to emphasize fire and general safety messages. When children get older, Emergency Services Career Information is offered to attract young adults into emergency services as either a career, or to serve their community as an on-call responder.

Many local annual events give DES opportunity to gain a lot of exposure to citizens allowing for a more personal engagement with people. Local businesses in the area frequently host in-house fire safety events that DES departments are present for. These events allow DES responders to answer questions and discuss fire safety items available in the place of business specifically. DES participates in child safety activities by supporting Bicycle Rodeo Events. These bicycle rodeo events focus on injury prevention and bicycle riding safety and include a bicycle helmet giveaway.

DES agencies work hard in many ways to provide for a safer community through public education.

Activities Include:

- Home Address Sign Installation
- Smoke and CO Detector Installation
- Firewise Surveys
- Wild Fire Preparedness
- Halloween Trunk or Treat Events
- Open House and station Tours
- Water Safety Standbys



Public Education (Cont'd)

While many of the events are focused around safety, some participation requests are for fun events like the Foster Parent Appreciation Day, the Back-to-School Show Giveaway, Trunk-or-Treat Events, Canoe & Kayak Regatta, the Law Enforcement Olympic Torch Run, and the Last Ball Golf Tournament. These fun events allow participation in different ways, but still provide the means for educating people on various fire & life safety topics. Annual events that are held in-house at various stations are the Wildland Fire Preparation Day and Halloween Open House. The MSB fire departments man the Alaska State Fire Chiefs Booth at the Alaska State Fair. With the State Fair lasting over two weeks, DES has increased exposure to engage with the community, reaching people not otherwise reached. In addition to all of the above DES provides fire safety & injury prevention education to the employees of the Office of Children's Services that conduct home visits. This helps OCS point out fire and injury risks in homes and helps educate/enforce the importance of fire safety and injury prevention to the parents of these children.

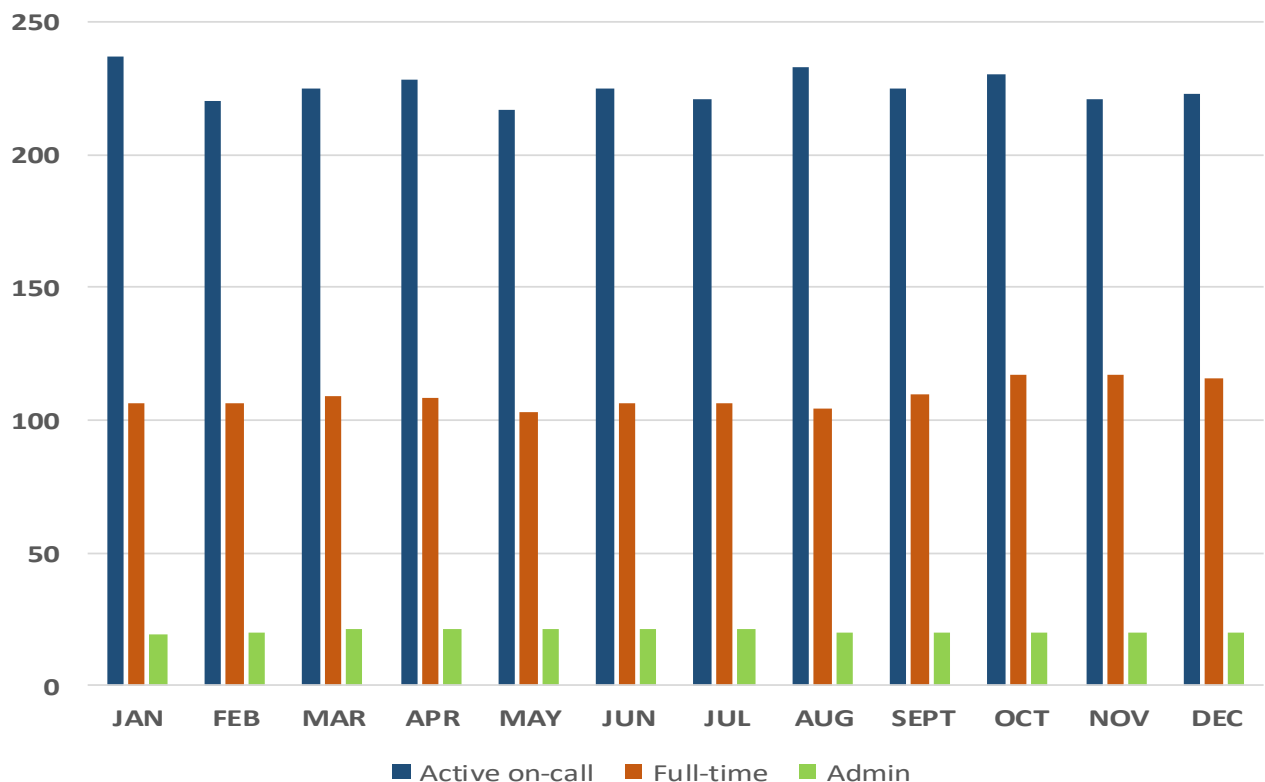
MSB fire departments install smoke alarms and CO detectors in homes that need them. Installation of these alerting devices can occur while on site for an incident or they can be scheduled by request of a home occupant. MSB approved address signs are strongly encouraged for properties that lie within the Mat-Su Borough. These signs assist emergency personnel to quickly locate an incident. These are just a sample of the many ways DES departments routinely engage the public to aid in the fire and injury prevention. This helps build a safer community for all.



