



Fire  
Department

# Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Report



# Mission

A **professional** department dedicated to **protecting life and property** through an **all-hazards approach**.

# Vision

**Internationally recognized** as a **leader in fire service excellence** with the ability to **predict** emerging and challenging environments, **develop** our members, and **cultivate** the community sense of **feeling safe any place any time**.

# Core Values

- **Service** – Professional and trained workforce providing for others before self.
- **Caring** – Using empathy and sympathy for addressing all situations.
- **Honesty** – Just behavior principled in intention and actions.
- **Trust** – Reliance on the department and individuals following our core values.
- **Integrity** – Moral and ethical conduct at all times.

# Community Input Survey

The VBFD is seeking input from Virginia Beach residents, and we've developed a community survey to help guide future engagement efforts.

Use the QR code here to access the survey:



# VBFD Credo

Striving for **excellence**, protecting with **honor**.

## The VBFD Way

- Our core values of **Service, Caring, Integrity, Trust, and Honesty** guide us as we serve the community and enrich lives.
- Seeking the **truth** is critical to our organizational wellbeing.
- We embrace **optimism** and know that any challenge can be met with the proper will.
- We remain **humble** but we are **confident** in our ability.
- Our **training** guides us. We value constant professional development and strive to ensure succession from within our ranks.
- We always display **courage and professionalism**, remaining **calm** in crisis and bringing order to chaos.
- We are **prepared** and continuously explore so we can adapt, improve, and ensure resilience.
- We embrace **technology** and are willing to incorporate new tools and techniques to achieve success.
- We all have a role in **preventing** the emergency and reducing risk. This is the most effective way to **protect** our community.
- We are not perfect, but we seek perfection so we can **achieve excellence**. The little things matter.
- **Exceeding the standard** is the standard and **leadership** is expected at all levels.



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# Message from Fire Chief Pravetz

It is with profound pride and deep respect that I present the Virginia Beach Fire Department's Fiscal Year 2024–2025 Annual Report. This past year was defined by progress, perseverance, and an unwavering dedication to our mission—protecting life and property through an all-hazards approach.

Our department continued to lead with excellence across every division. From enhancing emergency response capabilities to advancing wellness initiatives, every accomplishment reflects our core values: **Service, Caring, Honesty, Trust, and Integrity**. The introduction of the VBFD Way and our **Credo**, help us define who we are and what we stand for.

We marked a historic expansion of our workforce, welcoming over 30 new firefighter positions, with another 30 positions approved for FY2026. This strategic growth has already led to an 84% reduction in mandatory holdover hours and a 67% decrease in overtime—relieving strain on our personnel and strengthening our operational readiness.

Our investment in advanced apparatus included four new fire engines, two state-of-the-art tiller trucks, a specialized Hazmat unit, and Fire Boat 2—a 45-foot maritime response vessel extending our capabilities across the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay. These resources, combined with the talents of our personnel, ensure that we continue to meet the dynamic needs of our growing community.

Wellness and resilience remain foundational to our success. We expanded our health screenings through LifeScan, integrated cutting-edge tools like the DexaScan and Force Plate system, and celebrated the accreditation of our Peer Support Team. The addition of Dr. Diana Agnetti as our Public Safety Clinical Coordinator and the introduction of Ari and Ember—our therapy dogs—underscore our commitment to both physical and mental health.

We also proudly honored the legacies of those we have lost, including Master Firefighter Matthew A. Gallina and Captain Matthew "Chevy" Chiaverotti. Their courage, dedication, and service remind us of the meaning behind the badge and the importance of continuing to advocate for cancer prevention, early detection, and firefighter safety.

Across every corner of the organization—from the expansion of the Delegated Authority training model, to national deployments by Virginia Task Force 2, to award-winning community risk reduction programs—our department exemplifies what it means to serve with excellence.

As we look to the future, we remain focused on continuous improvement, innovation, and fostering the trust of our residents. I am grateful to every member of this department for

their relentless commitment and to our community for the unwavering support that fuels our success.

With gratitude,



**Kenneth Pravetz**  
Fire Chief, Virginia Beach Fire Department



# In Memoriam

## Matthew A. Gallina Celebration of Life

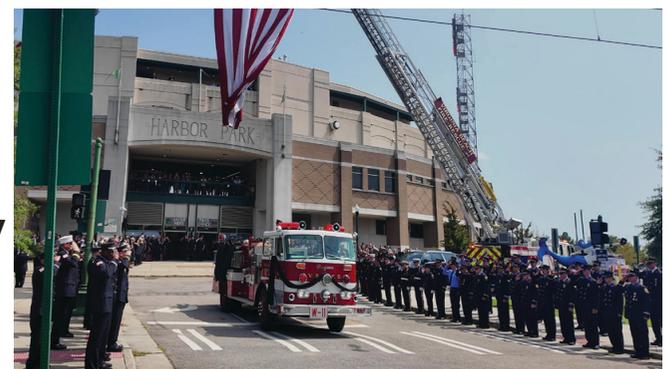
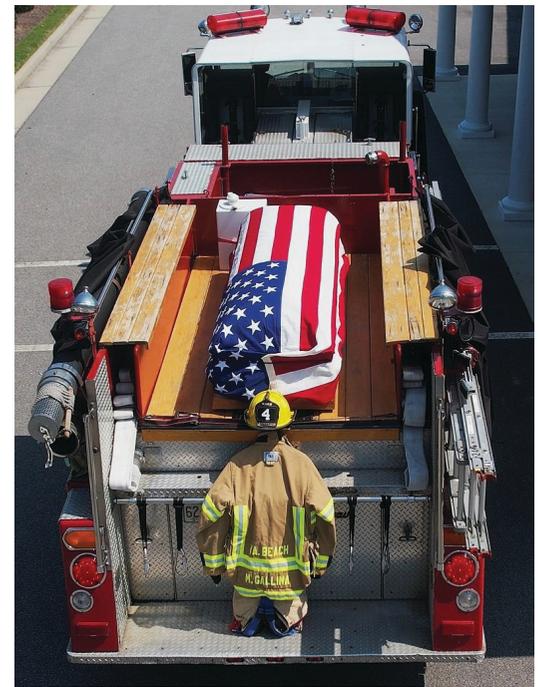
On August 26, 2024, a memorial service was held at Harbor Park in Norfolk, Virginia, to honor the life and legacy of Master Firefighter (MFF) Matthew A. Gallina, a dedicated member of the VBFD who passed away from occupational cancer. MFF Gallina passed away on August 21, 2024, at the age of 48. The event was attended by hundreds of firefighters, family members, friends, and community members who came together to pay their respects.

MFF Gallina's widow, **Michelle**, expressed her **deep gratitude** for the support of the community and the fire department. She pledged to continue **advocating for early cancer screenings** and raising awareness about the **risks faced by firefighters**, aiming to **save lives** and **honor her husband's legacy**. **Fire Chief Ken Pravetz**, along with several other speakers, delivered **heartfelt eulogies** highlighting MFF Gallina's **unwavering commitment** to his profession, his **relentless pursuit of truth**, and his **dedication to preventing future tragedies**.

The memorial service included a display of MFF Gallina's **20-year career with the VBFD**, featuring his role as an **investigator** and his numerous **contributions to community safety and well-being**.

The event served as a powerful reminder of the **ongoing issue of occupational cancer among firefighters** and underscored the critical importance of **increased cancer screenings and preventative measures** within the profession. **MFF Gallina's legacy continues to inspire and motivate nationwide efforts** to protect the health and safety of firefighters.

The memorial service at Harbor Park was a **fitting and heartfelt tribute** to a **brave and dedicated firefighter**, celebrating his **life, achievements**, and the **profound impact** he had on those around him.



# City of Virginia Beach

## City Leadership



Mayor  
Robert M. Dyer



Vice Mayor/District #5  
Rosemary Wilson



District #1  
David Hutcheson



District #2  
Barbara Henley



District #3  
Michael Berlucchi



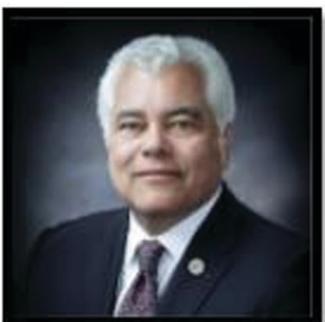
District #4  
Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond



District #6  
Robert W. Remick



District #7  
Cal Jackson-Green



District #8  
Stacy Cummings



District #9  
Joshua F. Schulman



District #10  
Jennifer V. Rouse



City Manager  
Patrick Duhaney

## City Overview

**Virginia Beach** is the most populous city in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with an estimated 2024 population of approximately 454,800 residents and over 14 million visitors annually. The city has a median age of 37.4 and a median household income of \$90,685, reflecting a balanced, economically diverse community. Spanning 249 square miles of land and 61 square miles of water, Virginia Beach boasts 38 miles of scenic shoreline along the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay and is divided into 10 City Council districts.



# Virginia Beach Fire Department

## Senior Staff



**Deputy Chief**  
(Operations Branch)

Vance Cooper



**Fire Chief**

Kenneth Pravetz



**Deputy Chief**  
(Services Branch)

Amy Valdez

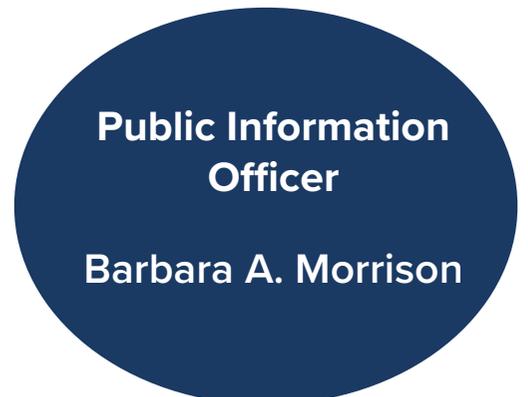


**Executive Assistant**

Lori A. Skytta



**Budget & Finance  
Manager**  
Jennifer L. Whitley



**Public Information  
Officer**  
Barbara A. Morrison



**Assistant Chief**  
(Administrative Services)

Lorna Trent



**Assistant Chief**  
(Community Risk Reduction)

Joshua Goyet



**Assistant Chief**  
(Training & Special Ops)

Michael Brashear



**Assistant Chief**  
(A-Shift/Shift Commander)

Paul Pureza



**Assistant Chief**  
(B-Shift/Shift Commander)

Norman Williams



**Assistant Chief**  
(C-Shift/Shift Commander)

Eric Wilkerson

# Department Overview

The **Virginia Beach Fire Department (VBFD)** is a metropolitan-sized organization providing a comprehensive range of fire and rescue services to the citizens of Virginia Beach. As an all-hazards response agency, VBFD delivers critical capabilities including:

- Fire Suppression
- Emergency Management
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Marine Operations
- Technical Rescue
- Fire Investigations and Inspections
- Life Safety Education
- Fire Training
- Safety, Health, and Wellness
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
- FBI SWAT Medic Program
- Disaster response through Virginia Task Force 2 (FEMA Urban Search and Rescue), and the Hampton Roads Incident Management Team

The VBFD has been an **Accredited Agency** with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) since 2001. The department has earned recognition as a local, regional, state, and national leader—and continues to set high standards of excellence in service delivery.

The department operates out of **25 work locations**, including:

- 20 city-owned fire stations
- 1 shared federal fire station
- The Harry E. Diezel Fire Training Center
- The Community Risk Reduction Division
- Resource Management
- The Virginia Task Force 2 office and warehouse

The VBFD serves more than **450,000 residents** with over **14 million visitors** annually across **307 square miles** within city limits — and extends its response capabilities up to **42 miles offshore** to support operations at the Dominion Energy Coastal Virginia Offshore



Wind Farm. On a daily basis, the department deploys:

- 22 engine companies
- 9 ladder companies
- 2 heavy rescue companies
- 3 water tankers
- 5 battalions
- 1 safety officer
- 1 unmanned aerial systems drone pilot
- 1 shift commander
- A fleet of cross-staffed apparatus, including 4 fireboats, 7 jet skis, 9 brush trucks, a technical rescue truck, a hazardous materials unit, and a command vehicle

In partnership with **Virginia Beach Emergency Medical Services (VBEMS)**, the VBFD provides first-response emergency medical care to both citizens and visitors. With over **500 certified Emergency Medical Technicians**, including more than **120 advanced life support (ALS) providers**, the department responds to all **Priority 1** calls and supports

## Strategic Goals

1. Serve the community by providing exceptional public safety through preparedness and emergency service.
2. Promote a healthy and safe work environment.
3. Recruit, hire, train, and maintain a fit, highly diverse, and skilled workforce.
4. Predict and forecast emerging trends and challenges.
5. Enhance Business Intelligence (BI) and Information Technology (IT) capabilities.

