

# Cascade Charter Township Fire Department Annual Report

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# 2018



# A Note From Chief Adam Magers



Cascade Township Fire Department is pleased to submit to you the 2018 annual report. In this annual report you will find general information on stations and vehicles, response statistics and reports from our staff on programs they are responsible for.

As I reflect on my first year here in Cascade, I am reassured that I made a great decision in relocating my family to this fantastic community!

We began this year with lofty goals on how to progressively bring this department in line with the rapid growth of the Township. We started off by completely restructuring the command staff to include three new captain positions and a paid on-call sergeant. This allows the department to have trained supervisors at both fire stations, and increase communication and efficiency between full-time staff and paid on-call firefighters.

Part of this process included roster changes as well. 2018 saw the retirements of full-time firefighter Brian Currier after 17 years on the team, as well as the retirement of 20-year paid on-call firefighter Rick Toppel. We have also welcomed new full-time firefighters John Makuch, Todd Pell, Eric Melse and Mike Poolman, as well as new paid on-call firefighters Zach Christian, Greg Calahan, Andrew Frizzle, Todd Hemmi and Rick Raviolo.

In addition to personnel changes, Cascade Fire took delivery of a new Rosenbauer rescue truck and a new medic vehicle. Also new to the department was the purchase of two LUCAS III automatic CPR machines. These LUCAS devices have been used many times since they were put in service early in 2018 and contributed to numerous saved lives.

2018 was another record year for emergency responses as we were dispatched to more than 2,143 calls that included fires, vehicle accidents, HAZMATs, medicals, water rescues, alarms, etc. Part of this increase is due to the development of the area southwest of the airport. After analysis, we changed and updated our automatic mutual aid from neighboring departments to provide better service to that area. As that area continues to grow and develop so must our fire department.

In the near future a third fire station will need to be built to adequately cover this area of the township and maintain response capabilities for an ever-increasing demand for service.

As we look back on 2018 as a year filled with accomplished goals and progressive changes, we are also looking forward to 2019 with a new set of lofty expectations.

Cascade Fire Department goals for 2019 include officer development and professional education, increase water rescue capabilities, NFPA compliance, live fire academy participation, and an improved ISO rating after this year's inspection.

As always, our number one priority is customer service to our residents. We look forward to working together this year to make Cascade an even better and safer place to live!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Magers'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

**Chief Adam Magers**

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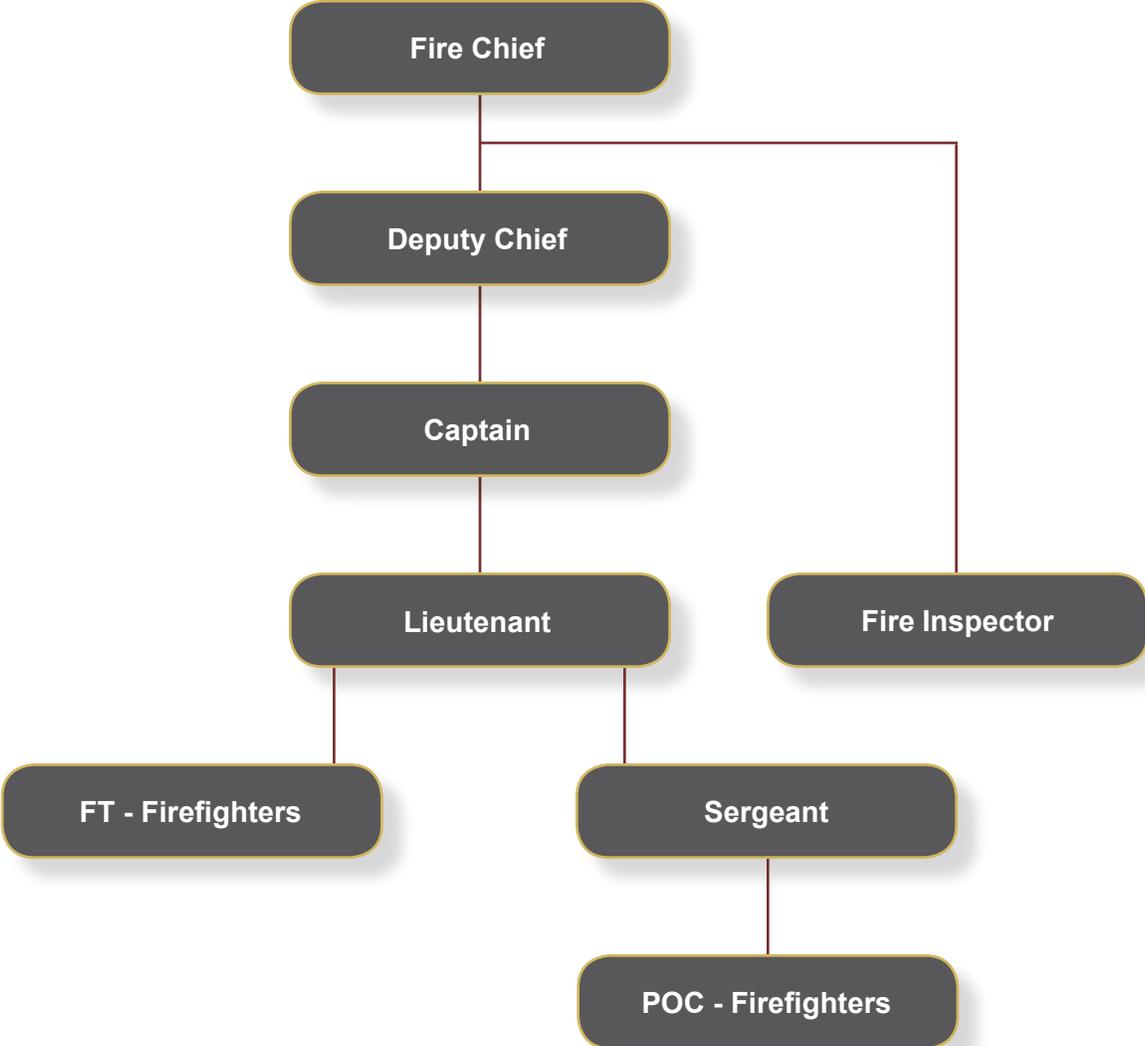
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# Cascade Fire Department Organization

