



# Village of Oak Park

## Fire Department 2009 Annual Report



1929 Engine Co. and Truck Co. 1 in front of the original Village Hall at 655 lake



Shift 1 today in front of 100 N. Euclid.

2001 Central States HME with 104ft aerial ladder by RK Ladders. Currently used today.



1915 Oldsmobile tractor with old horse drawn 1889 Pirsch 55ft hook and ladder.

# Our Mission and Organization

## Mission of the Oak Park Fire Department

*"To provide emergency and non-emergency service excellence by caring professionals in a way that embodies community values in a fiscal and equitable manner. We are dedicated to preserving life, protecting property, and defending the environment for the citizens and visitors of Oak Park, by using effective principles, and modern technology in a safe and proactive manner."*



## A Message from the Chief

Thank you for taking the time to look through our 2009 annual report. I think you will find that the OPFD is an extremely active component of your municipal government. We provide the very best emergency service to our citizens by having the necessary equipment, vehicles, and most importantly, dedicated professionals committed to serving the public.

The Oak Park Fire Department is rich in history and tradition dating back to 1905, but those early firefighters would hardly recognize our department today. The OPFD has evolved into an "all-risk" department that in 2009 responded to just fewer than 6000 calls for service. The majority of our calls continue to be in emergency (EMS), or pre-hospital medicine. Our ambulances are equipped and staffed by paramedics that can literally bring the Emergency Room to your residence or workplace.

Our non-EMS calls for service are extremely varied in nature and reflect the adage that if you have an emergency, call the fire department for help! In 2009 we responded to water, electrical, odor, carbon monoxide, furnace, and rescue incidents on a regular basis as can be expected in a densely populated community such as Oak Park. When we do have fires, our three stations equate into fast response times. We are able in most fire scenarios, to limit the fire to the room of origin.

As you will see, we made great progress in 2009, and we continue to look for ways to serve our community better in 2010!

Be safe!

*Thomas Ebsen*

Thomas Ebsen  
Acting Fire Chief



## Administration

During the 2009 budget year the Oak Park Fire Department employed 65 sworn personnel and one administrative positions. The five divisions that make-up the department include: Administration, Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Prevention and Training.

Oak Park is protected by three fire stations. Fire Headquarters located at 100 N. Euclid is comprised of a Quint (aerial ladder truck), Squad (engine), two ambulances, the shift command vehicle, and the administrative offices. Station 2 is located at 212 Augusta, and Station 3 is located at 900 S. East. Both stations house an engine.

Every apparatus is capable of providing Advanced Life Support (ALS). This means that all the engines and the truck have at least one paramedic on board and the ambulances always have two. We are able to provide the highest level of emergency care with our first arriving units on every call.

# Administration

## Administration Highlights of 2009

2009 saw many changes in the department. Chief William Bell retired in December after 29.5 years of service, the last five as Chief. In September for the first time in the history of the department five firefighters were laid off due to the economic conditions felt here in Oak Park (and in many other municipalities as well). By years-end, we were fortunate to re-hire three of the five laid off firefighters due to retirements and a job transfer by one of our firefighters.

The Village has provided our medics with the very latest 12-lead cardiac monitors on all of our front line ambulances and engines which enable the doctors at the hospitals to view the cardiac rhythms in the field. The life saving result is admitting appropriate patients directly to cardiac catheterization labs instead of the emergency room and saving precious time when a major cardiac event is occurring.

In June we broke with tradition by putting into service our new command vehicle which is a modified Dodge Sprinter Van. In the past our command vehicles were always SUV's, but we wanted a vehicle that could take advantage of new technologies available to the fire service. Most of those are computer supported, so we needed a vehicle that would provide a large interior work space and the Sprinter fit the bill.

The other technological advance that we made in 2009 was to move to a tablet pc format for our fire inspectors. Our inspectors now use the tablet pc's in the field and upload all their data in seconds to a web-based provider- they can even email the reports electronically! This not only saves time and paper, it also saved the Village an administrative secretary since it eliminated manual data entry.



2008 Dodge Sprinter replaced the 2001 Chevy Suburban as 620.



# Operations

The Deputy Chief of Operations is responsible for directing the Operations Division with the day-to-day activities being managed by the shift Battalion Chief. The Deputy Chief also oversees Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Training. Three shifts make up the operations division, each are staffed with one Battalion Chief, 4 Lieutenants, and 14 firefighters. Shift personnel work 24 hours on duty and then are off for 48 hours with their days beginning at 7:30 am and ending at 7:30 the next morning.