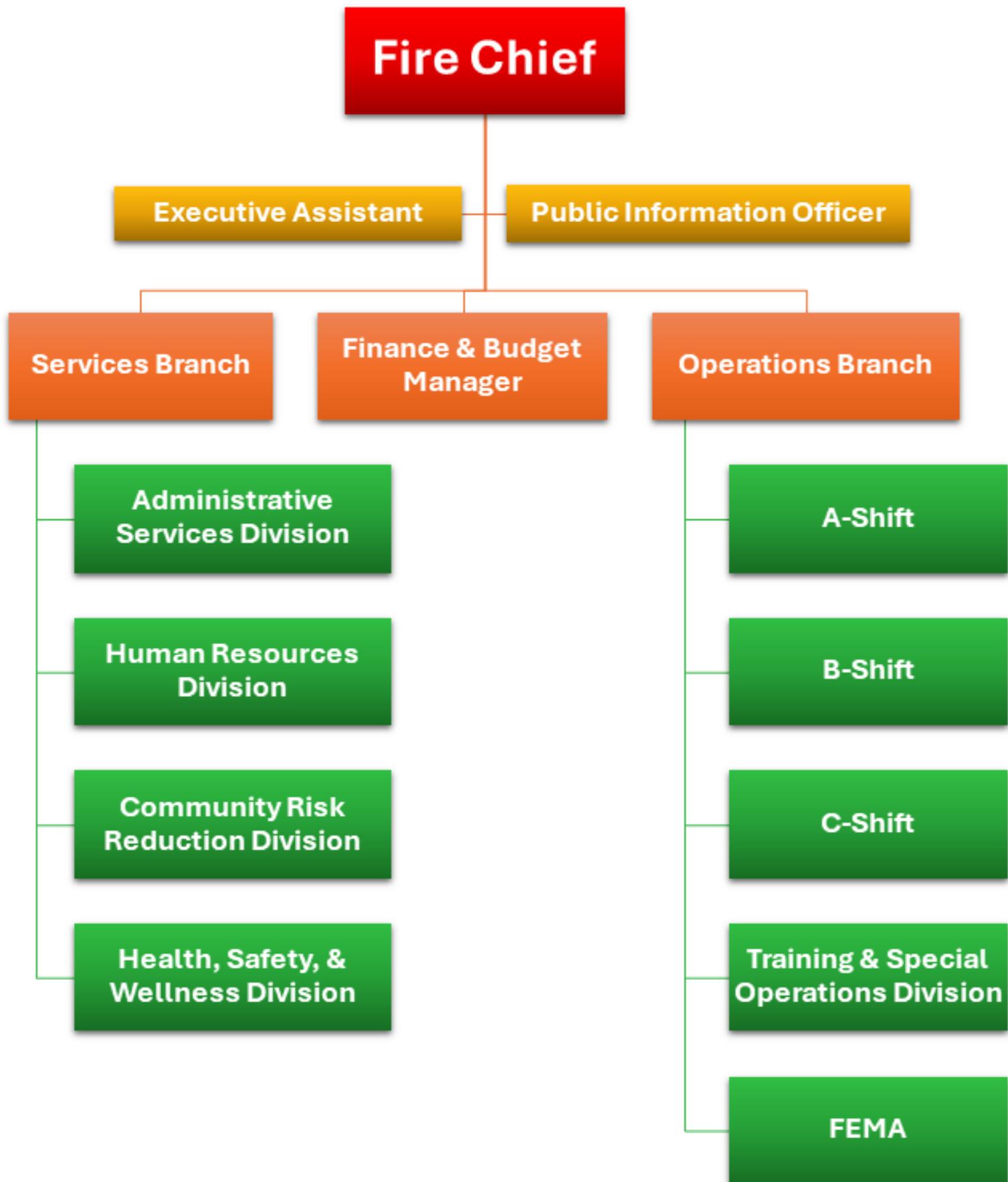
## Personnel



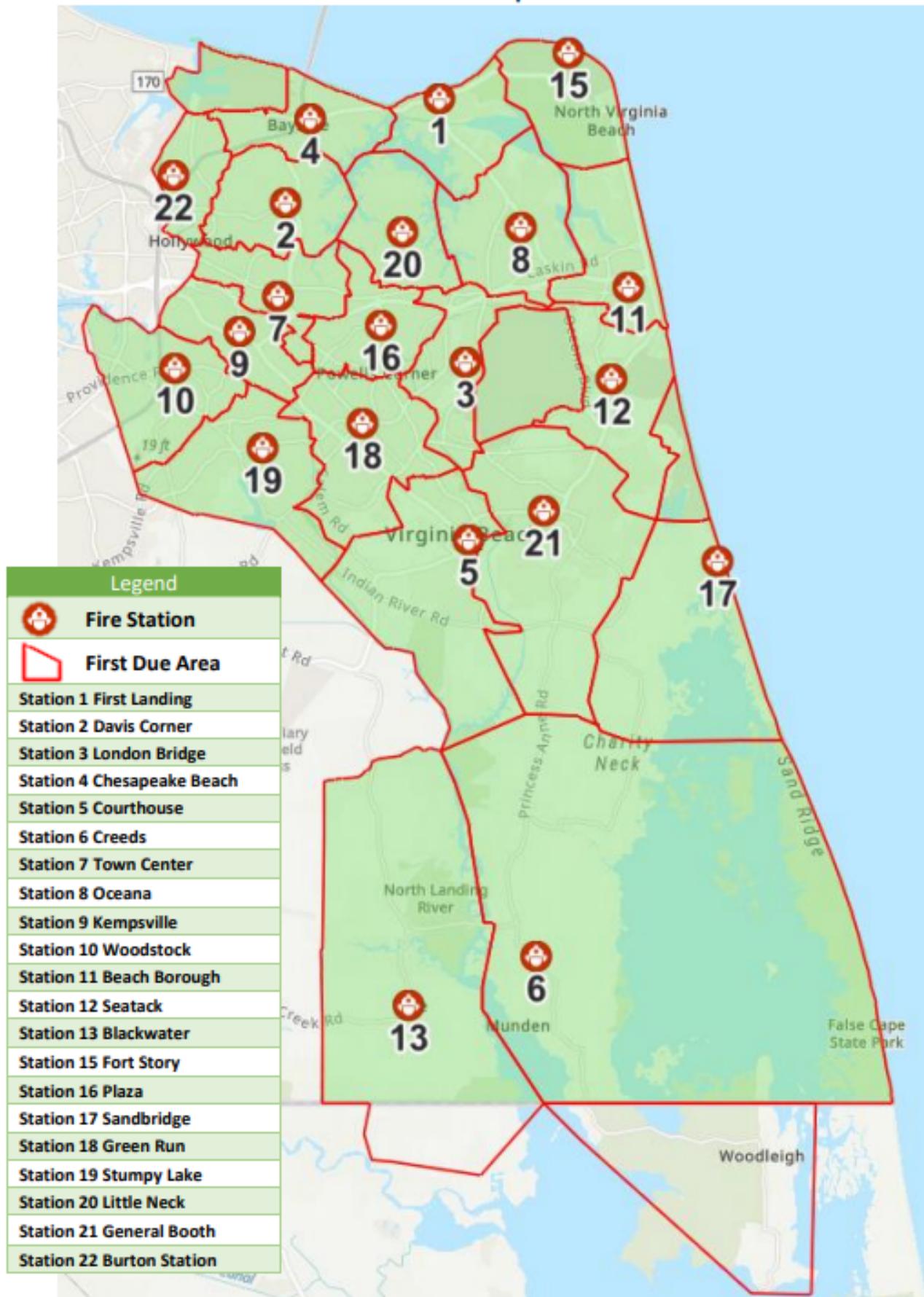
## Budget and Finance Branch

Budget Category	FY 2024	FY 2025
Salaries	\$ 53,835,125.00	\$ 55,298,288.00
Fringe	\$ 17,796,309.00	\$ 18,562,846.00
Professional Services	\$ 573,435.00	\$ 609,312.00
Internal Services	\$ 3,885,601.00	\$ 6,396,154
Other Charges	\$ 421,141.00	\$ 420,098.00
Supplies	\$ 959,798.00	\$ 1,496,782.00
Leases	\$ 257,526.00	\$ 231,871.00
Capital	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 76,306.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 77,737,435.00</b>	<b>\$ 83,091,657.00</b>

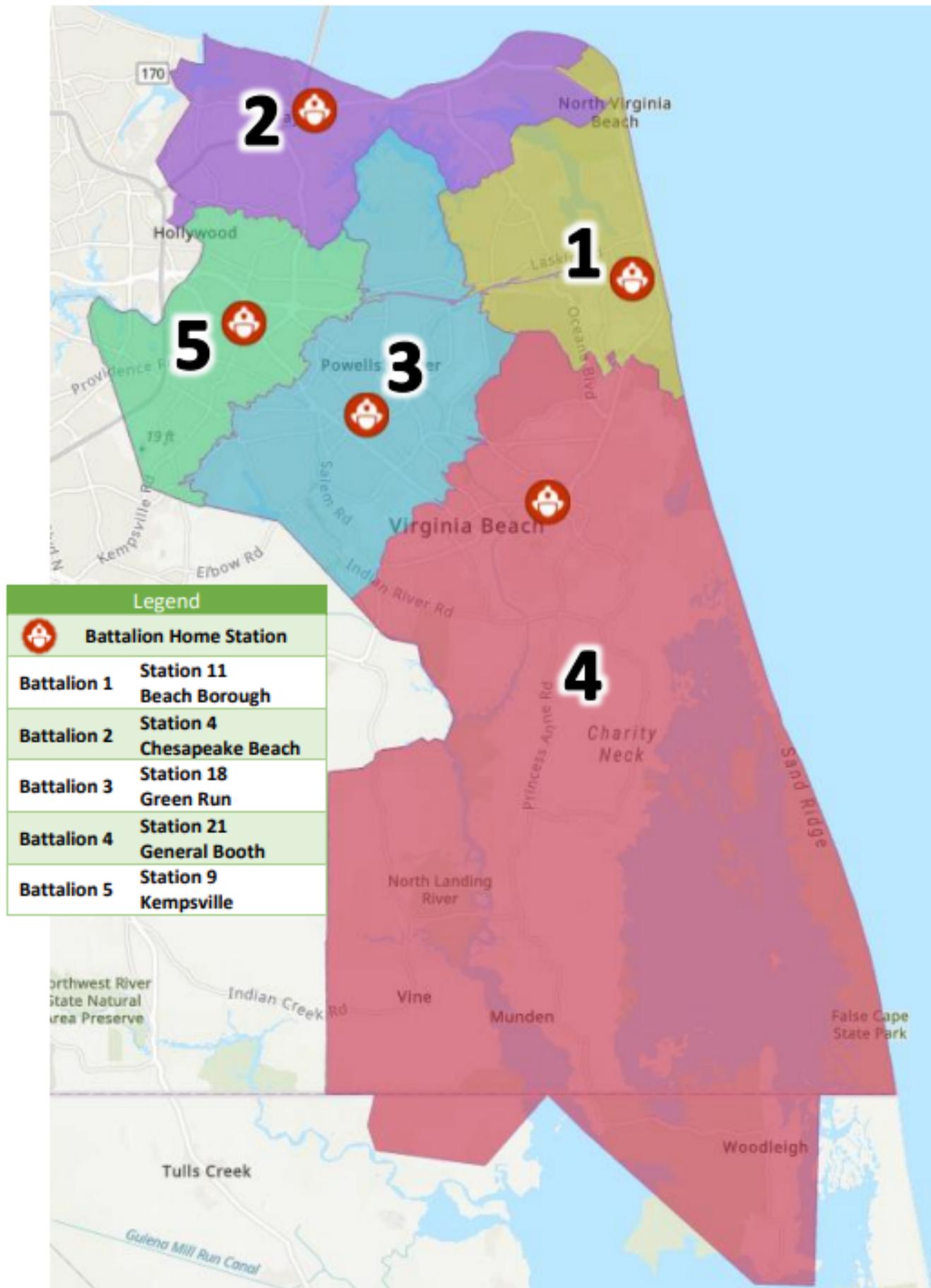
# Organizational Chart



# Fire Station First Due Area Map



# Battalion Areas Map



## What's New

### *30 New Firefighter Positions*

Over the past year, the VBFD expanded its workforce by more than 30 new firefighter positions, successfully conducting the largest recruit academy in its history. In Fiscal Year 2026, an additional 30 positions will be added to further strengthen departmental operations.

These staffing increases are a direct response to ongoing workforce shortages that, in recent years, have led to routine mandatory holdovers—requiring firefighters to work beyond their scheduled shifts to maintain emergency response readiness. While effective in sustaining operations, this practice has placed added strain on personnel, impacting work-life balance and increasing the risk of fatigue.

By investing in additional staffing, the VBFD aims to alleviate this burden, enhance operational efficiency, and improve service delivery to the community. Since the graduation of the most recent fire recruit class in March 2025, the department has seen a **significant 84% reduction in mandatory holdover hours** and a **67% decrease in overtime hours** compared to the same period the previous year.



## New Apparatus

### New Fire Engines

The VBFD has placed four new, identically designed **E-One fire engines** into service at Stations 2, 8, 19, and 21. These apparatus represent a new standard city engine model, built to support high-demand response areas and perform all core “engine work” functions.

Each engine is powered by a **Cummins X12 motor** and equipped with a **1,500-gallon-per-minute Waterous pump**. Onboard, they carry **500 gallons of water** and feature **six pre-connected, rapid-deploy hose lines** for efficient firefighting operations.

The units also include industry-leading **Whelen Engineering emergency lighting**, fully integrated with the **CenCom Core™ system**. This system synchronizes lighting and audible warnings across up to 99 devices and uses **Dynamic Variable Intensity™** to gradually adjust light output—enhancing visibility and safety during nighttime operations.

A key improvement in these engines is the inclusion of a DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid)-protected engine system. Through **Selective Catalytic Reduction**, DEF is injected into the exhaust stream to convert harmful nitrogen oxides—major contributors to smog and acid rain—into harmless nitrogen and water vapor. This environmentally responsible system helps reduce emissions while maintaining engine performance.





## New Tiller Trucks

The VBFD has deployed two new **Pierce tractor-drawn aerials (TDAs)**—commonly known as tiller trucks—featuring identical designs with **105-foot mid-mounted aerial ladders**.

These specialized apparatus offer superior maneuverability, especially within the city's tight streets and densely populated neighborhoods. Each unit operates like a tractor-trailer combination and is equipped with a **rear steering axle** operated by a firefighter in the trailer section. Despite being nearly **60 feet in length**, these vehicles can navigate more confined areas than the VBFD's 30-foot engines thanks to their dual-driver steering configuration.

- **Ladder 11** replaces the 2008 tiller currently serving the Oceanfront resort area.
- **Ladder 7** replaces a 2014 tower ladder assigned to the Town Center district.
- The 2008 tiller, now retired from its Oceanfront assignment, will be redeployed as **Ladder 1** to support operations in the Shore Drive corridor.

Both new TDAs are powered by **Cummins X12 engines** and come equipped with cutting-edge technology that enhances operator control and mission readiness—ensuring that the VBFD continues to deliver safe, effective service to the community.



## New Hazardous Materials Truck

The VBFD's **Hazmat 1** is a 2024 **E-One Specialty Rescue** apparatus with seating for four firefighters. This unit replaces the department's previous truck-and-trailer configuration and is **cross-staffed at Station 3** by members from Engine 3.

Purpose-built for hazardous materials response, Hazmat 1 features several critical enhancements:

- **Interior Research Area:** Equipped with two dedicated workstations for chemical analysis and incident safety planning. This space also houses the controls for an extendable mast-mounted camera, enabling real-time monitoring of entry teams operating in the hot zone.
- **Integrated Wi-Fi and Exterior Briefing Display:** The truck includes its own Wi-Fi network. A side-mounted exterior TV on the officer's side provides live video from the mast camera and supports field briefings and situational updates.
- **Walk-In Meter and PPE Area:** This climate-controlled space features a slide-out extension to maximize working room and equipment storage. The area includes a workbench for preparing meters and PPE, as well as a dedicated monitor for data display and live camera feed.
- **Expanded Equipment Storage:** Beyond the walk-in area, Hazmat 1 offers substantial storage capacity for both small and large equipment—including rooftop compartments for extended gear stowage.
- **Awning Coverage for Field Operations:** Both sides of the truck are equipped with deployable awnings, providing sheltered zones for donning PPE and conducting rehab operations during extended incidents.



## Fire Boat 2

The VBFD proudly introduces **Fire Boat 2**, a state-of-the-art **2023 Metal Shark “All Response Boat”**. Measuring **45 feet in length** and stationed at **Marina Shores Marina in the Lynnhaven Inlet**, this advanced vessel is designed to support **search and rescue** and **marine firefighting operations**, while also providing critical assistance to the **U.S. Coast Guard**.

Key features include:

- **Triple 350 hp V10 outboard engines** for powerful, reliable performance
- A **1,500-gallon-per-minute fire pump** to support high-demand suppression operations
- A versatile mission profile covering the **Lynnhaven Inlet, Chesapeake Bay**, and the **Atlantic Ocean**

With its exceptional speed, responsiveness, and firefighting capabilities, Fire Boat 2 significantly expands the city’s ability to respond to maritime emergencies. This investment strengthens Virginia Beach’s commitment to public safety, preparedness, and the protection of our coastal communities.