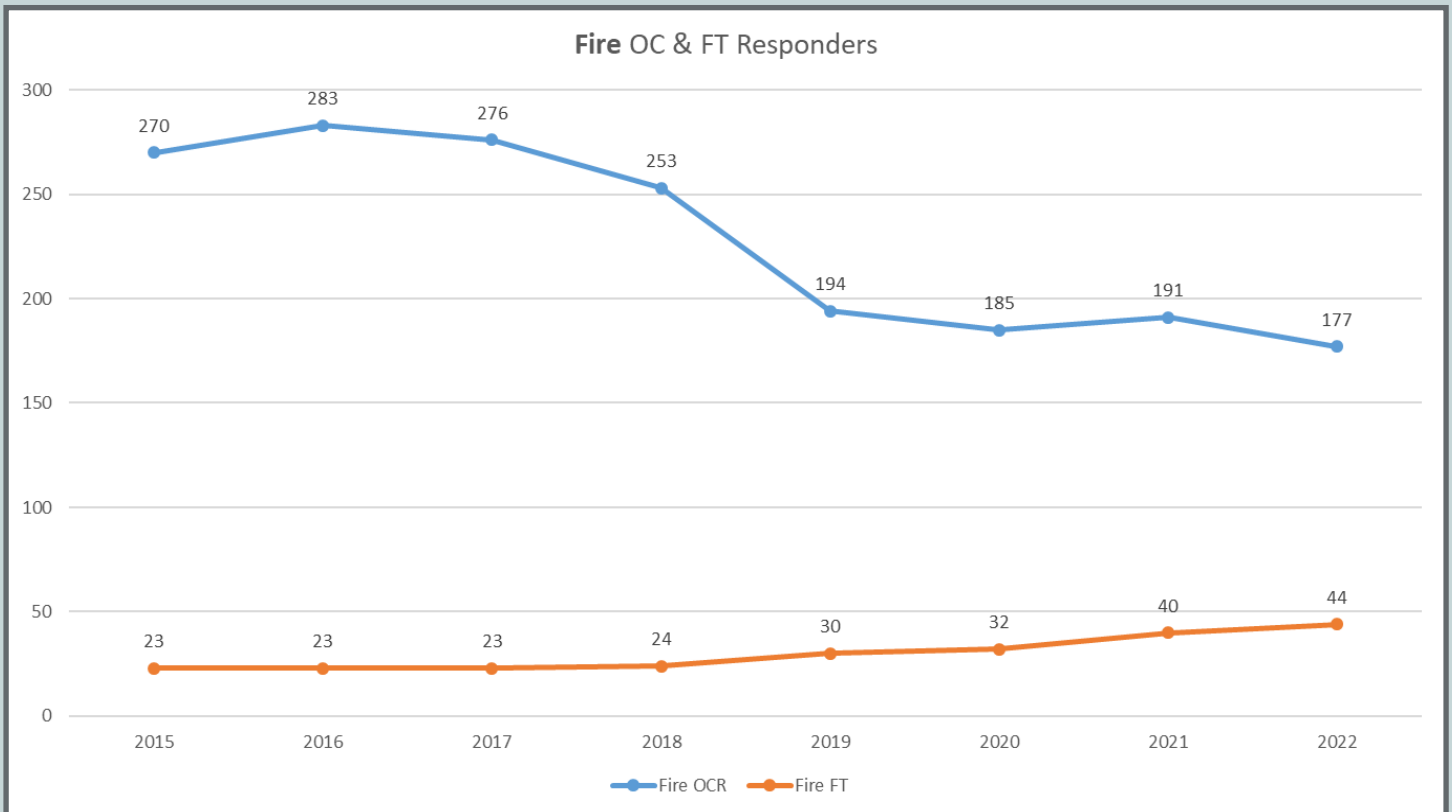
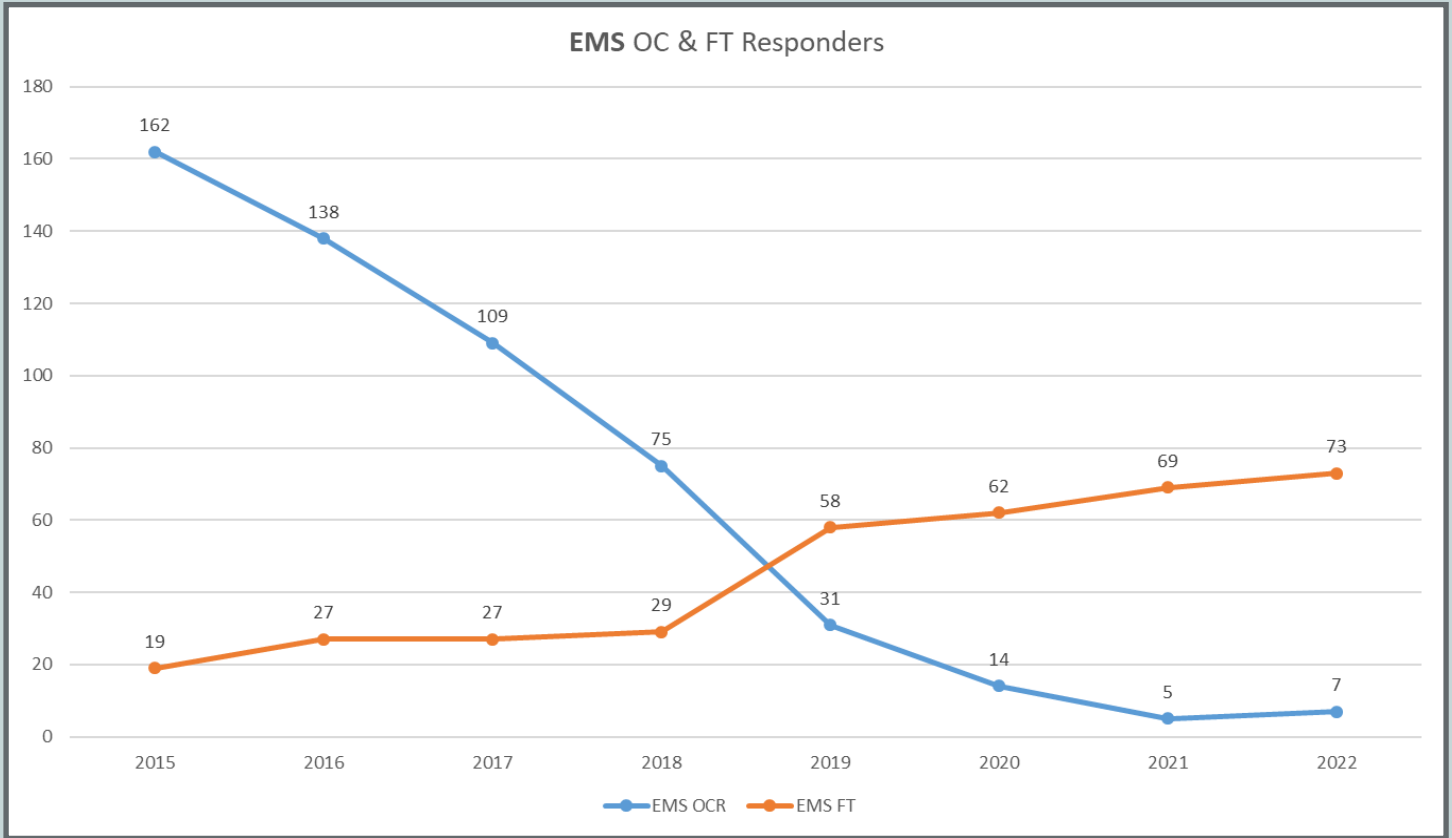
Personnel Overview