The fire department saw a decrease of 213 calls for 2009 compared to 2008. The majority of calls (59%) were for medical emergencies. Miscellaneous service calls continue to represent a large percentage of responses (19%) by the fire department. Service calls include, utility emergencies, odor investigations from natural gas to chemical smells, lock-outs from house and auto, and assisting invalids.

The fire department responded to 124 fires in 2009. Structure or building fires accounted for 52 of those responses with measurable loss in the building. Other fires included, vehicle fires, trash or rubbish fires, cooking fires, and brush fires.

## 2009 Calls by Incident Type

Fire	124
Explosion/Rupture	7
EMS & Rescue	3,483
Hazardous Conditions (no fire)	161
Service Calls	1,121
Good Intent False Alarm	378
Unintentional or Malfunctioning Alarm	624
<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>5,902</b>



## General Information

### 2009 Fire Loss

Estimated Fire Loss	\$954,463
Estimated Value of Structures	\$85,823,094
Percentage of Structure Saved	98.8%
Number of Building Fires	52

## Response Times

Average Response Time (time from en route to on scene)	
Emergency Calls	3 minutes 55 seconds
Non-Emergency Calls	5 minutes 13 seconds
Average Calls Per Day	
Fire	6.62
EMS	9.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.16</b>



# Fire Prevention Bureau

There were many changes to the Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) in the past year. A total re-organization of the Bureau occurred due to the budgetary problems that existed throughout the Village. The two full-time inspectors were reassigned back to work a 24 hour shift. Although that re-assignment occurred, the work of the Fire Prevention Bureau continues. As part of the reorganization, nine department members volunteered to work part-time in the bureau. The two full-time inspectors were part of the nine. A Battalion Chief who supervises and manages all activities of the Bureau. The bureau continues to inspect approximately 370 buildings currently designated as "Target Buildings" twice per year. "Target Buildings" pose either an increased risk due to the buildings operation or storage, such as restaurants and gas stations, or an increased life safety risk due to the occupant load, such as schools, high-rises, churches and theaters.

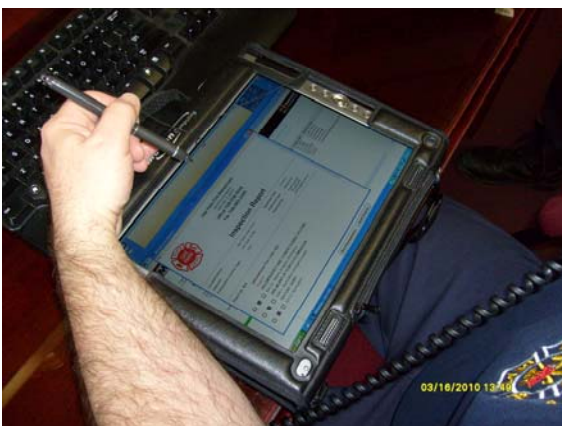
The Fire Inspectors strive to work with the building owners and occupants with risk management strategies through code compliance, fire and life safety education and fire investigation. The inspectors work to determine code compliance but also try to have building owners and occupants recognize fire and life safety hazards and educate them on ways to handle those hazards prior to their bi-annual inspection.



The Bureau oversees the building plans for all fire protection equipment installed in buildings throughout the village. Bureau personnel provide consulting support in the design phases well as review blueprints prior to system installations, conduct field inspections and perform final acceptance testing before the building is opened to the public. Fire protection systems include fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm, and hood and duct systems for restaurants. The bureau prides itself by working closely with Building and Property Standards Department consulting on inspections code enforcement and plan reviews.

Another major goal of the bureau is to work with building managers and maintenance staff to determine proper emergency evacuation procedures before they are needed. This service is particularly important to schools, churches, restaurants, and high-rise residential buildings.

In a move to go green, the bureau has implemented a new record keeping system. Instead of filling our paper copies of fire reports inspectors now carry new laptop computers with them and enter all violations directly into the computer. When a fire inspection is completed, the owner can now have the fire inspection report emailed directly to their computer. A hard copy is still available if needed. This new inspection is completed process has allowed the Bureau to significantly increase the number of inspections completed by reducing the time, re-work, and paperwork associated with capturing inspection data.