The Chain of Command for the Cascade Fire Department is as shown.



# Cascade Fire Department Leadership



*Adam Magers, chief*



*Ron Rowland, captain*



*Doug Venema, captain*



*Todd Stevenson, captain*



*Andy Albright, lieutenant*



*Jeff Knowles, lieutenant*



*Michael Bolt, lieutenant*



*Doug Poolman, inspector*



*Brett Boonenberg, sergeant*

# Cascade Fire Department

## Personnel Roster



*Kreigh Deering*



*Jeff Rashid*



*Robert Norris*



*John Makuch*



*Lance Korhorn*



*Eric Rodegher*



*David Lintemuth*



*Josh Dettwiler*



*Colin Rodriguez*



*Todd Hemmi*



*Andrew Frizzle*



*Greg Calahan*



*Andy Marsman*



*Jim Walker*



*Colin Forzley*



*Jon Snyder*



*Michael Lemkuil*



*Michael Kadish*



*Caleb Huggler*



*Eric Melse*



*Todd Pell*



*Richard Raviolo*



*Mike Poolman*



*Cynthia Holzhei*



Ron Rowland, captain

## Station ONE



Station One is connected to the Cascade Township Offices, located at 2865 Thornhills Ave. The building was purchased by the Township in 1980 to facilitate its offices, the fire department and the community library. Previously, the fire department was located at 6865 Cascade Road, which today houses a bridal shop.

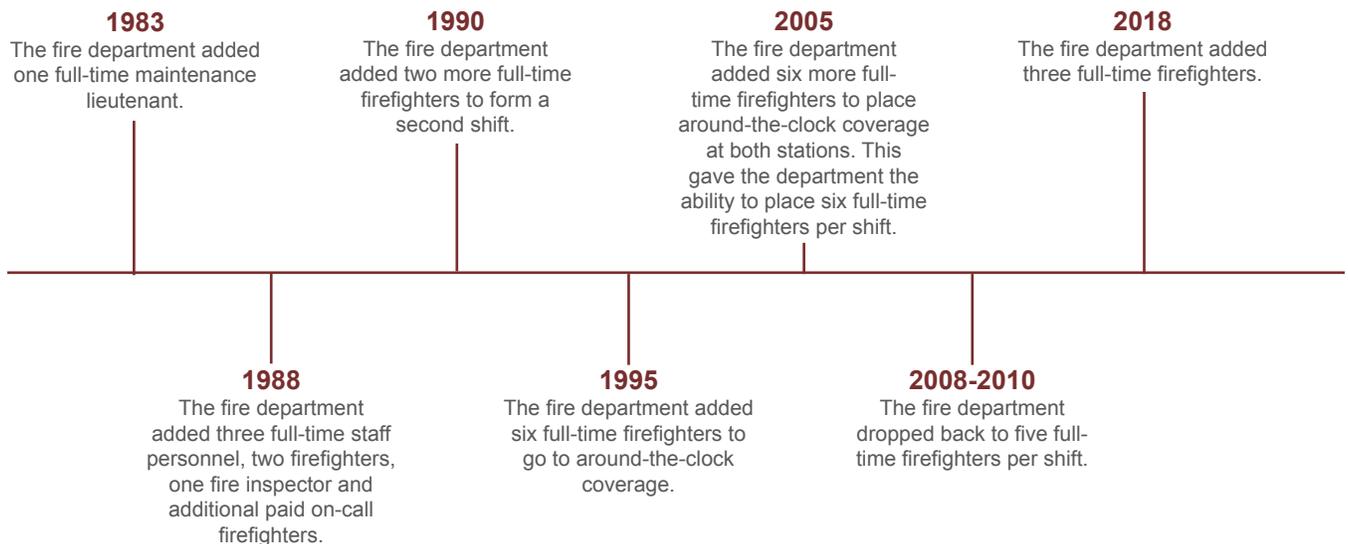
We grew to a station with three bays, three offices, a workout room, bathrooms, a shower room and a small kitchen/breakroom. In 1994, we added a fourth office, bunkroom and training/study room as well as remodeled the kitchen and bathrooms. No other changes have been made other than paint and normal maintenance.

