



Bridgton, Maine Fire Department Organizational Review

Project Report

June 8, 2015

Prepared for:

The Bridgton Maine Board of Selectmen

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About the Town of Bridgton and the Fire Department

The following provides an overview of the Bridgton, Maine Fire Department and the Organizational Review requested by the Bridgton Board of Selectmen.

About the Town of Bridgton

The Town of Bridgton is 64.24 square miles. Bridgton is a resort town in Maine's Lakes Region and is part of the Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, Maine metropolitan statistical area. Route 302 is the primary transit route through the town and is a popular route for summer tourists.

The 2010 United States Census reports that there are 5,210 residents in the Town, with an estimated total in 2012 of 5,283. The racial composition of the town is 96.6% white, 1.2% Hispanic/Latino, .7% African American, .4% Native American, .3% Asian and the rest are of mixed race. The median income of a household in Bridgton is \$36,722, with a per capita income of \$17,352. About 15.7% of the population is considered to be below the poverty line.

Bridgton is home to Bridgton Academy, a private preparatory school, Shawnee Peak Ski Area, and host to many events, such as the Four on Fourth Road Race. There are several villages/areas of Bridgton, which are classified as neighborhoods. They are Bridgton, the central area of town, which houses many shops, offices and a movie theater. In this area, there is also the Stevens Brook Elementary School, Bridgton Memorial School, Pondicherry Park and the Bridgton Community Center. North Bridgton is home to Bridgton Academy and has a post office. South Bridgton is off of Route 107, and is near Adams Pond. Sandy Creek is near Woods Pond Beach and is home to multiple summer camps; this area is mostly residential. The last neighborhood is West Bridgton, and home to Camp Winona, and the West Bridgton Fire Station.

The following provides a summary of the Bridgton Fire Department.

About the Bridgton Fire Department

The Bridgton Centre Village Fire Corporation was incorporated in 1854 with an initial cost of \$450. Throughout the years, interest waned but after a fire in town rallied the community, the support for the Fire Department began to grow. In the 1870's eighty-two members of the community joined the fire department as volunteers. In 1958, the Town of Bridgton took over for the Corporation and starting in the 1970's new stations were built throughout the town to cover the growing town. In 1989, the Town's Public Safety Services went to a 24-hour dispatch. In 2011, dispatch services were transferred to the Cumberland County Dispatch Office as a mean to increase efficiencies.

Currently, the Fire Department has approximately 50 volunteer members who are paid on a per call basis in addition to administrative duties assigned to three members whom receive a stipend for their services.

The Bridgton Fire Department operates four district stations throughout the Town.

- Central Station is the largest and houses Ladder 1, Engine 1, Reel 1 and Tank 4. This location provides quick access to Main Street and Route 302.
- North Station is on Route 37, near Route 117, near Bridgton Academy. Engine 5 is kept at this location for quick emergency response to the north side of the Town.
- West Station is on Route 302 and houses Engine 6 and Forestry 49. This Station is one of the first to respond in the area of Route 302 and I-93 to Fryeburg.
- South Station is on Route 107 and houses Engine 4 and Marine 1 and provides emergency response to the south part of the Town.

Each year the department responds to approximately 350 calls for service.

The next section discusses the purpose of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The Bridgton Board of Selectman wanted an outside review of the department in order to plan for the future.

As part of the study, the Selectmen generated several questions that they wanted the study to answer; they appear below:

Fire Prevention, Code Enforcement, Emergency Preparedness

- What are the Town's and Department's approaches to fire prevention and code enforcement related services?
- What is the Department's role in an emergency? Is there an Emergency Preparedness plan?

Training Programs, Philosophies and Organizational Statements

- What is the nature and scope of the Department's internal training programs and philosophies?
- Does the department implement and follow an organizational statement or mission?

Operations and Facilities

- What is the Department's personnel management system?
- What type of facilities does the Department utilize?

Apparatus Use and Planning

- What pieces of equipment does the Department currently own?
- What is a reasonable replacement and use program?

Staffing and Workload

- What is the current workload currently experienced by the Department?
- What are the available programs and job requirements for the Department's employees?

Organizational Culture

- What is the department morale?
- What changes can be implemented to increase the trust and better the relationships between the town, administration and the department?

Future of Department

- What is the future direction for the Bridgton Fire Department; full-time or on-call?
- Should the Department continue to contract the services of a separate ambulance company?

Community Relations

- What is the relationship between the Fire Department and the Board? The community members?
- Are Department members involved in the community?

The questions generated by the Board of Selectmen provided the baseline for the interviews and survey.

The next section provides a summary of the project methodology.

Methodology

PSSG conducted an extensive review of the Fire Department through internal and external interviews, a department survey data analysis, review of records, organizational charts, policy and procedures, and other material as presented by the department along with site visits to each station.

The report provides an objective review of the Bridgton Fire Department, including the organizational design, capacity, capabilities, and effectiveness of department operations.

The study approach ensured review of all information available and provided interview and survey opportunities to department stakeholders and interviews to community members, elected and appointed officials.

The research conducted during the study revealed a variety of perceptions and opinions locally regarding the Bridgton Fire Department. The stakeholder input, along with the information gleaned from written material and direct observations, informed the research findings.

The following summarizes the steps PSSG completed during the study:

Interviews

The PSSG team conducted interviews with members of the fire department, Bridgton government and elected officials. The interviews were focused on the questions generated by the Board of Selectmen along with other questions generated by PSSG in order to understand the operational environment of the department, issues affecting operations, and future needs.

Data Analysis

PSSG requested data from the department that included the following:

- Rosters
- Training Records
- Apparatus / Fleet Records
- Apparatus / Fleet Replacement Plan
- Policies and Procedures
- Annual Reports
- ISO and Similar Reports
- Capital Plans
- Budgets
- Call Data (to include type of structure, member response, response times, etc)

- Any other material the Town or department wanted to share

In order to understand the service level goals and to plan and assess performance, PSSG also requested the following:

- Documentation of performance goals, policies, and objectives.
- Current coverage by volunteer fire department members of calls occurring in Town.
- Call for service data.

PSSG also sought to evaluate specialized services and their functionality. This included focused review of following topics:

- The fire prevention and code enforcement policies and programs.
- Emergency management issues and emergency preparedness plans
- Training and staff development systems and practices
- Fleet maintenance and use, and apparatus replacement plans.

Comparison Community Review

PSSG researched information on other department to see if there were lesson learned or best practices that would assist the Bridgton Fire Department.

In addition to the secondary research, PSSG conducted limited primary research as appropriate. Given the study was on the Town of Bridgton had an extremely small budget, gathering information on outside agencies was mainly limited to publicly available information. To gather all the required information is impossible unless a full study was also conducted on the comparison communities.

After completing the review, PSSG has determined that the issues in Bridgton related to its fire department is less about best practices and what other towns are doing as it is about the internal capacity of the department and the need for support by the Town and community members to increase capacity.

Timeline

While PSSG began its review in September of 2014¹ and planned to complete the effort by December 2014, the department was unable to provide call data until January 2015, at which time it tried to transfer electronic files. After this effort was unsuccessful, the department was preparing paper files to transmit that would have been ineffective. Finally the department provided PSSG with a log in to its Emergency Response System. PSSG was required to learn how to use the system and create reports which was not part of the original work plan. Some data was contained in the system, but

¹ The proposal by PSSG request all data be supplies at the start of the project.

other information such as fleet management logs with information on costs to maintain equipment was missing.

Other material such as the ISO report, Organizational Chart, Capital Improvement Plan, Suppression Plan, and Safety Report were provided in late March of 2015 and training certification on April 22, 2015.

The next section provides the findings and recommendations.

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Findings and Recommendations

The Bridgton Fire Department has a mixed approval rating from community members and government officials. Some community members feel as though the department sufficiently does their jobs while others feel that the animosity between the town members, the Board and the department hinders the ability for the department to run efficiently and professionally.

There appears to have been a decrease in morale due to budget cuts, and communication issues between the Board and the department over necessary funds and the use of those funds. The recent cut to the awards budget appears to have been a trigger affecting the way members view the appreciation – or lack thereof – from the elected officials. There is a distinct feeling of “us vs. them”. The divide appears to hamper the ability of the Town to move forward on determining the future direction of the department. This issue needs to be resolved in order to restore the relationship between the Town and the department prior to moving forward with other efforts. Satisfaction of department members is of primary concern as recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters is important to the safety of Bridgton.

A summary and recommendation for each area that PSSG reviewed appears below.

Fire Prevention, Code Enforcement, Emergency Preparedness

Fire Prevention

Fire prevention efforts appear limited, but the department appears willing to make investments in this area.

Community outreach is limited, due in part because there is not a person assigned this task that receives a stipend. Efforts in this area are conducted on a volunteer basis. If a program were to occur at a school, the department member would be required to take a day out of work in order to perform the service to the town.

The department and community would benefit from having a member assigned to this position and provided a stipend for services and a budget for material. The person assigned should then – with input from other department members - prepare a plan that addresses fire prevention through awareness and education.

In addition, the suppression plan created in 2006 needs to be updated in order to continually improve safety in the community.

Code Enforcement

In order to address Code Enforcement there is a member who works eight hours per week, overseeing code enforcement and is considered the Fire Inspector. This is a limited part time position.

Some members feel that these tasks/salary/hours should be absorbed by the Chief, instead of having a separate employee. In order for the Chief to manage this process, hours would need to be increase. Many of those interviewed believe that there should be increased enforcement within the community for safety; specifically in the housing units. There is a desire to review the housing units to make sure that they are safe and properly outfitted in terms of fire safety.

This position would benefit from additional hours in order to meet the service demands and community needs.

Emergency Preparedness

The department provides a stipend to a member assigned to emergency preparedness. The budget does not provide a line item for updating or exercising the plan.

Emergency preparedness is a critical function of the Town. The person responsible should be afforded the opportunity to attend training, have support to update the plan, and the Town needs to conduct table tops and functional exercises to assist all Town departments with remaining proficient on the elements of the plan and the expectations of respective departments.

The Town should investigate grants available for this purpose and pursue the grants to supplement town wide efforts.

The department also needs to clarify the FEMA Comprehensive Emergency Management (CEM) Plan and provide the tools needed to the person who is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan.

Recommendations

- Increase capacity for fire prevention, inspectional services, and emergency preparedness.
- Create a strategy for fire prevention that includes community and school based activities.
- Assign a member to be responsible for fire prevention activities.
- Provide a budget for fire prevention.

- Increase the house for the code enforcement officer.
- Seek funding for emergency preparedness.
- Increase the hours for the emergency preparedness coordinator to enable the coordination of table tops and drills and yearly plan updating, or hire out for such services.

Training Programs, Philosophies and Organizational Statements

Training

The department requires the following training of its members:

- Infection Control
- Sexual Harassment
- Hazard Communication
- Respirator Protection

These courses are required of new hires and refresher training is required of all members.

All members must maintain, at a minimum, Hazardous Materials Awareness Certification and ICS/NIMS 700 and 100. Lieutenants must maintain level 200 certification and Chief Officers 300 level certification. The deputies and chief have attained level 400 certification. Records we reviewed showed that 11 members had certification in HazMat awareness, 16 in Hazmat Operations, and 6 were Hazmat Technicians. The department should strive to have all members receive the 24 hour Operations Course.

Structural firefighters complete training consistent with Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards requirements prior to classification. The department accepts Main Fire Training and Education Firefighter I&II and BLS Firefighter I certifications for this purpose. Structural firefighters must attend 12 hours of refresher training annually and interior firefighters are required to attend 20 hours of refresher training annually. The department is to review training requirement every six months, but PSSG did not find evidence of this process.

All department members complete an orientation prior to responding to incidents.

The department provides training to department members on Wednesday evenings in addition to sending officers to offsite training classes. Training courses in 2014 included storm training, dry hydrant pumping, ventilation and water rescue. The Emergency Reporting System does not provide data on the number of hours of training by class for each employee. While you can view this information, it does not download in a usable manner. Due to the limitation of the system PSSG could not create spreadsheets and

tables on the effort the department places on training. The training printout is over 100 pages which is not appropriate for analysis. PSSG did learn that there is disparity between members related to the number and types of training programs attended. For example one member attended 45 classes for a total of 126 hours of training while another attended 2 classes for a total of six hours. Prioritizing the training and monitoring members to ensure all members partake in training is important for the department to do in the future.

The following is an image from the training section of the Emergency Reporting Systems database.

Image 1: Training Report Screenshot

General > General	
1637 - Certifications Regardless of Status by Personnel for Personnel for Date Range	1503 - Classes Completed by Personnel
1524 - Code Hours per Training Code per Personnel	1623 - Code Hours Summary per Training Code For Date Range
1625 - Count of Classes by Class Category	1504 - Count of Classes by Personnel by Class Category
1506 - Count of Classes Instructed by Personnel by Instructor Type	1638 - Current Certifications by Personnel for Personnel for Date Range
1639 - Current Certifications by Personnel for Personnel for Expiration Date Range	1661 - Instructor Hours By Instructor Type Hours By Category for Personnel for Status
1505 - Master List of Training Codes	1507 - Percentage of Classes Passed or Failed by Personnel
1619 - Percentage of Classes Passed or Failed by Personnel by Class Category	1628 - Personnel Summary of Percentage per Incident and Training and Events for Date Range for Personnel for Shift
1621 - Sign-In Sheet with Active Personnel	1640 - Training Code Hours for Standard for Personnel for Date Range
1502 - Training Codes Completed by Personnel	1669 - Training Codes not Completed by Code for Code for Date Range
1626 - Training Codes not Completed by Personnel for Code for Date Range	1650 - Training Codes Taught by Instructor
1634 - Training Hours and Points per Personnel for Date Range	

It lists the types of reports available. The system requires you to go to this page, then click on the links to the reports, then within each report you have to provide a data range. In some sections you are provided forced choice of time frames and in other you can pick a specific date range. Ideally this would have been in one file that could have been extracted for analysis; however, the system does not provide comprehensive raw data downloads.

The department has the following number of members trained to operate the indicated apparatus:

Table 1: Number of Members Certified to Operate Apparatus

Apparatus	E1	E4	E5	E6	L1	T4	F49	R1	U1	M1
Number of Members Certified	13	13	13	13	8	6	6	13	15	2

A major concern when interviewing department members was the low number of members certified to operate the apparatus. This is a performance metric the department should seek to increase.

Philosophies and Organizational Statements

Organizations strive for a healthy and productive organizational culture as a means to increase productivity, growth, efficiency, effectiveness and reduce employee turnover.

According to Schein,² several key factors contribute to a healthy organization. This list while not exhaustive provides key indicators of a positive organization.

- Regard for and fair treatment of each employee as well as respect for each employee's contribution to the organization
- Employee pride and enthusiasm for the organization and the work performed
- Equal opportunity for each employee to realize their full potential within the organization
- Strong communication with all employees regarding policies and organizational issues
- Strong leaders with a strong sense of direction and purpose
- Ability to use innovation to meet demands
- Investment in learning, training, and employee knowledge

Bridgton Fire does a good job in some of these key areas and expresses similar sentiments in its mission and vision statements.

The department has the following mission statement:

The Bridgton Fire department is committed to protecting the people, property, and environment of our region. We remain responsive to the needs of our citizens and visitors by providing rapid professional services with dignity, safety, and well-being. We accomplish this mission through prevention, education, fire suppression, rescue, and hazardous materials response. The Bridgton Fire Department will actively participate in our community and region, serve as role models, and strive to effectively and efficiently utilize all available resources to provide an excellent service to our customers.

The values statement is as follows:

- We expect high moral and ethical behavior from our members. Be the positive example.
- We expect personal accountability from our members. Do not blame others. Fix the problem.
- We expect understanding, even though we might not see eye to eye.
- We expect teamwork. Help out, take care of one another, be nice.
- We expect respect. Treat each other with professional courtesy, honor the chain of command.

² Edgar Henry Schein (born 1928), a former professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management, has made a notable mark on the field of organizational development in many areas, including career development, group process consultation, and organizational culture.

- We expect collaboration. What is best for the department. (SIC) Resolve problems internally.
- We expect customer service to be a top priority. Do the right thing for the customer.