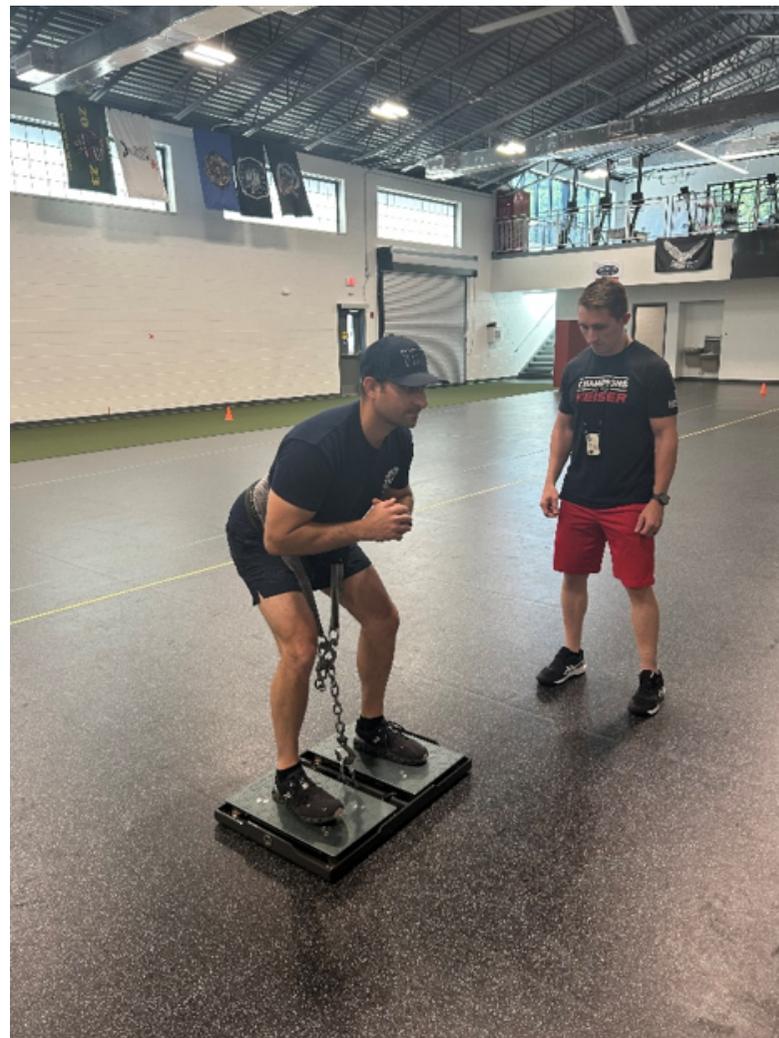


## *Enhanced Physical Screenings*

**This year marked significant progress in our physical health initiative** through our partnership with **LifeScan**, which will conduct comprehensive **annual firefighter physicals**

tailored to the demands of the fire service—ensuring **early detection screenings** and **in-depth health evaluations** that empower our Health and Wellness Team to identify risk factors and implement

proactive interventions that enhance long-term musculoskeletal health and operational readiness. The department has also acquired a **DexaScan (DXA) machine** and is training staff to perform advanced body composition and bone mineral density analyses, enabling us to **detect osteoporosis and osteopenia** early and tailor nutrition and strength protocols accordingly. Additionally, we now utilize a **Force Plate system** to deliver detailed biomechanical analyses of balance, gait, and movement restrictions so our Health and Wellness Team can prescribe individualized prehabilitation strategies and corrective exercises to **reduce injury risk** and **extend career longevity**.



### *Peer Support Team Accreditations*

In August 2024, the VBFD's **Peer Support Team (PST)** earned official accreditation from the **Commonwealth of Virginia**—a milestone that reflects the department's unwavering



commitment to the mental health and emotional well-being of its firefighters and first responders.

This designation confirms that the PST meets the Commonwealth's rigorous standards and is fully equipped to provide **confidential, peer-led support**, along with effective mental health resources, guidance, and assistance. Designed to create a safe, supportive environment, the PST allows firefighters to connect with trusted colleagues trained in **mental health awareness, crisis intervention, and emotional support**. The team also monitors for signs of **trauma, stress, and burnout**, and when needed, facilitates referrals to **licensed counseling professionals**. In collaboration with local mental health organizations, the PST delivers a **comprehensive continuum of care**.

With this accreditation, the VBFD joins a select group of public safety agencies in Virginia recognized for **prioritizing the mental health of their personnel**—reinforcing the department's proactive, people-centered approach to supporting those who serve.

### *Public Safety Clinical Coordinator*

The Public Safety Clinical Coordinator (PSCC) is a newly established role across Virginia Beach's public safety departments, created to strengthen and expand mental health support for personnel. This position works in close collaboration with the Peer Support Team (PST) to ensure members have access to comprehensive behavioral health resources—while safeguarding individual privacy.

The PSCC plays a key role in:

- Providing specialized mental health support
- Identifying signs of trauma, stress, and burnout
- Facilitating timely referrals to professional counseling services

Filling this vital position is **Dr. Agnetti**, who brings over **20 years of behavioral health experience**, including distinguished service as a civilian with the U.S. Navy, specializing in preventive science and psychological wellness. She holds a **Doctor of Social Sciences from Wilmington University**, and her deep understanding of public safety and behavioral health makes her exceptionally well-suited to support the department's evolving needs.

### *Therapy Dog Program*

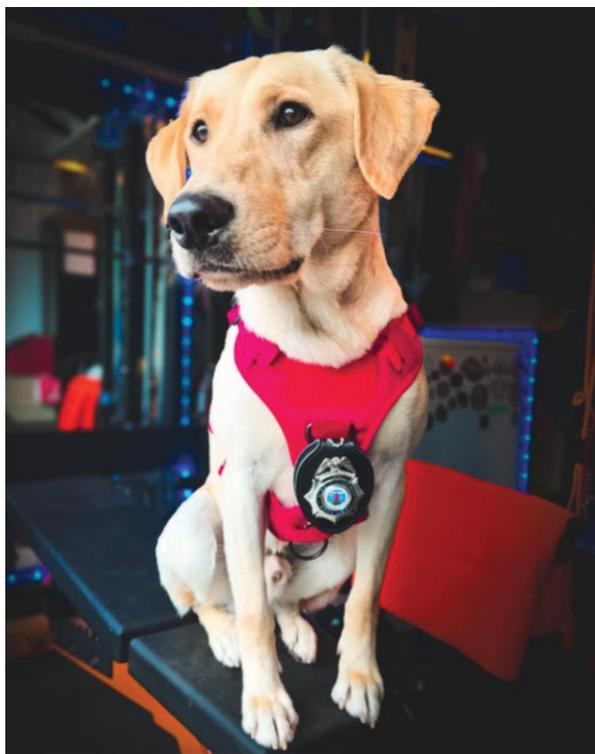
The VBFD proudly introduces **Ari and Ember**, the four-legged pioneers of its growing

**Therapy Dog Program**, dedicated to supporting the emotional well-being of firefighters and first responders.

**Ari**, a highly trained yellow Labrador donated by FrogDog K9, has already become a beloved presence throughout the department. Handled by **Master Firefighter Cayla Harper**, Ari is known for his remarkable ability to sense stress and provide calm simply through his presence—offering comfort during the most challenging moments of service.

Ari's impact has been so profound that the department is preparing to welcome a second therapy dog, **Ember**, a golden retriever currently in training. Handled by **Assistant Chief Lorna Trent**, Ember represents the next generation of wellness support, building on the success of the program's early foundation.

Together, **Ari and Ember embody the VBFD's deepening commitment to firefighter wellness**, helping to ease the invisible burdens of trauma and stress through the simple, healing power of connection.



### *Compliance Captain*

The **Compliance Captain** is a newly established position within the Research, Analysis, and Planning Bureau that plays a critical role in supporting the VBFD's accreditation and administrative functions, with a focus on aligning departmental priorities to the accreditation process.

Key responsibilities include:

- Assisting in the development and review of the **Community Risk Analysis/Standards of Cover, Self-Assessment Manual, and Annual Compliance Report**
- Participating in **Annual Program Appraisals** and maintaining **Peer Assessor Status**
- Reviewing and updating **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** to ensure alignment with best practices
- Supporting **Insurance Services Office (ISO)** reviews by gathering and compiling essential data
- Conducting **research and data analysis projects** that inform organizational strategy
- Overseeing the **Strategic Business Plan**, tracking progress toward goals and performance benchmarks
- Facilitating **department-wide connections, workflow automations, and process improvements**
- Serving as a conduit for personnel to submit ideas and engage with leadership—helping bridge the gap between field insight and strategic decision-making

This multifaceted position is vital to maintaining the VBFD's status as an **accredited, data-driven**, and forward-looking organization, continuously enhancing both effectiveness and efficiency in service to the community.

### *Delegated Authority Captain*

The **Delegated Authority (DA) Captain** is a newly established role within the Fire Training Bureau, created to advance the department's training capabilities and uphold rigorous accreditation standards. This position oversees the management of the department's **Delegated Authority**—enabling the VBFD to conduct self-testing and develop its own curriculum in accordance with established certification guidelines.

Working closely with internal training groups and external certifying agencies, the DA Captain plays a key role in:

- Developing and maintaining DA-compliant curriculum and testing processes
- Assisting with **ProBoard-aligned curriculum development**
- Instructing classes and verifying training records

- Maintaining Bureau **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**
- Participating on advisory committees that shape credentialing and training standards

Additionally, the DA Captain serves as a central point of coordination—facilitating collaboration across training stakeholders and ensuring continuous improvement in instructional delivery and content development.

This strategic position marks a significant evolution in the VBFD’s training infrastructure. By empowering internal curriculum design and certification capacity, the DA Captain helps shape the future of firefighter development—boosting effectiveness, adaptability, and excellence across the department.

### *Learning Management System Specialist*

The **LMS Specialist**, a civilian role within the Fire Training Bureau, is responsible for overseeing and advancing the department’s training operations through **Vector Solutions**.

This position ensures efficient and effective **learning management system administration**, including:

- Seamless course setup and delivery
- User access management and support
- Data tracking, performance monitoring, and reporting
- Troubleshooting and resolution of LMS-related issues

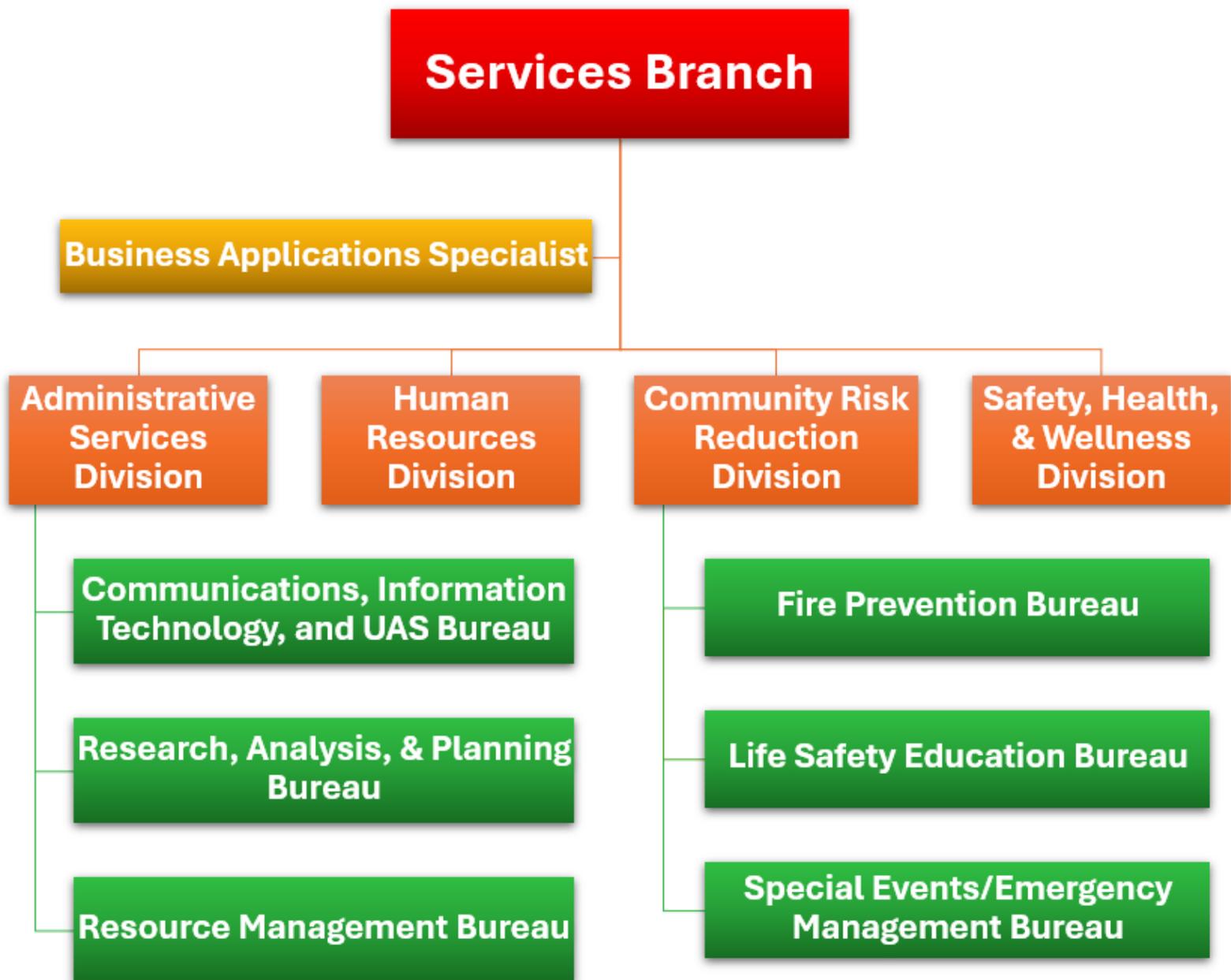
In close collaboration with department leadership, the LMS Specialist works to **optimize training programs**, support both instructor-led and online learning environments, and enhance the overall training experience for personnel.

Beyond internal responsibilities, the specialist also plays a key regional role—working alongside member agencies in the **Hampton Roads Training Officer Group** to share best practices and improve multi-agency training. They also collaborate with other **Vector administrators** to help build capacity and expand system use across neighboring departments.

This position is essential to streamlining training delivery, supporting professional development, and advancing interdepartmental coordination across the region.



# Services Branch



# Administrative Services Division

## Communications, Technology, and UAS Bureau

The VBFD's **Communications and Information Technology (CIT) Bureau** made **significant advancements in operational efficiency and emergency response capabilities** over the past year—reinforcing the department's commitment to **technological innovation**.

### *Technology Enhancements*

- Deployed **iPads to all frontline apparatus**, improving **patient care reporting**, access to emergency applications, and **Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD)** performance
- Installed **cellular routers on all ECG monitors** to ensure **rapid wireless transmission** of critical patient data to hospitals
- In partnership with the City's **Information Technology Department**, developed plans to upgrade:
  - **CAD terminals**
  - **Radio communications equipment**
  - **Station alerting systems**
- Future initiatives include expanding **satellite communication capabilities** to enhance deployment readiness during **emergency incidents** and **large-scale events**

### *System Integration and Mutual Aid*

- Delivered integration improvements through the **Response Committee**, the **CAD2CAD project**, and collaboration with **Orion** for mutual aid support and governance
- Strengthened emergency coordination through **data integration with ESRI**, in partnership with **CGIS, IT, and ECCS**

### *Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Program*

The **CIT Bureau** manages **Virginia Beach's largest and most active UAS program**, offering **critical aerial support** for fire and emergency operations.