## Station TWO



Station Two is located at 2990 Buttrick Ave. It was built in 1995 and dedicated in 1996. Its purpose was to place a fire station on the east side of the Thornapple River to better serve the residents and businesses on that side.

When Station Two was built, it included two-and-a-half bays, three offices, a training room with a small adjoining kitchen, bathrooms and a large back room for future growth. A remodel was completed in 2004, which added a bunkroom, day room, full kitchen/dining room, bathroom with showers and a workout room. No other changes have been made other than paint and normal maintenance.





Doug Venema, captain

# Apparatus Report

In 2018, we were fortunate enough to place two new pieces of apparatus into service. These vehicles did not increase our fleet size, rather they replaced existing apparatus.

The first vehicle we replaced was our 1999 F-550 that was used as our Rescue-7. Rescue -7 is the vehicle that responds as a first-out machine, primarily on motor vehicle accidents. Other instances where it may be first out include elevator rescues, machinery accidents and technical rescues.

We replaced it with a 2017 Freightliner four-door commercial cab with a Rosenbauer body. The new vehicle provided us with a greater area for storage of equipment and tools. It also provides us with a bigger truck to help block and protect our firefighters as they work at accident scenes on the roadways.

The second vehicle we took delivery of in 2018 was our new Medic-7. Our medic units are the busiest vehicles in our fleet. They respond to our medical calls which account for a large portion of our call volume. We house a medic unit at each of our stations. The new vehicle is a 2018 Chevy Silverado crew cab. We have traditionally used the Chevy Suburban as our medic units, but decided to try the Silverado for a few reasons. Specifically, they are more cost effective to purchase and outfit, and they offer a way to store our dirty turn-

out gear someplace other than in the passenger compartment. Recent studies have indicated that the carcinogens on our gear after fighting a fire can be harmful.

Every year all of our larger apparatus requires annual DOT inspections, pump testing and yearly service. This is performed by a local company. During this testing and inspection process, any problems they find are then repaired. This all has to be documented and recorded.

As with any fleet, this can become a very costly process. We do our best to budget and plan for this, however in some years we are faced with unexpected and unplanned repairs. Keeping the fleet in top operating condition is critical because we need to be assured the trucks are ready to go at all times.

We house two pumpers (1000 gallons each), and a rescue and medic at Station One. Station Two houses a pumper (1000 gallon), a tender (3000 Gallon), a medic and a brush truck. We also have a small Zodiac boat at Station Two. We hope to replace this boat in 2019 with a larger, more practical one. The current boat is 20 years old and starting to need some major repairs.