The Mat-Su Borough Department of Emergency Services employs an average of 360 personnel in the disciplines of EMS, Fire, Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Fleet Maintenance and Emergency Management. Approximately 60% of these public servants operate as on-call responders who meet the same standards of training as full-time responders, while working other full-time jobs outside of emergency services. Our personnel attend weekly trainings and pursue advancement in their skills through completion of continuing education. Their dedication demonstrates a passion for serving their communities and making a difference in people's lives. Unlike other Mat-Su Borough personnel, emergency responders must be available 24/7 and 365 days per year. At least 20 full-time responders and many on-call responders are on shift and available at any given time come rain or shine. Due to the transient nature of Alaska's residents and high standards of service which translates to high turnover rates, new responders are needed continuously, especially in communities with smaller populations. Emergency Services is a calling for many that requires extreme compassion, critical thinking, and flexibility to make it a career, and we are fortunate for every single one of our members who embody these qualities.

DES Personnel 2021



Average Number of On-Call and Full-Time Responders By Year



**Average
Personnel
Count
360**

**60%
On-call
40%
Full-time**

**Net Hire Ratio
1.07**

**Average #
Applications
per job
11**

**Annual Counts
Hires
85
Losses
80
Promotions
145**

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Recruitment

Applications taken online at
www.matsugov.us/jobs

Full-time Positions
~ 175 applications/year

On-call Positions
~ 325 applications/year

Most Emergency Responders serve less than 5 years, but an increasing number serve longer when full-time positions are available.



HIRING & RETENTION STEPS

Physical Ability Test

Panel Interview

Background Check

Physical

Training Academy

Weekly / Monthly Training

Emergency Call Experience

Continuing Education

Rank Promotion

**Average #
On-call
Personnel
225**

**Average
Tenure of All
Personnel
5.9 years**

**The Majority of
Personnel
Regularly Work
More than 40
hrs/wk or as a
2nd Job**

**High risk
factors among
Responders
include PTSD,
Depression,
Substance
Abuse, Suicide,
Obesity, and
Heart Attack.**

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Retention

All personnel are recognized for their years of service, including volunteer and on-call years, at regular benchmarks. They are also eligible for nomination by peers to receive Excellence Awards.

Nearly half of all Emergency Services personnel are new within the last 24 months. A quarter have been with us for 10 years or more. A special group comprising less than 3% have served 30 years plus.

RETENTION EFFORTS

Years of Service Certificates

Peer-nominated Excellence Awards

Graduation Ceremonies

Service Coins and Emblem Items

Appreciation Celebrations

Family Holiday Events

Continuing Education & Training

Peer Support & Chaplain Services

Funding Sources



Grants: In an attempt to offset a portion of the costs associated with payroll expenses, equipment, protective clothing, training, and community outreach, the Department of Emergency Services makes an effort to apply for various grants on an annual basis.

Areawide: The general areawide mill rate determines the annual revenues for the borough's area-wide services. The revenue generated under the areawide mill rate are split between the various areawide departments and divisions.

FSA's: Each fire service area is assigned a specific mill rate. The area mill levies determine the amount of funding that will be generated for each fire service area on an annual basis. Those revenues go into specific fire service area funds and are used to support the day to day operations of fire departments.