## *FY25 Impact Highlights*

- **1,210 calls for service**, averaging **3.3 per day**
- **Hundreds of hours** of aerial footage produced for operations and outreach
- UAS support for all major city events, including:
  - **Recruit burns**
  - **Structural Collapse Technician (SCT) exercises**
  - **FEMA training** at the Fire Training Center
- Aerial coverage provided for memorials honoring members of **VBFD, Virginia Beach Police Department (VBPD), and Portsmouth Fire Department**
- **24/7 aerial coverage** achieved through **shift-assigned pilots** supporting both emergency and planned events

## *Looking Ahead*

As the VBFD continues to lead with **cutting-edge technology**, the **CIT & UAS Bureau** remains dedicated to:

- Advancing **emergency response capabilities**
- Improving **interagency coordination**
- Strengthening **public safety operations** citywide

Through innovation and strategic planning, the VBFD continues to set the standard for **technology-driven emergency management**.

## **Research, Analysis, and Planning Bureau**

The **Research, Analysis, and Planning (RAP) Bureau** supports the VBFD's evolving needs in **data analysis, strategic planning, and research**, with a mission to foster and facilitate informed decision-making through critical analysis.

The Bureau is composed of a **Battalion Chief**, a **civilian Research and Analysis Manager**, a **Compliance Captain**, and a **civilian Administrative Specialist**. To meet growing demands, the department plans to add **two civilian analyst positions** in the future. In the meantime, the Bureau leverages partnerships with **Virginia Beach's Center for Geospatial**

**Information Services (CGIS), the Information Technology Public Safety Group, and interns to support analytical efforts.**

Key functions of the RAP Bureau include:

- Leading the department's **Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)** process
- Ensuring compliance with local, state, and national reporting mandates
- Overseeing the **design, quality control, coordination, and interpretation of data** that supports the VBFD's mission and operations
- Collaborating with internal divisions and external partners to align goals, **inform strategic budgeting, and measure performance**

The Bureau is also responsible for producing foundational departmental documents, including the:

- **Strategic Business Plan**
- **Self-Assessment Manual**
- **Community Risk Analysis**
- **Standards of Cover**

To fulfill its mission, the RAP Bureau equips the department with advanced **business intelligence, analytics tools, and GIS technology**. It validates operational needs and budget plans by extracting data from multiple records management systems. The **performance measures** developed by the Bureau provide meaningful evaluations of program effectiveness and help communicate organizational impact to the community, city leaders, and partner agencies.

### *Dr. Evgenly Ivanov Publication*

In September 2024, **Dr. Evgeniy Ivanov**, Research and Analysis Manager for the VBFD, published a peer-reviewed article in *Fire Technology*—a leading research journal co-published by the **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)** and the **Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE)**.

Titled "**Modeling Fire Company Staffing to Investigate its Effect on Effective Response Force Times to Structure Fires Using Local Incident Data**," the article explores how fire company staffing levels influence **Effective Response Force (ERF)** times during structure fire incidents, using real-world data from VBFD operations.



Key findings from the study include:

- **Improved response times** with increased crew sizes, especially for **moderate, high-risk, and special risk incidents**
- The importance of **incident data quality** for performance measurement and planning
- Actionable recommendations for **upstaffing strategies** to improve service delivery and operational effectiveness

The article was published in the **March 2025 issue** of Fire Technology (Volume 61, Issue 2) and is available online via the QR code provided:



## *Reaccreditation Process*

The VBFD is a proud **accredited agency** through the **Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)**—a globally recognized organization that sets the standard for fire and emergency service excellence.

CFAI's accreditation process includes rigorous **self-assessment** and an **external peer review**, designed to evaluate and continuously improve performance and service delivery. The VBFD was first accredited in **2001** and has successfully maintained its status with reaccreditation every five years—most recently in **2021**.

Achieving reaccreditation affirms that the VBFD meets or exceeds a comprehensive set of standards across key operational areas:

- **Community Risk Reduction**
- **Standards of Cover**
- **Training & Professional Development**
- **Resource & Financial Management**
- **Performance Measurement**
- **Health & Safety**

This distinction represents more than compliance—it is a **mark of excellence** that reflects the VBFD’s dedication to **continuous improvement, organizational accountability**, and the consistent delivery of **high-quality fire and emergency services** to the Virginia Beach community.

Looking ahead, the department is actively preparing for its next accreditation milestone, with a **CFAI peer review site visit planned for early 2026**.

### *NERIS Beta Testing*

The VBFD was selected to participate in the national beta testing of the **National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS)**—a groundbreaking platform set to replace the **National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)**.



Developed by the **U.S. Fire Administration (USFA)** in partnership with the **DHS Science and Technology Directorate** and the **Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI)**, NERIS is designed to modernize incident data collection, improve real-time analytics, and enhance operational decision-making for emergency responders nationwide.

The VBFD was chosen as one of only **50 departments** across the country to join the beta testing program in late 2024. The department’s **RAP Bureau** coordinated a comprehensive feedback effort, strategically involving:

- **High-run units**
- **Specialty response teams**
- **Rural stations**
- **Mutual aid partners**

This inclusive approach ensures that NERIS is evaluated under a wide range of operational conditions.

Looking ahead, the VBFD is preparing for a **full transition from NFIRS to NERIS in January 2026**, reinforcing its role as a forward-thinking, data-driven leader in emergency response and public safety innovation.

## Resource Management Bureau

The VBFD's **Resource Management (RM) Bureau** made significant strides in Fiscal Year 2025, reinforcing its role as a cornerstone of operational readiness and strategic support.

### *Personnel and Leadership Enhancements*

- Successfully **upgraded the Storekeeper 2 position to Storekeeper 3**, filled by a **highly qualified candidate**
- Onboarded a **new Facilities Manager** to ensure **continuity in infrastructure oversight**
- Secured approval for a **permanent Master Firefighter position**, reflecting a **proactive approach to staffing**

### *Major Equipment and Infrastructure Investments*

- Invested nearly **\$435,000** to **replace all 1¾", 2½", and high-rise hose** on frontline trucks—**enhancing safety and performance**
- Completed a **department-wide upgrade of Thermal Imaging Cameras**, acquiring **52 Bullard NXTs** for **advanced search and rescue support**
- Additional accomplishments included **outfitting Fire Boat 2**, **installing a new security system** at the RM facility, and completing the **FY25 annual inventory**

### *Operational Improvements and Innovation*

- Developed **equipment caches for ladder-to-engine transitions**
- Maintained a **full backstock of ground ladders**
- Replaced **130 SCBA bottles** due to wear and resolved a national recall issue involving SCBA second-stage regulator hoses
- Implemented SOLO Rescue gear washers and acquired **FLAME soap**, promoting **firefighter health and decontamination**

## *Strategic Planning and Future Readiness*

- Began implementation of a **new asset management system**
- Developed **FY26 SCBA trial specifications**
- Continued **full replacement of attack lines** to meet **NFPA standards**
- Supported citywide initiatives, including **DF44 process improvement** and collaboration with **VBEMS on DEA-compliant protocols**

## *Alignment with Department Goals*

The Bureau's work advanced multiple objectives within the **VBFD Strategic Business Plan**, including:

- Enhancing **operational readiness and safety**
- Promoting **fiscal responsibility** and **technological integration**
- Contributing to **SWaM vendor utilization** improvements—**14%**, exceeding the city's **10% goal**
- Expanding **national contract use**
- Ensuring **virtual access to RM-sponsored meetings** to minimize operational disruption

FY25 was marked by thoughtful investment, strategic growth, and a clear commitment to supporting the department's mission through innovation, accountability, and collaboration.



# Human Resources Division

The VBFD's **Human Resources (HR) Division** is committed to serving both internal personnel and the broader community through a **threefold mission**:

- 1. Providing Quality Service:** Delivering **exceptional support** to internal members and external stakeholders, helping ensure **smooth, efficient operations** across the department.
- 2. Recruitment and Workforce Diversity:** Implementing effective hiring practices to build a **highly qualified and community-reflective workforce**.
- 3. Promoting an Inclusive Workplace:** Fostering a **collaborative, inclusive environment** with open communication and positive employee relations at every level of the organization.

The division is overseen by the **Deputy Chief of Services** and supported by a dedicated team of professionals:

- **Human Resources Manager**
- **Recruiter**
- **Payroll Clerk**
- **Personnel/Operations Administrative Technician**

Together, they work closely with the **City's Human Resources Department** and **Fire Department leadership** to coordinate, streamline, and enhance all HR-related functions for a workforce of over **550 personnel**.

## Core Responsibilities Include:

- **Recruitment and hiring**
- **Promotions and career progression**
- **Performance appraisals**
- **Staffing and compensation**
- **Employee relations**
- **Learning and development**

The HR Division also ensures compliance with **local, state, and federal regulations**, regularly reviewing and improving HR programs and policies to align with all legal requirements.

## FY25 Accomplishments

- **Application Review:** Evaluated over **1,100 applications** to identify and advance the most qualified candidates.
- **Open House Events:** Hosted **two recruitment-focused Open Houses**, drawing approximately **200 prospective Firefighter Recruits** and increasing awareness about careers with the VBFD.
- **Job Analysis:** Partnered with **NTN and IO Solutions** to complete comprehensive **job analyses**, ensuring hiring and promotional practices align with position requirements.
- **Process Streamlining:** Advanced internal documentation and workflow refinement to support a **smooth transition** into the City's new **Human Resource Information System (HRIS)**, expected in **mid FY26**.



# Community Risk Reduction Division

## Fire Prevention Bureau

The VBFD's **Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB)** plays a critical role in safeguarding the community through proactive inspection, investigation, and education efforts. The Bureau supports fire code compliance, conducts origin and cause investigations, and advocates for improvements in fire and life safety policies. FPB personnel work collaboratively with residents, businesses, and partner agencies to reduce risk, strengthen preparedness, and enhance public safety across the city.

During Fiscal Year 2025, the FPB achieved several key milestones across its Inspections and Investigations programs, reflecting progress in workforce stability, operational modernization, and strategic alignment.

### *Inspection Activity*

- 5,216 annual fire inspections
- 3,987 re-inspections
- 532 attempted inspections and 44 attempted re-inspections
- 138 inspection requests and 237 complaints addressed
- 230 food truck inspections and 286 firewatch inspections
- 89 red tag removals
- 3 life safety inspections
- 5,767 invoices issued

### *Investigations & Risk Reduction*

- 148 fire scene investigations, including 36 arson cases (6 arrests), 7 bomb threats (3 arrests), and 13 Youth Fire Setter Program referrals
- The Investigations Program processed a total of 76 cases, with 38 arson incidents (8 arrests) and 14 youth referrals contributing to broader prevention strategies

## *Program Development & Policy Engagement*

- Successfully completed the 2024 Knox Box inventory, implementing a new serialized key system to enhance accountability and response efficiency
- Fire inspectors played a proactive role in shaping statewide code development and earned representation on the Short-Term Rental Committee to address evolving fire safety concerns tied to residential event properties

## *Technology Enhancements*

- The Salesforce platform was effectively used for pre-inspection communications with business owners.
- Field operations utilized mobile iPads for increased connectivity and productivity.
- Communication and documentation tools such as Microsoft Teams and Vector Solutions saw broader adoption, improving coordination and training engagement.

## *Virginia Fire Marshal Academy*

**Master Firefighter (MFF) Christopher Baker** graduated from the **Virginia Fire Marshal Academy's 45th Session Basic Law Enforcement School** in May.

MFF Baker successfully completed a demanding **14-week, 560-hour program** that prepared fire service professionals for law enforcement responsibilities. His training encompassed:

- Criminal and constitutional law
- Interview and interrogation techniques
- Conflict resolution and defensive tactics
- Active shooter response strategies
- Basic and tactical firearms training
- Field exercises and practical assessments
- Written evaluations and a rigorous final examination



This milestone reflected the crucial role Fire Marshals played in advancing the department's **Community Risk Reduction mission**. These sworn professionals:

- Educate the public on fire hazards and prevention.
- Enforce the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code and Uniform Statewide Building Code.
- Carry out fire investigations and performed law enforcement duties.



## Life Safety Education Bureau

The **Life Safety Education team** plays a vital role in advancing the VBFD's mission to protect and serve. As part of the **Community Risk Reduction Division**, the team works proactively to reduce preventable injuries, fatalities, and property loss through impactful fire and life safety education.

## Core Programs

Throughout the year, the team delivers a wide range of educational offerings tailored to residents of all ages, including:

- **Car Seat Safety**
- **Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention**
- **Operation Smoke Alarm**
- **Older Adult Fire and Fall Prevention (Steps to Safety)**

They place special emphasis on outreach to **vulnerable populations**—including preschoolers, older adults, and individuals with differing abilities—ensuring access to critical safety information through community events, presentations, and local resource fairs.

## Nationally Recognized: Safety Squad

A standout initiative is the award-winning **Safety Squad program**, which engages over **30,000 students annually (Grades K–5)** with interactive lessons on:

- Fire and injury prevention
- 911 education
- Crime prevention
- Emergency preparedness

Developed in partnership with **Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Emergency Communications & Citizen Services, the Office of Emergency Management, and the Virginia Beach Police Department**, Safety Squad has been showcased at professional conferences across the U.S., including in **Virginia, North Carolina, Colorado, Nevada, Florida, Tennessee, and Washington.**



## *Professional Excellence*

The Life Safety Education team is comprised of **four highly trained Public Safety Training Specialists** who meet—and exceed—the standards outlined in **NFPA 1035** for public fire and life safety educators. Each member is:

- A certified **Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST)**
- A qualified **Youth Fire Intervention Specialist**

Together, they deliver car seat checks, educational interventions, and life-saving safety education citywide.

## *FY2025 Community Impact*

- **30,000+ students** reached through Safety Squad
- **425+ car seat checks and installations** completed by CPSTs
- **25+ at-risk youth** supported through Youth Fire Education
- **19 Steps to Safety** presentations for older adult communities
- **61** preschool programs delivered
- **250+ community events** (resource fairs, camps, and more)
- **197 smoke alarms** installed through Operation Smoke Alarm
- **100+ bedside fire alarm clocks** provided to individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
- **671,500+ social media reach** on safety and prevention content

## *Building the Future of Risk Reduction*

In addition to public outreach, several team members serve as instructors in:

- **Life Safety Education**
- **CPST Certification Courses**
- **Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention**



Their expertise contributes to shaping the next generation of life safety professionals across **local, state, and national platforms.**

To learn more or request an educational presentation, scan the QR code to visit the **VBFD Fire & Life Safety Education website:**



## *Meyera E. Oberndorf Award for Exemplary Services to Senior Citizens*

The VBFD's **Life Safety Education Team**, was honored in **May 2025** with the prestigious **Meyera E. Oberndorf Award for Exemplary Services to Senior Citizens**, presented by the **Virginia Beach Mayor's Commission on Aging**.

This dedicated team has been a driving force behind the city's **all-hazards community risk reduction efforts**, with a strong focus on **protecting Virginia Beach's most vulnerable residents—particularly older adults**. Their impact extends beyond education: members of the team **served on the Mayor's Commission on Aging**, ensuring that the voices and needs of older residents were reflected in citywide initiatives.

The team also played a prominent role in the **annual Senior Showcase**, directly engaging with older adults, sharing life-saving safety information, and connecting attendees with essential community resources. Their work exemplifies the power of **proactive, compassionate public service**.