Overall, Bridgton Fire Department has a positive organizational culture when it comes to being civic minded and assisting the efforts of the town to remain safe, however, there is a bit of inertia when it comes to moving forward.

Negative aspects of the culture appear in the sense of entitlement portrayed with the requests for new equipment, while not being willing to foster positive relationships with the elected officials, fundraise, or promote the department through high levels of community engagement.

Recommendations

- Update, condense, and implement the mission statement for the organization.
- Formalize, properly schedule, and mandate more trainings for Department members.
- Provide EVOC training for more members of the Department.
- Continue to provide Firefighter I and Firefighter II training opportunities.
- Promote and expand the Jr. Firefighter program

Operations and Facilities

Operations

The department operates in a call fashion with a part time chief supported by limited part time staff to assist with administrative work, inspections, and emergency management. The department relies on its volunteers to respond to calls, remain current with their training, maintain the equipment and apparatus, conduct outreach for new members, enter data, and conduct community based outreach.

Many members believe the current structure does not reflect the community needs. Members expressed that it is increasingly more difficult to recruit and retain members, answer calls during the day while maintaining the administrative functions and required paperwork on a volunteer basis.

Each year the department responds to approximately 350 calls for service.

Of the calls, department members respond most often to motor vehicle crashes without injuries, building fires, and motor vehicles crashes with injuries. In 2014, five members responded to more than 100 calls. The next two charts show the response by type by

percentage of response followed by charts showing the number of calls for those members responding to the most calls.

Chart 1: Response by Type³

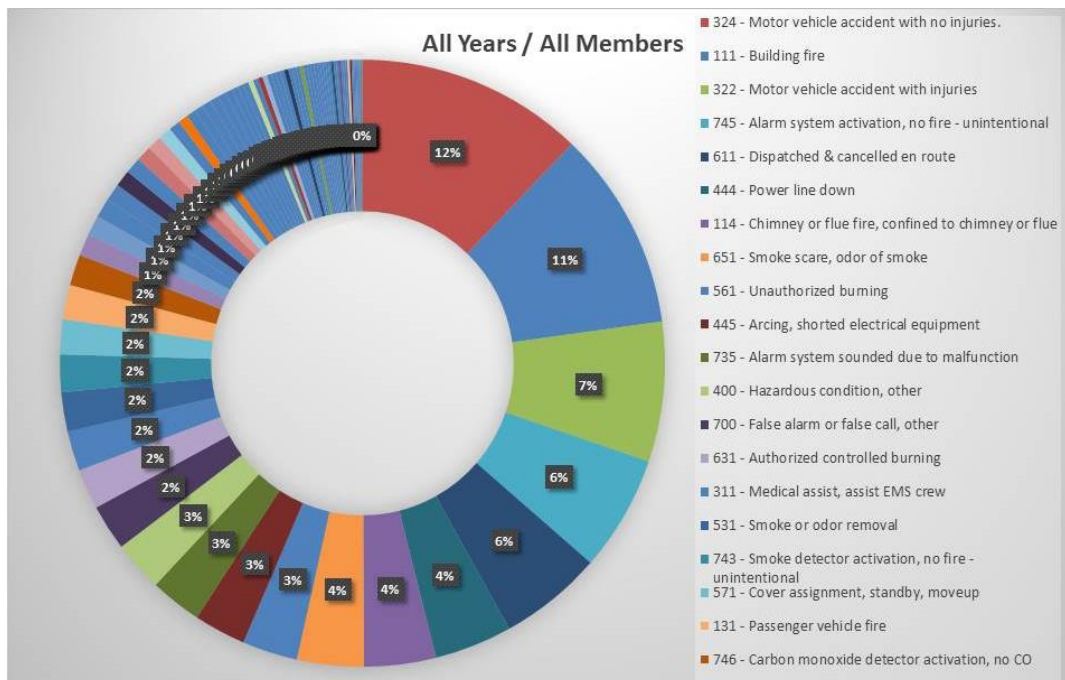
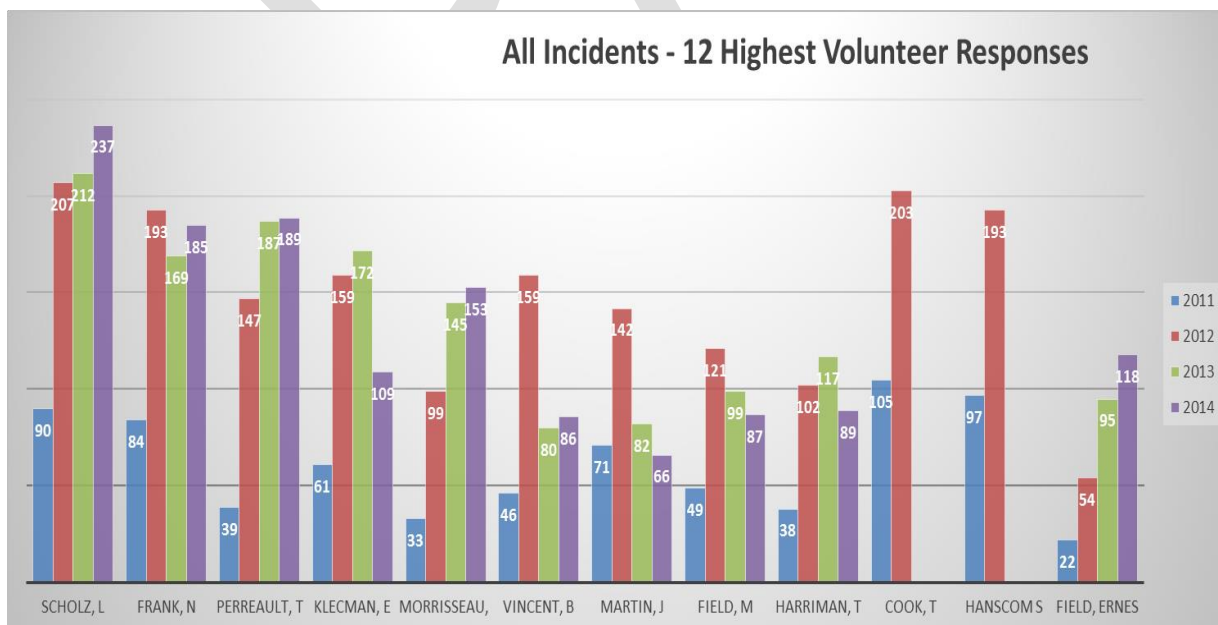


Chart 2: Response by Person



³ These charts are also included in the full operations data section.

As expressed by the members of the department, the daytime hours do have more calls for service, but the early evening hours through 11:00PM have a higher number of calls than the early morning timeframe. The following chart shows by hour the number of calls for service in 2014. The complete data section shows a breakdown for all years and for each year along with a breakdown call type by time of day.

2014	
Time	Count of Incidents
0:00:00	3
1:00:00	1
2:00:00	4
3:00:00	6
4:00:00	2
5:00:00	5
6:00:00	6
7:00:00	8
8:00:00	12
9:00:00	20
10:00:00	23
11:00:00	20
12:00:00	18
13:00:00	19
14:00:00	17
15:00:00	24
16:00:00	25
17:00:00	23
18:00:00	33
19:00:00	14
20:00:00	18
21:00:00	23
22:00:00	5
23:00:00	10
Grand Total	339

Members expressed that at some calls there are too many people and at others there are not enough. There seemed to be a reluctance to rotate call times or create more specific groups – in part due to the worry of not having enough members present in the nature of the call changes or intensifies. Policies and procedures are out of date. When the project began in September the goal was to have them completed by the end of the year, however, as of April 20, 2015

they were not completed. This shows the importance of having full time staff to manage the department and keep administrative requirements up to date.

Recommendations

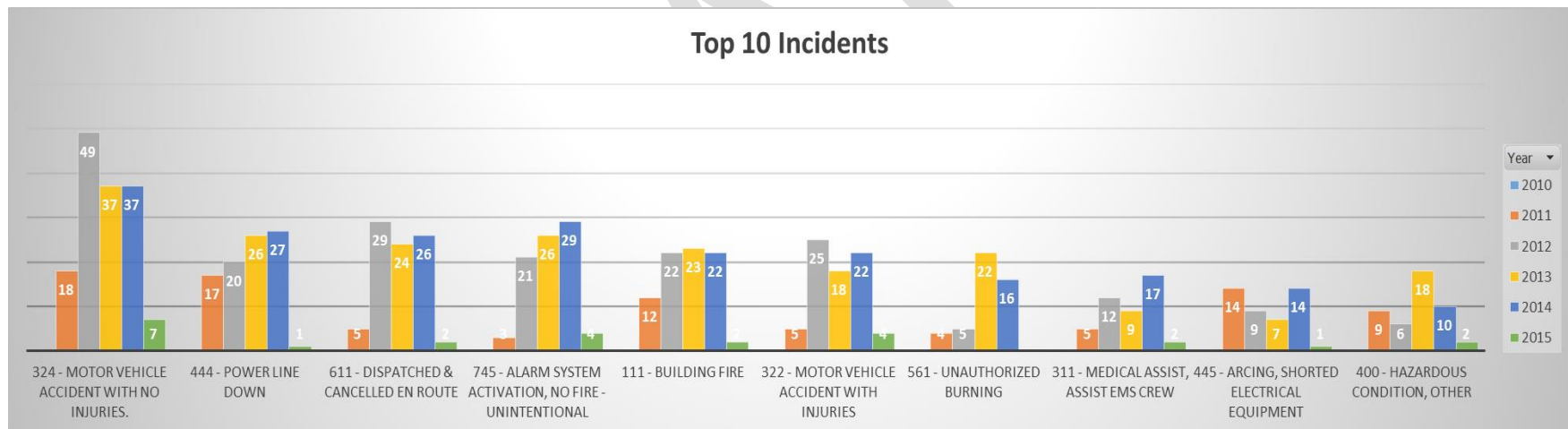
- Finalize Standard Operating Procedures and distribute to all Department members.
- Analyze deployment and necessity of personnel to scenes.
- Hire and formalize a full-time fire chief, with an established schedule, expectations and requirements.
- Analyze organization structure and positions within the Department to optimize resources.
- Review and analyze dispatch practices and policies for dispatching certain types of equipment.
- Review ISO rating and determine possible changes for improvement in future ratings such as the addition of full time staff.

Operations Data Section

The data in this section was created through the efforts of PSSG by extracting data from the Emergency Reporting System used by the town. The department used the system, but rather than working with the raw data it used the canned reports available. While a good starting point the canned reports are somewhat limited. The department needs to work with the vendor to create a master database which can be extracted in Excel enabling the department to make better use of the data stored in the system.

The information in this section allows the department and the town to use facts when making decisions, and allows the department to use this as baseline information while collecting the same information each month.

Chart 3: Top 10 Incidents 2010 – 2015



Below is a chart that shows all incidents for 2011 – 2015. The data for both 2011 and 2015 is incomplete however the available data shows the trend for that period of time.

Table 2: Incident Type 2011 - 2015⁴

Incident Type	Year					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	18	49	37	37	7	148
444 - Power line down	17	20	26	27	1	91
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	5	29	24	26	2	86
745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	3	21	26	29	4	83
111 - Building fire	12	22	23	22	2	81
322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	5	25	18	22	4	74
561 - Unauthorized burning	4	5	22	16		47
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	5	12	9	17	2	45
400 - Hazardous condition, other	9	6	18	10	2	45
445 - Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	14	9	7	14	1	45
735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	2	7	9	17	6	41
114 - Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue	4	10	10	8	6	38
651 - Smoke scare, odor of smoke	8	9	6	10	1	34
631 - Authorized controlled burning	1	15	6	5	1	28
746 - Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO		8	11	4	2	25
743 - Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	6	7	8	3	1	25
700 - False alarm or false call, other	6	11	5	3		25
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup ⁵		9	8	7		24
440 - Electrical wiring/equipment problem, other	10	2	3	1	2	18
531 - Smoke or odor removal	3	2	8	5		18
131 - Passenger vehicle fire	2	7	4	3		16
733 - Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	2	4	2	3	3	14
411 - Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	1	6	3	2	1	13
622 - No incident found on arrival at dispatch address			3	6	4	13
736 - CO detector activation due to malfunction	2	1	3	3	3	12
522 - Water or steam leak	2	2	1	5		10

⁴ Both 2011 and 2015 are incomplete; the data is included so that month over month analysis is still possible on the yearly charts.

⁵ Any verbiage in the charts is from the Bridgeton Fire Department. PSSG did not alter any of their inputs.

Incident Type	Year					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
412 - Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)		4	1	3	1	9
900 - Special type of incident, other		1	5	2	1	9
500 - Service Call, other	1	4	2	1		8
424 - Carbon monoxide incident	4	1	1	2		8
142 - Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire		4	3			7
141 - Forest, woods or wildland fire		3	3	1		7
100 - Fire, other			4	2	1	7
511 - Lock-out		1	4	1		6
360 - Water & ice-related rescue, other		1	3	1		5
600 - Good intent call, other	3	1		1		5
365 - Watercraft rescue		2	2	1		5
520 - Water problem, other			2	1	2	5
413 - Oil or other combustible liquid spill				3	1	4
740 - Unintentional transmission of alarm, other		2	2			4
551 - Assist police or other governmental agency		2		2		4
352 - Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle	3			1		4
710 - Malicious, mischievous false call, other			3			3
300 - Rescue, EMS incident, other	1	1			1	3
730 - System malfunction, other		1	1	1		3
460 - Accident, potential accident, other	1	2				3
138 - Off-road vehicle or heavy equipment fire		1	1	1		3
550 - Public service assistance, other		3				3
671 - HazMat release investigation w/no HazMat	1	1		1		3
162 - Outside equipment fire				1	1	2
113 - Cooking fire, confined to container	1	1				2
744 - Detector activation, no fire - unintentional			1		1	2
812 - Flood assessment		2				2
361 - Swimming/recreational water areas rescue			1	1		2
814 - Lightning strike (no fire)		2				2
341 - Search for person on land			1	1		2
118 - Trash or rubbish fire, contained		2				2
350 - Extrication, rescue, other	1	1				2
721 - Bomb scare - no bomb	1			1		2
323 - Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)		1		1		2

Incident Type	Year					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
815 - Severe weather or natural disaster standby	1	1				2
160 - Special outside fire, other	1	1				2
911 - Citizen complaint		2				2
813 - Wind storm, tornado/hurricane assessment	1					1
410 - Combustible/flammable gas/liquid condition, other			1			1
741 - Sprinkler activation, no fire - unintentional		1				1
151 - Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire			1			1
381 - Rescue or EMS standby	1					1
154 - Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire					1	1
150 - Outside rubbish fire, other	1					1
342 - Search for person in water		1				1
463 - Vehicle accident, general cleanup		1				1
423 - Refrigeration leak		1				1
650 - Steam, other gas mistaken for smoke, other				1		1
134 - Water vehicle fire				1		1
357 - Extrication of victim(s) from machinery				1		1
362 - Ice rescue		1				1
130 - Mobile property (vehicle) fire, other				1		1
363 - Swift water rescue			1			1
116 - Fuel burner/boiler malfunction, fire confined			1			1
621 - Wrong location			1			1
652 - Steam, vapor, fog or dust thought to be smoke		1				1
653 - Smoke from barbecue, tar kettle	1					1
Total	164	352	345	339	65	1265

The following series of charts show, by category, by month, by year the number of incidents.

Chart 4: All Years Motor Vehicle Accident with No Injuries

324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.