Telecommunications: The Borough's telecommunications expenses are cost shared between area-wide and fire service area funds. The telecommunications needs of each area are established and it is then determined how much funding will be pulled from each of those budgets to compile into the Telecommunications budget. This funding is used for the support, maintenance, upgrades, and improvements of the telecommunications systems, and to pay the salaries and wages of the telecommunications employees.

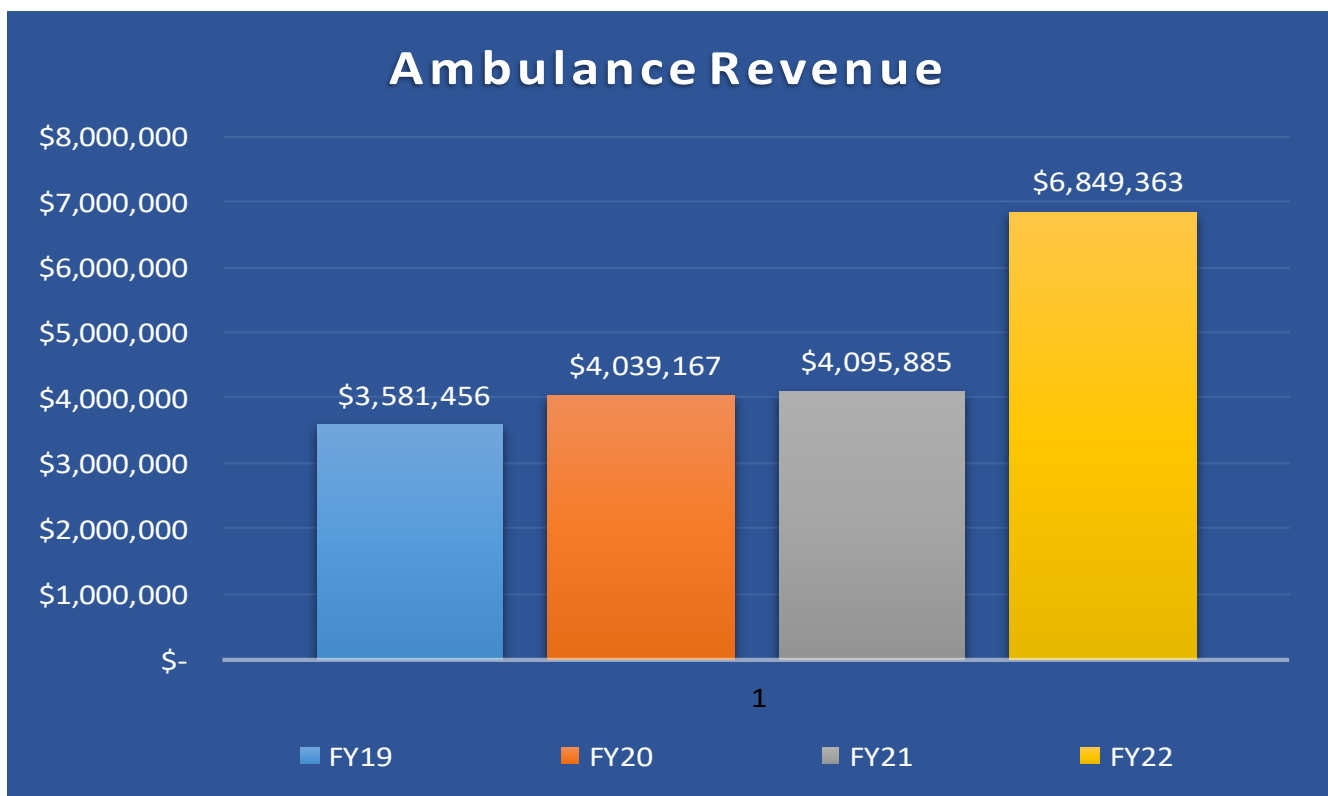
E-911: A fund has been established for the collection of E-911 service fees on each wireless or wire-line telephone within the Borough. Telecommunications carriers remit monthly payments to the Borough based on the number of their subscribers and the established rate of the E-911 service charge. Those remittances are deposited into the E-911 budget and used for various expenses, payroll, and training related to the Enhanced 911 Dispatch system. Allowable expenditures of the funding are outlined in Alaska Statute 29.35.131— 911 Surcharge. There is an established E-911 Advisory Board that oversees the budget and makes recommendations to the Borough Assembly on expenditures and surcharge rates.

Ambulance Billing: The ambulance transport billing is used to off-set some operating expenses for EMS in the General Fund.

Emergency Services Budget Overview

Annual Budget Expenditures	FY21	FY22
Fire Service Areas	23,460,011.00	23,368,242.00
Rescue	985,626.00	1,209,291.00
Ambulance	12,195,548.00	12,664,460.00
Admin/Telecom/Emergency Management	2,908,511.00	3,168,859.00
Fleet	905,065.00	1,122,589.00
E-911 Telephone Surcharge	1,654,594.00	1,675,905.00
Total Expenditures:	42,109,355.00	43,209,346.00

The main source of revenue that supports the operations of Emergency Services is derived from property taxes. Ambulance transport revenue also offsets area-wide expenses.



Administrative Staff

The Department of Emergency Services Administrative Office is located at the Cottonwood Public Safety Building (Station 6-5) in Wasilla. In addition to the Director and Deputy Director of Fire, there are 7 administrative staff persons at this location.