**Congratulations to the entire Life Safety Education Team on this well-earned recognition!**



## Special Events/Emergency Management Bureau

The **Special Events & Emergency Management Bureau** plays a vital role in ensuring the **safety, preparedness, and coordinated response** to public events throughout Virginia Beach. Through strong interagency partnerships, advanced technologies, and a commitment to operational excellence, the Bureau creates a **safe, well-managed environment** for both residents and visitors.

### *Planning and Coordination*

The Bureau invests significant time in **strategic planning, coordination, and logistical preparation**, ensuring that appropriate **fire and life safety measures** are in place for every event. The **Public Safety Special Events Task Force** convenes weekly to prepare for upcoming events and holidays. Additional planning sessions with event promoters address:

- Site mapping
- Occupancy limits
- Emergency egress plans
- Safety inspections and compliance considerations

This collaborative approach includes representatives from the **Police Department, Sheriff's Office, Emergency Communications and Citizen Services (ECCS), Public Works**, and the Resort Management Office—reflecting a **citywide commitment to public safety**.

### *Operational Efficiency*

One example of the Bureau's proactive approach is the implementation of an **operational "box" system** for large-scale Oceanfront events. In partnership with ECCS, the Fire Department pre-defines geographic boundaries in the **CAD system**, enabling:

- Automatic call dispatching within the event footprint
- Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) access for real-time alerts and status updates
- Enhanced location tracking and resource coordination

This innovation improves **response times**, reduces **radio traffic**, enhances **crew accountability**, and helps maintain **citywide emergency service levels** during large-scale activations.



## *Event Support and Innovation*

The Bureau provides operational support for a diverse portfolio of special events, including:

- **Last Night on the Town**
- **Shamrock Races**
- **NAS Oceana Airshow**
- **Jackalope and Reggae Fest**
- **USO Celebrations**
- **East Coast Surfing Championship (ECSC)**
- **Surf-n-Santa, Holiday Parade, and Monsters on the Beach**

To enhance adaptability and coordination, the Bureau integrates **GIS-based dashboards**, **mobile communications platforms**, and **real-time deployment tools**—advancing **data-informed decision-making** and multi-agency collaboration.

## *Comprehensive Public Safety*

In addition to planned events, the Bureau coordinates **emergency responses** for severe weather, public safety threats, and large-scale incidents. After-action reviews identify opportunities for growth, update response protocols, and drive **continuous improvement**.

Staff members maintain **incident command and emergency management certifications**, participating in regional exercises and professional development to uphold national best practices.

## *Looking Ahead*

As Virginia Beach continues to grow and host more complex events, the **Special Events & Emergency Management Bureau** remains steadfast in its mission to:

- Enhance preparedness
- Improve operational efficiency
- Strengthen community resilience

Through innovation, professionalism, and interagency collaboration, the Bureau helps ensure that all city events are **safe, coordinated, and memorable experiences** for the community.

# Safety, Health, and Wellness Division

The Safety, Health, and Wellness Division is dedicated to enhancing the safety, health, and overall well-being of our personnel. By eliminating unsafe conditions, reducing injuries and illnesses, and preventing property damage, we foster a culture where safety and wellness are woven into daily operations and long-term career sustainability.

## Special Events/Emergency Management Bureau

The Division comprises a multidisciplinary team focused on every aspect of firefighter health and safety:

- **Battalion Chief & Shift Safety Captains** Oversee personnel safety, ensure compliance with industry standards, manage injury/property damage reporting, and conduct thorough investigations.
- **Health and Safety Coordinator & Public Safety Wellness Coordinator** Provide comprehensive fitness support—physical assessments, conditioning sessions, group training, nutrition education, sleep optimization, and research initiatives.
- **Public Safety Clinical Coordinator (PSCC)** Leads mental and behavioral health efforts, coordinating internal and external support services for department members.

Together, this team drives a proactive, data-driven approach to health, safety, and resilience.

## Behavioral Health

The PSCC role enhances our mental health framework, coordinating with the Peer Support Team (PST) to deliver confidential, trauma-informed care. Led by Dr. Diana Agnetti, LPC, a licensed clinician with more than 20 years of experience—including service with the U.S. Navy—our program integrates:

- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
- Resilience education and wellness trainings
- Embedded and external clinical referrals
- Peer-led support backed by Commonwealth of Virginia accreditation



Together, the PSCC and PST offer a full continuum of care tailored to the fire service's unique needs.

## *Health and Wellness*

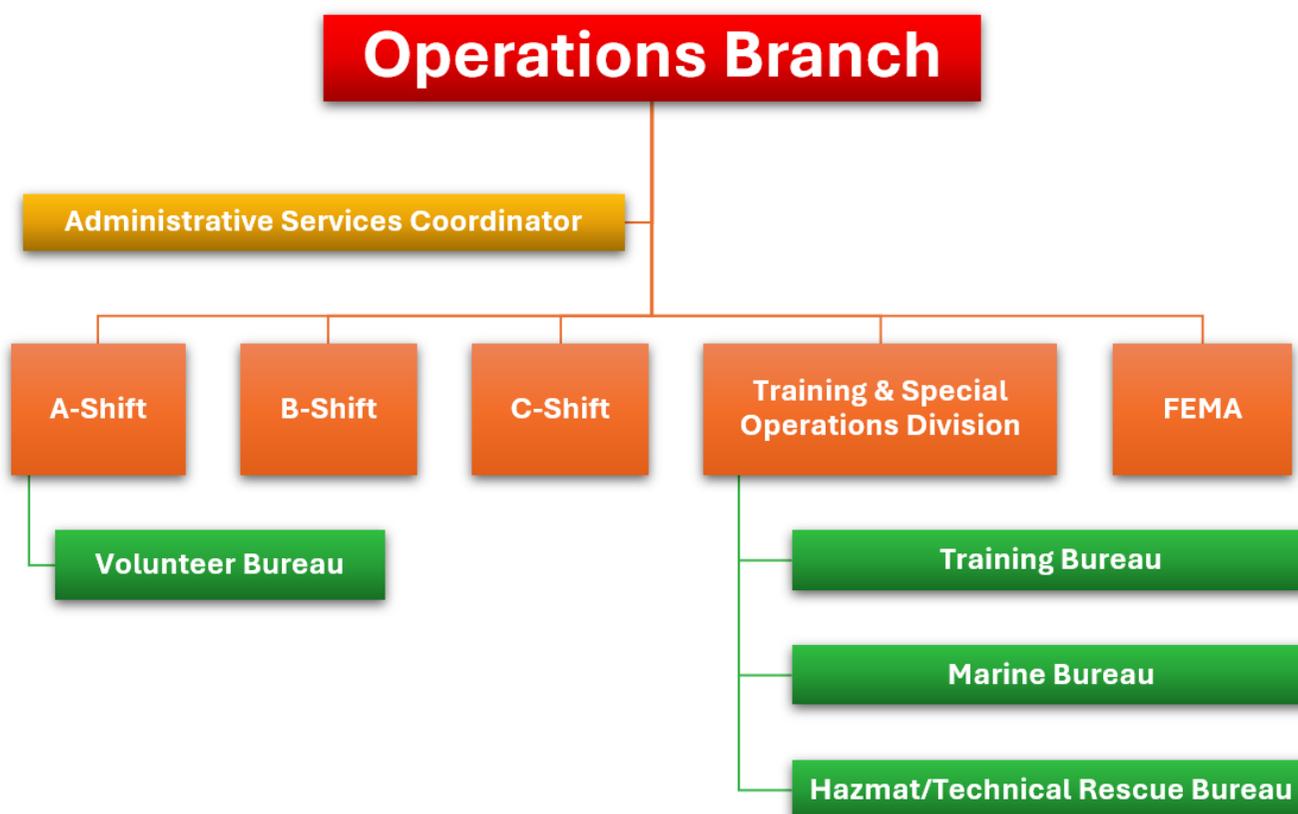
In partnership with **LifeScan**, we now provide annual firefighter physicals designed for the rigors of public safety. In addition, two new technologies bolster our preventative approach:

- **DexaScan (DXA)**: Measures body composition and bone density to inform targeted nutrition and strength protocols.
- **Force Plate System**: Analyzes gait and balance to guide individualized corrective exercises and injury prevention.

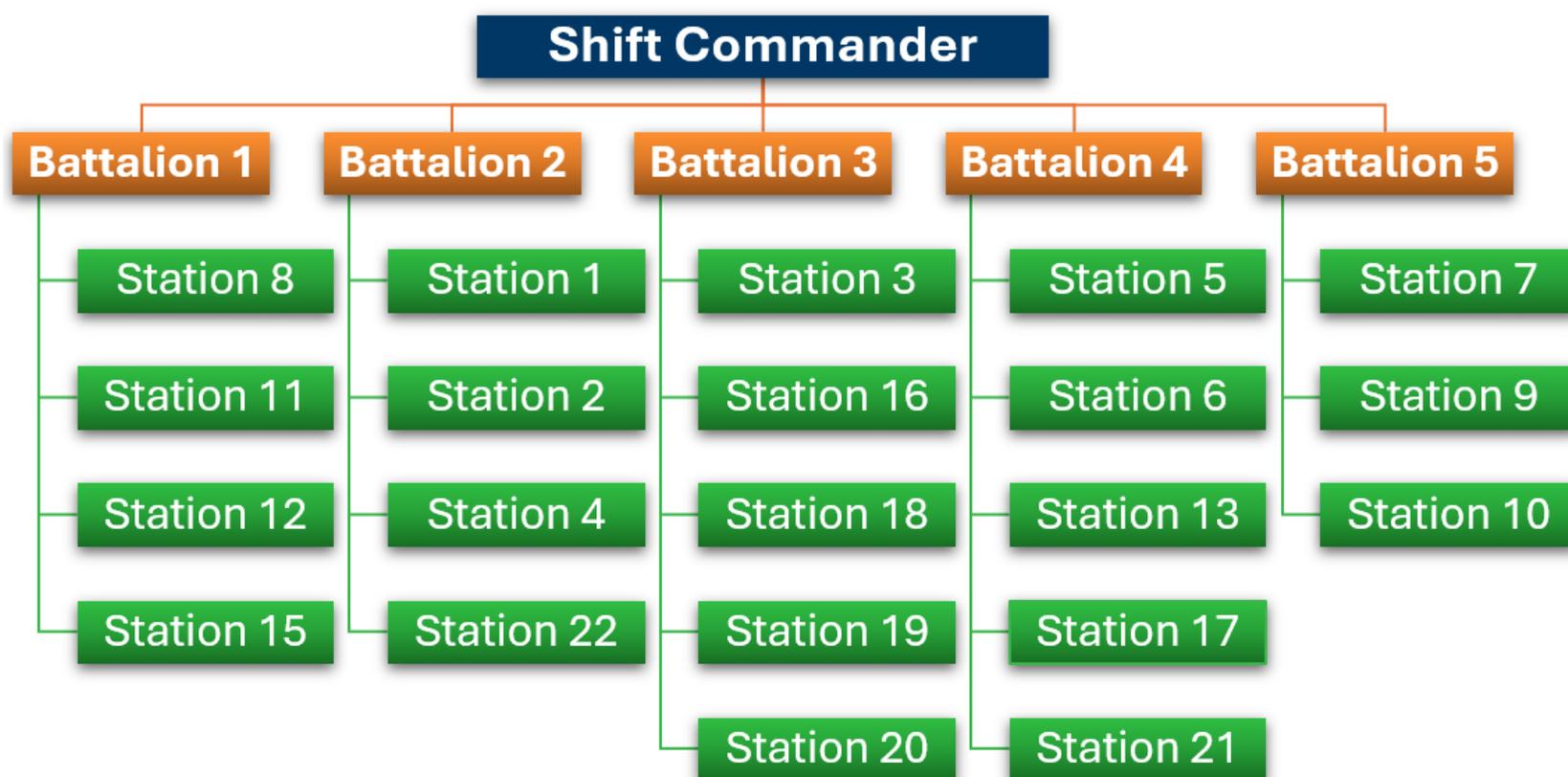
These tools empower our Health and Wellness Team to deliver data-driven interventions that enhance musculoskeletal health, improve mobility, and extend career longevity.

The **Safety, Health, and Wellness Division** continually evolves to meet the needs of our personnel. Through **innovative physical health initiatives, robust behavioral health support, and expert leadership**, we are building a resilient, thriving workforce—today and into the future.