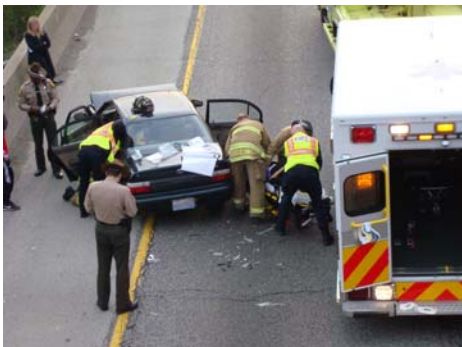
# Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for Oak Park are governed by the Loyola University Hospital Medical system and directed by Medical Director Dr. Mark Cichon. EMS in Oak Park is part of a system that advocates aggressive medical treatment and procedures while in the field. Our goals in EMS include rapid responses, and early medical intervention.

In 2009 the fire department responded to 3,483 EMS calls which accounted for 59% of the total incidents for the year. Motor vehicle crashes, cardiac events, and respiratory issues are among the several types of incidents we encountered throughout the year.

The practice of putting a third ambulance in service between the hours of 7:30am to 7:30pm due to the increased call volume incurred during those hours was very successful and definitely took a little of the burden off of our mutual aid companies. Although due to our budget constraints resulting in lay-offs and eliminated positions this practice was infrequently used in the later part of the year.

Every year our paramedics are required to do monthly continuing education. In a 4 year licensing period one paramedic must complete 120 hours of continuing education to maintain their license. Every month a representative from the Loyola EMS system will facilitate our continuing education. Some of the topics covered are: Cardiac issues, trauma, pediatrics, OB emergencies, illegal drug abuse, as well as several other topics. Last year we also prepared for our Standing Operating Procedure updates which included adding and eliminating certain medications, and some new procedures. One of those new procedures included the EZ-IO it is a device that allows us easy access to intravenous therapies when standard procedures will not allow us to establish IV access. It acts much like a power drill (but less powerful) and will place the needle directly into bone and give a safe, secure and accurate place for crucial IV treatments for such issues as full cardiac arrest, impending respiratory, or cardiac arrest, or for bariatric patients that have poor venous access. We now have an EZ-IO on each ambulance and they have proven very useful.



## EMS calls by incident

DOA	40
Psych/Behavioral	110
Motor Vehicle Crash	270
Chest Pain/Cardiac	163
Respiratory issues	259
Overdose	89
Refusals/	
Ambulance not needed	505
General Medical	2047
<b>Total</b>	<b>3483</b>



# Public Education

In 2009 The Public Education division of the department faced some challenges due to severe budget considerations. The full time Lieutenant day position was eliminated, then as a solution Public Education was then made up of 6 volunteers from various shifts to fill-in and continue the ever important job of educating and communicating with the public regarding Fire and Life Safety. Public Education is a cornerstone of the department, as it not only gives us the ability to communicate and interact with the public, but just as importantly teach the public ways to prevent fire emergencies in their home.

CPR is also one our very valuable programs it was very well attended throughout the year. The fire department is an American Heart Association Training Center. Classes were held every month in 2009 which included Heart saver CPR/AED (automatic external defibrillator), Healthcare Provider CPR/AED this class is intended for people who work in the medical field such as, nurses, doctors, EMT/Paramedic, medical assistants. We also offer a First Aid and Infant/Child CPR class as well.



The Child Passenger Safety Seat program that started in 2003 and has been increasing in popularity since then.

We inspected 389 child safety seats in 2009. The program started with four personnel and now includes 10 members from all three shifts. We also held a car seat check-up in July at station one. This event is very successful as we are able to check several seats in one day. The technicians are required to attend a 40 hour class to be certified and have to complete 6 hours of continuing education in a 2 year period.



One of the services we provide for public education includes visiting block parties in the summer and early fall. Every Saturday and Sunday members of the department while on duty will go visit local block parties. The main attraction is typically the fire engine but the second biggest is the "flame house". This is where the children and some brave adults get to practice putting a fire out on the plywood house with hinged flames. It is always a big hit especially in the warmer months.