Rescue Operations Chief: The Rescue Operations Chief position was created in 2022 to coordinate and support the Mat-Su Borough responses to technical rescues. This position answers to the Deputy Director- Fire and is tasked with working with both the area Fire Chiefs to determine the appropriate response plans for special rescues and to coordinate technical rescue training among the various departments. This person will advise the Deputy Director and Director on the many matters related to technical rescue and make recommendations for organizing and coordinating responses as well as ensuring personnel are adequately trained and meet all applicable standards and guidelines. This position helps generate standard operating guidelines, recommends the organization of rescue teams, recommends equipment purchases, facilitates training classes and responds to assist on scene with certain technical rescue emergencies. This position is also tasked with the development of an Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS/Drone) program for the Department of Emergency Services.

Department Administrative Specialist: As well as providing general administrative assistance to the Director and Deputy Director of Fire, this position prepares all legislation for the department; manages tracking all grants, projects, and contracts; coordinates the monthly staff meetings; and acts as the lead Records Management coordinator for the department. This position is responsible for the budgetary support for the Telecommunications Division, and performs as Secretary and supports the budgetary and administrative tasks for the Enhanced 911 Advisory board as well as the Local Emergency Planning Committee. This position is also the primary program coordinator for the Knox System that the department uses for building access and medication security. In addition, this person will act as backup to the administrative assistants that are responsible for the day to day management of all the departmental budgetary needs, as well as the Nova Time payroll system.

Recruitment & Retention Coordinator: Ensures fair and conscientious interview processes and facilitates hiring of qualified and appropriate responders, support staff, and leadership within DES. The Coordinator participates in and reviews hundreds of interviews each year across every division and rank of Emergency Services throughout the Mat-Su Borough. DES averages about 360 personnel, with small but constant fluctuations. Every on-call that is hired goes through the required paperwork and orientation process with the Coordinator, which also gives them a unique insight into the people who make up our department. In this hiring capacity, the Coordinator interacts regularly with other departments such as Human Resources and Finance to also carry out rank changes for our cadre of personnel who are constantly training and advancing. Marketing design, advertising, job posting, and attending recruitment events also falls within this positions scope of duties. Finally, tracking and recognizing benchmark years of service for DES employees, as well as awarding excellence honors, is a particular pet project of this position that is ever evolving.

Administrative Staff (Cont'd)



Administrative Assistant: The main duties are paying and processing of all Invoices for DES, which includes open, local, and regular purchase orders; processing of Pay Requests, and mileage and expense reimbursements, and reconciling the monthly departmental credit card statements. In addition, this position manages the fuel system software which includes the issuing and tracking of keys, running and distributing monthly fuel logs and reports, and completing related journal entries to Finance. Managing the web based Payroll system for our department's regular full time employees is also a main function of this position. Also required is overall general admin support for Emergency Services, as well as backup reception duties for the Administration Office.

Division Administrative Specialist: Administers several of the Division-wide databases which assist the department needs for on-call responder timecards, shift scheduling, incident reports, training and more. Assists in tech support, troubleshooting, and training for these databases. Facilitates gathering of data reports for the purpose of budgets, recruitment, and goal tracking. Processes public record requests for Fire and Rescue incidents. Also required is overall general admin support for Emergency Services, as well as backup reception duties for the Administration Office.



Division Administrative Specialist: Assists Department Director with budget review & finalization. Advises Department Heads on proposed budget, answers expense and revenue inquiries, prepares budget adjustments and journal entries. Tracks yearly Open Purchase Order expense for budgeting & operational purposes. Creates all yearly purchase orders for general operations. Acts as liaison between DES Departments and IT on the tracking of inventory & the coordination of replacement equipment and software renewals. Prepares billing requests and tracks expenses for payment.

Office Assistant: Responsibilities include front desk customer service and reception duties, processing incoming and outgoing mail, inventory and ordering of office and general building supplies, and processing of incoming orders for the various service areas. This position is also tasked with general administrative support duties that include data entry and report generation from various databases, assisting with new hire packets and badges, updating the departments resource listing, and assisting with public records requests. On occasion, special projects will be assigned by various administrative staff members.

Looking to the Future

Our strategic planning for DES is based off available and trending data to identify future needs. We are currently focusing on three key areas, facilities (Infrastructure), apparatus/equipment, and personnel/staffing.

Facilities:

- ◆ Renovate or replace facilities over 40 years old.
 - * Add new EMS facilities based on call volume and response times.
 - * Establish a station with living quarters and responder support facilities in each FSA.
 - * Renovate existing facilities to meet current and evolving needs.
 - * Improve facility safety through engineering controls.
 - * Develop the infrastructure (Telecom, Admin/EM) to support community and DES growth.
- ◆ Add new stations based on growth, demand, and deployment models to meet community and ISO needs.
- ◆ Add buried water supplies and basic amenities at remote stations.

Apparatus:

- ◆ 20 year replacement cycle for heavy use apparatus, based on use rates and condition. Consider extending life cycle to 30 years where economical. Cycle from frontline to reserve status to extend life.
- ◆ Consider dual role apparatus where feasible.
- ◆ Addition of new apparatus as growth and needs emerge. Incorporate new technologies for efficiency and safety.
- ◆ Addition of reserve fleet to cover needs while apparatus are being repaired.
- ◆ Standardized specifications to reduce maintenance costs and reduce down time.

