



Branford Fire Department

Staffing and Facilities Plan - June 2023

Board of Fire Commissioners

Robert J. Massey, Jr., Madeline Clem, Paul Riccio, David LaCroix, Kathleen Fox, Jack Ahern

Action is Needed to Maintain Services in our Thriving Community



*“OUR COMMUNITY HAS
OUTGROWN ITS FIRE
DEPARTMENT, AND
ACTION IS REQUIRED TO
MATCH OUR RESOURCES
TO THE NEEDS OF THE
PEOPLE WE SERVE.”*

- THOMAS MAHONEY, FIRE CHIEF

Dear Honorable Board Members and Elected Officials,

The Board of Fire Commissioners, along with the Fire Department Administration, has been warning for years that the Department is facing a staffing shortage. The erosion of the volunteer force has reduced the number of trained volunteer members to critically low levels. The volunteer companies are more than just a backup to the career staff. These companies are strategically located within densely populated areas where people live and sleep; they are the first responders in their districts. They also provide the additional workforce needed for various call types that require a multiple-company response.

Call volume has steadily increased, driven mainly by emergency medical incidents. The frequency and length of these incident types often leaves us solely reliant upon the volunteer companies.

Four of our five engine companies are volunteer. Despite recruitment and retention efforts that include following recommended best practices, we continue to lose volunteers faster than we can replace them. Since 1996, three volunteer companies and the volunteer rescue squad have closed due to declining membership. Branford is not alone in this trend; it is a statewide and national problem. Membership has dropped so significantly that in most instances, we can only rely on a single volunteer company by combining the available members of all four. We've added automatic mutual aid from East Haven to compensate for our lack of resources. However, this comes with the quid pro quo of sending our limited resources out of town to provide the same service to East Haven.

Two additional issues exacerbate the problem. First, development already underway, with more proposed, will add even more pressure to an already overburdened system. The second is a deployment problem: our resources are strategically deployed at multiple stations to meet the recognized standard of an engine company on a scene within four minutes. Unreliable staffing at these locations prohibits us from achieving this response time goal and creates an inequity of service for the parts of town previously protected by volunteer staff.

Our community has outgrown its fire department, and action is required to match our resources to the needs of the people we serve. This report provides background and significance to assist you with making informed decisions regarding the future of our fire and emergency services. Please read the information within and carefully consider our recommendations.

Yours in Service,

Robert J. Massey, Jr.

Robert J. Massey, Jr.
Chairman, Board of Fire Commissioners

Thomas F. Mahoney, Jr.

Thomas F. Mahoney, Jr.
Fire Chief



Table of Contents

Action is Needed to Maintain Services in our Thriving Community	1
Table of Contents	2
Report Abstract	3
Problem Statement	6
Purpose Statement	6
Breaking Down our Problem	7
Issue 1: Decline in Volunteer Staffing	8
Learn More about the National Decline of Volunteer Firefighters	10
Issue 2: An Increase in Calls for Service	11
Community Comparison	11
Drawdown.....	12
EMS Transport Time.....	13
Issue 3: Development that is Outpacing our Service Ability	14
Issue 4: Inequity of Service.....	16
Problem Summary.....	19
Staffing Options & Associated Costs	20
Staffing Option 1 – EMS Division Model	20
Staffing Option 2 – Firefighter/Paramedic Model.....	23
East Station – 32 Acorn Road	26
Adding New Firefighters at 32 Acorn Road Station.....	26
Cost Offsets	26
Increase in Grand List	26
Ambulance Transport Billing Revenue	27
Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating	27
Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant	27
Conclusion	28
Recommendations	31
Frequently asked Questions about the Branford Fire Department	32
What does the Branford Fire Department protect?	32
How is the Branford Fire Department currently organized and deployed? ...	33
Does the Branford Fire Department just put out fires?	35
Who provides emergency medical services in Branford?.....	37
Why does a fire truck come when I call for an ambulance?	39
Does the Fire Department earn any revenue to offset costs?	39
Appendices	40
Appendix 1 – Letter to BOF	40
Appendix 2 – Letter to Vol. Leadership	40
Appendix 3 – Letter from Vol. Leadership	40
Appendix 4 – IAFF Study Excerpt.....	40
Appendix 5 – IAFF Study Full.....	40
Appendix 6 – Branford Fire Study - 1997	40
Appendix 7 – 2022-2023 Annual Report	40
Appendix 8 – 2021-2022 Annual Report	40
Appendix 9 – 2020-2021 Annual Report	40
Appendix 10 – Definitions	41



Report Abstract



The problem is that the Branford Fire Department currently has a deficient level of staffing in relation to its high volume of calls for service. It cannot meet the staffing and deployment standard for fire response or provide an equitable level of service to all areas of Town due to a resource deployment model from a singular location.

The purpose of this report is to communicate deficiencies and to provide information and data in support of staffing and deployment proposals, that if implemented would extend the exceptional level of service that the community expects from their fire department.

The report first discusses four contributing factors to our problem; a decline in volunteer staffing, an increase in calls for service, development that is outpacing our service ability, and an inequity of service related to response times.

Two staffing options are proposed to address the problem. The first involves the creation of an EMS division. The second is an expansion of our staffing and deployment with a continuation of our current firefighter/paramedic model. Both models provide for a workforce sized to meet the demands of our service. Each of these proposals carefully balances recognized national standards on fire suppression staffing and deployment, a

model that fits Branford, and cost. Both options include a swift request for allocated contingency funds to provide immediate relief and a subsequent three-year plan.

Lastly, frequently asked questions about the Branford Fire Department are answered to provide additional institutional background information.

The Fire Chief, with the full support of the Board of Fire Commissioners, makes the following recommendations, with a full endorsement of the staffing model with the formation of an EMS division.



Staffing Option 1 Summary – EMS Division



Current	FY24	FY25	FY26
<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p> <p>Indian Neck E9 – 2 Fire-EMS *M-F, 8AM – 6PM Utilizing Current Staff</p>	<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 4 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 EMS Only M2 – 2 EMS Only</p> <p>Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS T1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 EMS Only</p> <p>Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS</p> <p>East Station E3 – 3 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 EMS Only</p>
<p>Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS 16 EMS Only Total: 56</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 48 Fire-EMS 16 EMS Only Total: 64</p>
<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$0</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$0</p>	<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$250,000</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$250,000</p> <p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$155,110 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$112,738</p>	<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$1,680,080</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$1,930,080</p> <p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$165,968 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$120,630</p>	<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$1,420,684</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$3,485,863</p> <p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$177,585 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$129,109</p>

Annual increase of personnel and associated costs is calculated at 7 percent.



Staffing Option 2 Summary – Continuation of Firefighter/Paramedic Model

Current	FY24	FY25	FY26
<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p> <p>Indian Neck E9 – 2 Fire-EMS *M-F, 8AM – 6PM Utilizing Current Staff</p>	<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p> <p>Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Deployment per Shift</p> <p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS T1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p> <p>Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS</p> <p>East Station E3 – 3 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>
<p>Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 52 Fire-EMS Total: 52</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 64 Fire-EMS Total: 64</p>
<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$0</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$0</p>	<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$250,000</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$250,000</p> <p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$155,110 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$112,738</p>	<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$1,741,612</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$1,991,612</p> <p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$165,968 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$120,630</p>	<p>Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan</p> <p>Increase from Previous FY: \$2,131,025</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$4,262,051</p> <p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$177,585 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$129,109</p>

Annual increase of personnel and associated costs is calculated at 7 percent.



The Branford Fire Department will provide the highest level of service to our community by valuing our members, promoting positive leadership, and dedicating ourselves to excellence.

Problem Statement

The problem is that the Branford Fire Department currently has a deficient level of staffing in relation to its high volume of calls for service. It cannot meet the staffing and deployment standard for fire response or provide an equitable level of service to all areas of Town due to a resource deployment model from a singular location.



The goal is always mission-focused, to provide the highest level of service to our community as a leader in cost-efficient emergency response, prevention, and risk reduction services.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this report is to communicate deficiencies and to provide information and data in support of staffing and deployment proposals, that if implemented would extend the exceptional level of service that the community expects from their fire department.



Breaking Down our Problem

Understanding a complex problem is often best achieved by breaking it down into small, manageable pieces. Four components are contributing factors to our problem statement:

1. A decline in the number of volunteer firefighters.
2. An increase in calls for service.
3. The recent development and future projected growth of Branford.
4. An inequity of service related to response times.

This next section will elaborate on our problem and provide a discussion that has aided in developing our conclusion and recommendations.

Problem Statement

The problem is that the Branford Fire Department currently has a deficient level of staffing in relation to its high volume of calls for service. It cannot meet the staffing and deployment standard for fire response or provide an equitable level of service to all areas of Town due to a resource deployment model from a singular location.





Issue 1: Decline in Volunteer Staffing

The history of volunteerism in the Branford Fire Department is rich. The Branford Fire Department began as an entirely volunteer department in 1899 and provided exceptional service to the community for a century. The Town started adding career staff to supplement the volunteers in 1963. Over the past 25 years, volunteerism in our Branford Fire Companies has declined, resulting in a transition from a majority volunteer to a majority career fire department.

Until 1997, Branford had seven volunteer companies strategically located throughout Town to respond rapidly to fire emergencies. These Companies consisted of MP Rice Hose Company 2, located in the Fourth Ward, Short Beach Hose Hook and Ladder Company 4, Stony Creek Rescue Company 5, Pine Orchard Hose Company 6, Headquarters Engine Company 8, Indian Neck Company 9, and Aerial Company 1. With the steady decline in volunteerism, Company 6, Engine 8, and Aerial 1 have all formally disbanded.

Our volunteer companies are not just a backup to the career staff. The companies are strategically located within densely populated areas where people live and sleep, and in the past, would be the first responders in their districts. They also provide the additional workforce needed for various call types that require a multiple-company response. Today, Branford currently has approximately 27 active volunteer firefighters distributed unevenly between the four volunteer companies as follows:



Company 2

341 Main Street
Pumper
8 Firefighters

M.P. Rice



Company 4

64 Shore Drive
Pumper
4 Firefighters

Short Beach



Company 5

41 School Street
Pumper, Light Rescue,
ATV, Marine Unit
9 Firefighters

Stony Creek



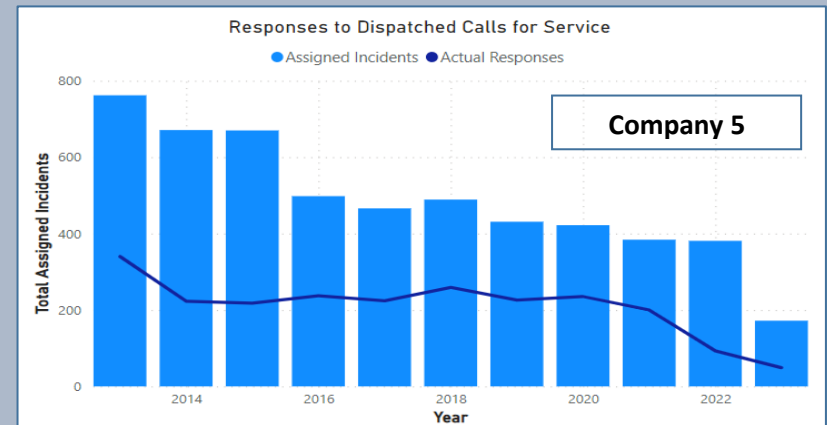
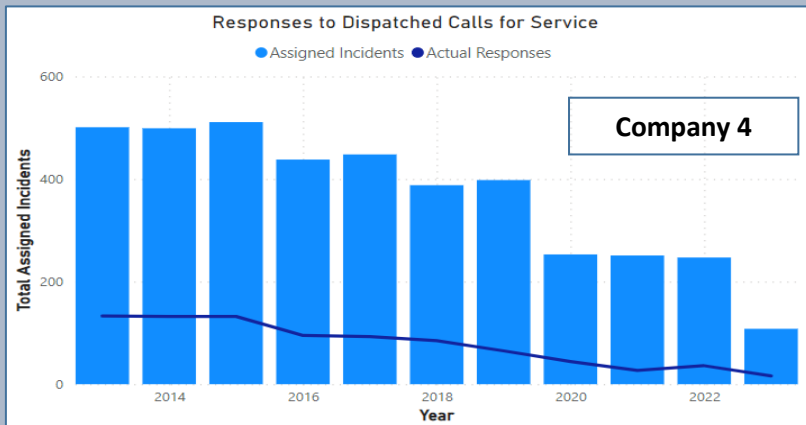
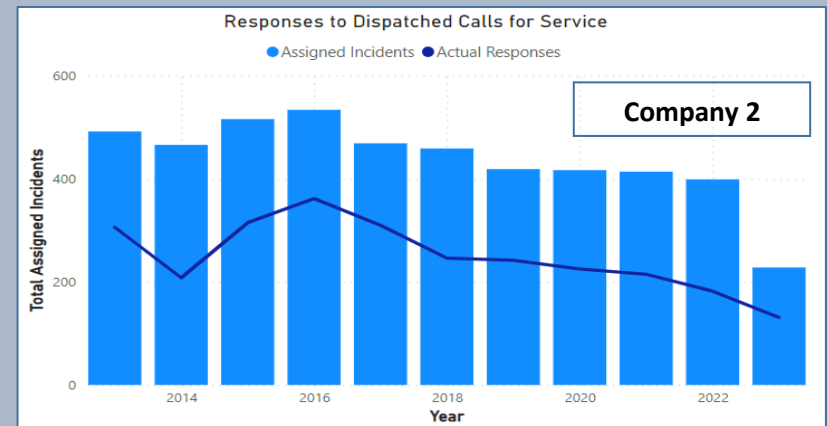
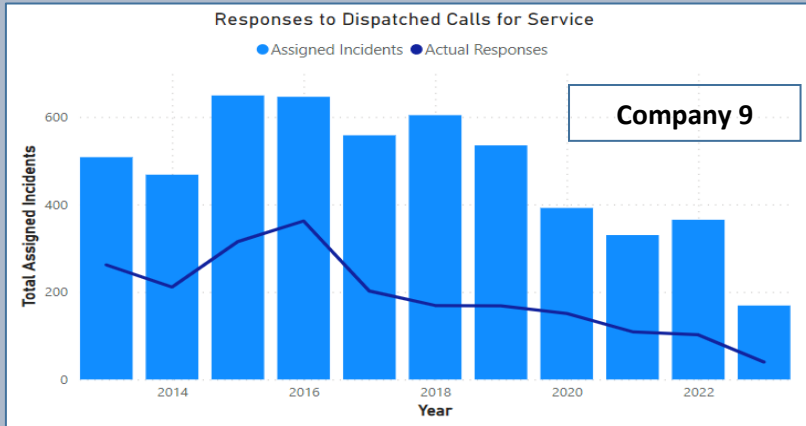
Company 9

6 Linden Avenue
Pumper, Brush
6 Firefighters

Indian Neck



Having only 27 volunteer firefighters between four companies makes it difficult for any one company to succeed in maintaining a reliable response. The following charts show a downward trend for each company in their ability to respond to their calls for service. The bars indicate the number of calls the company was dispatched to annually and the lines indicate their actual response. Company 4 and Company 9 are on the verge of being shuttered due to staffing and response troubles.





Branford Fire Department leadership has been and will continue working with the volunteer leadership to identify strategies to bolster the volunteer membership and to determine new ways to adapt for operational success with a smaller pool of firefighters (Appendix 2). As of February of 2023, the four fire companies are trialing an effort to act as one, with an increased focus on getting one unit in service when dispatched. This pooling of resources is supported by volunteer leadership (Appendix 3) and has allowed for a viable response to incidents more frequently. However, “robbing Peter to pay Paul” masks our volunteer staffing shortage and is not a long-term solution to our overall staffing issue.

The Department has also worked to increase the recruitment and retention of volunteers, including women and minorities, by participating in [Everyday Hero CT](#), a program dedicated to increasing the number of volunteer firefighters throughout the state. A partnership of the [Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association \(CFCA\)](#) and the [International Association of Fire Chiefs \(IAFC\)](#), the Everyday Hero CT campaign is a Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. The Department has also implemented incentive programs as part of our ongoing recruitment and retention efforts. These include an annual cash stipend, a pension program, and an Explorer Program in partnership with the Scouts of America.

While we continue to on-board new members, we still have a net loss of volunteers each year. This attrition includes our most experienced and seasoned members. The reasons for the decline of the volunteer system are complex and beyond the scope of this paper. It is, however, a reality and not likely to recover enough to make a significant difference.

A shortage of volunteers in the fire service is not just a Branford issue. The fire service is struggling nationally to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. If you would like to learn more about this critical issue, below are links to some related articles. An internet search on volunteer firefighter shortage will also yield thousands of results on the matter.

Learn More about the National Decline of Volunteer Firefighters

Shortage of Volunteer Firefighters Threatens Fire Departments Existence



Troubling Trend: Volunteer Fire Departments Struggle to Gain New Members



Chester County Sees Dramatic Decline in Number of Volunteer Firefighters



No Backup Causes Alarm for CT Volunteer Fire Departments



Departments Dealing with Volunteer Firefighter Shortage



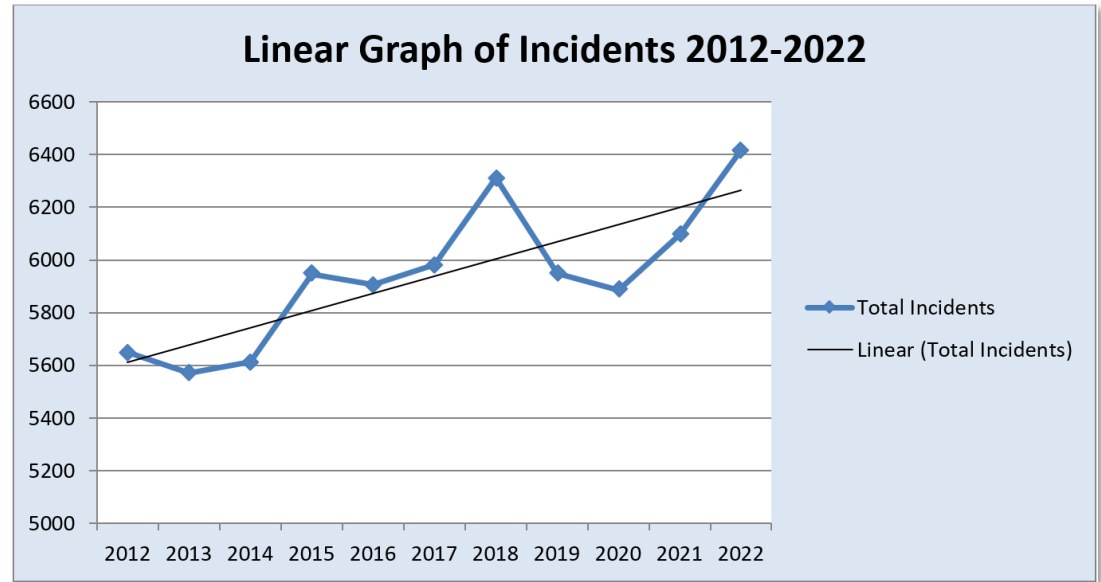


Issue 2: An Increase in Calls for Service

Our calls for service have been on a steady upward trend over the past decade. The model reflects a peak in the volume of calls in 2018 just before COVID-19 struck our nation. The pandemic resulted in a downward deviation indicating the community’s reluctance to use the healthcare system to avoid exposure to the virus. However, call volume has increased and surpassed previous record-breaking years since society reached a post-pandemic state. It’s important to note that this chart represents emergency incident responses only. Behind every incident is a report to document our findings and actions taken. While the extent of each report is dependent on the seriousness of the incident, our healthcare system is incrementally requiring additional data points to collect that result in a longer time commitment for report writing.

We don’t just respond to emergency incidents. There are several other services provided by our department such as fire investigation, code enforcement, inspections, plan review, fire prevention, public education, and community events. Additionally, firefighters must also complete activities related to training, equipment maintenance and repair, and fire station cleaning and upkeep.

Our annual emergency incident response call volume in 2022 was 6,415 and 2023 is on track to easily outpace our record high last year. This uptick in calls for service, along with the many required additional duties mentioned, has our staff operating under a prolonged and intense workload, creating a higher risk for burnout or injury.



Staffing Comparison

Town	Staffing/Shift	EMS Transport	Comments
Branford	10	Yes	Full Service Transport - 2 Part-Time - EMS Only on M3 0800-0000
Guilford	10	Yes	Full Service Transport
East Haven	12	No	Provides Paramedic for ALS transport on commercial ambulance
North Haven	11*	Varies	Transport Certain Call Types - Commercial Ambulance Otherwise

Community Comparison

In comparison to our neighboring communities, Branford easily takes on a higher call volume with less than, or an equivalent level of staffing for their lower calls for service.

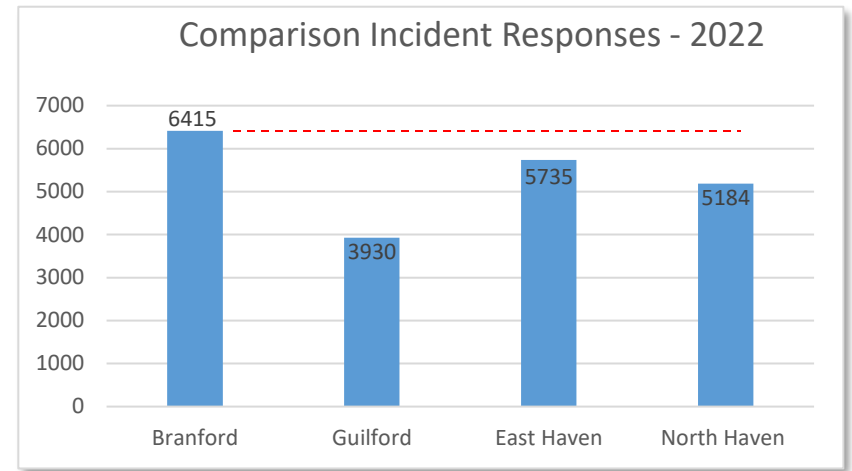
* SAFER Grant in progress - Increase staff by 26 for 17/Shift



The staffing comparison shows that Guilford more closely matches Branford’s model with 100% full service EMS transport and 10 firefighters on duty. In 2022, Branford responded to almost 2500 more calls for service than Guilford. East Haven and North Haven still responded to fewer calls for service than Branford, but they utilize a commercial ambulance service for transports, leaving firefighters in their respective jurisdictions for fire incidents or additional calls for service. Though a commercial ambulance service offers that benefit, there is a significant loss of revenue that helps offset municipal costs when passing incidents to a for-profit private entity. Additionally, the use of a private service does not guarantee the highest quality of service that the Branford Fire Department provides to its citizens.