## Public Education Activities

Block Party visits	43
Car Seats Inspected	389
CPR Classes Taught	82
Fire/Life Safety Talks	31
Station Tours	39
School Assemblies/ Safety Trailer Presentations	16

### Citizen Contacts

Children and Adults	6,179
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We had our 5th Annual Open House during Fire Prevention Week. Families and children are able to participate in interactive fire safety activities as well as earn prizes. The stations included fire extinguisher safety, stop, drop, and roll, and many others.



# Training

2009 marked the beginning of a new operational model for the training division. With the formation of the 7G program, one member from each shift volunteered to handle their shifts training needs. Each training officer enters the daily/monthly training reports into the database, as well as processes school requests and state exam requests for members of their respective shift. Along with the state required paperwork, each training officer participates in developing and delivering classes, drills and continuing education to the department.

The need for a pro-active training division is confirmed every time a firefighter loses their life. Survival on the fire ground always falls back to constant and relevant training. Without the ability to react automatically in a rapidly changing life or death situation the firefighter would be unable to complete their task. This instinctive ability is only fostered through constant hands on training.

The training division will continue to provide the needed training to maintain our members at peak operational capacity. This is done by providing up to date classroom activity's, hands on drills and evaluating new techniques and equipment in order to stay ahead of the constantly changing challenges in fire suppression, rescue and medical care.



A total of 19,172 hours of on duty training was completed in 2009. This is down 399 hours from 2008. This was due in part from the reduction of 11 positions and five lay-offs.



## Total 2009 Training Hours by Shift

Shift 1	7,679.75
Shift 2	5,486.75
Shift 3	6,002.25

## Certifications Received by Members in 2009

Confined Space Rescue	3
Collapse Technician	2
Fire Service Vehicle Operator	1
Firefighter III	1
Hazardous Materials Ops	1
Hazardous Materials IC	1
Hazardous Materials Tech A	2
Incident Safety Officer	1
Instructor I	1
Instructor II	1
Rope Rescue Operations	3
Technical Rescue Awareness	1
Trench Rescue Ops	2
Trench Rescue Tech	2
Vertical Rope Rescue II	2
Vehicle Machinery Operations	2
Vehicle Machinery Technician	1

Each of these certifications requires 40 hours of instruction and a written test with at least a passing score of 70%. This added 1,048 hours to the regular training each department member earned in while on duty in 2009.

# MABAS Division XI

The Oak Park Fire Department is a member of MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) Division XI. MABAS is a statewide mutual aid response system that provides local communities resources for fire, EMS and specialized emergency incidents that exceed the capabilities and resources of a local fire department. Division XI is made up of the fire departments in Oak Park, River Forest, Forest Park, Berwyn, Cicero, Stickney and North Riverside. Combined, the seven fire departments provide fire and EMS services to over 232,000 residents from 13 fire stations.



During 2009, through mutual aid agreements, Oak Park responded to neighboring communities 282 times and received aid 275 times. These included 14 responses to assist with structure fires outside of Oak Park, 98 responses to EMS calls and 1 response to Hazardous Materials incidents.

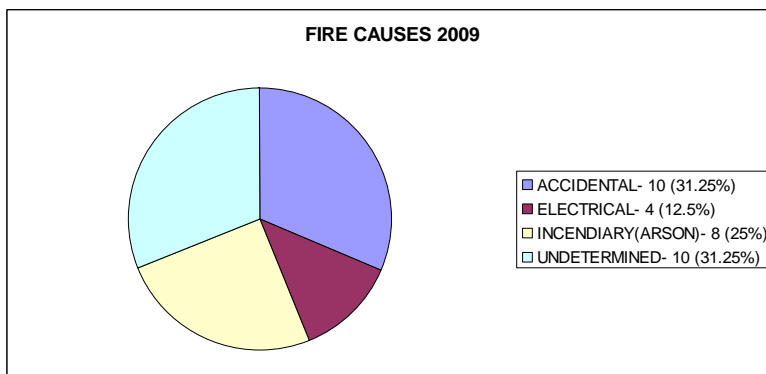
## Division XI Fire Investigation Team

The Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshall mandates that all Fire Chiefs are responsible for investigating all fires within their respective jurisdictions. To that end, the Oak Park Fire Department has fourteen (14) active state certified fire investigators. The investigators are charged with determining the origin and cause of fires within Oak Park. In addition, the Oak Park Fire Department fire investigators belong to the MABAS Division 11 Fire Investigation Team.