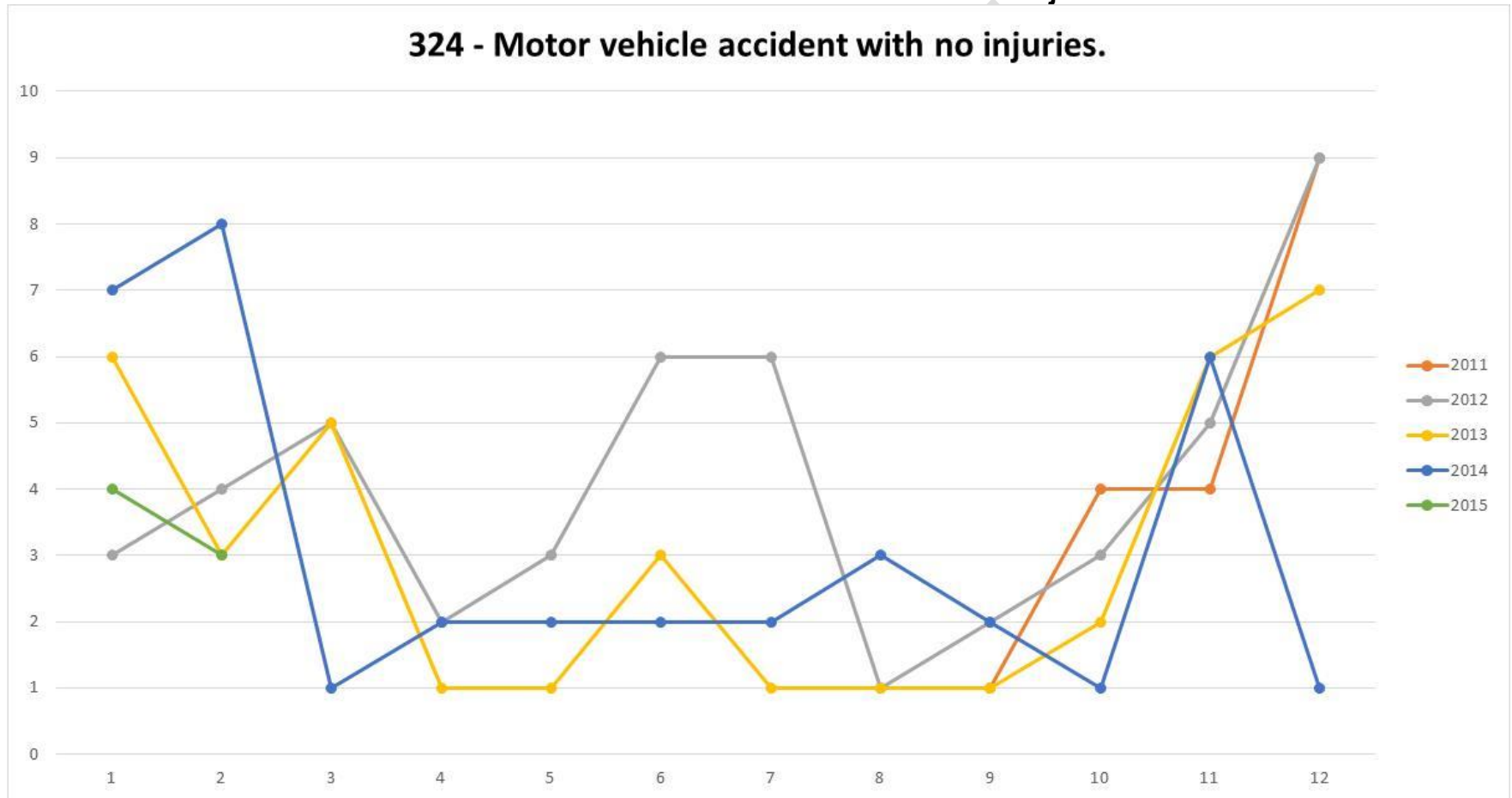


Chart 5: All Years Power Line Down

444 - Power line down

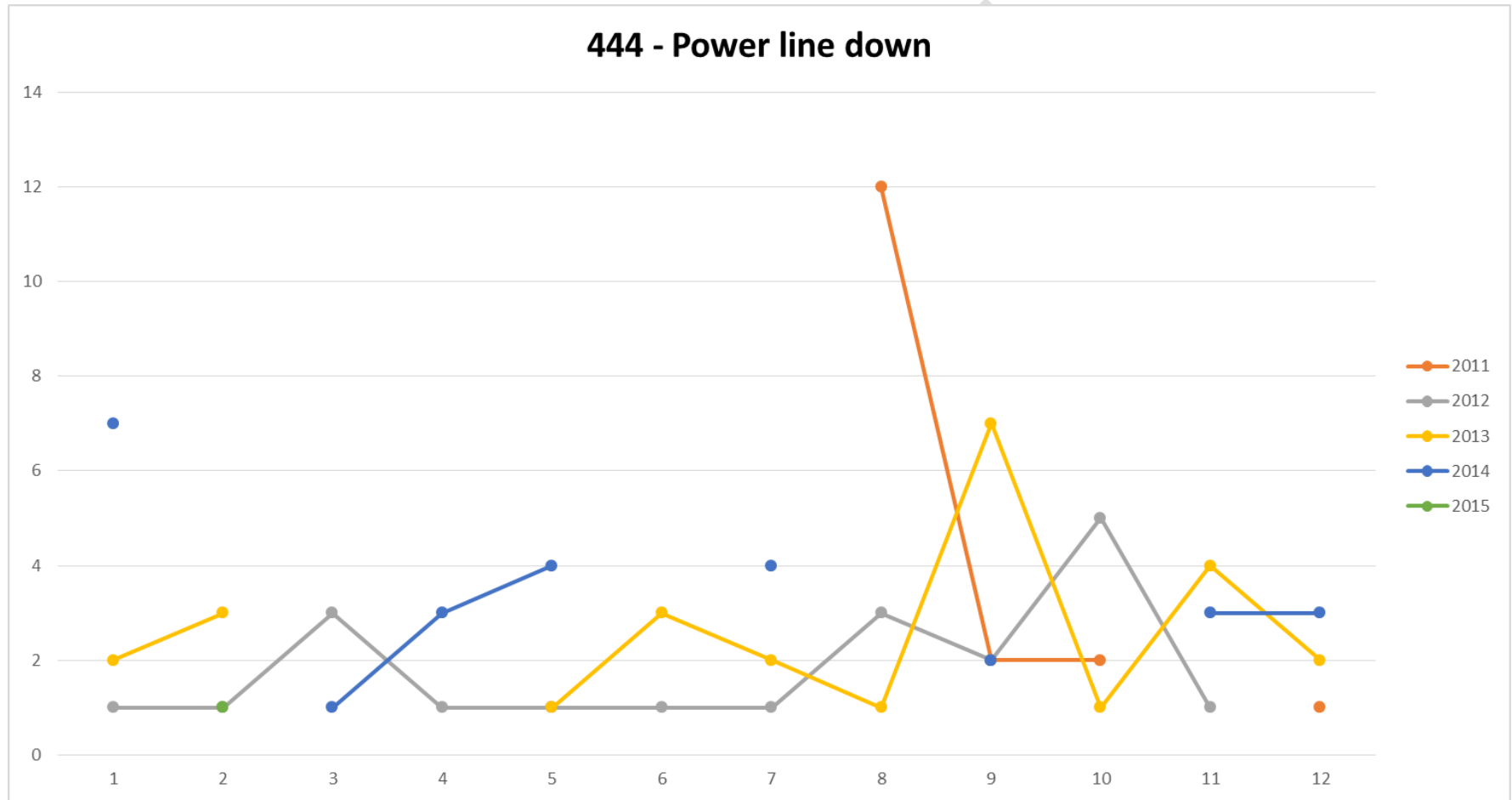


Chart 6: All Years Dispatched & Cancelled En Route

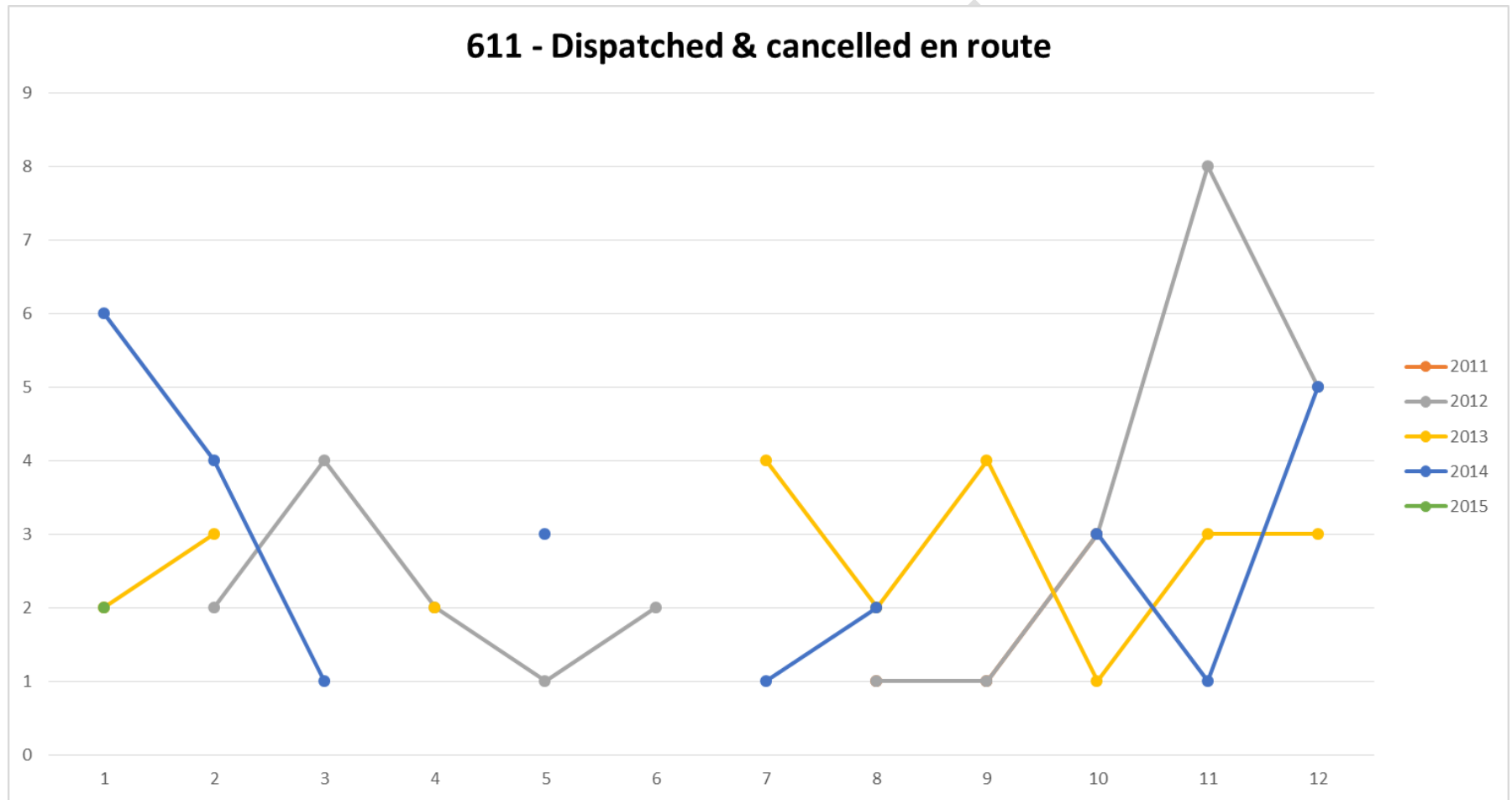


Chart 7: All Years Alarm System Activation, No Fire - Unintentional

745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional

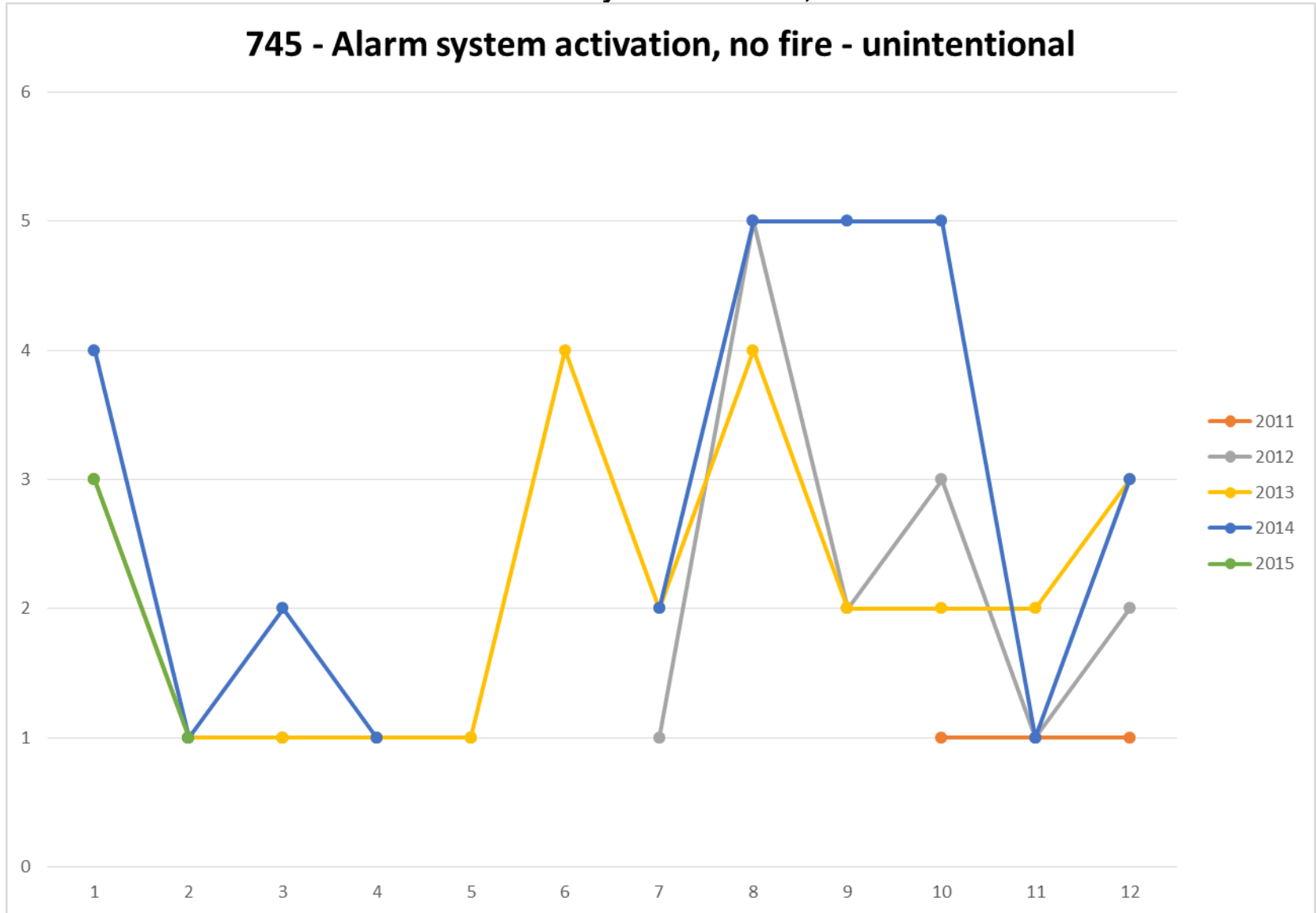


Chart 8: All Years Building Fire

111 - Building fire

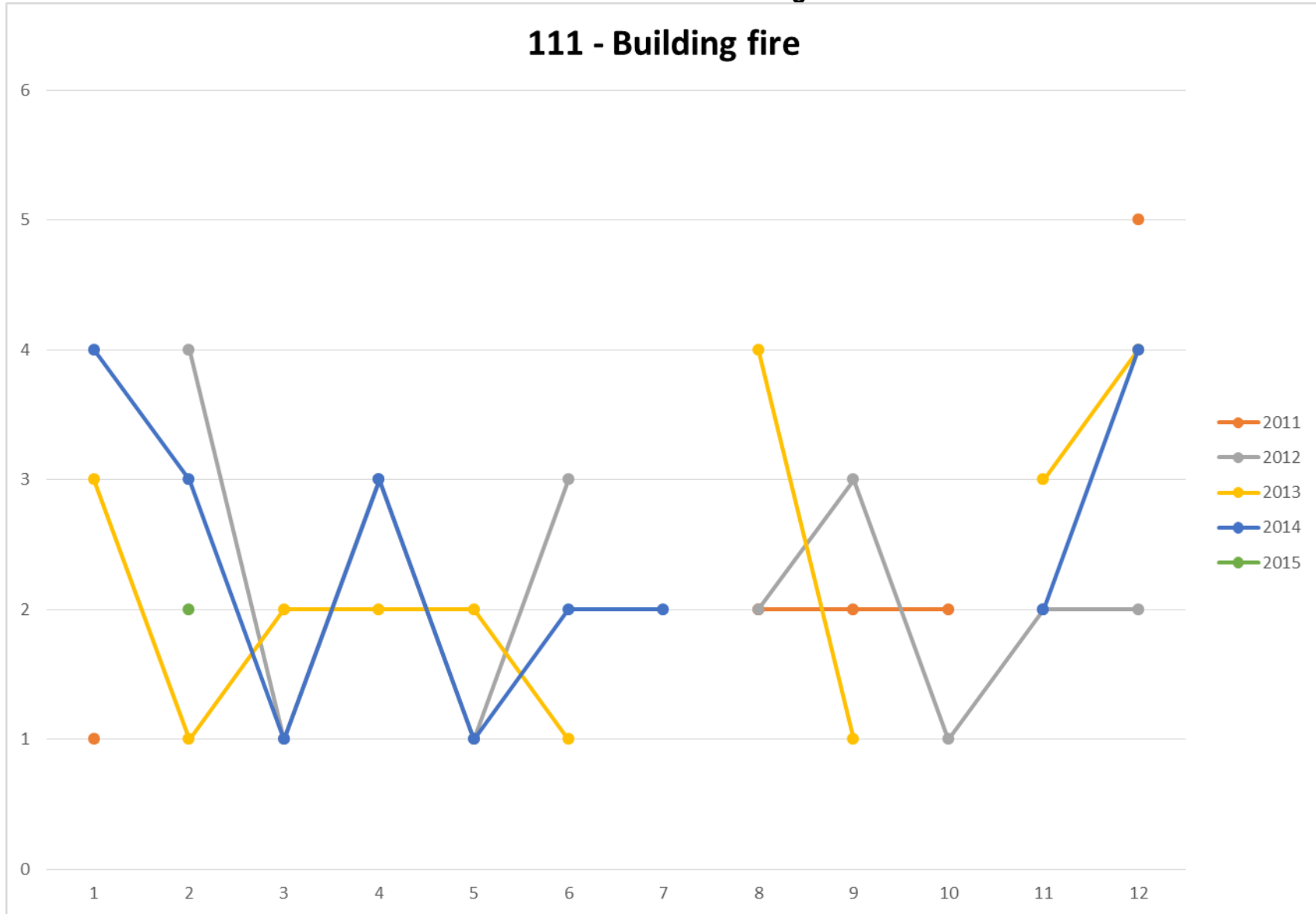


Chart 9: All Years Motor Vehicle Accident with Injuries

322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries

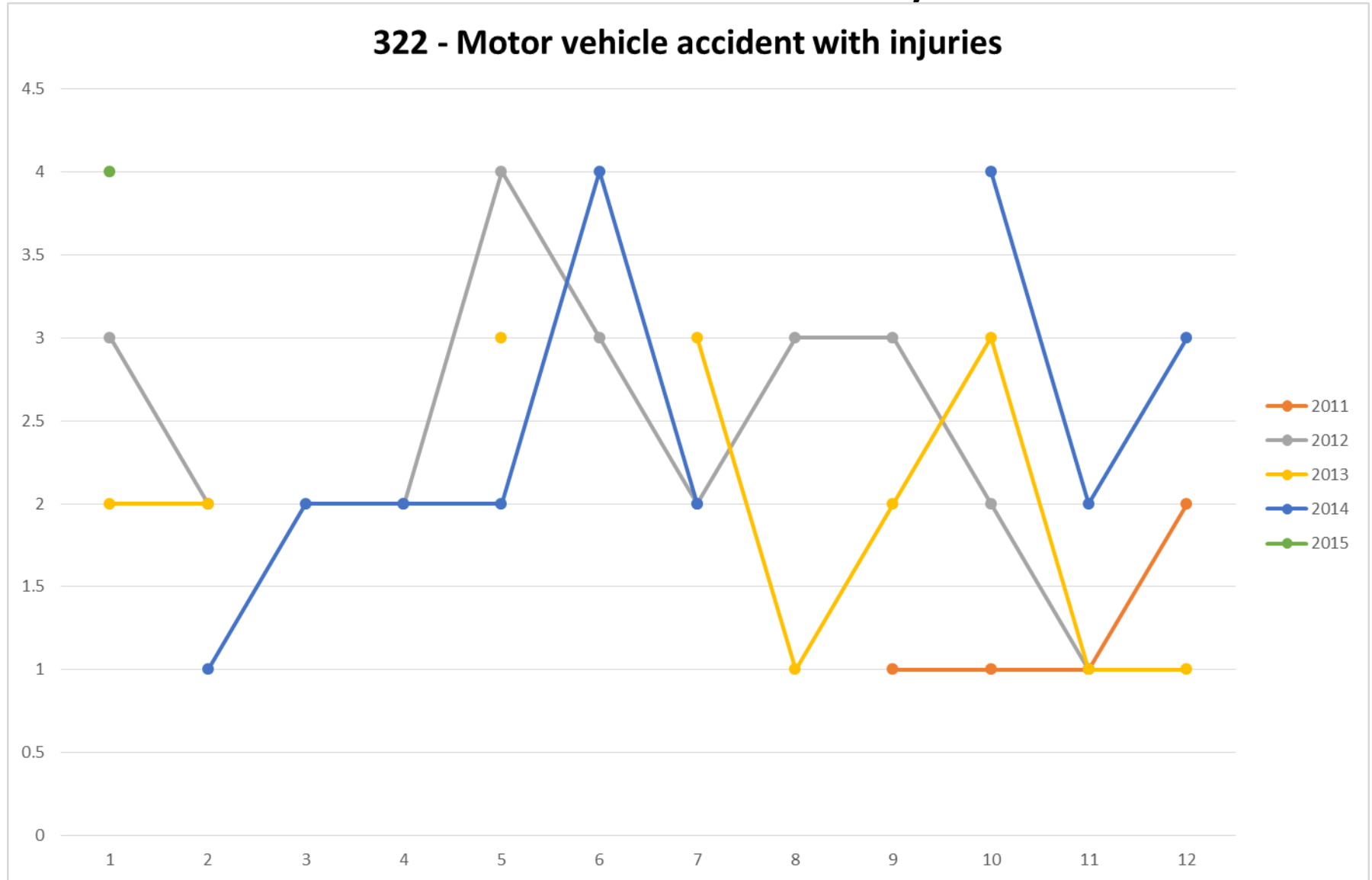


Chart 10: All Years Unauthorized Burning

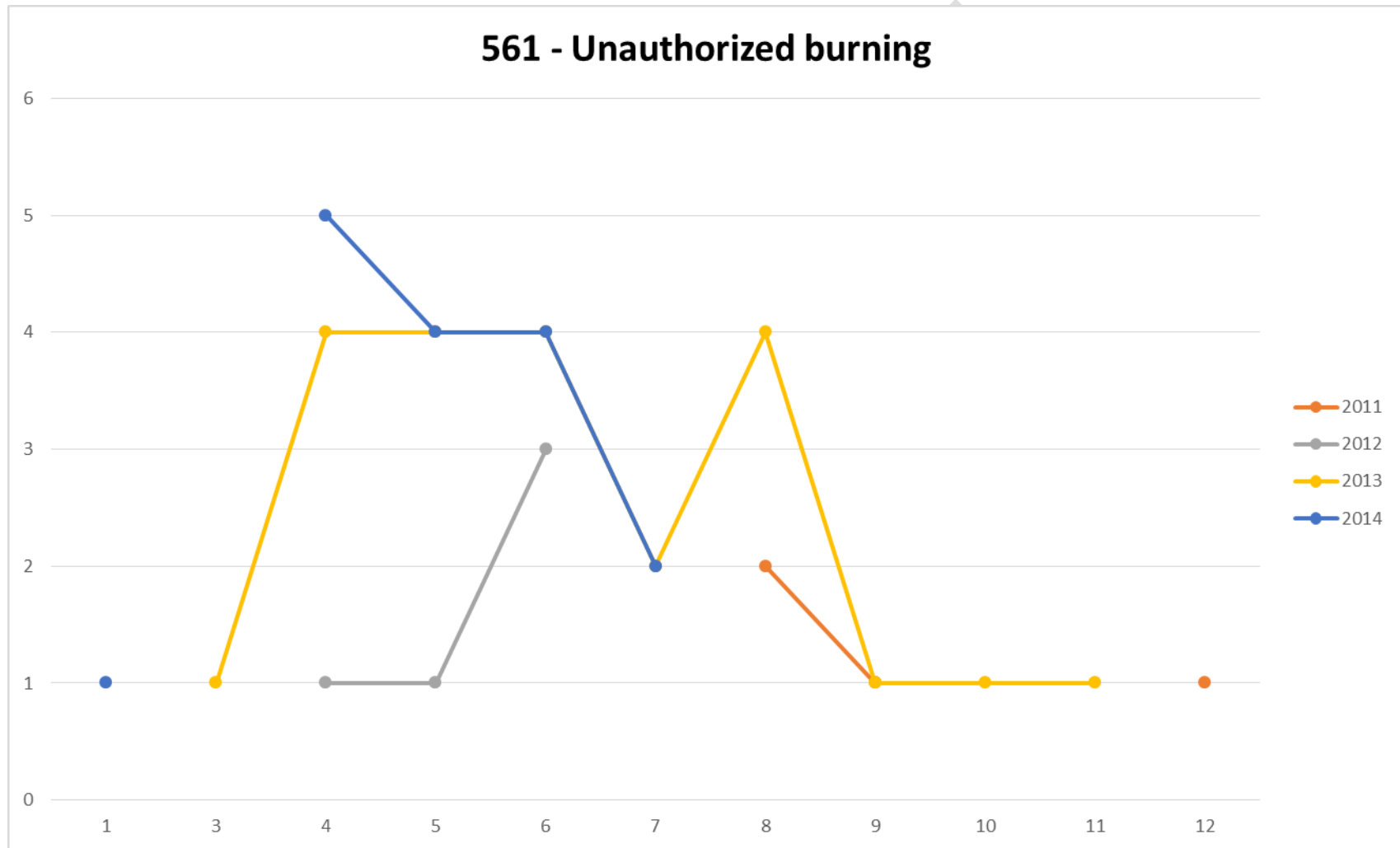


Chart 11: All Years Medical Assist – Assist EMS Crew

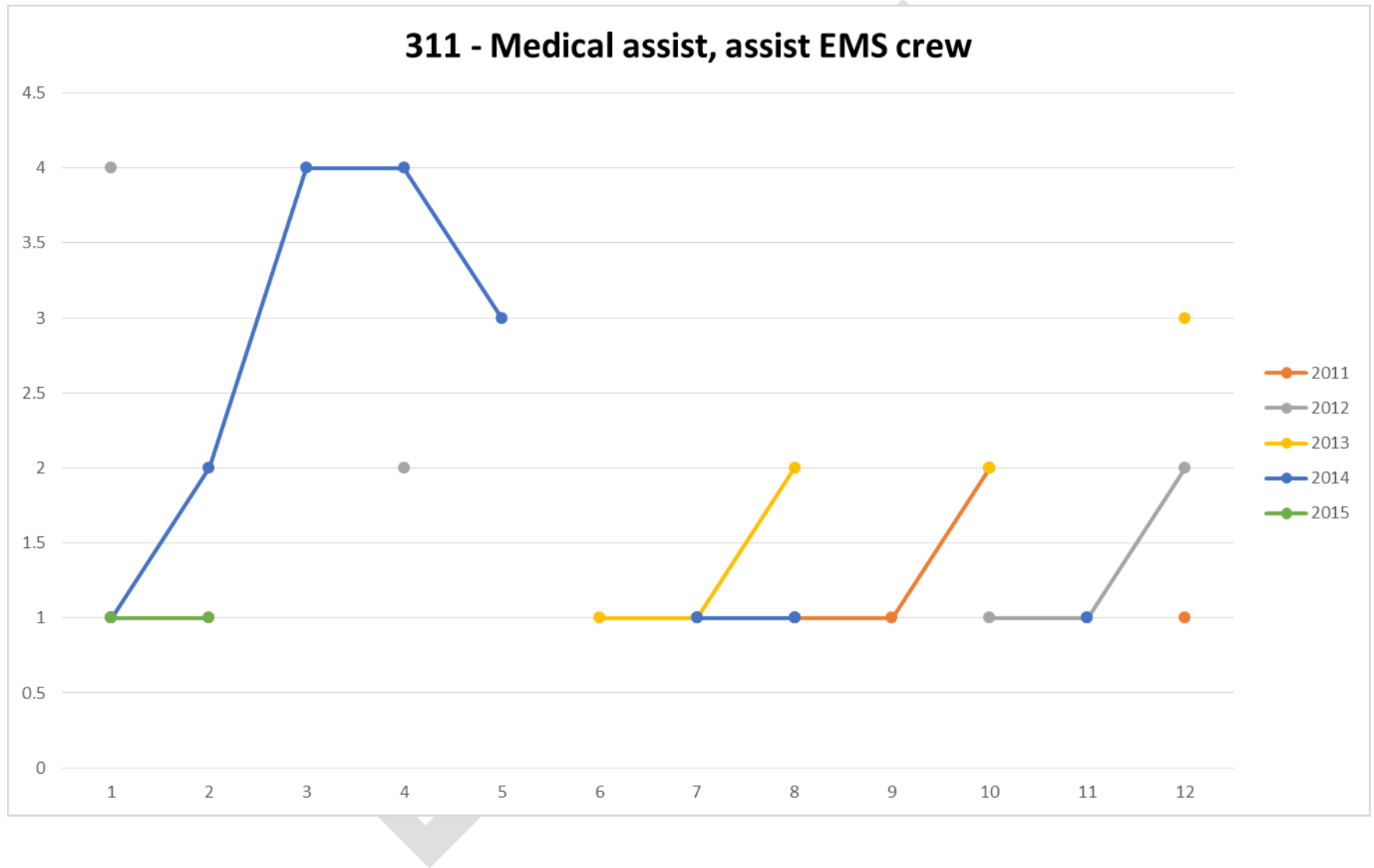


Chart 12: All Years Hazardous Conditions Other

400 - Hazardous condition, other

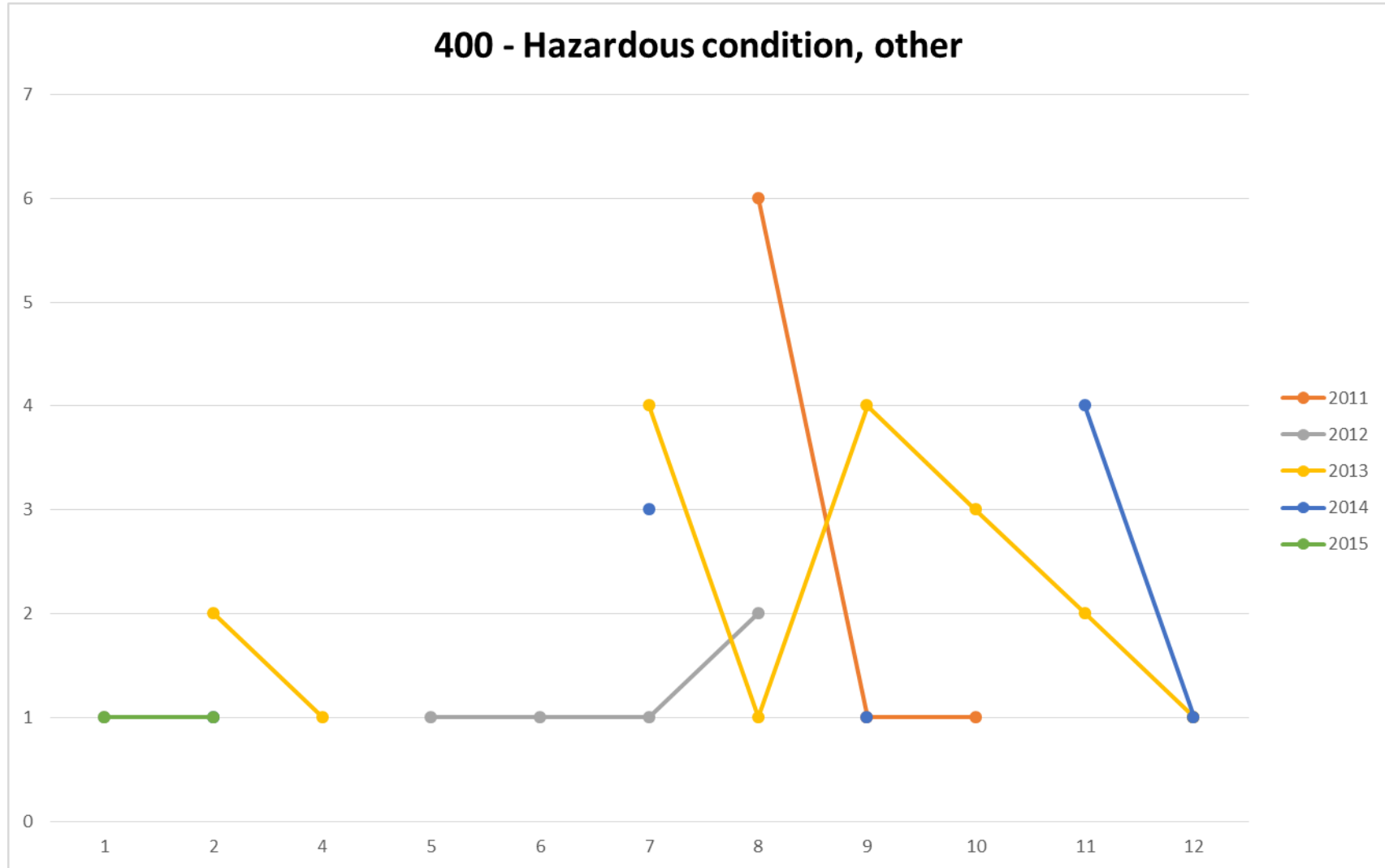


Chart 13: All Years Arcing – Shorted Electrical Equipment

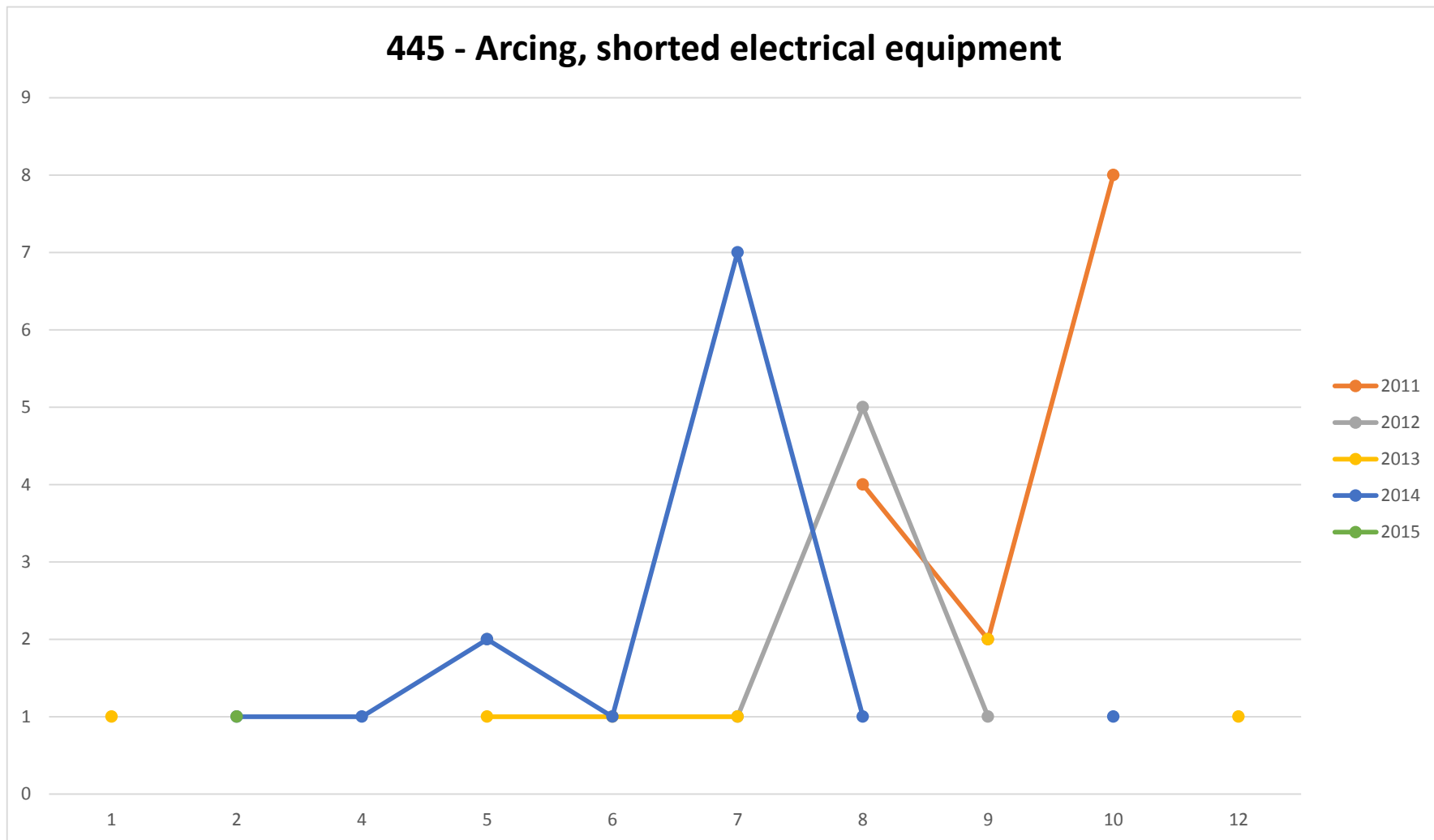
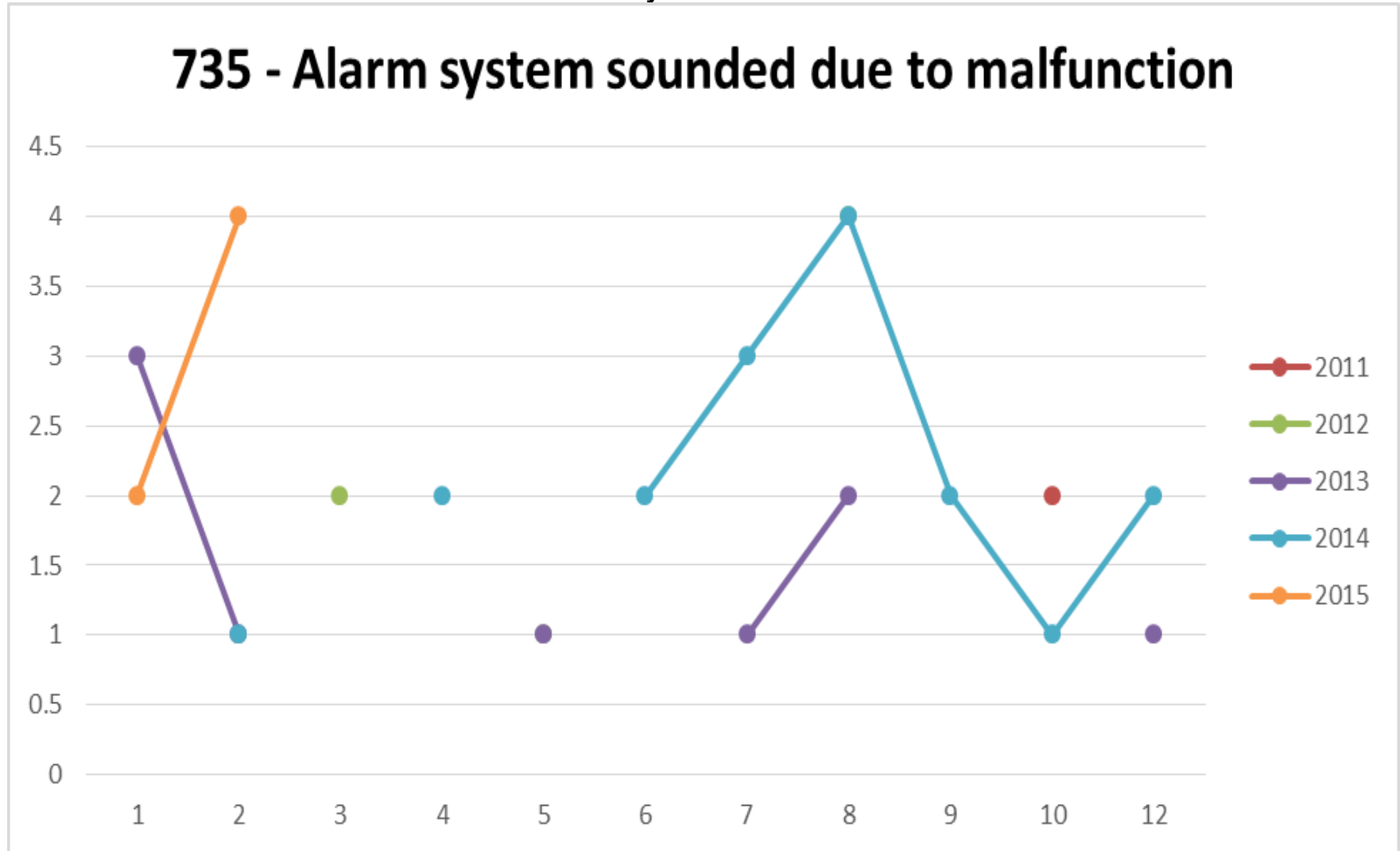