Drawdown

The decrease in volunteer company responses and our increase in calls for service have compounded to create a very real issue with resource drawdown. Concurrent calls for service are inevitable and occurring more frequently with our high call volume. When multiple calls for service occur simultaneously, resources are quickly drawn down leaving no one available for the next call.



Concurrent Call for Service – 6 Months (3317 Total Calls)		
Number of Concurrent Calls	Sum of Occurences	Sum of Calls Impacted
2	628	1256
3	348	1044
4	116	464
5	45	225
6	18	108
7	4	28
8	5	40
9	0	0
10	2	20
Grand Total	1166	3185

This chart represents concurrent calls for a six-month period (Nov 2022 - May 2023). Column one depicts scenarios of two concurrent calls for service up to 10 concurrent calls for service. Column two indicates the number of times a scenario occurred, and column three is the number of impacted calls. For example, in the past six months, we have had four calls for service at the same time, 116 times, involving 464 incidents.

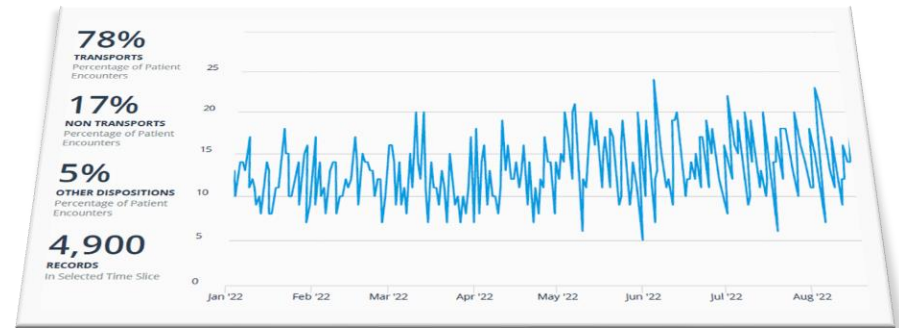
The department responded to a total of 3317 calls for service during this same period. Concurrent calls for service occurred 1166 times and involved 3185 incidents or 96% of our call volume. There were only 132 instances where there was a single call for service at one time, or 4% of our call volume.

The high frequency of concurrent calls illustrated here highlights our vulnerabilities. Volunteer crews who previously offset drawdown are no longer responding regularly, leaving frequent periods of time where adequate staffing is not available for medical or fire emergencies.



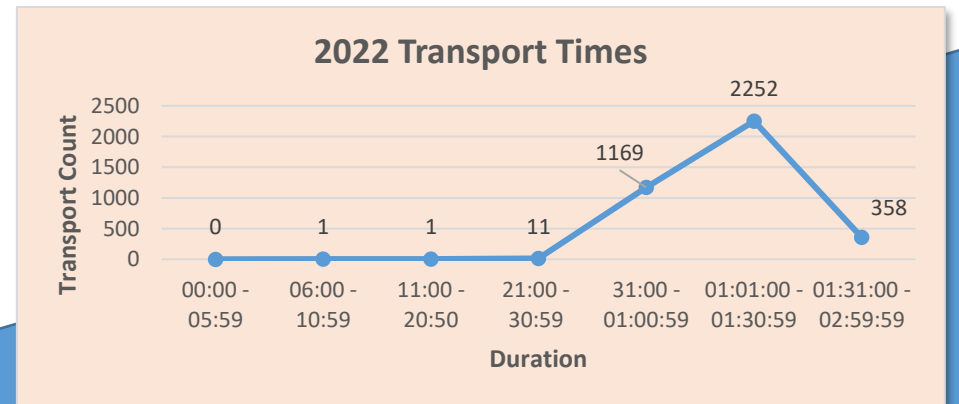
EMS Transport Time

The frequency of concurrent calls for service is only one of two related variables. The second is the length of time that a unit is committed to an incident, prolonging the drawdown period. Calls for service, especially those that required medical transport to a healthcare facility, take a considerable amount of time. To summarize, when drawdown occurs and our resources are committed, the time duration is not just a few minutes; we are often vulnerable for hours at a time.



Out of the 4,900 patient encounters we had in 2022, 3,792 required transportation to healthcare facilities outside our town. On average, each ambulance spends approximately one hour and ten minutes on a medical transport call. This duration starts when the ambulance receives the call and includes our response time, patient assessment, care provision, patient loading, transport, and transferring care to the hospital. The clock stops when the ambulance reaches the Q Bridge and returns to service for the next call. When multiple calls for service occur, even more staff are committed to patients leaving scarce resources available in town for these extended periods.

This graph further breaks down the number of calls within an incident commitment block of time. Note that 358 incidents took over an hour and a half to complete. Increased calls in Branford and our region are filling our local emergency rooms, and we are more frequently diverted to hospitals remote from Branford (Milford, Bridgeport, Derby, Waterbury, and Hartford). These diversions increase our transport times and contribute to our problem.





Issue 3: Development that is Outpacing our Service Ability

Over the last several years, Branford has undergone significant development. There are currently several large apartment buildings under construction with more working their way through Town approvals. We are only beginning to feel the impact of these developments. Our current daily call volume already routinely exceeds our available resources. It is not only the large developments that increase the workload of the department. All over Town, new or redevelopment is taking place on any available property; many of these are duplex style residential properties and cluster housing. Cumulatively, these contribute to the need for additional services. Branford is already considered an urban response district under NFPA 1710/1720 who defines that as having a population density of >1000 people per square mile. Our population density is currently 1,285 per square mile. More people in smaller spaces cause more problems. The type of development also impacts



Healthtech Park – 21 Sycamore Way – 495,000 SF – Office and Medical Space



Proposed Metro Star Development – Atlantic Wire Site

our services. Branford has a large elderly population with several nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and over age 55 housing. We've also become a health care hub; doctors' offices, clinics and surgical centers are significant users of our emergency medical services. The addition of the proposed 500,000 square foot development, along with other proposed projects on the east side of Town necessitates adding a long overdue fire station in that

area.



Mariners' Landing



New Development/Completed or Under Construction:

- Metro Star Apartments, 373-375 East Main Street – 188 Units with Retail
- Parkside I, 115 South Montowese Street - 60 Units
- Mariners' Landing, 60 Maple Street – 147 Units
- 5, 14, 21 Summit Place, Three Buildings – 50 Units (Proposed), 56 Units (Approved), 162 total
- 61 Burban Drive, Micro Apartments – 30 Units
- 65 Goodsell Point Rd, Marina Village – 17 Units Redeveloped Marina
- 245 East Main Street – 12 Unit Apartment Building

New Development/Proposed

- Former St. Elizabeth's Church 65-99 Burban Drive – 40 Townhouses with Large Apartment Building
- Atlantic Wire (Approved) 1 Church Street - 200 Units with Retail
- Branford Square, 329 East Main Street – Storage, Multi-Unit Apartments, Restaurant
- 81-111 Commercial Parkway, Apartments – 436 Units
- Healthtech Park – 21 Sycamore Way – Healthcare/Research

1300 New Living Units
1-4 Occupants/Unit
3250 Population Increase



Issue 4: Inequity of Service

Response times matter. Regardless of the cause of your emergency, if the condition is acute, or if the injury is life-threatening or limb-threatening, immediate care is needed. An inequity of service related to response time has evolved as the decline in volunteer responses has increased. A fire station near your home that once provided immediate care may give you a false sense of security as most calls for service are now handled by the career staff stationed at Fire Headquarters on North Main Street. Further distance from Headquarters equals a longer wait for services when needed most.

Time and Distance from Fire Headquarters to Various Points: Normal Traffic Speed (*Apple Maps*)

Red = >8 Minutes Travel Time

- 2 Indian Point Road, Thimbleberry Restaurant = 12 Minutes - 5.9 Miles
- 734 East Main Street, Massey’s Glass = 10 Minutes - 3.0 Miles
- 25 Chapel Drive, Pine Orchard Union Chapel = 11 Minutes - 3.7 Miles
- 130 Shore Drive, Rosso Vino = 7 minutes - 2.1 Miles
- 205 South Montowese Street, Lenny’s = 8 Minutes - 2.3 Miles
- 25 Jefferson Rd, Jefferson Woods Condominiums = 6 Minutes - 1.6 Miles
- 185 East Main Street, Branford High School = 5 Minutes - 1.6 Miles
- 185 Damascus Road, Francis Walsh Intermediate School = 8 Minutes - 2.8 Miles
- 144 Fresh Meadow Road, the Meadows Condominiums = 6 Minutes - 2.3 Miles
- 172 Mill Plain Rd, Commissioner Ahern’s House = 8 Minutes - 2.8 Miles
- 51 Goodsell Point Rd, Bruce and Johnson’s West Marina = 7 Minutes - 1.8 Miles

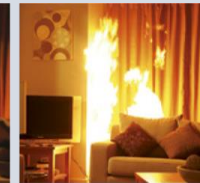
Did you know:

Residents could have less than 2 minutes to escape a home fire once the smoke alarm sounds.



30 secs

By now, smoke alarms should have detected the fire and alerted your family.



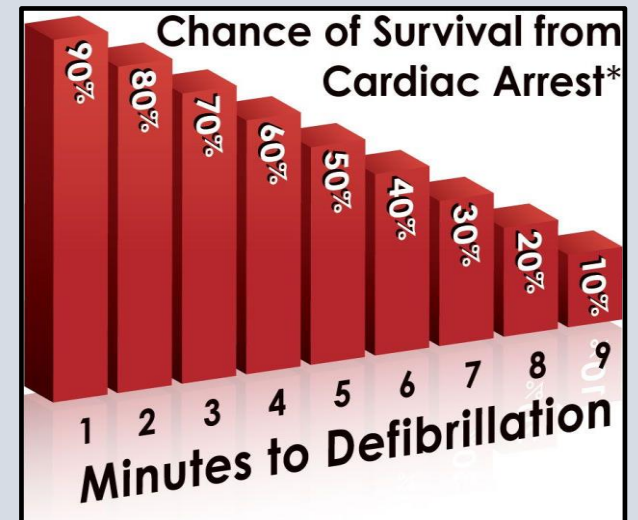
60 secs

With no warning, the fire goes unchecked. It will quickly take hold, giving off poisonous smoke.