Equipment:

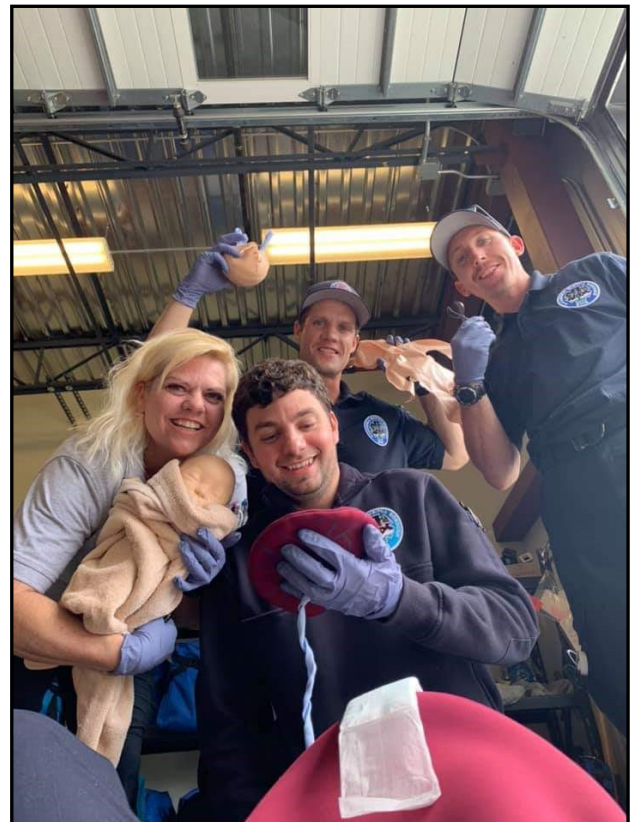
- ◆ Keep EMS, fire and rescue equipment on a realistic replacement cycle maximizing life expectancy.
- ◆ Integrate new technology as it becomes available. (UAS, ROV, etc.)
- ◆ Improve safety by replacing fixed life span equipment before expiration.



Looking Ahead (Cont'd)

Personnel:

- ◆ Reduction of civilian fire fatalities through improved community risk reduction activities. (Address signs, smoke/CO detectors, public education)
- ◆ Add additional full time staffed fire/rescue companies in Central and West Lakes. Move towards compliance with NFPA 1710 and 1720. Prepare for additional staffing for Greater Palmer FSA.
- ◆ Improve the health and safety of all responders through medical evaluations and improved support.
- ◆ Add administrative and other full-time positions based on needs in each FSA's. Fund a paid Fire Chief for FSA's.
- ◆ Add DES Health and Safety Officer.
- ◆ Add MSB Training Coordinator to ensure safe and consistent fire training.
- ◆ Engage further EMS cross training of fire-rescue personnel. Train EMS providers in rescue.
- ◆ Aggressive recruitment of on-call responders, targeting younger demographics.
- ◆ Find new incentives to help retain full time and on-call responders.
- ◆ Monitor and support fire protection at emerging target hazards such as the Port Mackenzie and Wasilla Airport. Match growth, expansion and community development to ensure adequate protection.
- ◆ Support emerging departments in new and growing communities.
- ◆ Implement area-wide technical rescue response plan.



Challenges

Workforce- attracting new full time and on-call responders in sufficient numbers to meet the workload.

- Our average age of responders is 40. DES needs targeted recruitment of younger responders and employees. Continue engagement with the school district on youth firefighter programs.
- Find ways to retain current and perspective new responders with creative and competitive incentives and benefit packages.
- Improve health and safety for all responders with a focus on prevention and mental health.

Infrastructure: Age of DES facilities, equipment and apparatus.

- Many facilities were built in the 1980's funded by grants and now require renovations or replacement. Need to add stations with living quarters in each service area to reduce response times.
- Establish a sustainable apparatus replacement cycle targeting 20 years for heavy use apparatus and replacement by 30 years of age for remaining equipment.
- Modernize equipment to utilize emerging technologies.
- Telecommunications equipment and infrastructure require substantial upgrades.

Budgeting- need to establish a budget that sustains growing operations and capital improvements.

- Cost increases are surpassing allotted budget growth.
- Supply chain issues are causing increased costs and delays in receiving needed items.
- Explosive growth rates in the MSB are outpacing increases in emergency services.

Efficiency- Improve coordination between services and service areas to better utilize scale.

- Continue with development of area wide Standard Operating Procedures.
- Standardize equipment and apparatus to reduce costs and improve maintenance support.