Chart 14: All Years Alarm System Sounded Due to Malfunction



The next series of charts and tables show the total number of incidents for all years by time of the day as a trend line chart and then as a table. After the table of all years all incidents, the next set of tables show the number of incidents per year by time of day. These tables are then followed by a series of charts that show the trend line of calls by type by time of day.

These charts should serve as a tool for the Town, the Fire Department, and the Board of selectman to use a tool to determine the feasibility of increasing the hours of current administrative staff or moving toward the hiring of per diem staff.

Chart 15: All Incidents for all Years by Time of Day

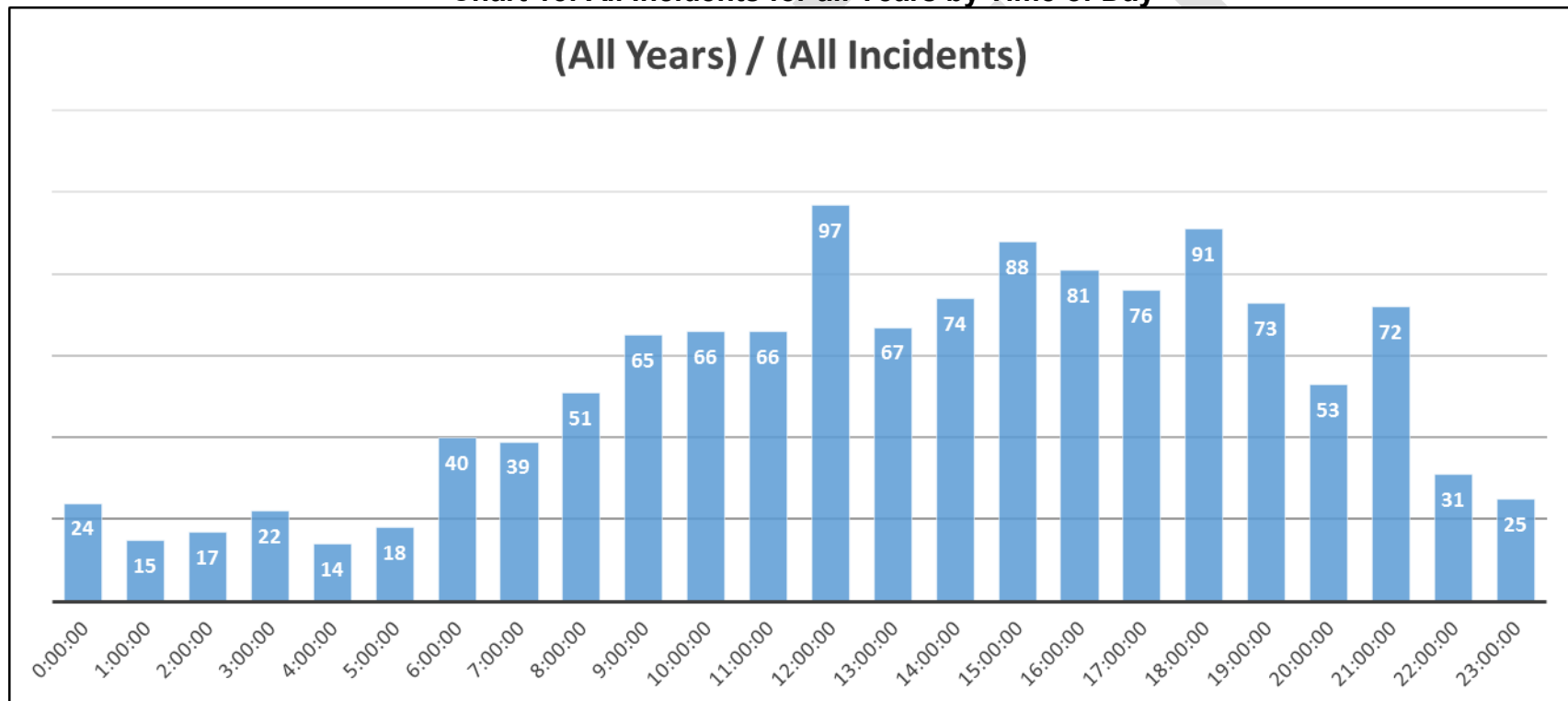


Table 3: All Years Incidents by Time of Day

2011 - 2015	
Time of Day	Count of Incidents
0:00:00	24
1:00:00	15
2:00:00	17
3:00:00	22
4:00:00	14
5:00:00	18
6:00:00	40
7:00:00	39
8:00:00	51
9:00:00	65
10:00:00	66
11:00:00	66
12:00:00	97
13:00:00	67
14:00:00	74
15:00:00	88
16:00:00	81
17:00:00	76
18:00:00	91
19:00:00	73
20:00:00	53