Rescue-7



Medic-7

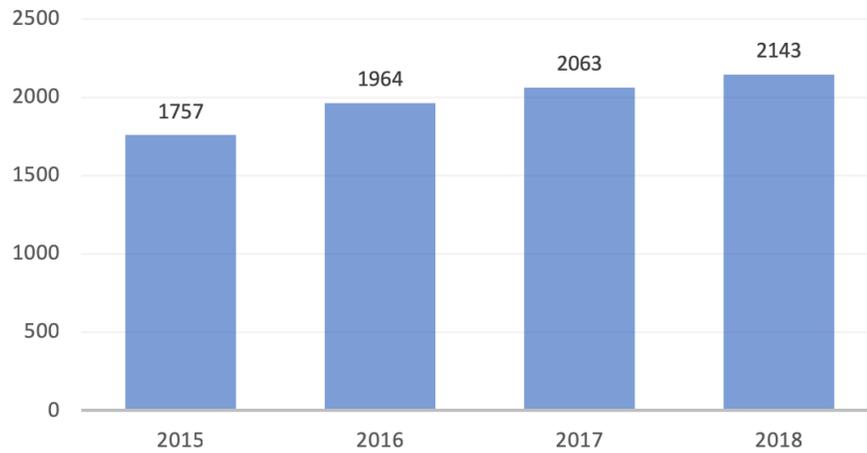


Car One



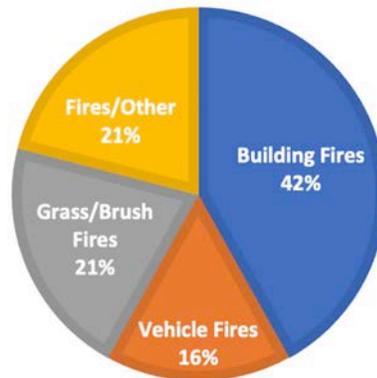
Brush Truck

## TOTAL CALLS



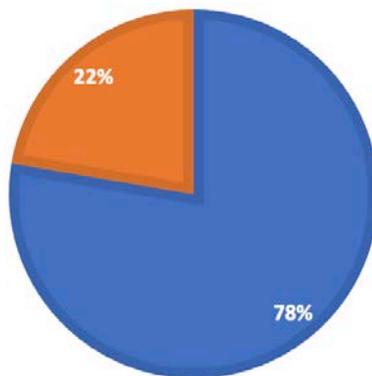
## FIRE CALLS

■ Building Fires ■ Vehicle Fires ■ Grass/Brush Fires ■ Fires/Other

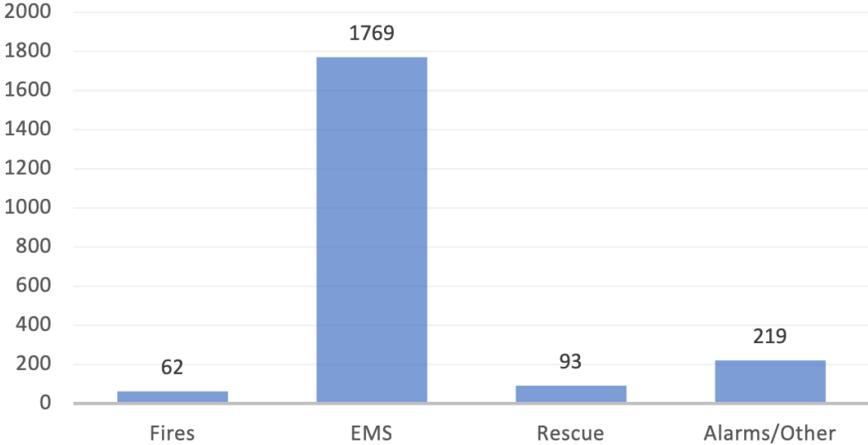


## EMS CALLS

■ EMS Calls ■ Other/Assists

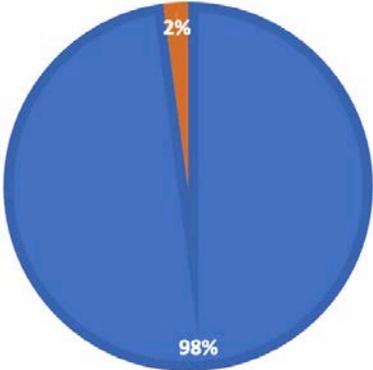


### TYPES OF CALLS



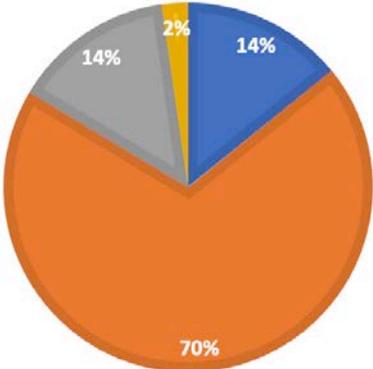
### RESCUE CALLS

■ Auto Accidents ■ Tech Rescue



### ALARM/OTHER CALLS

■ HAZMAT ■ Alarms ■ Power Line/Electrical ■ Aircraft Incident



# Training Report



Todd Stevenson, captain

The fire service is inherently dangerous. Cascade Township Fire Department (CTFD) is committed to providing safe, efficient and effective service to our customers and residents. We accomplish this mission by training all year to ensure we are ready for any emergency.

This year, CTFD has added emergency reporting systems and target solutions software programs to help expand our training ability. With these new online platforms, we are able to document and track training activities done by an individual firefighter, those on a shift or the whole department. We now have access to hundreds of training videos that cover topics such as emergency medical services, hazardous materials, firefighting and even prevention of work-related injuries.

Over the last year, CTFD has completed more than 5,400 hours in training for its members. Since CTFD responds to many different types of calls throughout the year, CTFD trainings have many components to help ensure all personnel have a well-rounded training base.

For example, more than 1,300 training hours were spent on EMS, more than 300 hours for new recruit training, with 74 hours of water supply training.

CTFD also invited outside instructors to provide training on various topics. CTFD personnel received training in emotional wellness, first-responder self-defense, forcible entry and stroke awareness. These types of trainings are valuable to our members as it allows them to experience topics that are not normally taught by our department instructors.

Training was not just limited to the fire station. CTFD personnel took classes and went to trainings throughout the country. Places like New Mexico for bomb-tech/terrorist incident training, Maryland to the National Fire Academy for HAZMAT training and Indiana for live fire training. Additionally, leadership and officer classes are being attended locally by CTFD members, who also participate in mutual aid and ice rescue training at a community pond with a neighboring department.



Moving into 2019, the Staff and Command program at Eastern Michigan University will be attended by CTFD command officers throughout the next five years. CTFD personnel will also attend live fire trainings as well as additional leadership classes. CTFD will continue providing fire and medical training that is innovative, educational and relevant so our members will be ready for that next call.



*Brett Boonenberg, sgt.*

# Paid On-Call Report

It is my honor to be the inaugural sergeant for the Cascade Township Fire Department. In my eight years of service to the Fire Department, I have seen many positive changes with one being the restructuring of the department.

In the past, communication was lacking between the full-time firefighters and the paid on-call firefighters. The sergeant position was added to bridge the gap between the two and make us a more unified team.

There are many responsibilities placed on a paid on-call firefighter, which at times can be quite challenging to balance civilian life with the responsibilities of the department. I am very fortunate to be the leader of 11 hardworking, and dedicated firefighters who at the drop of a hat may be called to an emergency situation.

Cascade Fire is a combination department made up of approximately 20 full-time firefighters and 12 part-time or paid on-call. Cascade has two stations that are occupied 24/7 with full-time firefighters. In the event of a structure fire, car accident, hazardous material or any other call that requires extensive man power, both stations get depleted of qualified firefighters.

The moment the call comes in, paid on-call staff are notified via a pager to report to their assigned stations. Once arriving to the station, they will be assigned to pull another vehicle or remain at the station to prepare for the next emergency call. All qualified paid on-call staff have been through a rigorous six-month firefighting training course, consisting of both class time and practical training.