Each fire investigator must maintain their certification by attaining at least ninety (90) hours (points) of continuing education and at least ten (10) experience points, or actual fire investigations, within a four (4) year period. This requirement ensures that all fire investigators are kept current with new investigative techniques, new laws, and new National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 921 and 1033 standards.

The fire investigator will determine if a fire was accidental or intentionally set (incendiary). In the case of an intentionally set fire, the Police Department Arson Investigator will be summoned to investigate the criminal aspects of the fire and bring the offender(s) to justice. When there is a fire resulting in high dollar loss, a casualty, a fatality, or a difficult determination of origin and cause, investigators from surrounding communities, including the Office of the State Fire Marshall, can be asked to assist with the investigation.

For year's end 2009, the Oak Park Fire Department investigated 32 fires. The causes of those fires were Incendiary, or Arson, fires comprised 25% of the investigated fires for 2009. These fires were turned over to the Oak Park Police Department for further investigation and prosecution. Of those eight arson fires, the Police Department made arrests in two of the cases.



## Division XI Technical Rescue Team

The Oak Park Fire Department is prepared for all types of emergencies with the formation of the Technical Rescue Team. The team is comprised of 60 highly trained personnel from all seven Division 11 towns. The team has suffered the loss of 20 personnel due to budget cuts across the division including Oak Park which was reduced from 23 members to 18.

In 2009 the team was validated by MABAS as a certified response team. This must be done every four years. Validation simulates an emergency callout of the team with nine other teams from across the state. The teams must respond to the Illinois Fire Service Institute in Champaign and operate for 48 hours as if they were at the scene of an actual incident. This includes working setting up a tent camp in which the teams must sleep and eat in shifts while the rescue is happening as to always have personnel at the scene working to rescue the victim. This drill does not stop for breaks and goes around the clock till it is finished and taxes the teams resources and skills. The team drills once a month to maintain operational readiness. Training is of great importance when dealing with high hazard low frequency responses. Without constant training on the core skills which the rescue technician relies on, these skills would not be maintainable.

Technical rescue calls can be classified into four areas: Structural Collapse, Confined Space Rescue, and High Angle rescue. Structural collapse includes anything from a partial collapse of a single building to large areas of devastation due to man made events or natural disasters.



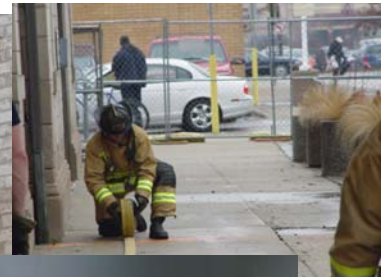
## Oak Park Fire Department Green Initiatives

Part of the departments mission is to protect not only life and property but also the environment. We do not stop at just protecting the environment during emergencies but also during our day to day routine. One of the major items to lessen the impact on the environment is the video conferencing system. This system allows all three stations to participate in lecture training and meetings via a live two way video feed transmitted on the Villages intranet system. Physical training will still take place at station one or another designated location. But thanks to the video conferencing this has cut down on unnecessary trips to station one saving on fuel costs and wear and tear on the engines, also leaving the engines in their response districts. Another positive change is paperwork reduction. Much of our daily paperwork is now done on the computer without the need to print out paperwork that is temporary in nature. An exception is state mandated paperwork that must still be signed in ink and kept on file. Even that may be changing as the state is looking into electronic signatures. New efficient fluorescent lights have been installed in each station saving both energy and reducing the carbon foot print that each building produces. Naturally recycling is a part of our daily lives at home and it is now second nature for us here at the fire house. Paper, plastic, and aluminum is all recycled. The battery recycling program is working wonderfully. The spent batteries from our emergency medical equipment and rescue tools are now recycled in safe and responsible manner. We as a department will continue to take on challenges of providing emergency services in an eco-friendly manner.

# Photo Gallery



The Junior Police academy came by to learn about fire safety and what it is like to be a fire-fighter.



Training is vital to maintain our skills, here are just a few of the drills we do during the year.



One of our biggest fans out trick-or-treating!



8/09 River Forest Fire Dep. Hosted a disaster drill combining the efforts of Police, Fire, and specialty teams from Division 11. One of the Incidents was a Haz Mat inside the college.



A representative from The Invisible fence co. came to give a talk and donate Pet Masks for dogs and cats rescued from fires





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