21:00:00	72
22:00:00	31
23:00:00	25
Grand Total	12

Table 4: 2011 Incidents by Time of Day

2011	
Time of Day	Count of Incidents
0:00:00	5
1:00:00	1
2:00:00	1
3:00:00	6
5:00:00	2
6:00:00	10
7:00:00	4
8:00:00	9
9:00:00	7
10:00:00	7
11:00:00	9
12:00:00	16
13:00:00	9
14:00:00	9
15:00:00	15
16:00:00	13
17:00:00	6
18:00:00	3
19:00:00	11
20:00:00	2
21:00:00	14
22:00:00	2
23:00:00	3
Grand Total	164

Table 5: 2012 Incidents by Time of Day

2012	
Row Labels	Count of Incidents
0:00:00	10
1:00:00	7
2:00:00	10
3:00:00	4
4:00:00	4
5:00:00	8
6:00:00	12
7:00:00	10
8:00:00	11
9:00:00	14
10:00:00	17
11:00:00	20
12:00:00	24
13:00:00	18
14:00:00	18
15:00:00	27
16:00:00	22
17:00:00	24
18:00:00	26
19:00:00	20
20:00:00	15
21:00:00	10
22:00:00	15
23:00:00	6
Grand Total	352

Table 6: 2013 Incidents by Time of Day

2013	
Time	Count of Incidents
0:00:00	6
1:00:00	5
2:00:00	1
3:00:00	4
4:00:00	4
5:00:00	2
6:00:00	9
7:00:00	14
8:00:00	17
9:00:00	17
10:00:00	12
11:00:00	13
12:00:00	35
13:00:00	16
14:00:00	29
15:00:00	20
16:00:00	21
17:00:00	19
18:00:00	22
19:00:00	26
20:00:00	16
21:00:00	23
22:00:00	8
23:00:00	6
Grand Total	345