At the conclusion of that course, they must pass a state approved exam before receiving their firefighter badge. Once the firefighter portion of training has been completed, they move into a six-month medical class and must pass another state exam before receiving an emergency medical technician license.

These are the minimum requirements to work as a paid on-call firefighter in Cascade Township. Ongoing training is required to meet our accreditations, state and national requirements, and most importantly, to ensure we have highly trained personnel.

This year, we had one paid on-call retire after 19 years of service and one relatively new paid on-call move to another state. At this time, we have four new cadets who have passed their medical training requirements and are now on the firefighter portion of their training. We are hoping to add these four to our qualified personnel roster this coming Spring, giving us a total of 14 qualified paid on-call staff members.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as sergeant, and I am looking forward to improving our level of service in the years to come.



## Fire Prevention

The purpose of fire prevention education is to provide information, lessons and practices to promote fire and life safety for our citizens, businesses and guests.

Many of our local businesses in Cascade rely on our fire department to provide them with CPR/AED training, fire extinguisher training, and emergency evacuation procedures and drills. We also spend a lot of time in our two elementary schools, teaching fire and life safety to our young students who then bring that information home to their families.

## Fire Inspections

In 2018, we performed in many facets of fire prevention. Fire prevention activities help protect properties from devastating loss.

Further, it protects the life and safety of our citizens, business owners and employees, as well as the health and safety of our firefighters.

## Fire Investigations

Post fire investigations is another vital part in the overall picture of fire prevention. Not only are we mandated by law to investigate the cause and origin of any significant fire, but in doing so, we can learn what are trends in the cause of fires and can then develop the tools and education to prevent similar fires in the future.

Our fire investigation team is part of a larger county-wide team within Kent County with which we can receive or provide assistance within our communities in fire cause determination.

## Pre-Incident Surveys/ Planning Investigations

Part of a commercial business inspection is to identify hazards as well as document the characteristics of the building and the processes the business is involved with.

This is vital information for our responders to have when responding to these properties. A lot of our focus for 2018 and in 2019 is to prepare for ISO to visit us in the fall. Part of those requirements are to have updated information and pre-incident surveys on all commercial properties. That consists of more than 900 addresses and well over 1000 businesses within those addresses. This is a huge undertaking, which we have already begun, and will keep us busy into the new year.



*Doug Poolman, inspector*

In **2018...**

**237**

BUSINESS INSPECTIONS

**32**

INCIDENTS ASSISTING THE  
DUTY CREW IN EMERGENCY  
RESPONSES

**72**

HOURS OF REQUIRED  
CONTINUING EDUCATION  
CREDIT HOURS FOR FIRE  
INSPECTORS

**17**

SIGNIFICANT FIRES  
REQUIRING INVESTIGATION

**38**

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS

**144**

HOURS OF REQUIRED  
DEPARTMENT TRAINING

**72**

HOURS OF REQUIRED  
CONTINUING EDUCATION  
CREDIT HOURS FOR FIRE  
INVESTIGATORS

**DOZENS**

PLAN REVIEWS PARTICIPATED  
IN

PRE-INCIDENT FIRE  
SURVEYS FOR COMMERCIAL  
PROPERTIES DEVELOPED

# Community Risk Reduction

2018 has been a year of learning and growth. In April, I was appointed to the position of community risk reduction officer. What does this mean?

CRR is the identification and prioritization of risks, followed by the coordinated application of resources to minimize the probability or occurrence and/or the impact of unfortunate events.



## Community

Those serving in Cascade Township's Fire Department strive to be a collective leader in our community. This community is where we have chosen to work, live, play, serve and protect.

It also takes the entire fire department "community" to make sure we are doing our very best to provide the highest quality service to our citizen community. I work with the chief, command staff, firefighters, training division, and fire inspector to identify risks and train the staff and community, with the end goal of reducing the occurrence and impact of unfortunate events, increasing community safety.



## Risks

In Cascade, as well as most everywhere else, young and elderly individuals are at the greatest risk. The young are vulnerable because they haven't lived long enough to learn life lessons and the elderly are vulnerable because they now need assistance doing what they used to do for all of us.

Cascade is fortunate to have many preschools and early childhood learning centers along with two elementary schools. This gives us great opportunities to teach our young people fire safety and prevention practices.

Cascade is also blessed to have three, soon-to-be four, senior assisted living facilities. Not only do we work with the facilities to train our staff and theirs for preparedness and responses to emergencies, we can work with the residents to reduce the need for our services.

## Reduction

The end goal is to train fire department staff and the community in order to reduce the occurrence and impact of unfortunate events.



Andy Albright, lieutenant

## 2018 Summary

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**6** BLOCK PARTIES

FIRE PREVENTION EVENTS **9**

**17** PUBLIC RELATIONS EVENTS

PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS **2**

Block parties are not just fun for the kids. They allow our staff to interact with the adults, too. This is a great opportunity for the community to ask questions and get answers to what services we provide, what levels of training our staff has and what they can expect if they end up needing our services.

We look forward to these events and encourage you to contact us for your next block party.