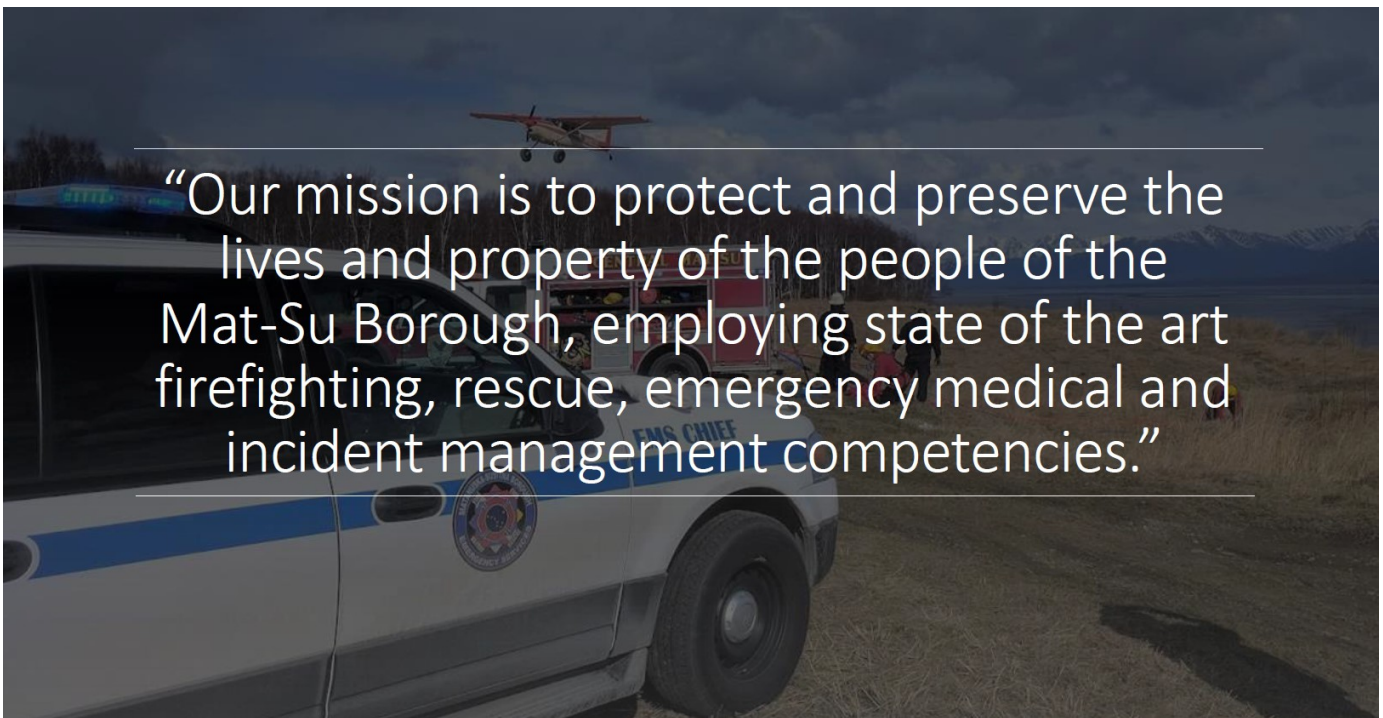
Public Safety- Improve MSB resident safety through enhanced community risk reduction activities.

- Improve access to free smoke and CO detectors for the public. Increase installations.
- Improve access to free home address signs for residents.
- Increase community awareness and preparation for natural disasters. (EM/CRR)
- Improve CRR (community risk reduction) activities in schools and ensure consistent messaging within the MSB.
- Expand wildfire mitigation efforts through community planning and continued FireWise/ Wildland-Urban Interface hazard recognition and reduction.
- Modernize public interactions through new programs such as Community Connect.



Conclusion

Both the Department of Emergency Services staff and responders appreciate the unparalleled level of support we receive from the public and our elected officials. Without their continued support we would not have the funding and support necessary to protect the community at the level currently provided. It is our honor to serve the diverse population of our Borough, which encompasses one of the largest response areas for a local government in the State of Alaska. Emergency response, accessed through 911, is a core service provided to all our residents and visitors alike. Without question or delay, all persons in need within the Matanuska Susitna Borough have access to high quality emergency services. We thank you for taking the time to learn more about our organization through this public report. If you have further questions please reach out to our administrative office at 907-861-8000. Have a safe day.



Contact Info:

**680 N SEWARD-MERIDIAN PKWY
WASILLA AK 99654
907-861-8000**

<https://www.matsugov.us/departments/emergency-services>

Mat-Su Borough - Emergency Services - Station List

Station Number	Station Address	Nearest Cross/Side Street	Station Type
Sutton	PO Box 267, Sutton, AK 99674		
Stn. 1-1	15625 N. Glenn Hwy, Sutton	Jonesville Road	Fire
Stn. 1-9	11317 N. Jonesville Road, Sutton	N. Glenn Hwy	EMS
Butte	3355 S. Old Glenn Hwy, Butte		
Stn. 2-1	3355 S. Old Glenn Hwy, Butte	Bodenburg Loop	Combo
Stn. 2-2	8271 S. Ben Hur Drive, Butte	Knik River Road	Fire
Palmer	645 E. Cope Industrial Way, Palmer, AK 99645		
Stn. 3-1	717 S. Cobb Street (City of Palmer)	W. Dahlia Avenue	Fire
Stn. 3-2	5955 Glenn Hwy., Palmer	Riverwood Circle	Fire
Stn. 3-3	15855 E. Clark Road, Palmer	Wolverine Road	Fire
Stn. 3-4	Palmer Airport	S. Airport Road	Fire
Stn. 3-5	8200 Turner Road, Palmer	Palmer Fishhook	Fire
Stn. 3-9	630 E. Steel Loop, Palmer	S. Eklutna Stn.	EMS
Rescue	680 N. Seward Meridian Pkwy, Wasilla, AK 99654		
Stn. 4-1	501 N. Tommy Moe Drive, Wasilla	Swanson Avenue	Rescue
Central	101 W. Swanson Ave, Wasilla, AK 99654		
Stn. 5-1	1911 S Terrace Court, Palmer	Fireweed Road	Combo
Stn. 5-2	7731 E. Bogard Road, Wasilla	Engstrom Road	Fire
Stn. 6-1	101 W. Swanson Ave, Wasilla	Lucille Street	Combo
Stn. 6-2	4568 S Knik Goosebay Road, Wasilla	Vine	Fire
Stn. 6-3	11021 W. Horizon Drive, Wasilla	Knik Goose Bay Road	Fire
Stn. 6-4	18297 W. Point Mackenzie Rd, Wasilla	Goose Creek Road	Fire
Stn. 6-5	680 N. Seward Meridian Pkwy, Wasilla	Palmer-Wasilla Highway	Fire
Stn. 6-6	2330 W. Fairview Loop Road, Wasilla	Danielle Drive	Fire
West Lakes	10073 W. Parks Hwy, Big Lake, AK 99652		
Stn. 7-1	1685 N. Pittman Road, Wasilla	Phillips Drive	Fire
Stn. 7-2	5182 N. Pittman Road, Wasilla	Church Road	Fire
Stn. 7-3	10073 W. Parks Hwy., Wasilla	Johnsons Road	Fire
Stn. 7-9	1250 S. Spring Drive, Wasilla	Parks Hwy.	EMS
Stn. 8-1	3047 S. Big Lake Road, Big Lake	Roxas Road	Fire
Stn. 8-2	19151 W. Four Dog Court, Big Lake	Lakes Blvd.	Fire
Houston	PO Box 940027, Houston AK 99694		
Stn. 9-1	Miles 57.5 Parks Highway (City Hall)	Armstrong Road	Fire
Stn. 9-2	12176 W. Birch Road	Kenlar Road	Fire
Talkeetna	PO Box 285, Talkeetna, AK 99676		
Stn. 11-1	13874 E. Veterans Way, Talkeetna	Talkeetna Spur Road	Fire
Stn. 11-2	42488 S. Parks Hwy, Talkeetna	E. Helena Drive	Fire
Stn. 11-9	42500 S. Parks Hwy, Talkeetna	E. Helena Drive	EMS
Willow	PO Box 177, Willow, AK 99688		
Stn. 12-1	32054 W. Parks Highway, Willow	Willow Community Center Cir.	Fire
Stn. 12-2	14379 W. Willow Fishhook Road, Willow	Sunny Drive	Fire
Stn. 12-4	15210 N. Four Mile Road, Willow	Willow Fishhook	Fire
Stn. 12-5	26470 W Shirley Lake Drive, Willow	Crystal Lake Road	Fire
Stn. 12-6	8878 Mike Ardaw Road, Willow	Parks Highway	Fire
Caswell	PO Box 521, Willow, AK 99688		
Stn. 13-1	19631 E. Deep Woods Way, Caswell Lakes	Caswell Loop	Fire
Trapper Creek	PO Box 13028, Trapper Creek, AK 99676		
Stn. 14-9	8903 E. Devonshire Drive, Trapper Creek	S. Parks Highway	EMS

3 ways to help Local Emergency Responders get to you faster.

To serve our community even better, we are rolling out 2 new programs to protect our residents and their property.

Community Connect and Smart 911 are free, secure and easy to use platforms that allow you to share critical information about your household. This aids dispatchers and emergency response personnel when responding to your residence. By providing information about your household that you feel is important for us to know about at the time of an Emergency, we can ensure you and everything you care about is protected to the best of our ability.



1. Post Your Address Numbers

Per Mat-Su Borough Code 11.20.060, Property owners are required to post the assigned street address number on the addressed building and in a location that is visible from the street.

- Address numbers should contrast with the background and be no less than four inches on height.
- Reflective, aluminum signs are best. If you have a long driveway, please post numbers on the house and at the bottom of the driveway.

Make your own sign; or contact one of these local companies.

A1 Signs - 907-373-6737

B Original Signs - 907-376-3083

DG Signs - 907-746-5196

Horseshoe Lake Road Firewise – 907-354-8734

JOLT Construction – 907-892-5658

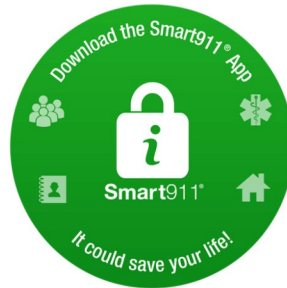
Sign King - 907-373-2604

Contact Mat-Su Borough Addressing at (907)-861-5400 if you have questions about your address.

2. Smart 911

Smart911 helps 9-1-1 call takers and all first responders in making faster and better decisions, shorten response times, and save lives.

- ❑ Anyone can create a Smart911 Safety Profile for free at Smart911.com or on the [Smart911 mobile app](#). They can include special driving directions, safety information, phone numbers, home and work addresses, family member information, photos, medical conditions, disabilities, even pet information.
- ❑ Your safety profile is free, private, and secure. Add as much or as little to your profile as you want. It's up to you, and your information will only be seen if you must call 9-1-1.



<https://smart911.com/>

3. First Due - Community Connect

Community Connect is a secure, easy to use platform that allows you to share critical information about your household that will aid fire responders and emergency response personnel if called to your residence in the Mat-Su Borough.

- ❑ **Create an Account**
Sign up for free and get started doing your part. It just takes an email, phone number and address.
- ❑ **Enter the Information that matters most**
Provide valuable information that can help us assist more effectively during an emergency.
- ❑ **Help Fire & EMS Responders when seconds count**
That's it! Just keep your account updated when things change so we can always be prepared.



<https://www.communityconnect.io/info/ak-matsuborough>

Call 907-861-8000 if you need assistance