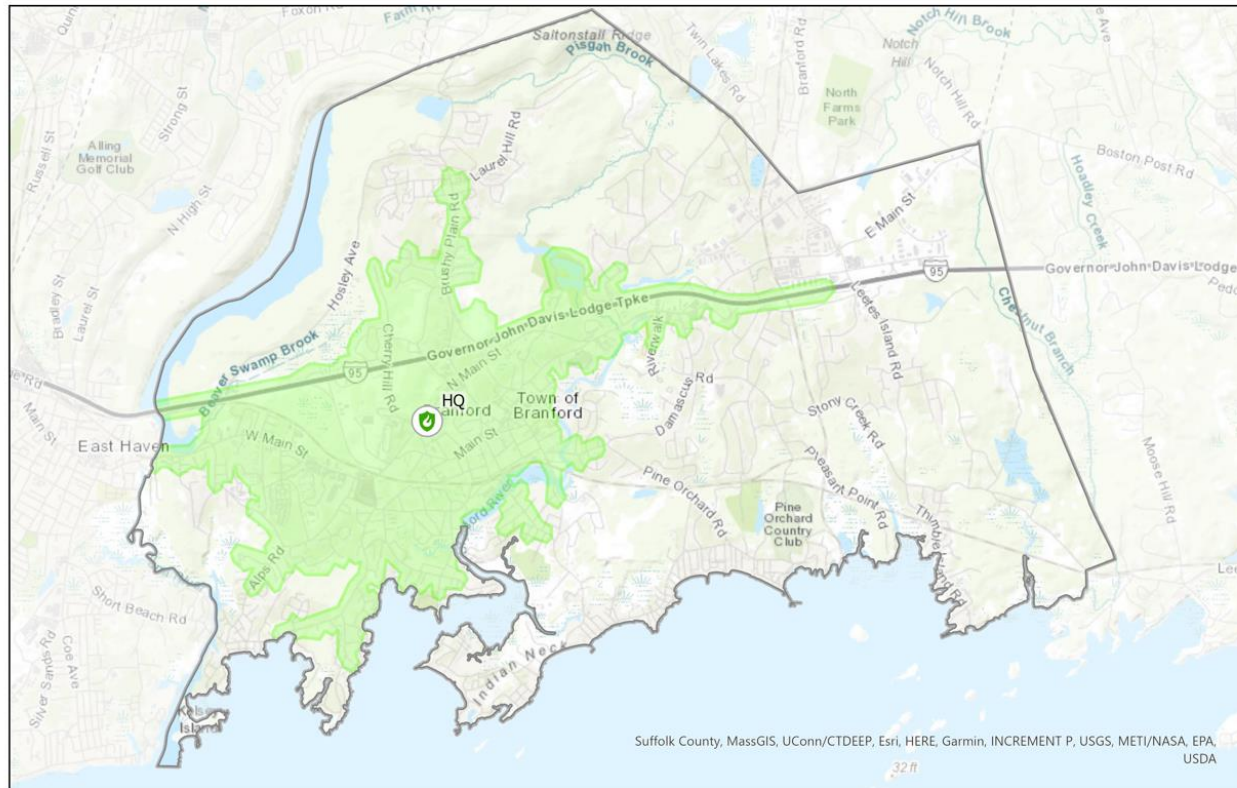
3 mins

The fire has reached in excess of 800 degrees celsius. All of the contents in the room will be on fire and it will have spread to other rooms in the house.





A redistribution of resources and additional staff are needed to improve response times in areas remote from Fire Headquarters. The new Indian Neck Fire Station is ready to house career firefighters. The Town owns property at 32 Acorn Road and is working with Town officials to earmark its use for a fire station in the quickly developing east side of town. Career staff assigned to Headquarters and these two additional stations will vastly improve our response time, allowing for improved outcomes in medical and fire emergencies. This deployment model will make for a more equitable level of service across our entire community.



These graphics represent each of the three response areas discussed above. Headquarters is shaded in green, Indian Neck in blue, and the proposed east station at 32 Acorn Road is red. The shading represents an approximation of coverage with a 4-minute response time using a road speed computer-based model. In reality, our resources will likely extend beyond the shaded areas within the four-minute mark while responding in an emergency mode, protecting more areas represented in these graphics.

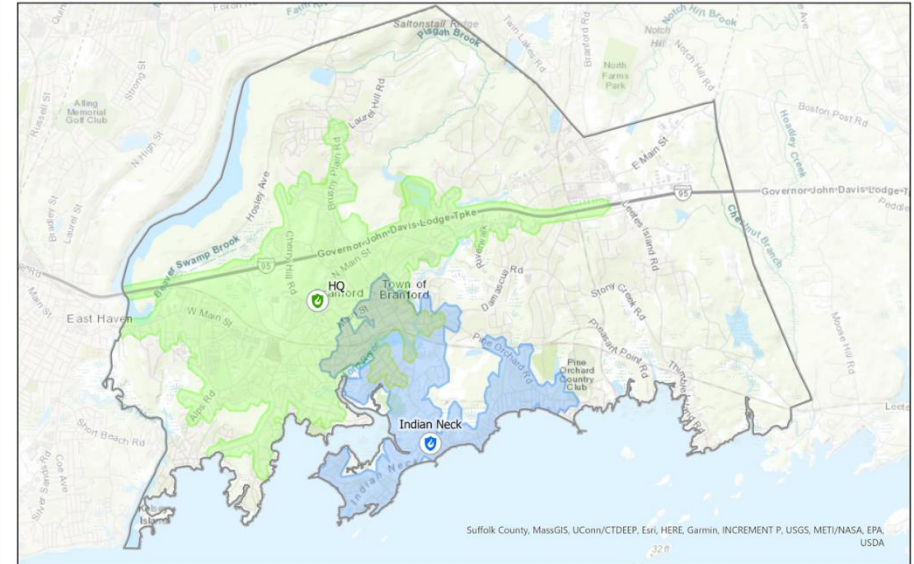
Current Model

Reliable 4-Minute Response from Headquarters Only



Reliable 4-Minute Response from Headquarters & Indian Neck Stations

45 North Main Street
6 Linden Avenue



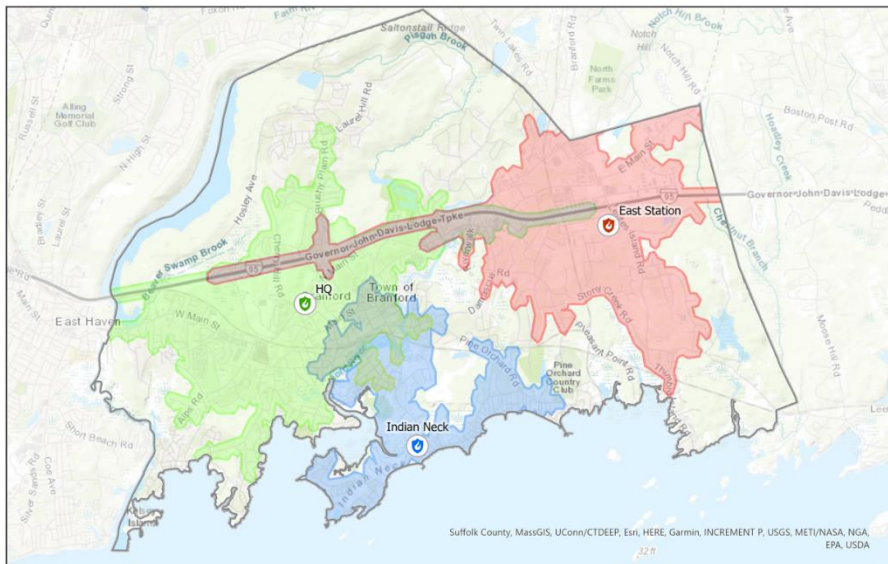
Firehouses

- HQ
- Indian Neck

- HQ
- Indian Neck



Map produced May 2023



Firehouses

- East Station
- HQ
- Indian Neck

- East Station
- HQ
- Indian Neck



Map produced May 2023

Reliable 4-Minute Response from Headquarters, Indian Neck Stations, & Proposed East Station

45 North Main Street,
6 Linden Avenue & 32 Acorn Road



Problem Summary

The Branford Fire Department takes immense pride in being a premier all-hazards emergency service, dedicated to serving our community in times of crisis. However, we recognize that we face several significant challenges that require our attention to continue to deliver a quality service.

Our substantial increase in call volume is placing a strain on our resources and personnel. This surge in demand necessitates action to ensure we can effectively respond to emergencies while maintaining the highest standards of service.

Volunteers have long been the backbone of our organization, selflessly giving their time and expertise to protect and serve our community. The decrease in volunteer participation poses a serious concern, requiring us to take steps to sustain our operational strength.

We must address the impact of recent and projected growth in our community. As our population expands, so too does the demand for emergency services. It is crucial that our service proactively matches our growth, ensuring adequate resources, infrastructure, and personnel are in place to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Lastly, an inequity of service related to response times has become apparent. Every individual in our community deserves swift and efficient emergency assistance, regardless of their geographic location. We must address this disparity head-on, working to implement equitable resource allocation and strategic positioning of our emergency assets.

While these challenges are complex, they present opportunities for growth and improvement. It is our goal to address these obstacles to meet our mission and to continue to deliver the highest standard of emergency response to our community.





Staffing Options & Associated Costs

The primary challenge in achieving an adequately staffed Fire/EMS Department is the expense associated with paid personnel. However, when compared to similar communities that employ paid personnel, Branford Fire and EMS stands out as a leader in cost-effective services. For instance, the Town of Guilford, which has an equivalent number of paid fire/EMS positions as Branford, handles only 60% of our call volume. Additionally, our operating budget benefits from the revenue generated through ambulance billing, which offsets approximately 28% of our expenses.

Staffing Option 1 – EMS Division Model

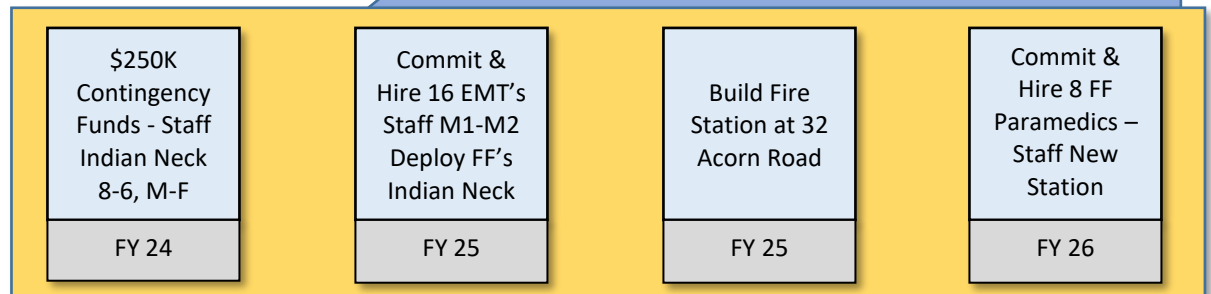
Our preferred option would be to develop an EMS Division and hire emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who are not firefighters to staff two of our ambulances. This option would allow us to reallocate firefighter/paramedics to fire engines and have EMS only staff on our medical transport units. In this scenario, each ambulance staffed with EMTs would be able to handle all basic life support (BLS) incidents independently without the need to commit a firefighter. For higher acuity incidents, an engine with a paramedic would respond along with the ambulance to provide advanced life support (ALS) service. For an ALS incident, only one paramedic would drop from an engine for patient care during transport to the hospital on the ambulance. Our breakdown of EMS calls is 62% ALS, leaving 38% of our volume as BLS. This model keeps more firefighters available for fire incidents or other additional calls in our jurisdiction.

By hiring EMTs, our salary per person decreases by \$42,372.00. These figures indicate initially hiring 16 EMT's vs 12 firefighter/paramedics in Option 2, allowing us to add more staff to reach our goal in a shorter period of time. Additionally, the annual costs for continuing education for our paramedics is a substantial expense. Hiring EMTs that require less continuing education does not place an additional burden on our budget. The annual savings on recurring salary and training costs add up quickly, making this a fiscally desirable option over the long run.