One highlight from 2018 that allowed us to expand our reach into the community was to host a training session for Leader Dogs For The Blind. The training session allowed future service dogs to familiarize themselves with the sights, sounds and smells that come along in the case of an emergency. Doing this kind of training in a controlled, non-emergent environment allows the dogs to build confidence and not panic in the future if their person ever has this type of situation. This also allowed our staff to become familiar with how to handle and work with these future service dogs.

We look forward to hosting more events like this as new puppies come into the training program.

## 2019 Goals

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Starting in January, I will be attending training for fire service members who are responsible for managing community risk reduction programs.

We will continue to build our fire safety programs for the children in our community. Along with that we will be attempting to set up some joint training with Forest Hills Public Schools, mutual aid fire departments, law enforcement and EMS to prepare for large-scale incidents involving our schools.

We will continue to work with our assisted living facilities on emergency plans and train our staff for emergencies in these high-risk environments.

We will be rolling out a new emergency evacuation and fire extinguisher training program for businesses in Cascade Township.

We will also be bringing a program back to the citizens and businesses. For a number of years, we had a program called On Site. Firefighters would have a table set up in different high traffic businesses or a company breakroom. Firefighters would take blood pressures, pulse rates and pass out fire safety information.

If you are interested in bringing this program to your company, please contact us for more information.



Jim Walker

The Cascade Township Fire Department (CTFD) is comprised of 34 members. There are 19 full-time firefighters who are also emergency medical technicians, and 14 paid on-call members who serve as medical first responders and emergency medical technicians. CTFD provides emergency medical services to a 35-square-mile area containing various commercial and industrial developments, medium-to-high concentrations of residential developments, some agricultural areas as well as assistance to the Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

The CTFD maintains six vehicles licensed by the State of Michigan as basic life support units, including fire engines, a Suburban, a pickup truck and a medium-duty rescue vehicle. These vehicles are inspected annually on-site by the State to ensure requirements for basic life support vehicles licensure are met.

## Department Calls

At the development of this report, the CTFD has responded to more than 2,000 calls for service. Nearly 900 of those calls were for EMS services. These calls varied from medical related incidents involving cardiac arrests, strokes and diabetic complications to trauma involving falls or automotive accidents.

## EMS Training

Trainings for the CTFD that involved basic life support, medical or trauma topics fall under the premise of EMS training. This training is coordinated and conducted by Capt. Todd Stevenson and FF Jim Walker.

The department trains twice a month as entire group. One of those trainings focus on various topics within the EMS spectrum. Each individual is required to maintain between 15 and 30 EMS continuing education (CEs) for their medical licensure. In 2018, CTFD was able to supply 34 of these CEs for their licensure through regularly scheduled department trainings. Topics varied from automotive extrication, basic cardiac life, forcible entry, drivers training and medical complications to emergency preparedness for calls involving nature at its worst.

## Department Accomplishments

LUCAS Device chest compression devices were added to the BLS equipment. These devices were purchased in 2018 and their effectiveness was noticed with the saving of a life over the summer.

The emergency reporting system is an online EMS report writing system that the CTFD is using to record patient information, assessments and treatments. This is a requirement by the State to maintain the EMS/BLS services license.

While this system comes with a learning curve, the data taken from this can help in making decisions related to CTFD training and emergency services.

## New Medic 7

CTFD has purchased a new pickup truck to use as a medical response vehicle. The department has usually bought a new suburban as the primary medical response vehicle, but opted to try something different. This vehicle was placed in service early December and continues to be a work in progress with a good outlook for providing medical services.





# CPR and First Aid Training

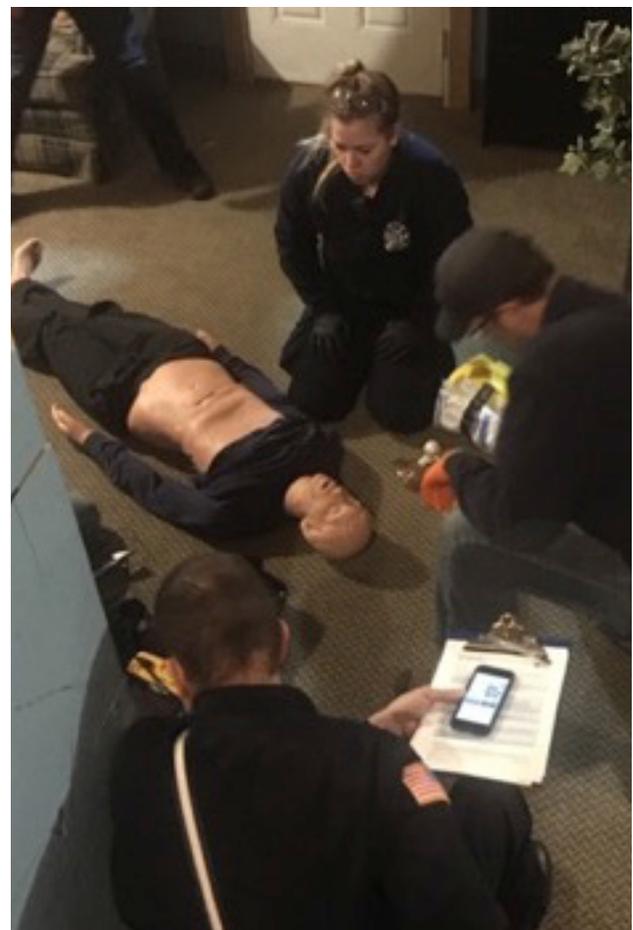
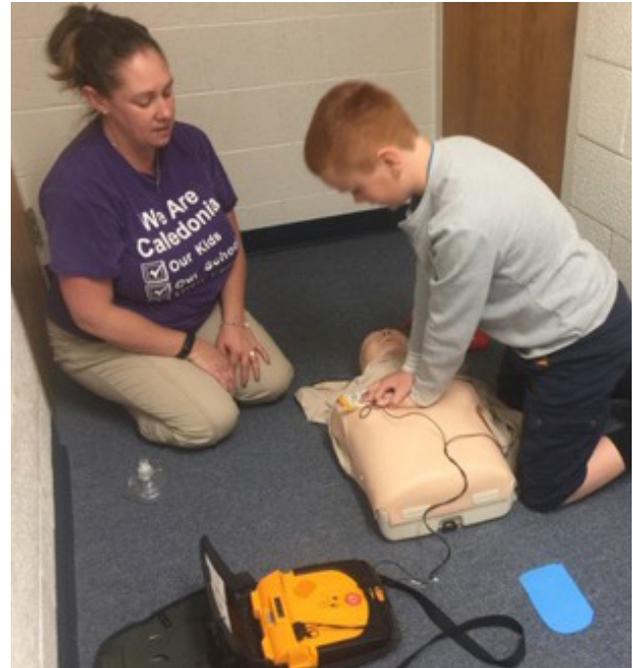
*Michael Bolt, lieutenant*