Table 7: 2014 Incidents by Time of Day

2014	
Time	Count of Incidents
0:00:00	3
1:00:00	1
2:00:00	4
3:00:00	6
4:00:00	2
5:00:00	5
6:00:00	6
7:00:00	8
8:00:00	12
9:00:00	20
10:00:00	23
11:00:00	20
12:00:00	18
13:00:00	19
14:00:00	17
15:00:00	24
16:00:00	25
17:00:00	23
18:00:00	33
19:00:00	14
20:00:00	18
21:00:00	23
22:00:00	5
23:00:00	10
Grand Total	339

Table 8: 2015 Incidents by Time of Day

2015	
Time	Count of Incidents
1:00:00	1
2:00:00	1
3:00:00	2
4:00:00	4
5:00:00	1
6:00:00	3
7:00:00	3
8:00:00	2
9:00:00	7
10:00:00	7
11:00:00	4
12:00:00	4
13:00:00	5
14:00:00	1
15:00:00	2
17:00:00	4
18:00:00	7
19:00:00	2
20:00:00	2
21:00:00	2
22:00:00	1
Grand Total	65

Chart 16: All Years Motor Vehicle – No Injury – Time of Day

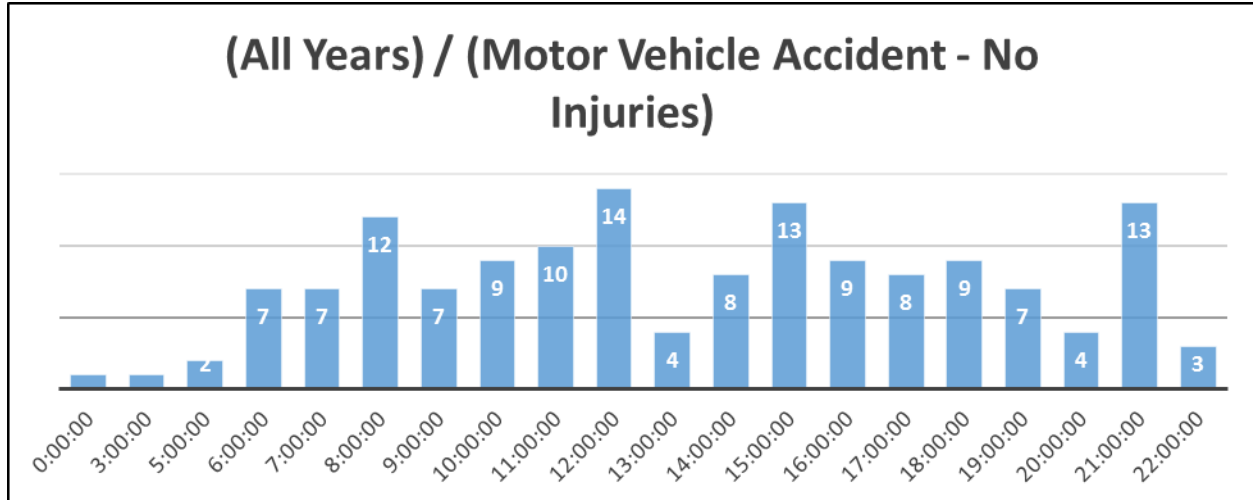


Chart 17: All Years Power Line Down - Time of Day

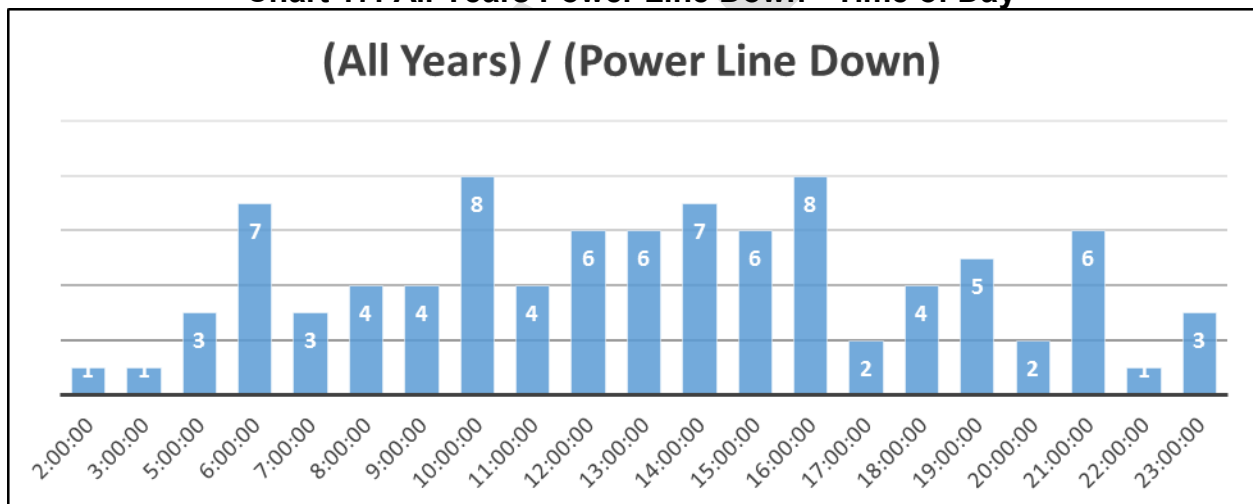


Chart 18: All Years Dispatched and Cancelled En Route - Time of Day

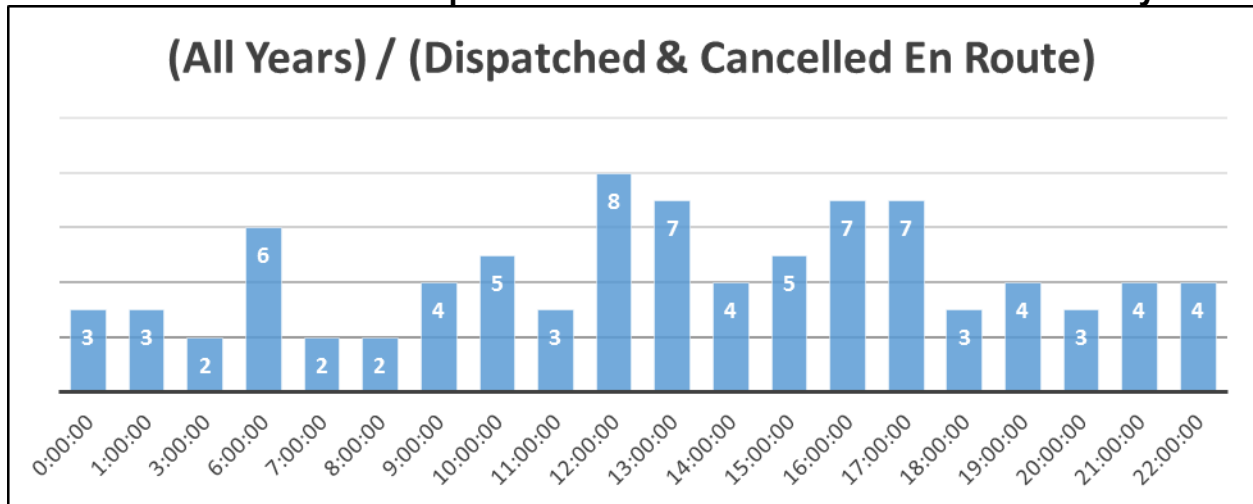


Chart 19: All Years Alarm System Activation – No Fire – Unintentional - Time of Day