Our framework also addresses flaws in a similar model in a nearby community. A neighboring fire department in our region has a model of EMT-only staff, but they are hourly employees with unequal benefits compared to their firefighter coworkers. This arrangement creates the potential for disparity between full-time career firefighters

Line Item	Town Cost
Salary	\$ 61,152.00
Uniform	\$ 800.00
EMT/Paramedic Stipend	
FICA/Medicare	\$ 898.30
Medical	\$ 11,015.72
Dental	\$ 597.60
H.S.A	\$ 2,000.00
Pension	\$ 18,536.04
Life Insurance	\$ 170.04
WC Insurance	\$ 4,464.10
Vacation/Holiday/Sick	\$ 13,104.00
Total/EMT	\$ 112,737.80
16 EMTs	\$ 1,803,804.80

The full spreadsheet is available upon request

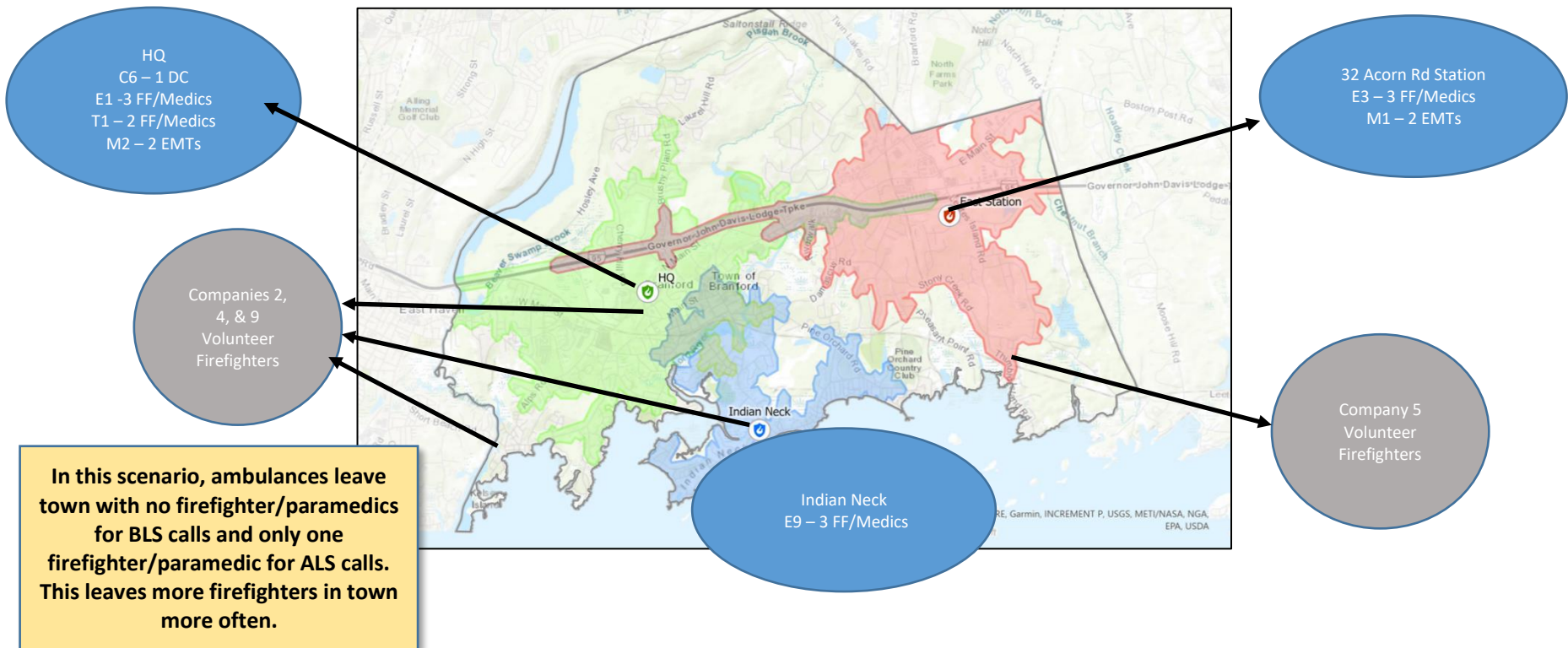




and EMTs working under the same roof. The result is unhappy employees with high turnover, harming the quality of care. By offering a competitive salary with the same benefits as our firefighters, that gap is closed, and we have a better chance of recruiting and retaining quality employees in a team-based atmosphere with a focus on providing quality service to our community.

There are hurdles to this option, however. First, this proposal will require an agreement with the collective bargaining unit as this addition of a new job classification has a direct impact on their work. Secondly, we would not be permitted to apply for the SAFER grant to offset these costs because the SAFER grant is designed to bolster the ranks of firefighters. This plan also includes a station in the eastern portion of Town. Eight firefighter/paramedics will be needed once the station is opened, creating an opportunity to utilize the SAFER grant.

Final Staffing and Deployment – EMS Division Model





Deployment and Fiscal Impact – EMS Division Model

Current	FY24	FY25	FY26
Deployment per Shift	Deployment per Shift	Deployment per Shift	Deployment per Shift
Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS	Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS Indian Neck E9 – 2 Fire-EMS *M-F, 8AM – 6PM Utilizing Current Staff	Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 4 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 EMS Only M2 – 2 EMS Only Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS	Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS T1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 EMS Only Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS East Station E3 – 3 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 EMS Only
Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40	Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40	Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS 16 EMS Only Total: 56	Career Staff Count 48 Fire-EMS 16 EMS Only Total: 64
Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan	Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan	Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan	Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan
Increase from Previous FY: \$0 Annual Increase from Project Start: \$0	Increase from Previous FY: \$250,000 Annual Increase from Project Start: \$250,000 <small>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$155,110 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$112,738</small>	Increase from Previous FY: \$1,680,080 Annual Increase from Project Start: \$1,930,080 <small>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$165,968 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$120,630</small>	Increase from Previous FY: \$1,420,684 Annual Increase from Project Start: \$3,485,863 <small>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$177,585 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$129,109</small>
Annual increase of personnel and associated costs is calculated at 7 percent.			



Branford Fire Department Staffing & Facilities Plan Staffing Option 2 – FF/Paramedic Model

Staffing Option 2 – Firefighter/Paramedic Model

Staffing Option 2 expands our department staffing utilizing our current model. In this scenario, every new hire is required to maintain certification as firefighter and a licensed paramedic. This plan requests the release of \$250,000.00 from contingency funds to provide immediate relief through staffing a second engine at the Indian Neck Fire Station using existing staff from 8 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday. The next step is a commitment to hire 12 firefighter/paramedics to permanently staff the Indian Neck Fire Station full time in FY 2025. Concurrently, a fire station similar to the New Indian Neck Station would be constructed on a town-owned site at 32 Acorn Road to protect the east side of the Town. FY 2026 requests 12 additional firefighter/paramedics to staff that new station.

Line Item	Town Cost
Salary	\$ 84,433.44
Uniform	\$ 800.00
EMT/Paramedic Stipend	\$ 6,000.00
FICA/Medicare	\$ 1,322.88
Medical	\$ 11,015.72
Dental	\$ 597.60
H.S.A	\$ 2,000.00
Pension	\$ 27,297.05
Life Insurance	\$ 170.04
WC Insurance	\$ 6,163.64
Vacation/Holiday/Sick	\$ 15,309.36
Total/FF	\$ 155,109.73
12 FF/Medics	\$ 1,861,316.76

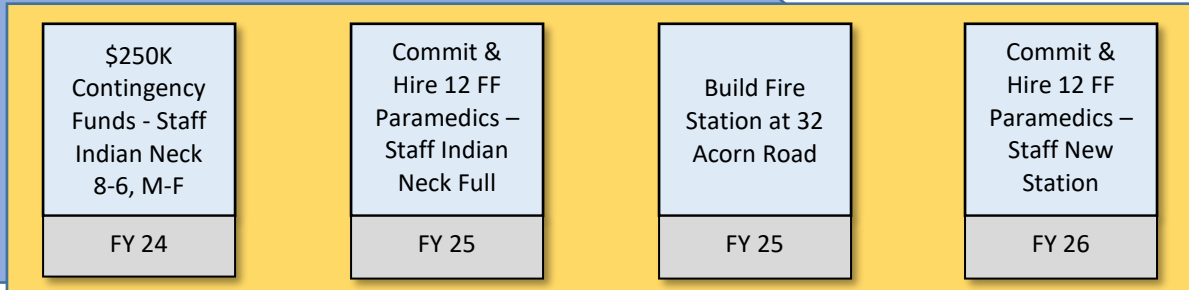
The full spreadsheet is available upon request

In the fiscal year 2024, our operating budget has received approval for \$7,401,722.00. If we decide to incorporate 12 new positions, the projected cost today would be an additional \$1,861,317.00. It is crucial to emphasize that this amount represents a worst-case scenario and is calculated using the highest pay rate for a full-time firefighter/paramedic and includes the most costly benefits such as a family health plan.

By obtaining funding from a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant, we have the opportunity to minimize this cost and distribute it across three budget cycles. It is recommended that we begin staffing immediately using current staff in FY 2024 with the money earmarked in contingency for this purpose. Subsequently, we can pursue a SAFER grant during the next available application period, which typically opens between January and February. This approach enables us to optimize our budget allocation and secure additional resources through the SAFER grant to support our staffing needs. These additions, in concert with some redeployment of personnel, would provide a viable solution to our problem of adequate staffing and equity of service.

While firefighter/paramedics are the gold standard, there are challenges associate with this model. It is difficult to source quality firefighter/paramedics, especially for larger hiring groups.

The pool of candidates with these qualifications is small and the number of jobs available is large. Many municipalities are addressing the same challenges we are. Paramount, this model carries more cost. Firefighter/paramedics have a higher salary due to their level of training and responsibilities. Additionally, the continuing education required to maintain our

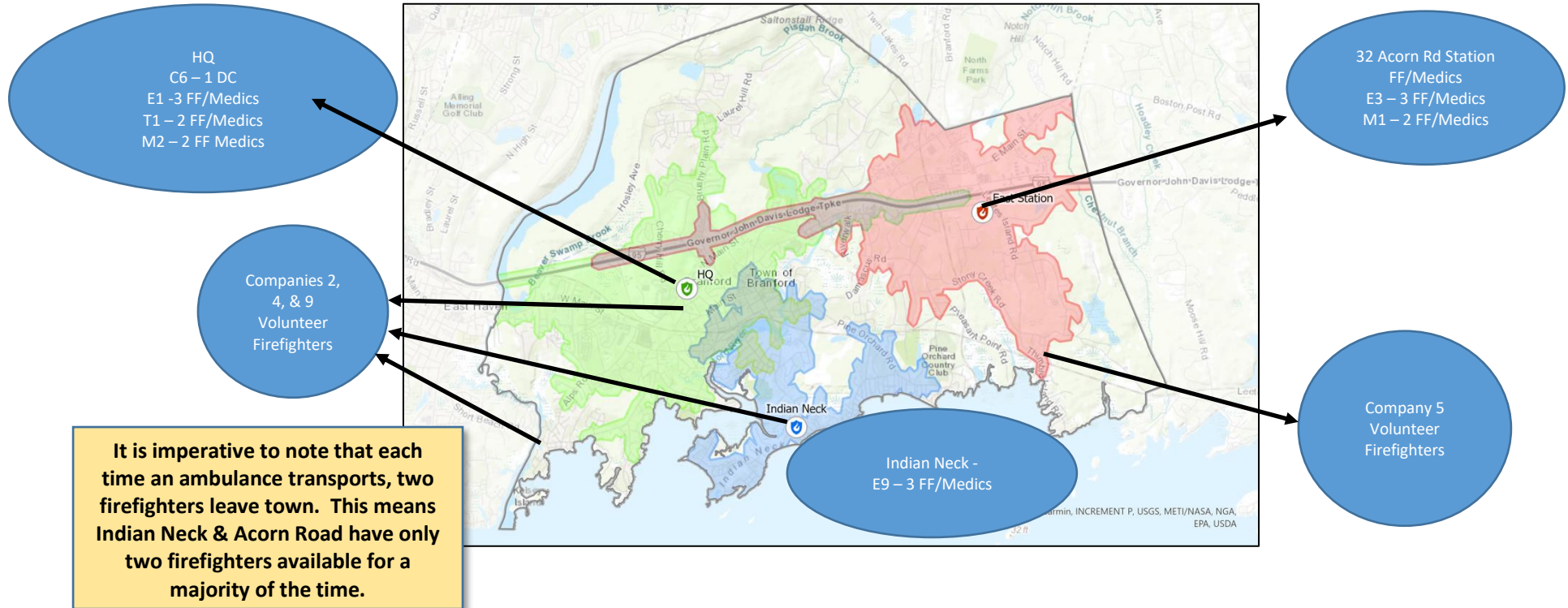




Branford Fire Department Staffing & Facilities Plan Staffing Option 2 – FF/Paramedic Model

entire department to the paramedic level is expensive. These costs compound annually and amount to a much larger burden on taxpayers as opposed to the EMS division model.