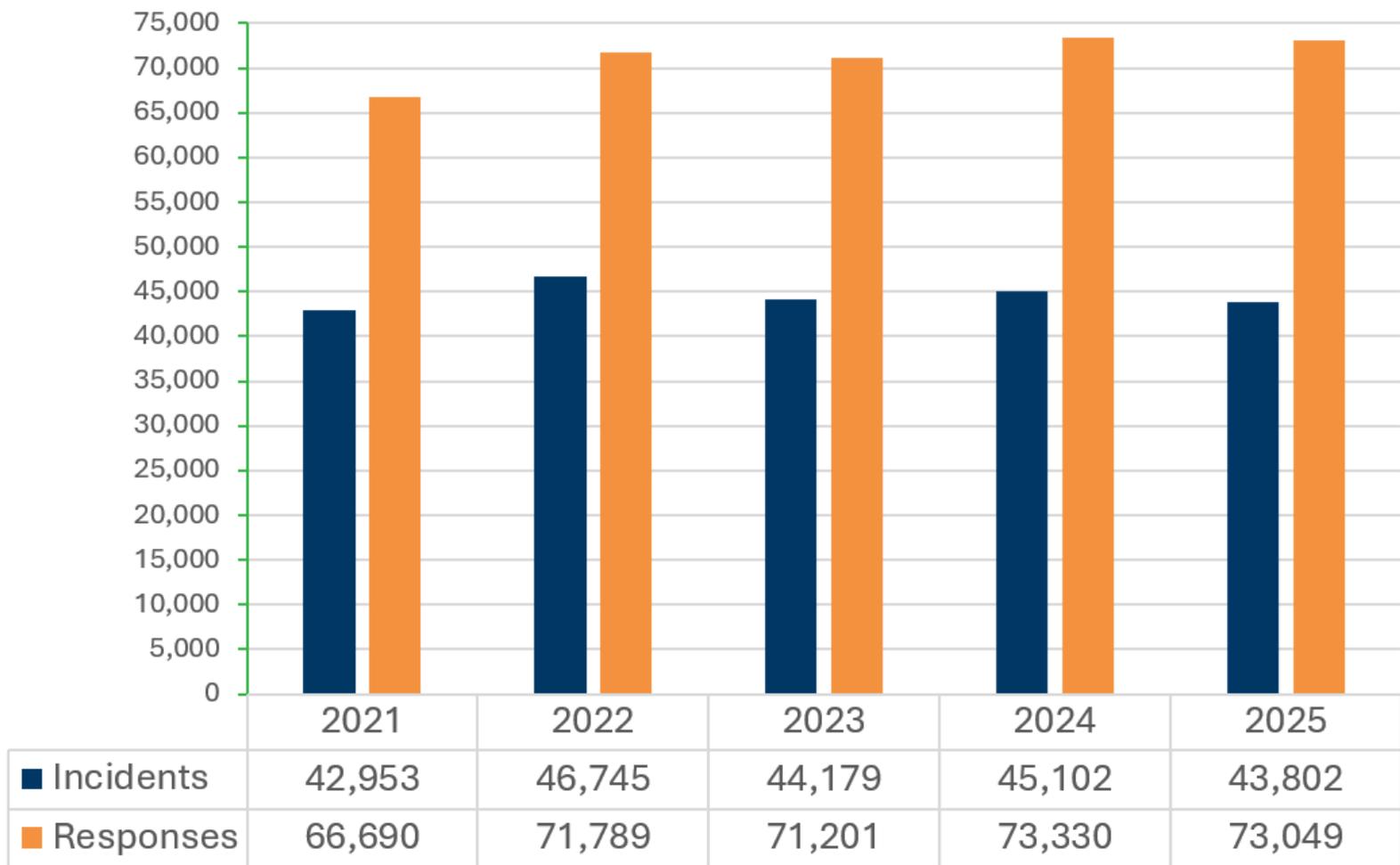
# Operations Branch



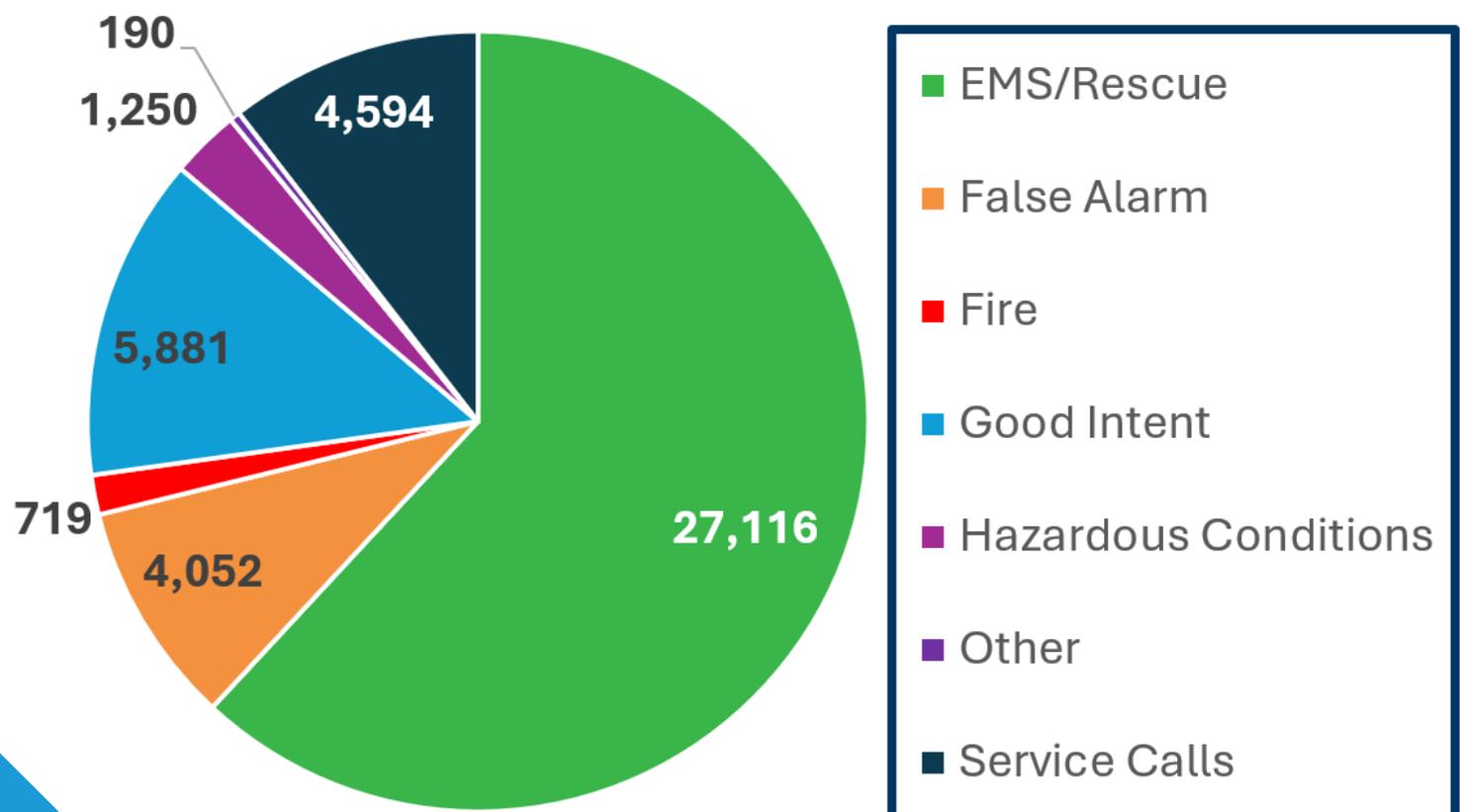
The VBFD operates **three shifts** (A, B, and C), each led by an Assistant Chief who serves as the **Shift Commander**. They are responsible for **five battalions**, each with a Battalion Chief charged with oversight of the stations and personnel within their areas.



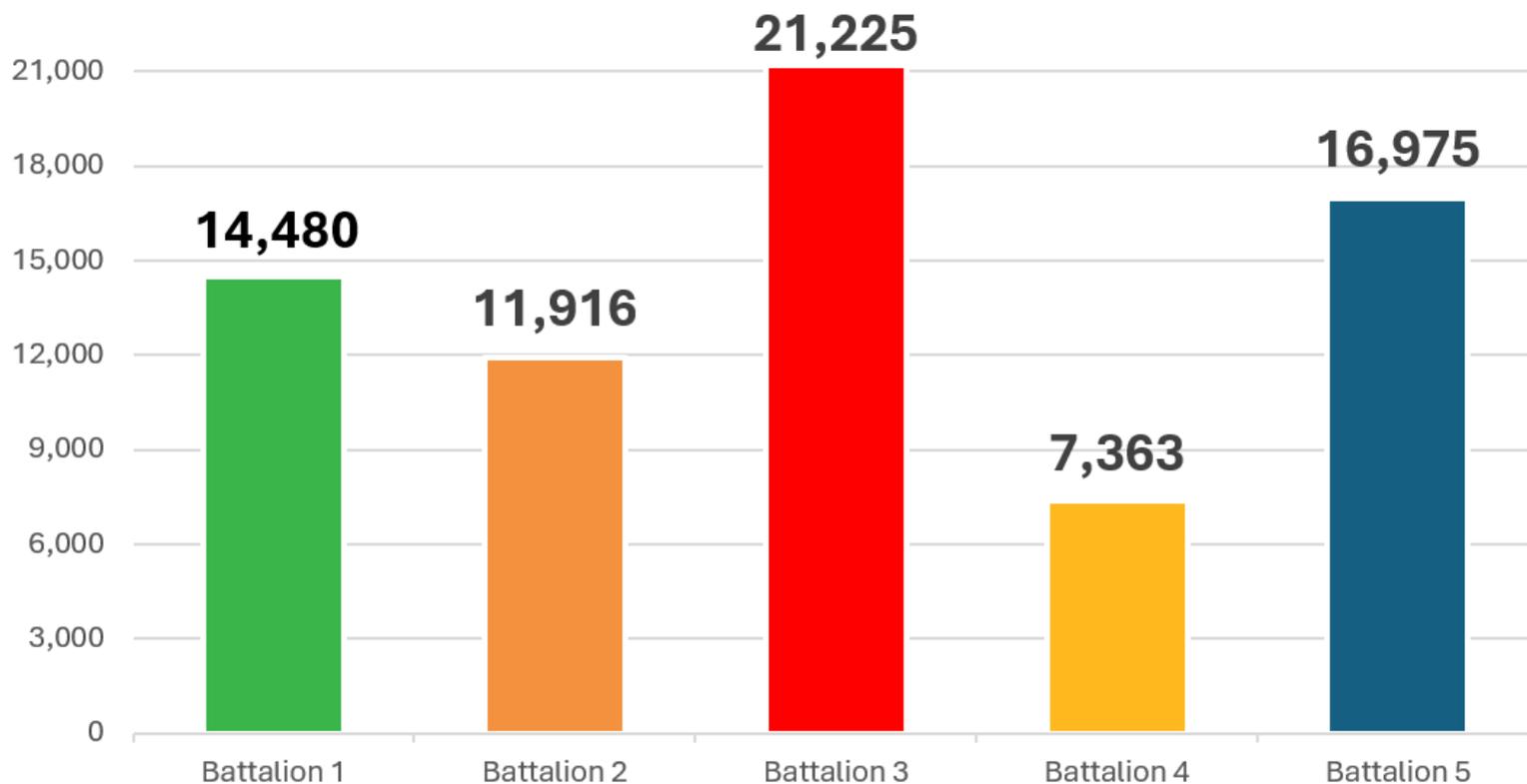
## Total Incidents and Responses by Fiscal Year



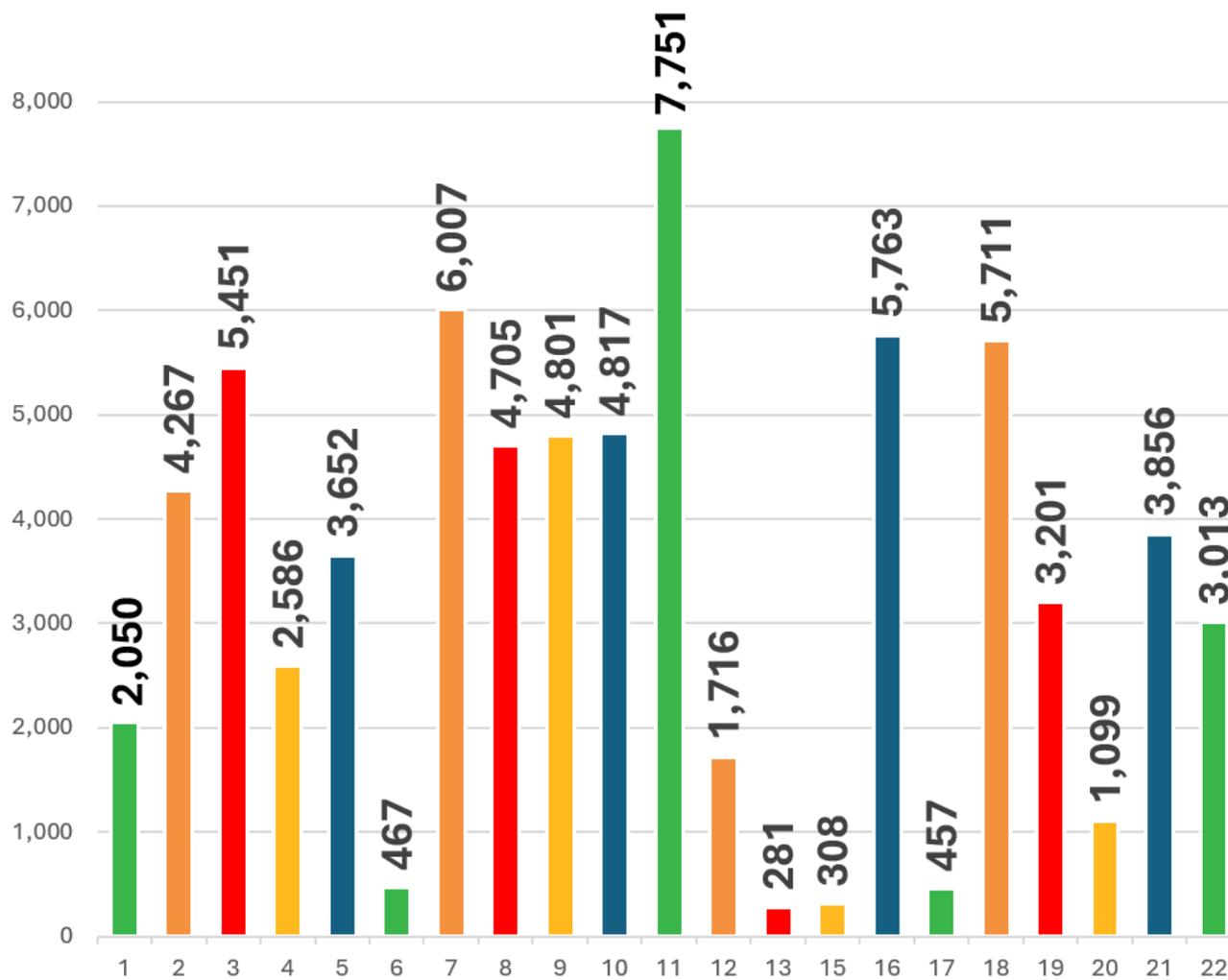
## Calls for Service by Incident Type (Fiscal Year 2025)



## Responses by Battalion Area (Fiscal Year 2025)



## Responses by Station (Fiscal Year 2025)



## Responses by Unit (Fiscal Year 2025 – Ranked, Highest to Lowest Response Volume)

Rank	Unit	Response Volume
1	Engine 18	4209
2	Engine 07	3799
3	Engine 16	3521
4	Engine 19	3201
5	Engine 10	3100
6	Engine 9	3055
7	Engine 8	3035
8	Engine 2	2842
9	Engine 14	2596
10	Engine 11	2518
11	Ladder 16	2242
12	Engine 22	2036
13	Engine 5	1969
14	Ladder 7	1942
15	Engine 3	1807
16	Engine 21	1757
17	Battalion 5	1746
18	Ladder 10	1717
19	Engine 4	1682
20	Engine 12	1645
21	Ladder 8	1586
22	Battalion 3	1502
23	Ladder 2	1425
24	Fire Rescue 2	1350
25	Ladder 11	1338
26	Ladder 21	1329

Rank	Unit	Response Volume
27	Engine 1	1320
28	Battalion 1	1299
29	Fire Drone 1	1246
30	Fire Rescue 1	1201
31	Safety 1	1179
32	Engine 20	1099
33	Ladder 22	977
34	Battalion 2	904
35	Battalion 4	770
36	Ladder 1	627
37	Engine 17	457
38	Engine 6	389
39	Tanker 5	333
40	Engine 15	308
41	Car 10	263
42	Engine 13	216
43	Fire Boat 1	96
44	Support 8	84
45	Fire Boat 12	71
46	Tanker 13	65
47	Tanker 6	62
48	Hazmat 1	18
49	Fire Boat 6	16
50	Fire Boat 2	7
51	Tech 1	3

## Responses by Unit (Fiscal Year 2025 – Alphabetical)

Unit	Response Volume
Battalion 1	1299
Battalion 2	904
Battalion 3	1502
Battalion 4	770
Battalion 5	1746
Car 10	263
Engine 1	1320
Engine 2	2842
Engine 3	1807
Engine 4	1682
Engine 5	1969
Engine 6	389
Engine 7	3799
Engine 8	3035
Engine 9	3055
Engine 10	3100
Engine 11	2518
Engine 12	1645
Engine 13	216
Engine 14	2596
Engine 15	308
Engine 16	3521
Engine 17	457
Engine 18	4209
Engine 19	3201
Engine 20	1099

Unit	Response Volume
Engine 21	1757
Engine 22	2036
Fire Boat 1	96
Fire Boat 2	7
Fire Boat 6	16
Fire Boat 12	71
Fire Drone 1	1246
Fire Rescue 1	1201
Fire Rescue 2	1350
Hazmat 1	18
Ladder 1	627
Ladder 2	1425
Ladder 7	1942
Ladder 8	1586
Ladder 10	1717
Ladder 11	1338
Ladder 16	2242
Ladder 21	1329
Ladder 22	977
Safety 1	1179
Support 8	84
Tanker 5	333
Tanker 6	62
Tanker 13	65
Tech 1	3