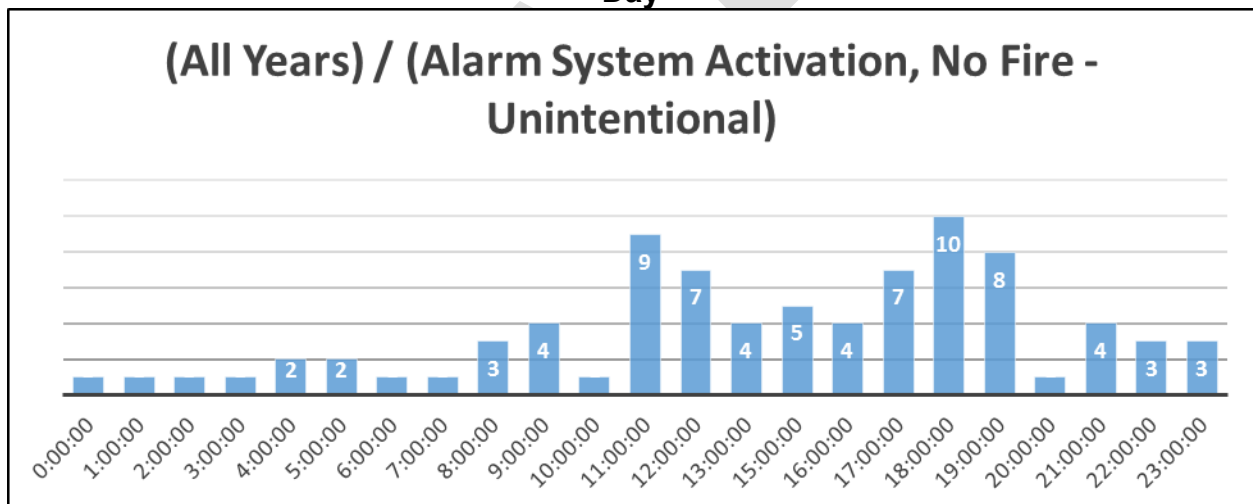


Chart 20: All Years Building Fire - Time of Day

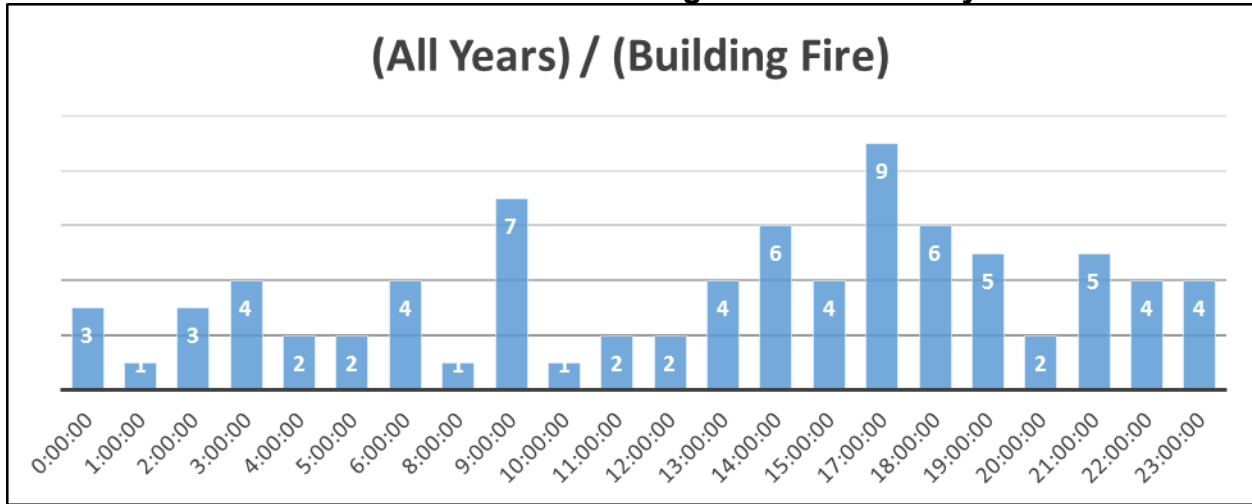


Chart 21: All Years Motor Vehicle Accident with Injuries - Time of Day

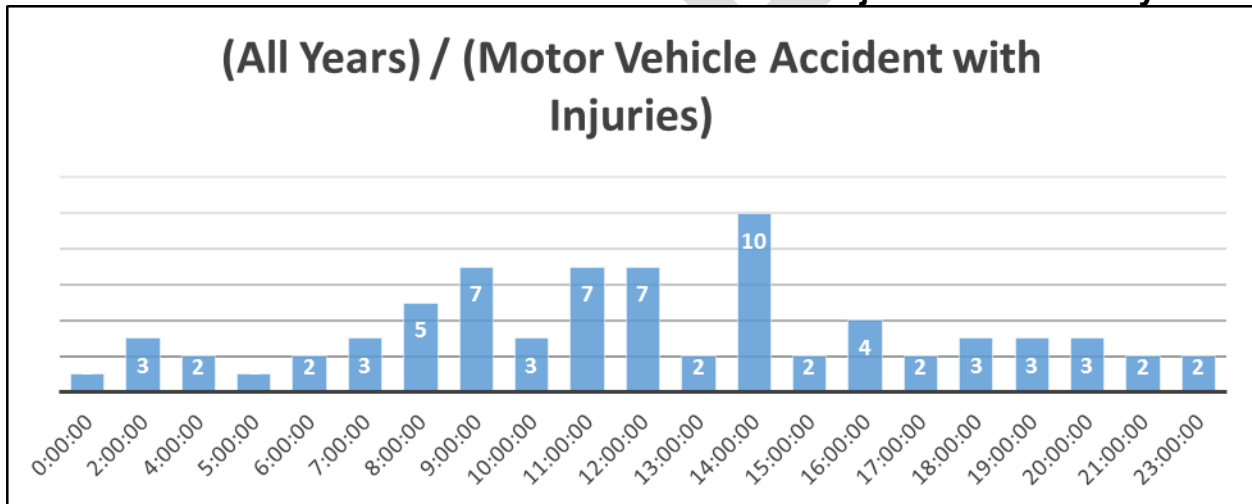


Chart 22: All Years Unauthorized Burning - Time of Day

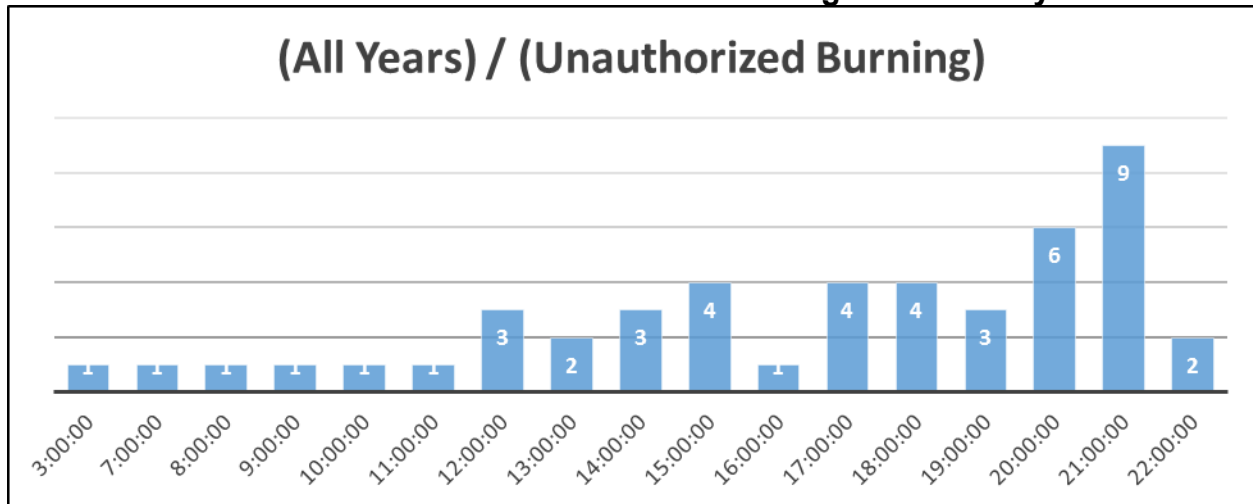


Chart 23: All Years Medical Assist EMS Crew - Time of Day

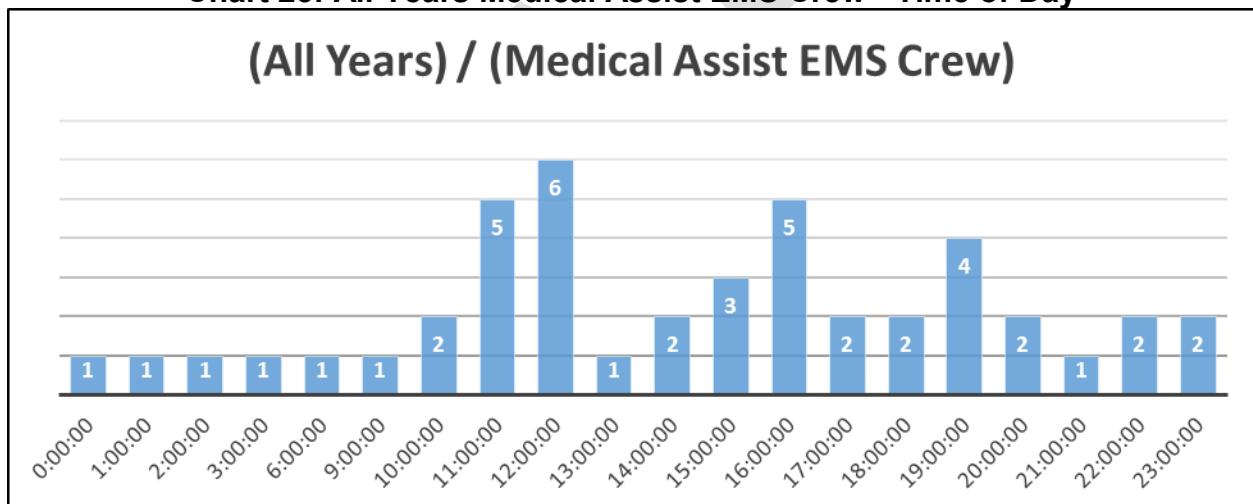


Chart 24: All Years Hazardous Conditions – Other Time of Day

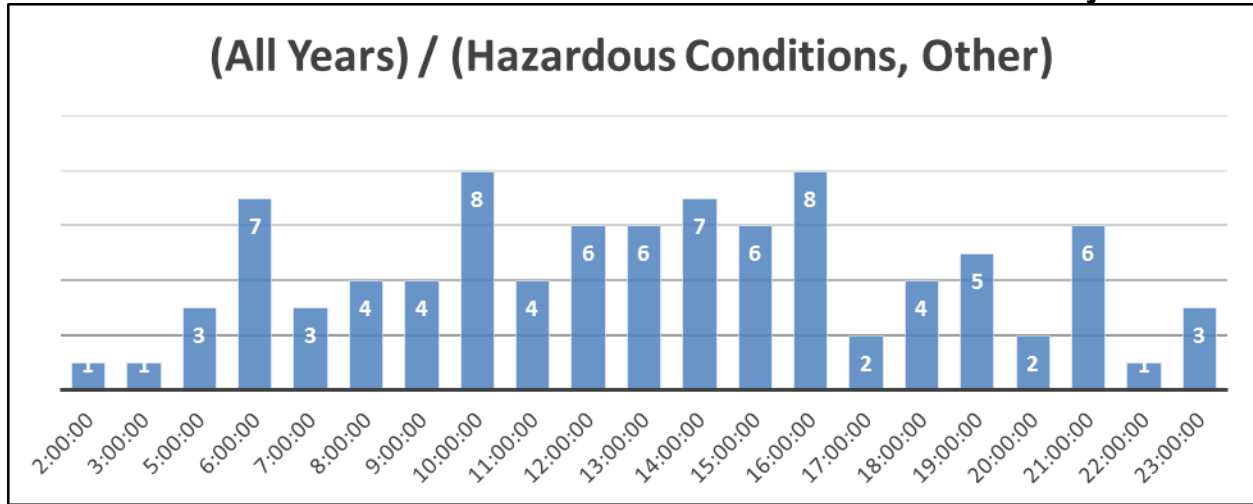


Chart 25: All Years Arching Shorted Electrical Equipment - Time of Day

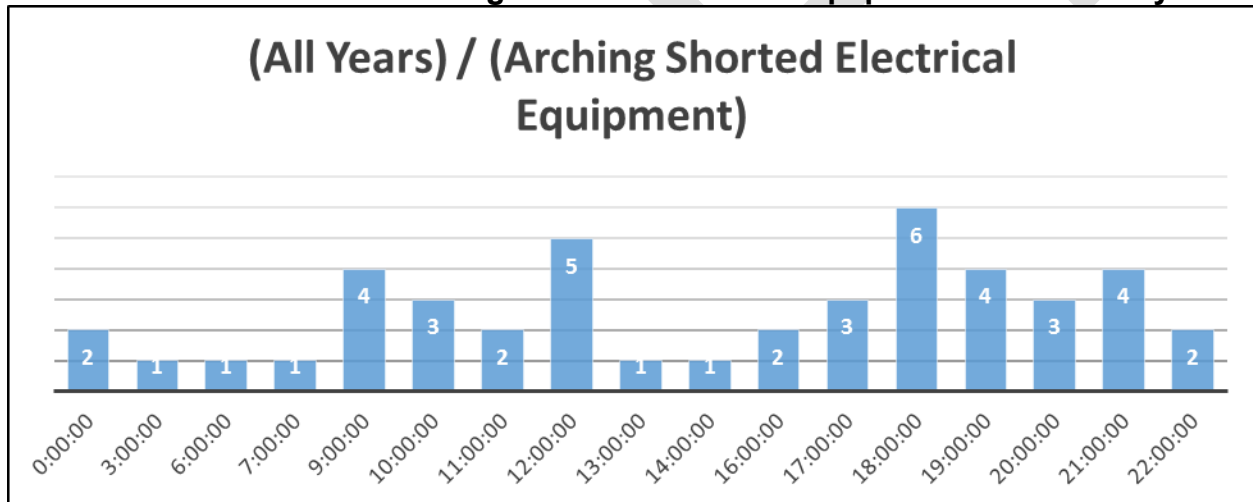
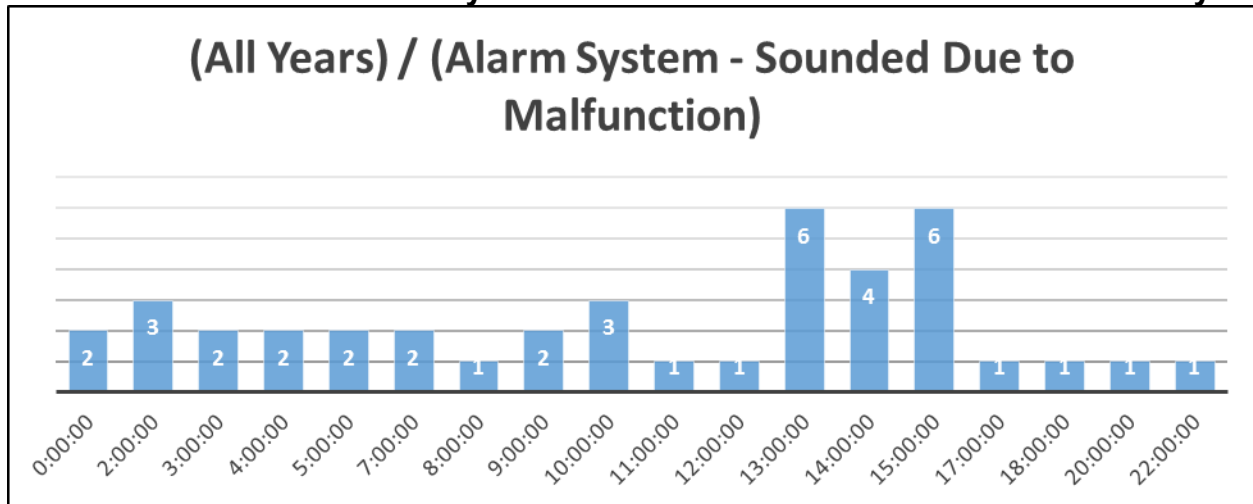


Chart 26: All Years Alarm System Sounded Due to Malfunction - Time of Day



The next chart, as shown in the operations section, depicts the number of members responding to a call by type. PSSG suggest that the chief conduct additional research with these folks to determine what factors impact their ability to response to the calls. This knowledge is important in order for the department to recruit additional personnel.

Figure 1: All Years / All Members Response by Type by Percent

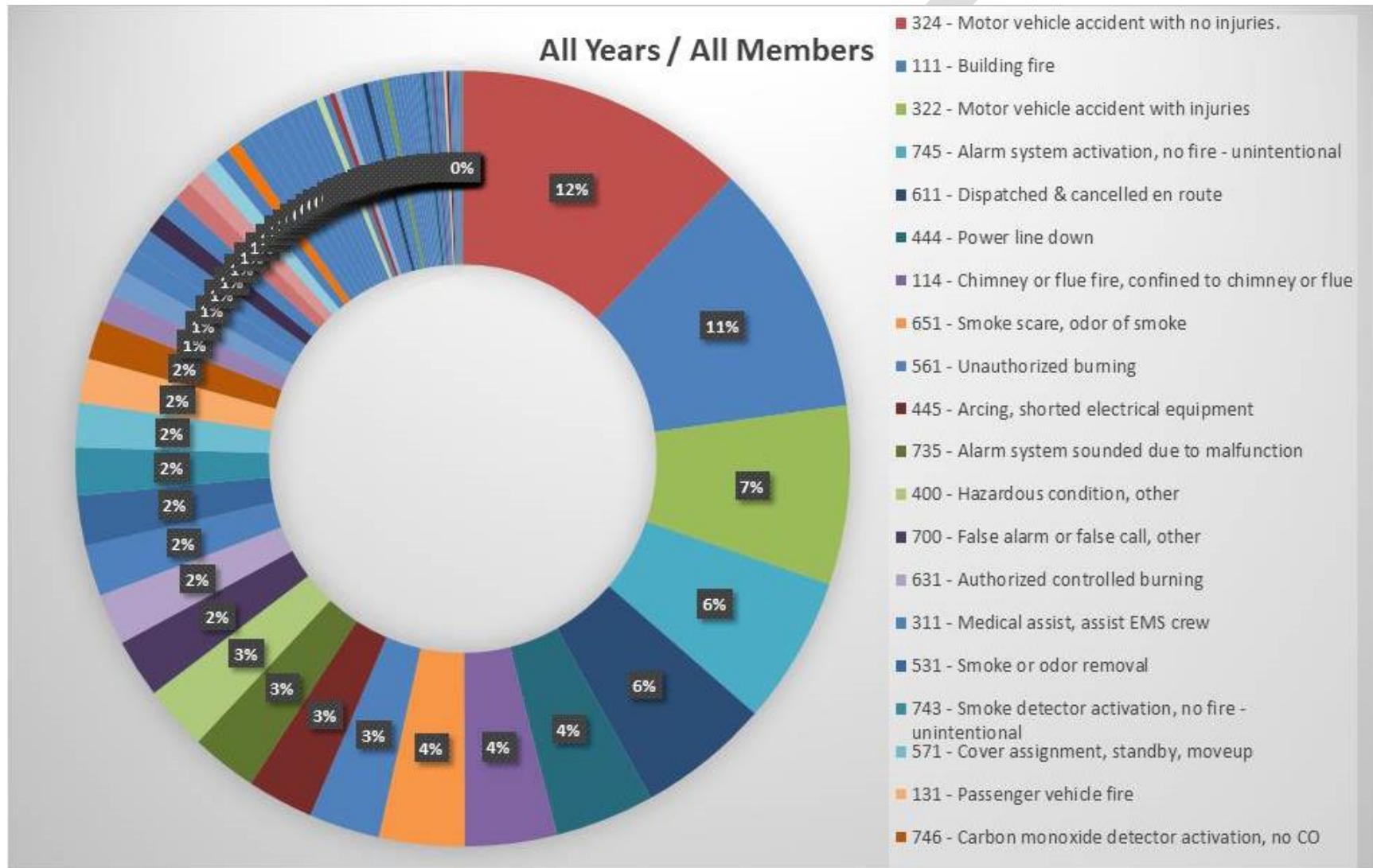
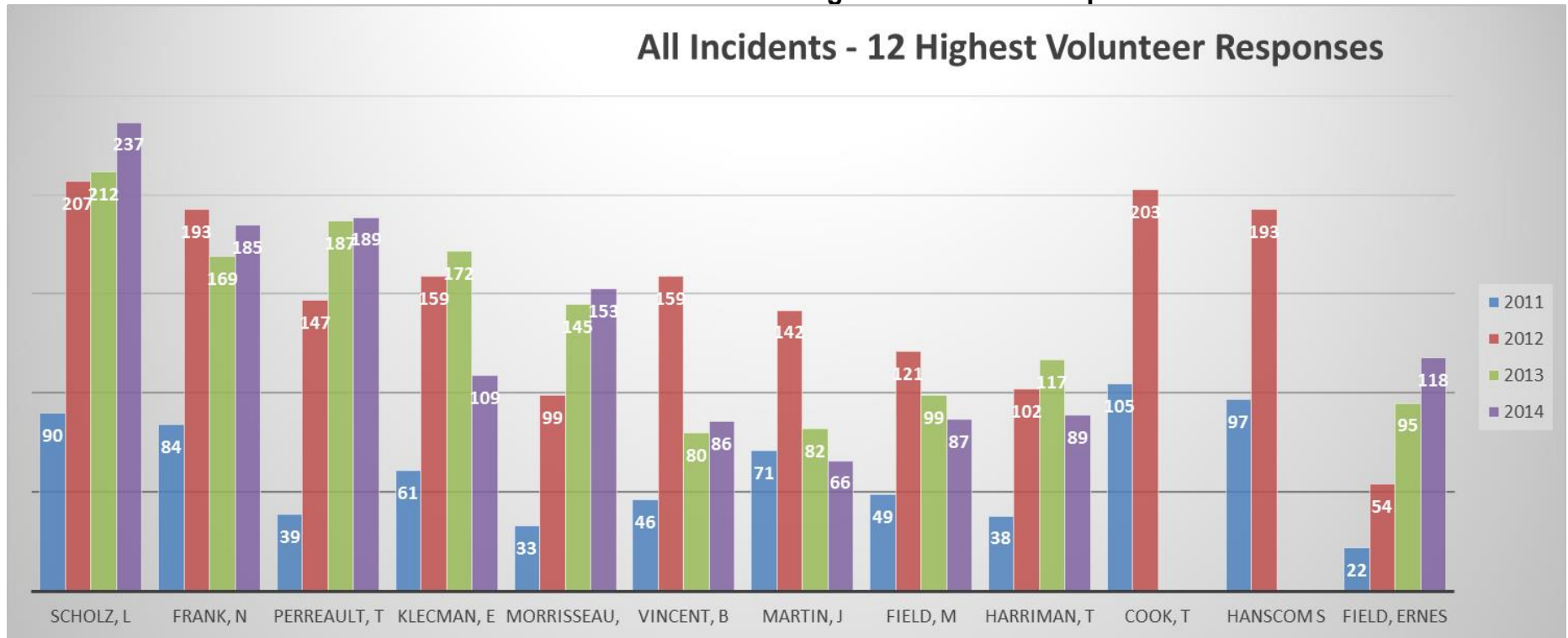


Chart 27: All Incidents – 12 Highest Volunteer Responses



Facilities

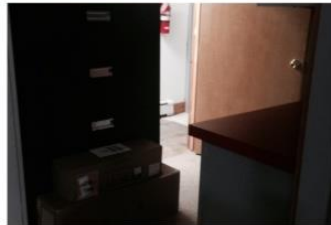
Each station suffers from poor ventilations, lack engine exhaust systems, decontamination area and equipment, fire alarm monitoring, separate male/female facilities, bio-hazard waste area, improper / poor lighting, outdated training rooms, and cramped office areas. Computer systems in the stations are old and in need of replacement.

The overall cleanliness of the facilities is poor and there is deferred maintenance at the sites. The Central Station, a single story metal building is extremely cramped in terms of space making it difficult for movement around the apparatus. There are not separate locker room facilities or areas for fire fighters to do work unless it occurs in the very small officers that are available. The station lacks training space and an area for the chief or members of the command staff to hold a private meeting. South Station is a two story garage that has a large second floor that is not finished. This space is currently used for storage. While this space is in need of organization and inventory, unless the space was finished it does not serve a practical purpose. North Station is a small traditional garage structure.

On the next three pages are pictures of each of the stations. The PSSG team took over 100 pictures during the site visit and has selected some from each station as representative example of the conditions of the facilities.