Final Staffing and Deployment – Expansion with Firefighter/Paramedic mode.



Learn More about Adequate Staffing

[Appendix 4](#) is an excerpt from a report titled "GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPONSE CAPABILITIES ANALYSIS," commissioned by the Branford Professional Firefighters Local 2533 in June 2016. The report was prepared by the International Association of Firefighters. While the current administration may not fully endorse all the conclusions and recommendations in the report, they agree with the following excerpt, which emphasizes the significance of a swift response from fire departments with sufficient resources in order to combat fire growth effectively. The complete report is in Appendix 5. Adequate staffing has been a long-standing discussion dating back to 1997 (Appendix 6 - Branford Fire Department Study).



Branford Fire Department Staffing & Facilities Plan Staffing Option 2 – FF/Paramedic Model

Deployment and Fiscal Impact – Firefighter/Paramedic Model

Current	FY24	FY25	FY26
Deployment per Shift			
<p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS R2 – 2 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Headquarters DC – 1 Fire-EMS E1 – 3 Fire-EMS T1 – 2 Fire-EMS M2 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>
	<p>Indian Neck E9 – 2 Fire-EMS *M-F, 8AM – 6PM Utilizing Current Staff</p>	<p>Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS</p>	<p>Indian Neck E9 – 3 Fire-EMS</p>
			<p>East Station E3 – 3 Fire-EMS M1 – 2 Fire-EMS</p>
<p>Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 40 Fire-EMS Total: 40</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 52 Fire-EMS Total: 52</p>	<p>Career Staff Count 64 Fire-EMS Total: 64</p>
Fiscal Impact of Staffing Plan			
<p>Increase from Previous FY: \$0</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$0</p>	<p>Increase from Previous FY: \$250,000</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$250,000</p>	<p>Increase from Previous FY: \$1,741,612</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$1,991,612</p>	<p>Increase from Previous FY: \$2,131,025</p> <p>Annual Increase from Project Start: \$4,262,051</p>
	<p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$155,110 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$112,738</p>	<p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$165,968 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$120,630</p>	<p>Annual Cost/Fire-EMS - \$177,585 Annual Cost/EMS Only - \$129,109</p>
<p>Annual increase of personnel and associated costs is calculated at 7 percent.</p>			



East Station – 32 Acorn Road



In both scenarios, placing career resources on the east side of town is essential to correct our gap in service to residents and businesses in this area. The Town possesses land at 32 Acorn Road that is both adequately sized and strategically positioned to accommodate the much-needed fire station on the east side of Branford. Once fully staffed, this station, along with the staffed Station 9 and Headquarters, would enable an equitable four-minute response time to approximately 90% of the developed areas in Town. An initial cost estimate for constructing an 8,400 square foot firehouse is approximately \$3,780,000.00 and calculated at a price of \$450.00 per square foot, which includes site work. It is important to note that this estimate is preliminary in nature.

Adding New Firefighters at 32 Acorn Road Station

The cost of staffing this station would be comparable to the staffing cost of the Indian Neck station with firefighter/paramedics as mentioned earlier. The specific estimated cost would rely on the contractual rates in effect during the hiring of new firefighters, as well as any potential increase in benefits cost. If the proposal is approved, we would strive to mitigate the initial financial impact by seeking another SAFER grant. This approach aims to secure additional funding to offset the costs associated with station staffing.

Cost Offsets



Increase in Grand List

The expectation is that some of the expenses associated with fully implementing the suggestions presented in this document would be balanced out by the growth of the grand list resulting from ongoing and planned development. Adequately staffing emergency services plays a crucial role in fostering economic development.



Cost Offsets - Continued

Ambulance Transport Billing Revenue



The potential increase in ambulance revenue is contingent upon the number of calls received, and historically, call volume has shown an annual increase. Currently, the revenue generated from ambulance billing offsets approximately 28% of our annual operating budget.



Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating

The Fire Department is working to lower our Insurance Services Organization Public Protection Classification number; we are currently a Class 4/4Y. The Public Protection Classification (PPC) program is a community fire protection scoring system based on a Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) used by the Insurance Services Office, also known as ISO Mitigation. Communities get a PPC score from 1 to 10.

- 1 means the community has superior property fire protection.
- 10 means the community's fire protection efforts don't meet ISO's minimum criteria.

Most home and business insurers use PPC scores to determine insurance premiums. Businesses and individuals in a community with a good PPC score typically pay less for fire insurance.

We are very close to reducing our PPC score from a 4 to a 3 and feel strongly we could obtain a PPC of 2. The lack of staffing jeopardizes that possibility and could even result in a higher rating. An improved PPC score means a safer community. A good PPC score shows the community is working to provide fire protection for property owners and citizens.



FEMA

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant

A successful Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant award could potentially fund up to 100% of the annual cost over three years. The percentage and cost share changes each year depending upon the perimeters set by Congress. This is a competitive peer reviewed application process. Branford Fire received a SAFER grant in 2017. The FY 2022 SAFER program provided for 100% federal cost with no local cost share for three years, as did the FY 2000 and FY 2021 programs. All three of these program years saw the cost shares waived by special process under the COVID emergency declaration. It is uncertain whether this situation will continue for the FY 2023 application cycle.



Conclusion



April 20, 2023 – Structure Fire at 3 Linden Ave (Across the street from Indian Neck Company 9) – No Response from Company 9

Inadequate staffing to meet the demands of our community is the shared factor among all the analyzed components that pertain to our problem statement. We need to bring in more career staff to address our rising call volume, compensate for the decline in volunteer numbers, keep up with the fast expansion of our community, and ensure a fair response time across all areas of Town.

Currently, Fire Headquarters is the only station that possesses full-time staff members, while the remaining stations depend on volunteer on-call personnel. Consistent with the national trend, the reliability of Branford's volunteer response has diminished. Calls directed to Companies 2, 4, 5, and 9 frequently go unanswered, resulting in unacceptable delays in reaching incidents beyond the expected four-minute response time from Fire Headquarters. Additionally, the existence of vacant stations in the districts may foster a misleading perception of security within the neighborhoods they are meant to serve.

The Board of Fire Commissioners and the Fire Chief recommend Staffing Option 1, supporting the creation of an EMS division. By hiring 16 career EMTs, we can finally establish a much-needed

second career engine company. This can be achieved by reallocating firefighter/paramedics from ambulances to fire trucks. Although no additional firefighters are initially being added in the first phase of this plan, assigning EMTs to ambulances enhances the effectiveness of our existing firefighting resources by adjusting their roles. Consequently, more firefighters will be present in the town for longer periods. Furthermore, this change enables the formation of a three-person engine company, which aligns with our current staffing levels for an engine and significantly improves safety and efficiency compared to a two-person engine company



Our current schedule consists of four distinct shifts, each adhering to a 24/72 hour work schedule, resulting in an average of 42 working hours per week. By incorporating four new EMTs into each shift, the daily staffing would increase to 14 members (10 FF/paramedics and 4 EMTs). Station 9 in Indian Neck is designated as the location for the additional engine company.

To enhance overall effectiveness and reliability, we plan to consolidate the existing four volunteer companies into two. Company 4 in Short Beach would be permanently closed, and its remaining members, along with the Indian Neck Company 9, would be reassigned. The reassignments would be made to either M.P. Rice Company 2 or Stony Creek Company 5. Currently, the volunteer companies have been operating in a similar manner, with some success in ensuring that at least one of the four volunteer engines is available for deployment.

In 2022, we entered into an automatic aid agreement with The Town of East Haven. This allows for an immediate joint response to reported building fires, but only on the west side of Town. Under the agreement, each Department provides the equivalent of a four-person engine company to the Town in need to help ensure proper staffing at the fire scene. The downside for Branford is that we lose our only staffed engine company when called to assist, leaving only our cross-staffed ambulance crews or the volunteers to cover the Town. Similarly, when a “working fire” is declared, both Branford and Guilford provide additional personnel to each other to act as the required Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), by request, under a mutual aid agreement. Because East Haven and Guilford also have a decline of volunteers in their communities, crews assigned to RIT are most often reassigned to supplement extinguishment operations, which undermines the intention of having a trained team ready for firefighter emergencies. Consequently, additional mutual aid from towns further away are often required to fulfill this essential role. A second engine company will allow us to continue to protect Branford while we are fulfilling our obligation to East Haven or Guilford under our automatic and mutual aid agreements.



The proposed addition of a second paid Engine Company still falls short in adequately providing coverage for a town of our size, given our population, density, and call volume. Our Town has been experiencing substantial growth and development, resulting in an increase in densely populated areas. Furthermore, we have emerged as a health care hub,



with nursing homes, assisted living facilities, doctors' offices, clinics, and surgical centers relying heavily on our emergency medical services. Considering the proposed 500,000 square foot development and other projects planned for the east side of Town, it is imperative to establish and execute a plan for a fire station in that area, which has been long overdue. We have identified a suitable piece of Town-owned land at 32 Acorn Rd, which possesses sufficient size and a strategic location, enabling a four-minute response time to a significant portion of the east side of Town. Additionally, it offers convenient access to various other areas in Town through Route 1, Interstate 95, and Featherbed Lane. It is crucial to promptly construct a fire station on this site and equip it with a third career engine company. Subsequently, an ambulance from headquarters would be relocated to this station, ensuring a fairer distribution of response capabilities. With all three stations staffed, we would be able to achieve our goal of a four-minute response time to approximately 90% of the Town.

Finally, the implementation of Staffing Option 1 makes the most fiscal sense while still fulfilling our mission. The formation of an EMS division allows us to hire EMT's at a lower cost for medical duty only, making for a more efficient use of our existing firefighter/paramedics. As staffing costs are an increasing variable that compounds from one year to the next, the savings of an EMT only job classification adds up quickly. Over the course of 10 years, our preferred EMS division model saves the town over 10 million dollars.