# Fire Stations

## Station 1 – First Landing

2837 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Population served: 13,400

Total Square Miles Covered: 6.7

Square Land Miles: 4

Square Water and Marsh Miles: 2.7

Minimum staffing: 2 Captains, 5 Firefighters

### Unit Responses:

Engine 1: 1,320

Ladder 1: 627

Fire Boat 1: 96

Fire Boat 2: 7



## Station 2 – Davis Corner

4672 Haygood Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23455

**Population served:** 30,200

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 7.7

**Square Land Miles:** 6.6

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 1.1

**Minimum staffing:** 6 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

Engine 2: 2,842

Ladder 2: 1,425



## Station 3 – London Bridge

600 Central Drive, Virginia Beach, VA  
23454

**Population served:** 10,300

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 6.4

**Square Land Miles:** 5.9

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 0.5

**Minimum staffing:** 9 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 3:** 1,807

**Fire Rescue 1:** 1,201

**Hazmat 1:** 18

**Safety 1:** 1,179

**Fire Drone 1:** 1,246



## Station 4 – Chesapeake Beach

2211 Greenwell Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23455

**Population served:** 18,000

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 5.8

**Square Land Miles:** 4.5

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 1.2

**Minimum staffing:** 5 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 4:** 1,682

**Battalion 2:** 904



## Station 5 – Courthouse

2461 Princess Anne Road, Virginia Beach,  
VA 23456

**Population served:** 16,000

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 17.2

**Square Land Miles:** 13.7

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 3.5

**Minimum staffing:** 5 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

Engine 5: 1,969

Tanker 5: 333



## Station 6 – Creeds

595 Princess Anne Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23457

**Population served:** 3,200

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 83.3

**Square Land Miles:** 29.7

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 53.6

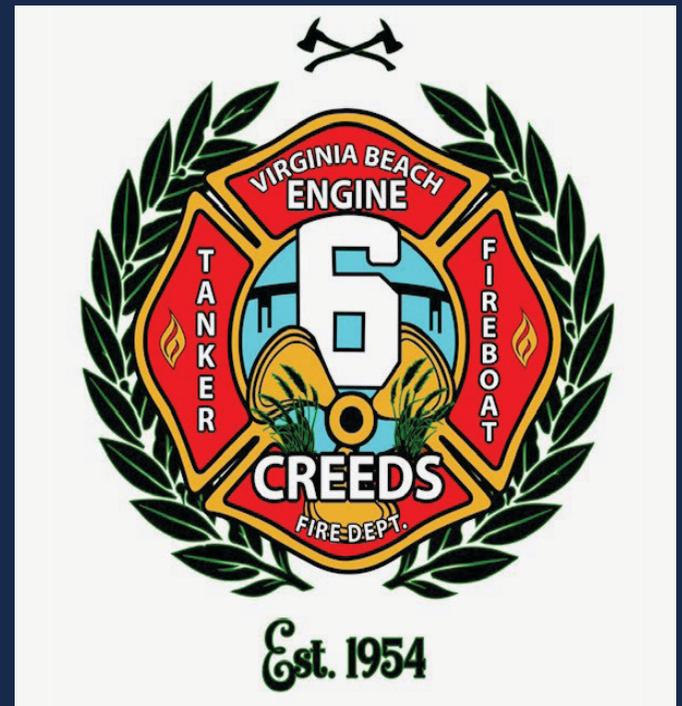
**Minimum staffing:** 5 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 6:** 389

**Tanker 6:** 62

**Fire Boat 6:** 16



## Station 7 – Town Center

4817 Columbus Street, Virginia Beach,  
VA 23462

**Population served:** 29,900

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 5.9

**Square Land Miles:** 5.5

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 0.4

**Minimum staffing:** 12 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 7:** 3,799

**Ladder 7:** 1,942

**Fire Rescue 2:** 1,350

**Tech 1:** 3

**Car 10:** 263



## Station 8 – Oceana

1201 Bayne Drive, Virginia Beach, VA  
23454

**Population served:** 28,100

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 9.9

**Square Land Miles:** 7.8

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 2

**Minimum staffing:** 6 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 8:** 3,035

**Ladder 8:** 1,586

**Support 8:** 84



## Station 9 – Kempsville

5145 Ruritan Court, Virginia Beach, VA  
23462

**Population served:** 24,800

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 5.6

**Square Land Miles:** 5.3

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 0.3

Minimum staffing: 6 Personnel

### Unit Responses:

**Engine 9:** 3,055

**Battalion 5:** 1,746



## Station 10 – Woodstock

5656 Providence Road, Virginia Beach,  
VA 23464

**Population served:** 34,200

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 8.8

**Square Land Miles:** 7.9

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 0.9

**Minimum staffing:** 6 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 10:** 3,100

**Ladder 10:** 1,717



## Station 11 – Beach Borough

800 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

**Population served:** 27,800

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 7.5

**Square Land Miles:** 6.1

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 1.3

**Minimum staffing:** 11 Personnel

### Unit Responses:

**Engine 11:** 2,518

**Engine 14:** 2,596

**Ladder 11:** 1,338

**Battalion 1:** 1,299



## Station 12 – Seatack

949 S. Birdneck Road, Virginia Beach, VA  
23451

**Population served:** 16,300

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 9.4

**Square Land Miles:** 8.4

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 0.9

**Minimum staffing:** 4 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 12:** 1,645

**Fire Boat 12:** 71



## Station 13 – Blackwater

6009 Blackwater Road, Virginia Beach, VA  
23457

**Population served:** 1,700

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 34.1

**Square Land Miles:** 18.9

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 15.2

**Minimum staffing:** 5 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 13:** 216

**Tanker 13:** 65



## Station 15 – Fort Story

700 Atlantic Avenue, Joint Expeditionary  
Base Little Creek-Fort Story, VA 23459

**Population served:** 2,900

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 7

**Square Land Miles:** 3.3

**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 3.8

**Minimum staffing:** 4 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 15:** 308



## Station 16 – Plaza

3608 S. Plaza Trail, Virginia Beach, VA 23452

**Population served:** 33,200

**Total Square Miles Covered:** 6.2

**Square Land Miles:** 5.8

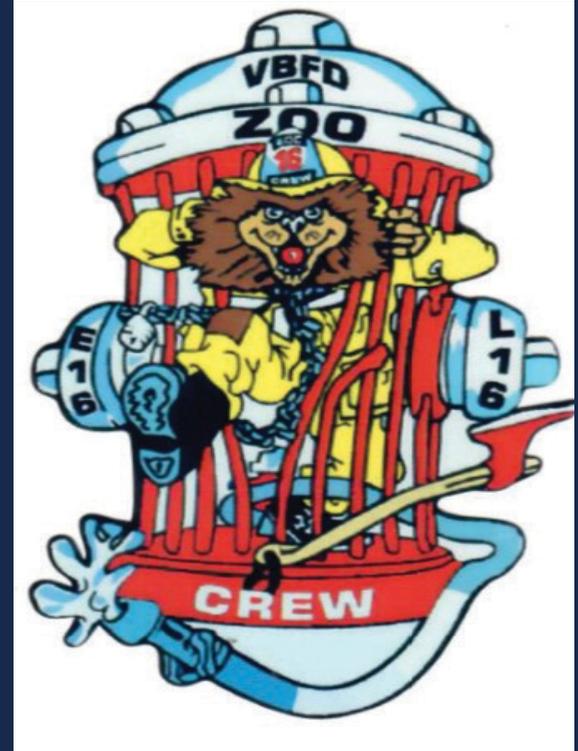
**Square Water and Marsh Miles:** 0.3

**Minimum staffing:** 6 Personnel

**Unit Responses:**

**Engine 16:** 3,521

**Ladder 16:** 2,242



## Station 17 – Sandbridge

305 Sandbridge Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Population served: 1,800

Total Square Miles Covered: 18.1

Square Land Miles: 7.9

Square Water and Marsh Miles: 10.2

Minimum staffing: 4 Personnel

Unit Responses:

Engine 17: 457



## Station 18 – Green Run

1601 Lynnhaven Parkway, Virginia Beach,  
VA 23456

Population served: 52,000

Total Square Miles Covered: 10.8

Square Land Miles: 10.2

Square Water and Marsh Miles: 0.5

Minimum staffing: 6 Personnel

Unit Responses:

Engine 18: 4,209

Battalion 3: 1,502



## Station 19 – Stumpy Lake

4196 Pleasant Valley Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23464

Population served: 50,100

Total Square Miles Covered: 11.3

Square Land Miles: 9.8

Square Water and Marsh Miles: 1.5

Minimum staffing: 4 Personnel

Unit Responses:

Engine 19: 3,201



## Station 20 – Little Neck

885 Little Neck Road, Virginia Beach, VA  
23452

Population served: 14,100  
Total Square Miles Covered: 7.1  
Square Land Miles: 5.2  
Square Water and Marsh Miles: 1.9

Minimum staffing: 4 Personnel

Unit Responses:  
Engine 20: 1,099



## Station 21 – General Booth

1468 Nimmo Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA  
23456

Population served: 33,500  
Total Square Miles Covered: 21.7  
Square Land Miles: 18.2  
Square Water and Marsh Miles: 3.5

Minimum staffing: 8 Personnel

Unit Responses:  
Engine 21: 1,757  
Ladder 21: 1,329  
Battalion 4: 770



## Station 22 – Burton Station

1160 Tolliver Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23455

Population served: 15,700

Total Square Miles Covered: 4

Square Land Miles: 3.7

Square Water and Marsh Miles: 0.3

Minimum staffing: 8 Personnel

Unit Responses:

Engine 22: 2,036

Ladder 22: 977



# Training and Special Operations Division



## Training Bureau

The **Harry E. Diezel Fire Training Center**—named in honor of the former **Virginia Beach Fire Chief and City Council Member**—is located near the **Oceanfront** on a **23-acre** site. The facility includes **classrooms, administrative offices, an auditorium, a state-of-the-art multimedia studio, an apparatus bay, a smokehouse, a burn building, a flashover simulator, a Hazmat training site, and a FEMA Virginia Task Force II Urban Search & Rescue and K9 training area. Live fire training props, developed in partnership with Dominion Virginia Natural Gas, further enhance the facility's capabilities.**

The **Training Bureau** oversees **seven-month fire academies** and all **ongoing department training**, including:

- **Engine and ladder company in-service sessions**
- **Specialized operations and career progression training**
- **Officer development and career path courses**
- **Leadership training and the Volunteer Support Technician Academy**
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) instruction**

The bureau also supports **neighboring fire departments** by offering the region's **only**



**burn building**, used by agencies in **Norfolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Franklin, Currituck County**, and **Navy Regional crews**. The facility is additionally utilized by several **state and federal agencies**.

The bureau manages the **Fire Cadet Program**, which serves **youth between the ages of 14 and 18**, introducing them to **fire service principles** and **career pathways**. Organizationally, the **Training Bureau** consists of four key divisions:

- **Incumbent Training**
- **Recruit Training**
- **Delegated Authority**
- **EMS Training**

All divisions are overseen by the **Battalion Chief of Training**. The in-house **multimedia studio** produces high-quality digital content for multiple city departments. This includes:

- **Training videos and podcasts**
- **Department newscasts** and **livestreams** for training and events
- **Social media content** for VBFD platforms (**Facebook, Twitter, Instagram**)
- Collaborative media projects such as **Every 15 Minutes** with the **Virginia Beach Police Department, United Way campaigns, VBTV features**
- Hosting and maintaining a dedicated **VBFD training website**



## *Incumbent Training*

### Learning Management System – Vector Solutions

The department's efforts to **track, develop, and update training** through the **Learning Management System (LMS), Vector Solutions**, continued throughout the year. Now in its **second full year of implementation**, the LMS has enabled the department to produce **enhanced data** supporting **ISO and Accreditation factors**. Additionally, **all Fire and EMS certifications** were updated to ensure that **every firefighter—through the rank of Fire Chief—has training records accurately imported and tracked**.

The Training Bureau also transitioned to **Vector Evaluations Plus**, a **digital solution** for managing and facilitating **department-wide task books**. This system supports personnel from **Probationary Firefighter through Battalion Chief**, providing a unified platform to **track training progress**. The platform also supports **video uploads** to document progress and demonstrate required competencies for each position. There are still **numerous opportunities** to expand this feature, with **more developments anticipated in 2025**.

## Command Simulations

In recent years, the Vbfd has advanced its **Command Simulations** program to promote **training consistency and operational excellence**. Initial efforts focused on developing a **new Battalion Chief command board** and enhancing **accountability systems**. Through collaborative development groups and research, **new tools and protocols** were introduced.

With this foundation, the department committed to **regularly rotating all Battalion Chiefs through command simulations**, facilitated by the **Fire Training Center** and supported by **trained role players**. These efforts quickly produced **measurable improvements in shift-to-shift consistency**.

The program evolved to include **specific call-type simulations**, addressing scenarios such as:

- **Multi-family structures**
- **High-rise buildings**
- **Big-box facilities**
- **High-hazard/risk environments**

Scenario-specific drills were designed to test challenges such as **Mayday incidents in multi-family or high-rise structures**. The use of **standardized language, arrival procedures**, and **incident playbooks** has significantly strengthened operational readiness. These simulations have also enhanced **collaborative training efforts** with **EMS, ECCS**, and **regional partners**.

## Company In-Service & Live Burn / Thermal Imaging Training

This year marked the **second consecutive Spring Company In-Service and Live Burn cycle**. The format mirrored previous years, with:

- **Three morning stations:** Mayday procedures, **Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC)** use, and **Search Techniques**
- **Three live burn evolutions** in the afternoon

This structure provided companies with the opportunity to:

- **Practice with new thermal imaging technology**
- **Review the updated MAYDAY policy and checklist**
- **Strengthen foundational firefighting skills**

**Over 690 participants**, including **Fire Training Instructors (FTIs)**, took part in this three-month initiative (March–May), with contributions from **54 different instructors** providing **200+ hours** of timely, hands-on training. Feedback from the field was **overwhelmingly positive**.



## Officer In-Service

In addition to hosting a **two-day Leadership Under Fire session** for officers, the Training Center restructured its **officer development programming**. Now, officers participate in **three quarterly sessions** featuring:

- **Four-hour training modules**
- **Leadership topics**
- **Discussion-based engagement**
- **Breakout sessions for active participation**

The **fourth session each year** features an **external guest speaker**, a **Chief Chat**, and **departmental updates**.

## Training Outside the Fire Training Center

As part of a broader effort to expand **hands-on training opportunities** across the city, the department constructed a **new three-story training prop** adjacent to the **burn building** at the **Fire Training Center**. This structure was transformed into a **state-of-the-art Mayday training facility**, featuring **multiple drop props** and **training mazes** designed to support **advanced Mayday and search-level exercises**.

The project serves as a **proof of concept** for future construction of similar **three-story structures** within **each battalion**, enabling enhanced training access **beyond the central Training Center**.

The long-term goal is to outfit each battalion with:

- **A forcible entry door**
- **Ladders, hose lines, and essential tools**
- **A dedicated space for company-level drills and ISO-qualifying facility training**

This initiative not only increases training accessibility but also allows companies to remain **in-service and available for response** while engaging in critical skill development.

## Acquired Training Fleet – Dedicated Apparatus for Training

In **May 2025**, the VBFD achieved a major milestone by assigning **dedicated apparatus to the Training Bureau** for the first time in department history.