The Cascade Township Fire Department is an authorized training center through the American Heart Association. It is comprised of 13 active instructors throughout West Michigan.

We currently have two instructors within the department. The training center is administered by Firefighter Jim Walker serving as the training center coordinator and myself as the instructor facilitator.

Through our network of instructors, we have provided high-quality CPR instruction to the west Michigan community. Our training center offers a Basic Life Support Provider CPR class, a Heart Saver CPR with AED class for individuals with no medical experience and a Heart Saver First Aid class.

This past year 658 individuals have passed one of these classes and have received certification through the AHA. We have also provided free infant CPR classes to the public, hosted by Baby' R' Us.



# HAZMAT Report

A material that poses an unreasonable risk to the health and safety of people and the environment if it is not properly controlled is considered a hazardous material. More than 80,000 chemicals are registered for use in commerce in the United States, with an estimated 2,000 being introduced annually.

The Cascade Township Fire Department responded to 28 hazardous materials incidents in 2018. Many of these calls are commonly handled by the on-duty suppression staff without incident. These calls are commonly made up of Carbon Monoxide incidents, Natural Gas incidents, and fuel spills. Most of our firefighters hold an operations level certification. Operations level responders recognize a potential incident, meet competencies at awareness level and core competencies of operations level and act in a defensive fashion. Operations level responders may set up and operate decontamination procedures. Cascade Township Fire Department has 5 members who are trained to the technician level. Technicians perform more of an offensive action and enter the hazard zone using extreme levels of protective clothing and equipment.

Our department has been a part of a regional hazardous materials response team called Tri-Com HAZMAT Team and includes the City of Kentwood Fire Department and Dutton Fire Department. Our team consists of 14 active members trained to the technician level and the three fire chiefs. Kentwood Fire Station 2 houses our technician level trailer. This trailer has some of the top of the line equipment to mitigate any type of hazard we may run into, including monitors, detection devices, radios, personal protective equipment, a variety of mitigation tools, among many other items. Cascade Station 2 houses our decontamination trailer, which has all the equipment needed to establish a proper decontamination operation.

Cascade Township currently has 16 occupancies that fall under the SARA Title 3 ACT. This is the Emergency Planning and the Community-Right-To-Know Act. These facilities have certain hazardous chemicals, or a quantity of a chemical above the reportable quantity threshold limits which requires them to report all hazardous chemicals on-site.



In the last year, I have taken all these facilities and started a spreadsheet that has been placed on our mobile computers for a quick reference of locations, chemicals, quantities, hazards, locations, emergency response guidebook, and if the chemical is water reactive or not. Information such as this is crucial for our responders to have prior to arrival so they can properly initiate an action plan. Previously, we would have to search for this information after we arrived on-site.

In addition to the facilities we have in the township, we also are unique in the sense that we have a major interstate, railroad and international airport that transports all types of hazardous materials daily.

Our department also held a hands-on hazardous materials training in November. This training included a leaking cylinder of Hydrochloric Acid



Jeff Knowles, lieutenant

with one victim who needed to be removed. Our initial response team entered in full firefighting turnout gear with SCBA, removed our patient and assisted in identifying the chemical that was leaking with identification markings and numbers. Proper decontamination was performed of the victim and the responders. Our Technicians donned level A suits, entered the “hot zone” and mitigated the hazard in an offensive method.

I was extremely happy with how our staff performed this evolution. I chose to put members in roles they would not normally be placed in, and assisted the incident commander, walking him through the proper steps required for a hazardous materials event. Finally in December, I was lucky to have attended a hazardous materials incident management class at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This was a six-day class that was funded by FEMA. I received a top-notch education alongside some of the most skilled and experienced members in hazardous material response from departments large and small across the United States. Knowledge that I learned has already been brought back to benefit our department and team.