FY	EMS Division Model	FF-Paramedic Model	Annual Savings
25	\$ 1,680,080	\$ 1,741,612	\$ 61,532
26	\$ 3,485,863	\$ 4,262,051	\$ 776,187
27	\$ 3,729,874	\$ 4,560,394	\$ 830,520
28	\$ 3,990,965	\$ 4,879,622	\$ 888,657
29	\$ 4,270,332	\$ 5,221,195	\$ 950,863
30	\$ 4,569,256	\$ 5,586,679	\$ 1,017,423
31	\$ 4,889,104	\$ 5,977,746	\$ 1,088,643
32	\$ 5,231,341	\$ 6,396,189	\$ 1,164,848
33	\$ 5,597,535	\$ 6,843,922	\$ 1,246,387
34	\$ 5,989,362	\$ 7,322,996	\$ 1,333,634
35	\$ 6,408,617	\$ 7,835,606	\$ 1,426,989
10 Year Savings			\$ 10,785,683

Annual increase of personnel and associated cost is calculated at 7 percent



Recommendations

The Fire Chief, with the full support of the Board of Fire Commissioners, makes the following recommendations to address the identified problem:

- 1 Immediately appropriate \$250,000.00 from contingency to staff the new Indian Neck Fire Station, Monday to Friday, 0800-1800 using existing staff.
- 2 FY 2024 - Commit to funding sixteen full-time emergency medical technicians to staff Medic 1 and Medic 2
- 3 FY 2025 - Hire sixteen fulltime emergency medical technicians to staff Medic 1 and Medic 2 – Reallocate firefighters to 2nd career engine.
- 4 FY 2025 - Build a new fire station on the Town-owned property located at 32 Acorn Road to protect the east side of the Town.
- 5 January 2025 – Apply for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant.
- 6 FY 2026 - Hire eight additional firefighters to staff a third engine company at the new station.



Frequently asked Questions about the Branford Fire Department

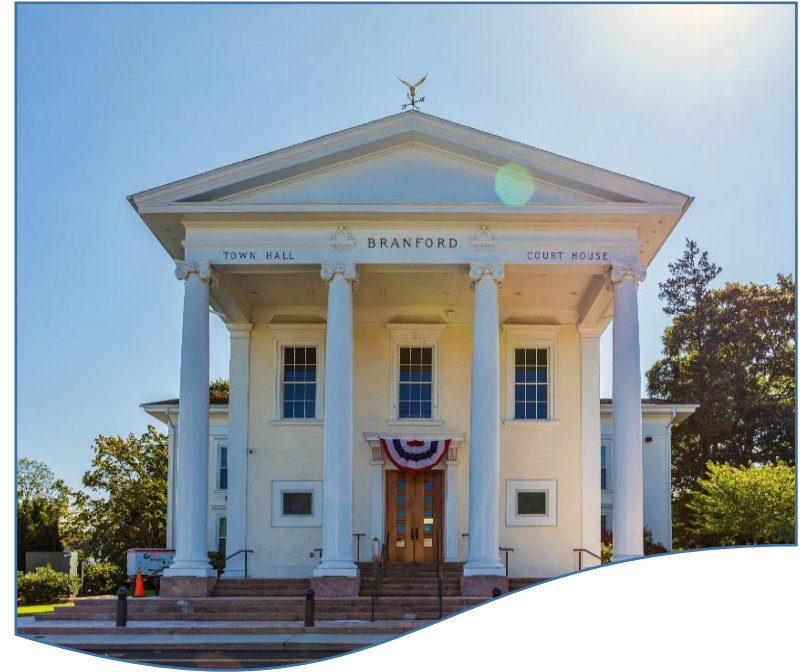
What does the Branford Fire Department protect?

Branford was first settled in mid-1644 as part of the New Haven Colony; the Town has had an organized Fire Department since 1899. Branford is approximately 22 square miles. Branford's population is 28,176 (U.S. Census Bureau 2021 Est.) with a population density of 1,280 per square mile. We are a typical New England community with many closely spaced neighborhoods of single- and multi-family homes constructed entirely of wood with open porches.

In the past, Branford earned the moniker "Condo Capital" of New England, as we are charged with protecting over 60 condominium complexes, many three stories in height and built of wood frame construction. All of these complexes are composed of multiple buildings, some with hundreds of units. The distance between these complexes and our firefighting apparatus often necessitates longer hose stretches, requiring additional personnel to efficiently set up a single fire attack hose line. Over the past five years, several new apartment complexes have added hundreds of new housing units.

Our community boasts a diverse business sector that encompasses bioscience, manufacturing, healthcare, service industries, and retail. Additionally, Branford benefits from having over 20 miles of coastline, featuring two large harbors and more than a dozen marinas. Notably, the Branford Fire Department is responsible for safeguarding a cluster of small islands known as the Thimble Islands. These islands, which are inhabited seasonally, encompass a total of 81 residential houses.

Geographically, Branford is intersected by the "Northeast Corridor" transportation network. This crucial infrastructure comprises Interstate 95, U.S. Route 1, and Amtrak's Washington-to-Boston rail line. The rail line also accommodates CT DOT commuter trains and freight traffic. Furthermore, the Branford Fire Department is entrusted with the protection of significant state and federal military assets, including the Connecticut National Guard's Branford Armory and the Army Reserve Training Center. Our town is home to numerous businesses that play a vital role in manufacturing essential products or providing services crucial for post-disaster recovery efforts, whether natural or manmade. We take great pride in our preparedness, knowing that it is pivotal in safeguarding both the private and public assets of our town. Moreover, our preparedness efforts directly impact our economy and contribute to our community's resilience.





How is the Branford Fire Department currently organized and deployed?

The Branford Fire Department is a combination department operating from five stations. A combination department is one that is made up of both career and volunteer firefighters. The department comprises 44 career personnel, 27 active volunteer firefighters, and 33 part-time EMS-only employees.

All **career firefighters** currently deploy from Fire Headquarters at 45 North Main Street. Forty firefighters are assigned to one (1) of four (4) divisions, each consisting of one (1) Deputy Chief, one (1) Captain, and eight (8) Firefighter/Paramedics. Each of the four 10-member Divisions work a 42 hour per week rotating schedule to provide 24-hour coverage, seven days per week. Career members are assigned as follows:

- **Car 6** – one (1) Deputy Chief of Operations (Shift Commander)
- **Engine Company 1** – 1 Captain, 2 Firefighters
- **Rescue 2** - two (2) Firefighters (light rescue carrying tools and equipment to handle most rescue incidents)
- **Medic 1** – two (2) Firefighters (advanced life support ambulance)
- **Medic 2** – two (2) Firefighters (advanced life support ambulance)

As a result of understaffing, career members “cross-staff”, or will leave their assigned unit to staff a different apparatus depending on the type of call they are dispatched to. Truck 1, Engine 7, Marine 2, our ATV, and two additional ambulances are often cross-staffed by career personnel.

All career firefighters are cross-trained, dual-role firefighters/ EMTs and are capable of providing paramedic level advanced emergency medical care along with fire suppression, rescue, and hazardous materials response.



Our 33 **part-time EMS-only employees** staff Medic 3 from 8 AM through midnight each day. Medic 3 is always first up for medical emergencies in an effort to keep firefighters available in town. While this helps immensely, our frequent multiple calls for service quickly draw down our remaining resources.



Finally, our 27 active **volunteer firefighters** are distributed unevenly between the four volunteer companies as follows:

Engine Company 2 - Located at 341 Main Street in the Fourth Ward district - one pumper, 8 firefighters

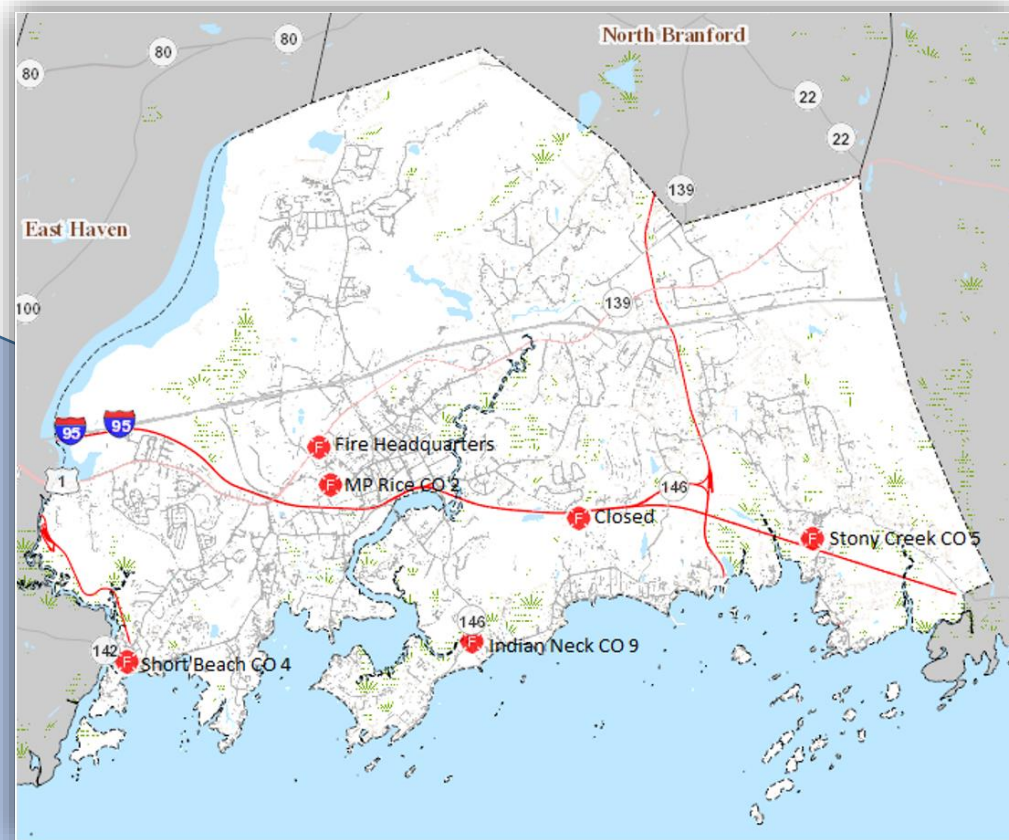
Engine Company 4 - Located at 64 Shore Drive in Short Beach - one pumper, 4 firefighters

Engine Company 5 – Located at 41 School Street in Stony Creek - one pumper, one light rescue, one all-terrain vehicle (ATV), one marine unit, 9 firefighters

Engine Company 9 – Located at 6 Linden Ave in Indian Neck - one pumper, one brush unit, six firefighters

The companies are strategically located within densely populated areas where people live and sleep; they are supposed to be the first responders in their districts. They also provide the additional engine companies needed for various call types that require a multiple-company response.

Station Locations





Does the Branford Fire Department just put out fires?

No. The Branford Fire Department has evolved into an “all-hazards” emergency services provider. We are responsible for providing fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, emergency medical care, ambulance transport, code enforcement, and fire prevention services to our community among others. The services we provide are driven by the needs of our community and are based upon the vulnerabilities identified in our Local Emergency Operations Plan. These are also in line with the [United States Fire Administration’s Strategic Plan](#) to, “ready the nation’s fire service for all hazards”.



- Cyber Incident
- Tropical cyclone
- Widespread Infectious Disease
- Flood Related Hazards
- Significant Criminal Acts
- Energy/ Fuel Shortages
- Winter Related Hazards
- Transportation Accidents (Air/Rail/Roads)
- Food and Agricultural Disaster/Incident
- Sea Level Rise
- Port Incidents
- Industrial Incidents
- Temperature Extremes
- Power Failure
- Dam Failure
- Hazardous Materials Incidents/Accident (in transit)
- Water Contamination
- Drought Related Hazards
- Earthquake
- Major fire
- Tornado
- Civil Disturbance
- Thunderstorm Related Hazards
- Special Events



While our primary focus at the Department revolves around fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services, we are equally dedicated to offering rescue and technical rescue capabilities to our community. Although some of these services entail high-risk situations, they occur infrequently, resulting in substantial costs associated with acquiring and maintaining specialized equipment and keeping our firefighters' certifications current. To address these challenges, we collaborate with regional or state teams to provide such services, effectively distributing the financial burden and optimizing cost-saving measures.