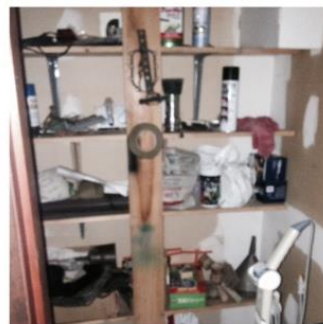
Central Station - Photographs





DuxBox 141 B. 4.1									
1st Alarm	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
2nd Alarm	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
3rd Alarm	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
DuxBox 141									
1st Alarm	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
All Hands	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
2nd Alarm	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
3rd Alarm	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
DuxBox 141									
1st Alarm	Shuttle High St. Area	7.4	1.1	15.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1

North Station - Photographs



South Station PhotoGraphs





West Station – Photographs



Recommendations

- Clean and organize each station.
- Review use of and cost to upkeep additional fire stations.
- Ensure the department applies for all grants that allow for station improvements.

Apparatus Use and Planning

Proper equipment and apparatus are essential elements of a department in order to be as effective as possible at preventing, responding to, and mitigating the impact of fires.

It appears that the town and the department are divided on the topic with external stakeholders less willing to purchase new equipment and internal stakeholders desiring additional equipment.

There was much attention to the Quint the department purchased. The main points of contention were; the cost of the apparatus, the fact that the town has few multi story structures, the vehicle is large and difficult to maneuver on many streets in town – especially by the lake, and the perception that the apparatus supports mutual aid calls more than town calls.

The department does not appear to have a fully developed capital improvement plan for apparatus replacement. On several occasions members told PSSG team members that one existed, but the plan was never produced for review. In the FY 15 budget, there was approximately \$5,000.00 allocated for maintenance, however, it is not possible to ascertain from previous years how much of the budget was spent on maintenance. The budget files for the Town lack categories so there was not any way to sort or review the data.

There are not any definitive standards on vehicle replacement, therefore, department tracking of fleet maintenance and issues are important. The fire department did not provide any maintenance log or a log tracking issues with the apparatus, as a result, PSSG could not make definitive statements on equipment replacement. In order to constructively plan for the future a complete analysis is required.

Department members expressed the need for a mini pumper. A mini pumper should be used as a supplemental vehicle and not in place of a full sized vehicle. A mini pumper has application as the first vehicle out to remote areas, areas with a steep grade, supplemental for brush fires, or for use as the first vehicle in severe weather that might delay the larger apparatus. Mini pumpers have two and four door options, each with laminations. Before proceeding with this purchase the department needs to conduct a full needs assessment and research on the pros and cons of each type of mini pumper set up.

General equipment such as thermal imaging cameras, is aging.

Members identified vulnerabilities with the radio system and cited that there were several areas in the town that suffered from poor reception. Reception is critical to ensure member safety and is an extremely valid concern.

Members also expressed a need for a tow vehicle / pickup truck. Currently members use their own vehicles to tow the boat. This leaves the town vulnerable and at risk for a lawsuit if a crash occurs with the privately owned vehicle towing a piece of town equipment.

Recommendations

- The town needs to provide monthly summary sheets by budget category for review by the chief so that he can appropriately track finances enabling him to keep track of maintenance and other costs.
- Complete review of past deployment of apparatus to determine time in use.
- Develop policy for apparatus deployment that ensures the proper equipment arrives on scene, but also ensures that equipment is not needlessly deployed.
- Establish testing procedures and schedule for all equipment and assign to one individual for ensuring the testing occurs.
- Institute more in-depth driving training for members to minimize costly, premature repairs to vehicles.
- Discontinue the practice of members having to use personal vehicle for transport.
- Purchase a vehicle for transportation of equipment, traffic control and possibly forestry supplies.
- Cost out new equipment: mini pumper, 2nd water craft, 2nd VAC tanker, thermal imaging camera, high angle, and confined space rescue equipment. Once the costing is established, create a purchase and replacement plan.
- Develop long-term Capital Improvement Plan for purchasing, repairing and replacing all equipment and apparatus.
- Complete study of current radio communications and possible upgrades to repeater sites and system.

Staffing and Workload

The administrative workload appears to be hampering progress in the department. Many routine administrative functions as well as longer range planning required for a department to run efficiently are incomplete. Part time assignments require more time than the current allocation. This gap will be increased if the department undertakes the creation of a more robust fire prevention program, increased community education, increased inspection services, and recruiting.

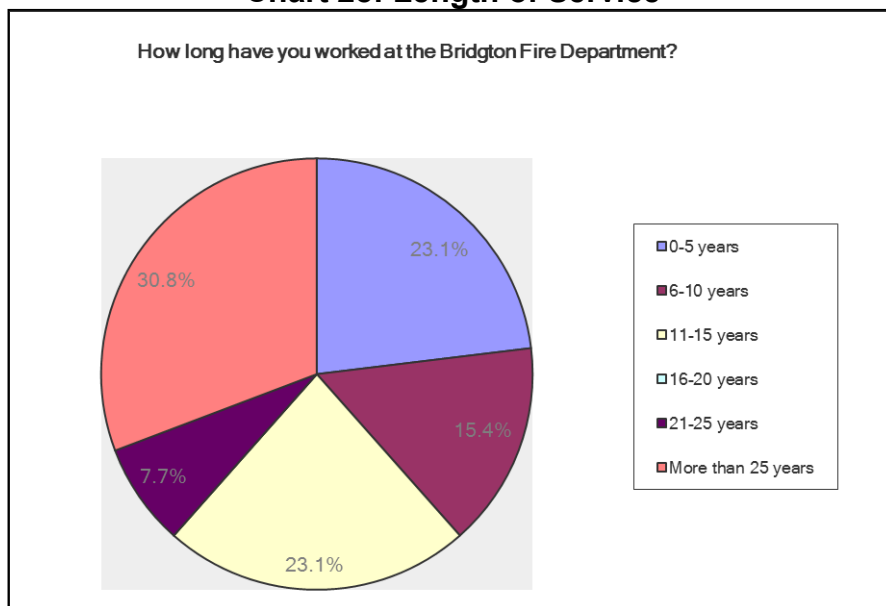
The department referenced a Jr. Fire Fighter Program, but did not have details on the number of participants or assignments within the programs. This type of program is effective as a strategy to recruit new members to the department and should be fully functioning with a person assigned.

As shown in the next chart, the fire department experiences a significant amount of loyalty by its members.

Of the members responding to the survey, 30% have more than 25 years of dedicated service, while 23% have less than five years of experience. This leaves the department somewhat vulnerable in that many of the most senior members may soon be retiring.

from volunteering leaving a gap in the knowledge based at the department. It also means the department must actively recruit additional members to fill vacancies.

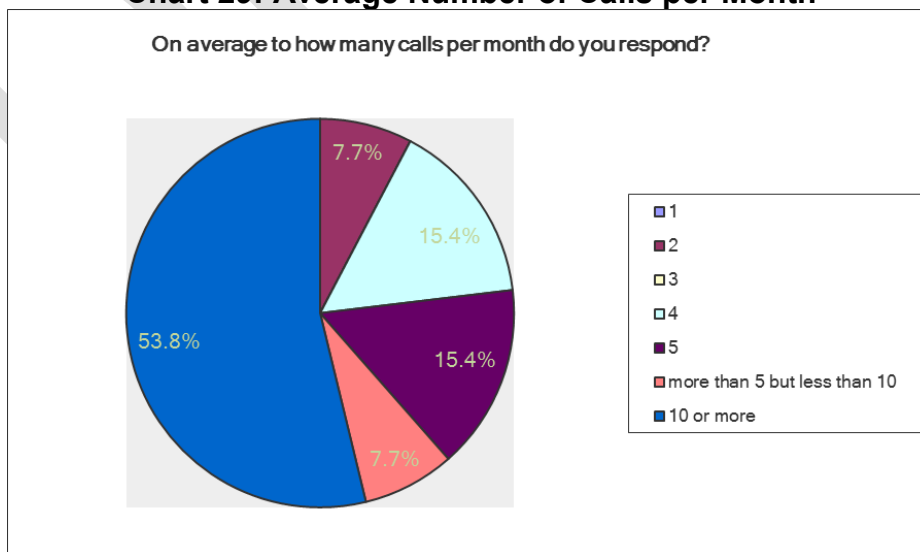
Chart 28: Length of Service



As shown in the chart above, survey respondents believed that they spent the most time volunteering to answer calls and attend training.

The chart below shows that of the survey respondents, 53% believed they responded to 10 or more calls per month. Of those responding to calls, 54% of the members believed they were spending less than 10 hours per month on calls with one member reporting spending more than 30 hours on calls.

Chart 29: Average Number of Calls per Month



When asked about training 80% of the respondents believed they spent between 5-14 hours each month attending training.

Members are vocal with their concern that coverage during the day is harder and harder as members work outside the immediate response areas. On an individualized basis, when reviewing hours it does appear members with local jobs are covering daytime calls more frequently.

Recommendations

- Implement full-time Chief's schedule with hours spread out during the week rather than a few long days, but with flexibility to coordinate efforts on nights and weekends as appropriate for special events.
- Implement a schedule that has other paid administrative staff working during the week allowing them to bring the apparatus as certified drivers appears to be a weakness in the department.
- Improve recruitment and retention practices.
- Develop Performance Evaluation to address health concerns and requirements. Complete annual medical questionnaire for members that is reviewed by a physician per OSHA 1910 respiratory standards.
- Determine wages for per diem and on call volunteers. Look at increasing wages that will encourage members to leave their "day" job to respond to a call.

Organizational Culture

The department believes the following are the most pressing priorities for the department.

- Creating a full time chiefs position
- Acquiring new apparatus
- Obtaining a new station
- Increase the salary of the members

The second tier of changes includes the following:

- Increasing the number of call members
- Re-establishing a line item for awards
- Conducting more community outreach

Most members responding the survey were satisfied working for the department, but expressed a need for increased communication. Half of the respondents believe the members of town government were neutral on its position with respect to the fire

department where half believed that the town government members with dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the department.

The department apparatus, turn out gear, and specialized equipment received the highest rating where the facilities were rated poorly from all respondents.

Recommendations

- Maintain the positive culture that exhibits pride in the organization
- Complete a facilitated open-table discussion with the Board in reference to funding from the budget for banquets and recognition, perception of the department, support for department initiatives and to build this report into a strategic plan..
- Improve morale by having more community-building activities and increased communication between the administration, town officers and the department members.

Community Relations

The department does not have a fully operational community relations plan. Given that this effort would be on a volunteer basis, it might be difficult to assign this task to a person that volunteers to respond to calls for service as well.

Recommendations

- Recruit a person with a marketing or business background to support community relations efforts.
- Hold public meeting to address community concerns and desires and brainstorm more effective solutions; include fire department volunteers and administration, as well as town administration and officers so that all perspectives are reviewed.
- Increase public awareness and education for fire safety through safety days, open houses, presentations, and enhance use of the departments Facebook page and website.
- Invite community members to department meetings and to view the additional efforts members place on training and maintaining equipment.
- Training and program investments need to align with community programming and outreach efforts.
- Community engagement needs to occur at all levels of the department.

General Observations

The community members, town administration and the fire department have differing views about the level of service necessary for Bridgton. Some of the community and town administration feel as though there is no need to transition to a full-time fire department due to the small size of the town, level of call volume and the fear of

increased tax burden. Many of the department members feel that a full-time department would be beneficial to the town. All those involved felt that a full-time fire chief is a necessary addition in order to have the best working relationship between the town and the department and to correctly run a growing agency.

There is also conflicting ideas about the pay level and whether or not the department members should be paid at a higher level. Employees frequently felt that their pay was too low to justify leaving their fulltime jobs to respond to a call, and felt that it was a financial burden on their family to continue responding to calls. The community, however, felt that the employees were paid enough or that they were even overpaid and a raise was not warranted. This indicates that many of the community members would be supportive of going to a full-time department as long as the increased tax burden could be clearly communicated and explained.

Members of the public are worried about quarrels between the department and the town administration and that the level of service was being sacrificed or could be sacrificed if the department doesn't feel appreciated or supported.

There was also a high level of concern over the misuse of department equipment. Community members mentioned inappropriate driving practices of some of the employees. They also expressed disapproval of the use of certain large pieces of equipment for less serious incidents and the mutual aid of these pieces of equipment.

The public also expressed a desire for more involvement within the community and for more education programs. They felt that the department did not do enough within the community and that there should be closer relationships and partnerships developed.

The majority of the public did, however feel that the response time to incidents was great and that the department did a good job responding to calls. They did feel that there could be better training for the employees on how to deal with community members during and after a critical incident.

The department used to hold a banquet for its members. This event was held at one location. The venue graciously contributed to the event; however, PSSG suggests that any fundraising conducted be done so with guidance from a formal policy. When soliciting support for town services, the process should be completed in such a way that affords all businesses in similar categories the same opportunity to provide support. Funds received should be carefully tracked and documented. At all times two members should be entering the donations received and accounting for how the donations are used. The funds should be received by a Fire Department Foundation or Friends of the Fire Department 501c3 nonprofit organization. In the future fundraising could occur through community events which would raise the awareness levels of the efforts put forth by the department members.

Town government officials desire to increase the ISO rating in order to decrease the insurance levy on the town. The report shared is old and should be redone in the next few years (typically done every 15 years). Bridgton could ask to have the report done early but only if they have done significant improvements to change the classification – which was not evident through information learned during the interviews.

On the first page last paragraph of the report, it states the report “it is not for the purpose of determining compliance with any state or local law nor is it for making recommendations about loss prevention or life safety” which seems to conflict with the statement from the department about having to maintain the level of stations as well as to how they are delivering their suppression system, the current system is just one approach and could be reviewed in more depth for future delivery.

The current report occurred prior to the Town moving towards regional dispatch with Cumberland County. The new report should reflect a positive change with the change in dispatch.

There is a credit for distribution which is good, but not perfect. This does not prohibit the Town to reevaluate the location and the number of station that they need. In order to evaluate this process, the department needs to work with the Emergency Reporting System vendor to create a more robust and functional report on this topic.

Another item that is low is the credit given for staffing which is very low. Having a full-time Chief could provide the necessary time and commitment to add this person to respond in a timely manner but also for the development of the future of the department. ISO usually uses a formula of crediting three call personnel to equal one full-time person.

There are also credits provided for training. If the department standardized its approach to training and did a better job of distributing training, this area could be enhanced. The report also discussed pre-fire inspections indicating they should be made twice a year with records that include notes and sketches. The ISO report is so old that it is difficult what was done in the past and how that compares with current operations. The department did not share any of this information, therefore it is likely this is an area for improvement.

The Town initially wondered if it should continue to contract out for ambulance service or give that responsibility to the fire department. At this time, PSSG believes the Town and department need to concentrate on rebuilding the trust between the two. Using this document as a starting point, the department – with stakeholder input – can develop a strategic plan to improve operations. Once the fire department has achieved the recommendations in this report, the Town could again consider the change in ambulance service delivery.

Conclusions and Future of Department

The following provides the priorities for the department.

- Hold a facilitated meeting between the department members and elected officials to discuss the tension between the two and create a plan for moving forward in order to concentrate on the safety of the town.
- Establish hiring procedures for full-time personnel.
- Hire a full-time Chief to run the Bridgton Fire Department through the means of an impartial hiring process.
- Review state statutes pertaining to department governing and personnel.
- Research/cost analysis needs to be conducted to determine cost of per diem employees vs. full time employees for the key areas in this report.
- Analyze the use of and responses from each of the four stations to include run time analysis (which will require the department working with its vendor to extract data for analysis).
- Develop a 501c3 to increase fundraising abilities.
- Implement strategies suggested to lower ISO rating.
- Develop a long term capital plan and apparatus replacement plan.
- Develop a short term plan for cleaning, organizing, and enhancing the current stations.
- Provide an incremental raise to attract more responses during the work day.
- Investigate and apply for grants as appropriate.

Most importantly, the department members need to feel appreciated and supported with its efforts. Certainly the fire department runs like many functions in a small town – through volunteers. Fire services is a bit unique however in that the members are not only required to attend department meetings, but they also need to attend training, maintain equipment, and put themselves in dangerous positions.

Bridgton, not unlike other towns its size is facing the transition to a staffed department because of the increased requirements of the profession and the inability of volunteers to always provide adequate coverage. While a completely full time department is still some time away, incremental steps will ensure administrative work is completed, provide ways for the department to increase its services delivery, and the added staff might help with recruitment of additional volunteer members.