## 2019 Goals

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- More training with our entire Tri-Com HAZMAT Team
- Increase our Technician level responders to include a minimum of one member on-duty daily per department
- Continue to build HAZMAT spreadsheet to involve all facilities and any hazardous materials that may be on-site, regardless of quantity
- Certify all officers and potential officers in Hazardous Materials Incident Command

If you have any questions regarding our Hazardous Materials Response Team or the 16 occupancies covered under SARA Title 3 please feel free to contact us at any time.



# Technical Rescue



*Michael Bolt, lieutenant*



This past year, I have been tasked with developing a technical rescue team within the Cascade Fire Dept. Our team consists of nine firefighters whose goal is to provide technical rescue, including trench rescue, high angle rescue, swift water rescue and building collapse rescue.

The team is led by Cascade Firefighter Bob Norris. He currently serves with the Michigan Region 6 Technical Rescue Team. Most of our team members already have training in many of the specific technical rescue disciplines, but we need to have all members trained in all fields to make the unit cohesive and able to handle any emergency at any time.

This past year, we were approached by the National Weather Service to provide the technical rescue ability to remove an employee from the radar tower located at 4900 Tim Dougherty Dr. We took this opportunity on and are ready for this challenge. We anticipate performing this scenario with them sometime in 2019. This needs to be accomplished when the weather allows for the radar to be turned off.

Over the next year, we look to bring in instructors to teach new firefighters the basics in rope rescue. We also look to continue hosting classes through Michigan Region 6. Finally, we are looking to host a swift water rescue class this summer. We don't know what the new year will bring, but look forward to any challenge!





Jeff Knowles, lieutenant

# Health and Wellness

Cascade Township Fire Department has been very proactive in health and wellness. Many people feel that firefighting is a dangerous job, which is correct. Most of those people, if asked what the leading cause of death amongst firefighters, would likely say that firefighters mostly die in a fire. However, this is far from the truth, with the leading cause of death amongst firefighters being heart related issues.

In 2017, 87 firefighters died in the line of duty with 50 of those being heart attacks. Unfortunately, 2018 didn't look much different with 81 line of duty deaths at the time of this report. Cascade Township Fire Department has provided its firefighters with the proper equipment to help prevent these tragedies in our department.

Each Fire Station is equipped with a treadmill, elliptical machine, various free weights and benches.

Station 1 additionally has a row machine and other additional equipment due to an increase in space. Cascade Fire Department Policy requires each firefighter to perform a one-hour workout per shift. Workouts do get interrupted to respond to emergency calls.

Heart related issues are the leading cause of death on duty for firefighters, but another serious concern firefighters face is cancer. The U.S. Fire Administration and NIOSH are currently performing multiple studies to understand the relationship between firefighters and cancer. Firefighters are two times a greater risk for mesothelioma. How do we prevent or lower the risk of cancer amongst our firefighters? A cancer presumption program will aid in reducing the risk of contamination and cancer.

## 2019 Goals

Although tobacco use is considerably lower these days, I would like to create a tobacco-free policy department wide. Tobacco increases the risk of heart disease and cancer. So why are we allowing our firefighters to further increase that risk by using tobacco? Many departments have already implemented similar policies.

I'd also like to work on obtaining a second set of gloves and hood for each firefighter. Absorption of contaminants through our pores is shown to be a major concern for cancer. Contaminated gloves

and hoods need to be properly cleaned to prevent contamination. I was recently informed many insurance policies already have replacement gloves and hoods built into their policy.

I previously stated that we currently have a policy for all firefighters to perform one-hour of physical fitness per shift. My goal is to ensure all firefighters and officers abide by this policy. We need to stress the importance of heart health and proper physical fitness for ourselves, our family and our citizens.



# Hydrant Report



*Michael Bolt, lieutenant*

The fire hydrant is an important tool for a firefighter to have, but it is often overlooked. Many times, homeowners hide them by planting bushes or tall grasses around them, making it difficult to locate them at night. It is important we, as a department, continue to check on them every year so we know they will operate properly in an emergency.

The hydrants are owned and maintained by the City of Grand Rapids, but Cascade Township Fire Department ensures these hydrants work properly. Every spring, the members of the fire department check on each public hydrant to make sure the valve will open and water will flow.

After water has flowed through the hydrant, the top of the valve is painted red so we know it has been checked. In the fall, we pump the water that is trapped in the vertical portion of the hydrant so it

does not freeze during the winter months and paint the top of the valve blue. Any issues discovered throughout the year are reported to the City of Grand Rapids Water Department for repair.

Maintaining proper operation of the fire hydrants will be a priority of the Cascade Township Fire Department in 2019.

We ask the residents of the township to comply with township ordinance in regards to keeping vegetation and snow piles clear of fire hydrants on their property. It is there to provide fire protection for their property and that of their neighbors. If residents see any issues with the fire hydrants, please contact the Cascade Fire Department so we can have them addressed.



Thank you for reading our 2018 Annual Report. For more information and updates year-round, visit [cascadetwp.com](http://cascadetwp.com).





## **Cascade Fire Department**

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616.949.1320 (Non-Emergency)