Technical Rescue Services Provided by Branford Fire Department						
Service Level:	AWARENESS	OPERATIONAL			TECHNICIAN	
Rescue Discipline						
Animal Rescue	X		**		**	
Rope Rescue	X		X		X*	
Structural Collapse	X		X*		**	
Confined Space	X		X		X*	
Vehicle	X		X		X	
Machinery	X		X		X	
Trench Rescue	X		X*		X*	
Surface Water	X		X		**	
Swift Water	X		X*		X*	
Dive Search & Rescue	X		X*		X*	
Ice Rescue	X		X		X*	
Watercraft S&R	X		X		**	
Flood S&R	X		X		X*	
HAZMAT/ WMD	X		X		X*	
X* = Service Provided by a Regional Team with BFD members trained to this level						
** = Service Provided by State or Regional Team						
Service levels as defined by NFPA 1006 Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications, 2021 Edition; NFPA 472: Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents, 2018 Edition						



Who provides emergency medical services in Branford?

Branford Fire Department is the designated emergency medical services and ambulance provider within the Town of Branford. We hold a certificate of operation, CO14P1, in the First Responder/Basic Ambulance and Mobile Intensive Care - Paramedic categories. Branford Fire Department is part of CT EMS Council - Region 2 and receives medical oversight and direction from Yale New Haven Hospital Center for Emergency Medical Services. Emergency medical services are provided by dual-role career firefighter/paramedics and part-time EMTs or paramedics. Our service is based upon a multi-tiered response consisting of pre-arrival instructions, first responder, and ambulance service at both the basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) levels. The Branford Communications Center (PSAP) receives 911 calls originating within the town. The center triages the call and provides pre-arrival instructions to the caller while simultaneously dispatching the appropriate resources. The ambulance and first responders are dispatched via radio, tone-activated paging, alphanumeric paging, station alerting, and mobile data terminals (MDTs). Branford participates in a mutual aid system implemented automatically to help assure EMS response during times of system overload. Branford Fire Department operates five ambulances, all of which currently respond from Branford Fire Headquarters, 45 North Main Street. Two full-time ambulances are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with cross-trained dual-role Firefighter/ Paramedics who provide advanced life support (paramedic) level service. Our other ambulances are staffed part-time, one 16 hours per day, seven days per week, and the other are staffed "as needed" by call-in crews. When call-in ambulances are needed, the radio alert and paging system is activated and another crew is called in. The early interventions and pre-hospital care provided by our EMTs and paramedics significantly contribute to positive outcomes for our patients.





Branford Fire Department's emergency medical services rank amongst the best in the State. Our service and personnel have been recognized by the Yale New Haven Center for EMS with many awards and citations for exceptional patient care.

We provide a tiered system of emergency medical response consisting of:

- Community education and prevention; Branford is recognized by the State Office of Emergency Medical Services as a HEARTSafe Community. HEARTSafe Communities is a program designed to promote survival from sudden out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. It is a general concept focused upon strengthening the "chain of survival" as described by the American Heart Association; it recognizes and stimulates efforts by individual communities to improve their system for preventing sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) from becoming irreversible death.
- 911/emergency medical dispatcher providing pre-arrival instructions.
- First responder/basic life support.
- Advanced emergency care by paramedics.
- Ambulance transport to the appropriate hospital.
- Review and education for continuous quality improvement.



10 CHEST PAIN (NON-TRAUMATIC)

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Is s/he **completely alert** (responding appropriately)?
2. Is s/he **breathing normally**?
 - a. (**No**) Does s/he have **difficulty speaking** (crying) **between breaths**?
3. Is s/he **changing color**?
 - a. (**Yes**) **Describe** the color change.
4. Is s/he **clammy** (cold sweats)?
5. Has s/he ever had a **heart attack or angina** (heart pains)?
6. Did s/he take any **drugs or medications** in the **past 12 hours**?

Cocaine (or derivative)
Medications

POST-DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS

- a. I'm sending the **paramedics** (ambulance) to help you now. **Stay on the line** and I'll tell you **exactly** what to do next.
- b. (**≥ 1 + D-1, 2, 3**) If there is a **defibrillator** (AED) available, **send** someone to get it **now** in case we need it later.
- c. (**Patient medication requested and Alert**) Remind her/him to do what her/his **doctor has instructed** for these situations.

*** Stay on the line with caller if her/his condition seems unstable or is worsening.**

*** Utilize the Aspirin Diagnostic & Instruction Tool – if authorized by local Medical Control and the patient is alert and ≥ 16 years old.**

*** Link to ☎ X-1 unless:**

DLS **INEFFECTIVE BREATHING** and Not alert → **ABC-1**

LEVELS	#	DETERMINANT DESCRIPTORS	CODES	RESPONSES	MODES
D	1	Not alert	10-D-1		
	2	DIFFICULTY SPEAKING BETWEEN BREATHS	10-D-2		
	3	CHANGING COLOR	10-D-3		
	4	Clammy	10-D-4		
C	1	Abnormal breathing	10-C-1		
	2	Heart attack or angina history	10-C-2		
	3	Cocaine	10-C-3		
	4	Breathing normally ≥ 35	10-C-4		
A	1	Breathing normally < 35	10-A-1		

The resources assigned to an EMS incident depend upon the nature of the medical emergency as determined by the emergency medical dispatch protocol.

- Lower acuity incidents are assigned an ambulance with a crew of two consisting of, at minimum, one emergency medical technician/driver and one paramedic.
- Higher acuity incidents such as heart attack, stroke, breathing problems, and significant trauma are assigned an ambulance with a crew of two consisting at a minimum of one emergency medical technician/driver and one paramedic, and a rescue unit consisting of, at minimum, one emergency medical technician/driver and one paramedic. Higher acuity incidents require additional personnel to stabilize and treat the patient up until rapid transport.
- Cardiac arrest incidents are assigned additional resources due to the complex team approach needed to manage this type of event successfully.

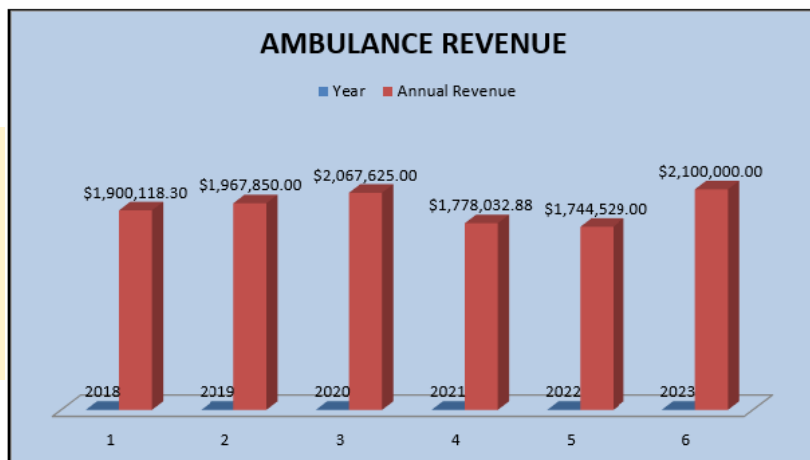


Why does a fire truck come when I call for an ambulance?

Ambulances are a limited resource that transport patients out of Town to the appropriate hospital. On any given day, all Branford ambulances may be committed to another emergency. Time is of the essence during an emergency; we send a fire truck to ensure you receive care as quickly as possible while simultaneously requesting mutual aid from a neighboring community. All of our career firefighters and some of our volunteers are trained emergency medical care providers. Also, some incidents require additional help. Because our fire crews are trained and a ready resource, we send them to provide that assistance. When a patient's condition is critical, there's no such thing as having "too much help" in order to ensure that a life is saved.



Does the Fire Department earn any revenue to offset costs?



Yes. Our ambulance service provides a significant revenue stream from ambulance transport billing. This money off-sets the cost of providing our services by almost 30% of our approved \$7.1 million dollar operating budget. In FY 2023, ending June 30, 2023, our yearly revenue will exceed \$2.1 million dollars.



Appendices

Correspondence

Appendix 1 – Letter to BOF



Appendix 2 – Letter to Vol. Leadership

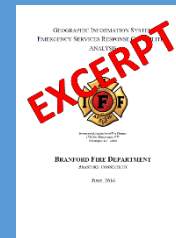


Appendix 3 – Letter from Vol. Leadership

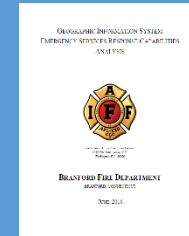


Studies

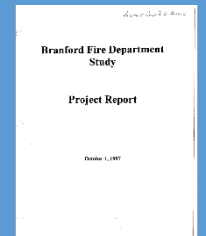
Appendix 4 – IAFF Study Excerpt



Appendix 5 – IAFF Study Full



Appendix 6 – Branford Fire Study - 1997



Annual Reports

Appendix 7 – 2022-2023 Annual Report



Appendix 8 – 2021-2022 Annual Report



Appendix 9 – 2020-2021 Annual Report





Appendix 10 – Definitions

Advanced Life Support (ALS) - Advanced level of medical care provided by paramedics. Key components of ALS include advanced airway management techniques to establish and maintain a patient's airway. ALS providers are proficient in intravenous (IV) access and can administer various medications, including cardiac drugs, pain relief medications, or medications to manage allergic reactions, through IV lines. ALS providers are trained in cardiac monitoring and defibrillation, allowing them to interpret cardiac rhythms, perform electrocardiograms (ECGs), and utilize defibrillators to deliver electrical shocks when necessary to restore normal heart rhythms

Automatic Aid - A plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms.

Basic Life Support (BLS) - Basic Life Support (BLS) refers to essential emergency medical care provided by Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to individuals experiencing cardiac arrest, respiratory distress, or other life-threatening situations. BLS techniques include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), and basic airway management to ensure oxygenation and circulation until more advanced medical help arrives.

Company - A group of members: (1) under the direct supervision of an officer; (2) trained and equipped to perform assigned tasks; (3) usually organized and identified as engine companies, ladder companies, rescue companies, squad companies, or multi-functional companies; (4) operating with one piece of fire apparatus (pumper, aerial fire apparatus, elevating platform, quint, rescue, squad, ambulance) except where multiple apparatus are assigned that are dispatched and arrive together, continuously operate together, and are managed by a single company officer; (5) arriving at the incident scene on fire apparatus.

Engine/ Pumper - Fire apparatus with a permanently mounted fire pump of at least 750 gallons per minute capacity (GPM), water tank, and hose body whose primary purpose is to combat structural and associated fires.

Engine Company - A group of fire fighters who work as a unit and are equipped with one or more pumping engines that have rated capacities of 750 GPM or more.

GPM – Gallons per Minute (A standard handheld fire hose delivers between 150 and 165 GPM)

Mutual Aid - A written intergovernmental agreement between agencies and/or jurisdictions that they will assist one another on request by furnishing personnel, equipment, and/or expertise in a specified manner.

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) - A designated crew that will serve as a stand-by rescue team for personnel and be available for the immediate search and rescue of any missing, trapped, injured or unaccounted for firefighter(s).

Suburban - An incorporated or unincorporated area with a population between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile. *Branford has a population of 1,285 per square mile*

Truck Company - A group of fire fighters who work as a unit and are equipped with one or more pieces of aerial fire apparatus.

Urban - An incorporated or unincorporated area with a population of over 30,000 people and/or a population density over 1,000 people per square mile but less than 2,999. *Branford has a population of 1,285 per square mile.*