**Training Engines 91, 92, and 93** are now **primarily designated for training purposes**, significantly reducing the operational impact of the **daily training demands** that often require the use of front-line **engine and ladder companies**.

This strategic shift enhances the department's ability to deliver high-quality training while maintaining operational readiness.

Looking ahead, the department plans to expand the **Training Fleet** by assigning a **reserve ladder truck**, with the potential addition of a **rescue unit and ambulance** to further support evolving training needs at the **Fire Training Center**.

## Hampton Roads Training Officers Group (HTOG)

The **Hampton Roads Training Officers Group (HTOG)** continues to serve as a **dynamic regional committee** committed to **collaboration, information sharing, and regional training advancement**.

Key initiatives include:

- A **shared Vector Enterprise platform**, enabling personnel to access training across jurisdictions with certification tracking through each department's LMS.
- A **joint meeting** between HTOG and the **Hampton Roads Fire Chiefs**, resulting in direction to develop **standardized command and control practices** and to align **regional training strategies**.

Continued progress is expected in 2025–2026.

## Ladder Academy

In December, the VBFD reaffirmed its commitment to **firefighter readiness** by delivering the **Ladder Academy**, a specialized **four-day training course** for personnel newly assigned to **ladder companies**.

The academy ensured that each participant was **equipped with critical skills, familiar with updated procedures**, and **trained to the latest standards** for ladder company operations.



The curriculum included instruction and practical training in:

- **Throwing ground ladders**
- **Conducting primary searches**
- **Performing VEIS** (Vent, Enter, Isolate, Search)
- **Executing RIT** (Rapid Intervention Team) functions
- **Practicing vertical ventilation**
- **Conducting vehicle extrication**

Through this **targeted training initiative**, firefighters gained valuable experience in **life-saving techniques** and were better prepared to respond to a **wide range of emergency incidents** with **confidence and operational precision**.



## Driver/Pump Operator



The **Driver Pump Operator (DPO) course** provides firefighters with a **comprehensive, week-long training program** designed to build essential skills for operating **fire apparatus pumps** with safety and confidence in emergency settings.

The curriculum combined **theoretical instruction** with **hands-on practical exercises** and covered key areas including:

- **Mechanics of fire pumps**, such as **centrifugal** and **positive displacement** types, and components like **impellers** and **discharge fittings**

- **Flow and pressure calculations**, teaching participants how to apply formulas to determine appropriate **flow rates** and **pressures** for varied hose configurations
- **Simulated fireground operations**, including **deploying hose lines**, **adjusting pump pressures**, and managing dynamic scenarios under operational conditions

Emphasis was placed on:

- **Safety protocols**, including the use of **personal protective equipment (PPE)** and maintaining **situational awareness**
- Identifying and mitigating **potential hazards** during pump operation
- **Basic troubleshooting** and **routine maintenance practices** to ensure apparatus reliability

By the conclusion of the course, participants were equipped to:

- **Operate fire pumps efficiently**
- **Calculate and adjust flow rates and pressures**
- **Diagnose basic operational issues**
- **Perform essential apparatus maintenance**

These competencies directly enhanced participants' **operational effectiveness** and strengthened **fireground safety** across the department.

## Recruit Training

The **Virginia Beach Fire Academy** worked diligently over the past year to train **50 Recruit Firefighters**, delivering the largest combined academy in **VBFD history**.

Spanning **eight months**, the academy included all required **professional training** that **meets or exceeds State standards** in both **Fire** and **EMS disciplines**.

Recruits also completed **specialized education**, including:

- **Marine Awareness**
- A newly developed and adopted **Mayday / Firefighter Survival Course**, by the **Virginia Department of Fire Programs**

Both record-setting classes **graduated on March 7, 2025**, marking a historic achievement for the department's training efforts.

Looking ahead, the **Recruit Shop** will collaborate with the **Delegated Authority Office** to deliver the **"Best of Training"** program to an additional **50 Recruits** in the **Fall of 2025**.



## Recruit Classes

### Virginia Beach Fire Academy 16

“Tighten Up”

Graduation Date: March 7, 2025

- Alex Baranowski
- Daniel Bowen
- Jan Brennick
- Ronald DiLeo
- Zachary Freeman
- Carson Graves
- James Hall
- Marcus Harrell
- Justin Hoggard
- Grayden Howell
- Matthew Huey
- George Hughes
- Shenandoah Kwiatkowski
- Joseph Lanagan
- Bergen Maguire
- Alain Martell – Class Valedictorian
- David Meyer
- Thomas Moore
- River Morgan
- Dustin Nguyen
- Wyatt Raines
- Austin Sale
- Charles Savino
- Holly Schmadeka
- Jason Schretzenmayer
- Mercedes Sotelo
- Austin Spencer -Christopher J. Whelan Award
- Joshua Virgili
- Jaden Williams
- Trinton Ynclan - Jason R. Workman Award

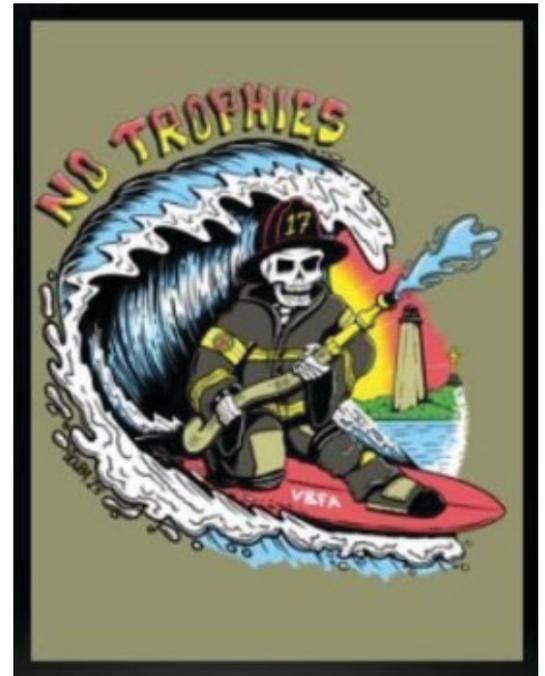


## Virginia Beach Fire Academy 17

“No Trophies”

Graduation Date: March 7, 2025

- Brock Bittner
- Daniel Bjorklund
- John Bochicchio
- Daniel Buettner
- Cameron Clark
- Tristen Dodd
- Carter George
- Jackson Mitchell -  
Jason R. Workman Award
- Conor Owen
- Jack Scanlon
- Jordan Smith
- Dakota Sun
- Kenneth Hannah
- William Harrell
- Thomas Kait
- Timothy Kelly
- Caleb Mann
- Jackson Marlowe
- Mikhael Matthews
- Matthew Willbanks -  
Christopher J. Whelan Award



## *Delegated Authority*

On **March 6, 2025**, the department added **two new positions** to the **Fire Training Center**. These roles are instrumental in supporting:

- **Testing oversight**
- **Curriculum development**
- **Instructor training and checkoffs**
- **Task book facilitation**
- Enhancements to both **recruit** and **incumbent training programs**

The **Training Bureau** also launched **monthly collaborative meetings** with the four **Delegated Authorities** in Virginia—**Henrico County, Fairfax County, Prince William County,** and **Virginia Beach**. These meetings mark the beginning of an ongoing partnership focused on:

- Improving **curriculum development**
- Enhancing **testing processes**
- Elevating **instructor standards** at both the **local and state levels**

The primary goal is to **strengthen communication, increase consistency,** and **raise the overall quality of fire service training across the Commonwealth.**

Delegated personnel are reviewing opportunities to **collaborate with the state** on a **digital testing platform**. This system would integrate testing across the **Commonwealth** and among the **Delegated Authorities**, streamlining processes and promoting consistency.

In parallel, the Bureau is preparing to **transition multiple training courses** into **ProBoard-certified programs** in partnership with the **Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VD FP)**. These certifications will provide participants with a **nationally recognized credential** while helping to **standardize instructional content** across programs.

As part of this broader initiative, **all written testing** is expected to move to a **digital format by Fall 2025**. The Bureau is currently evaluating several platforms that align with **state requirements** and feature **secure, accredited test banks** to improve both **delivery and efficiency**.

### Exploration of Virtual Reality (VR) in Training

Looking ahead, the Bureau is exploring the integration of **Virtual Reality (VR)** as a tool to support **command simulations**. VR offers the potential for **immersive, scenario-based learning** that improves **decision-making skills** within a **controlled and repeatable environment**.

## Podcast Production and Multimedia Updates

On the multimedia front:

- The **"First In" podcast** was **officially released in late May**, and is currently awaiting final **City approval** for full distribution across various platforms
- The **"Over In a Flash" podcast** continues to be published **monthly**, serving as a key channel for **internal communication and knowledge sharing**.

## *EMS Training*

This year, **EMS Coordinator April Achesinski** retired from the department. Her **dedication and vision** left a lasting impact and will be **sincerely missed**.

In response to this transition, the department received approval to implement a **new leadership** model by assigning a **full-time Fire Captain** to oversee the **EMS Shop**. Additionally, a **full-time instructor** has been appointed to support delivery of:

- **CPR, ACLS, and PALS** instruction
- **Continuing education**
- **Recruit EMS training**

Since the transition, several key improvements have already been implemented, including:

- **Updates to Vector Solutions**
- **Enhanced certification tracking processes**
- A streamlined approach to offering **CPR at the station level** within a **three-week rotation**
- Strengthened **communication and collaboration** with **Virginia Beach EMS (VBEMS)**

The **Training Bureau** looks forward to continuing this momentum and advancing to **new levels of EMS education and program development** in the coming year.

## *Cadet Program*

The **Virginia Beach Fire Cadet Program** is a **hands-on, career-based opportunity** open to youth **ages 14 to 18** (who have completed the 8th grade) interested in exploring a future in **Fire and Emergency Services**.

The program exposes participants to a variety of **career experiences, leadership**



**opportunities, and community service activities.** Its primary goal is to help young adults **explore career paths** within the fire and EMS professions while encouraging them to become **responsible, engaged citizens** in their communities.

Fire Cadets typically meet on the **first and third Monday** of each month, year-round, at the **Harry E. Diezel Fire Training Center**. During these sessions, cadets engage in:

- **Physical training (PT)**
- A **pre-selected fire topic**, delivered through a combination of **classroom instruction, on-the-go demonstrations, and hands-on-skill-building**

Field crews often support training sessions by providing **specialized instruction** and additional **manpower**. Each topic is taught independently, with cadets applying their skills during a culminating **Shift Day**. On Shift Day, cadets rotate through realistic scenarios such as:

- **Technical rescue demonstrations**
- **High-angle rescue with rappelling**
- **Exterior residential fire simulations**
- **Vehicle fire exercises**

The program also encourages collaboration with **neighboring city Cadet programs**, with participation expected to grow in future sessions.

Fire Cadets regularly assist with department and community events, including:

- **Award ceremonies**
- **Funerals**
- **Parades**
- **Recruitment and community life safety events**

In the past year, cadets proudly volunteered at several high-profile engagements, including:

- **Memorial Day Ceremony**
- **9/11 Honor Log**
- **Special Olympics Competition**
- **MDA Fill the Boot**
- **Firefighter Challenge**

## *Virginia Fire Rescue Conference*

Hosted by the **Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA)**, the four-day **Virginia Fire Rescue Conference** was held in **February at the Virginia Beach Convention Center**. With

participation from **more than 800 students and public safety professionals** from across the Commonwealth, and representation from **over 150 vendors nationwide**, it marked one of the **largest-attended conferences** in the event's **25-year history**.

The conference serves as a premier showcase for **next-generation fire apparatus**, along with the **latest advancements in fire equipment, technology, and public safety gear** from vendors across the country.

In addition to the vendor exhibits, the conference offered a wealth of **training opportunities** to firefighters and emergency personnel from throughout Virginia.

- **Over 100 sessions** were led by some of the **most respected instructors and subject matter experts** in the fire service—including several from the **VBFD**.
- Participants received a total of **10,000 hours of instruction**, supporting both **career certification** requirements and **professional development** across all levels of the fire service

## Marine Bureau

The VBFD **Marine Bureau** operates within the **Special Operations Division**, overseeing **maritime firefighting and water rescue missions**. The **Marine Team** comprises **six fire stations**, each supporting critical operations.

- **Fire Station 1** operates **Fire Boat 1**, a 30-foot **2007 vessel**, and **Fire Boat 2**, a 42-foot **2023 Metal Shark** docked at the **Virginia Beach City Marina in Lynnhaven Inlet**. These vessels primarily cover **Lynnhaven Inlet, Lynnhaven River, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Chesapeake Bay**. **Inflatable Rigid Boat (IRB) 1**, a trailered **2014 vessel**, is also stationed here to support Fire Boats 1 and 2 and respond to **inland waters**.
- **Fire Station 12** operates **Fire Boat 12**, a 41-foot **1977 vessel** docked at the **Virginia Beach Fishing Center Southside Annex in Rudee Inlet**. It primarily serves **Rudee Inlet, Lake Rudee, Lake Wesley, and the Atlantic Ocean**.
- **Fire Station 6** is home to **Fire Boat 6**, a trailered 24-foot **2010 vessel**, which responds to incidents in the **Intracoastal Waterway, Back Bay, and the Port of Virginia**. The station also houses **Fire Rescue Boat 6**, a 16-foot trailered vessel capable of navigating **low-water and marsh areas** in Back Bay.

The VBFD's **fire boats** are the **sole marine firefighting resources** in Virginia Beach. In addition to firefighting, they respond to a range of emergencies, including:

- **Boat accidents**
- **Distressed vessels**



- **Drownings**
- **Medical incidents on the water**
- **Hazardous materials situations**
- **Vehicle accidents in the water**
- **Missing boaters**

The **Marine Bureau** also provides **vital support to the United States Coast Guard**.

## *Water Rescue Swimmer Program*

Initiated in **2016**, the **Water Rescue Swimmer Program** has become a cornerstone of the VBFD's **emergency response capabilities**. Today, **nearly all VBFD personnel** are trained as **Surface Water Rescue swimmers**, equipped to perform rescues from fire boats and along inland shorelines.

**Fire Stations 15, 11, and 17** are designated **Surf Rescue Swimmer Fire Stations**, **maintaining mandatory rescue swimmer staffing** from **April through October**. These highly trained personnel hold **Surface Water Rescue and Surf Rescue certifications**, enabling them to:

- Support the **Virginia Beach Lifeguard System**
- Conduct surf rescues in areas **without lifeguard coverage**

The VBFD currently maintains a roster of approximately **90 certified Surf Rescue Swimmers**.

## *Special Olympics Polar Plunge*

The **2025 Polar Plunge** made waves at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront as a record-setting **4,151 participants**—including plungers, runners, and Cool Schoolers—came together in support of **Special Olympics Virginia**, raising an astounding **\$1.7 million (and counting)** for the cause. Once again, plungers proved that when it comes to **fostering inclusion, courage knows no temperature**.

The **VBFD Marine Team** played a crucial role in safeguarding the event. Providing dedicated **in-water support**, VBFD's **Fire Rescue Swimmers (FRS)** remained vigilant, responding to distressed swimmers and ensuring a safe, inclusive, and encouraging atmosphere for all.



Beyond their emergency response role, VBFD personnel embraced the opportunity to **connect with the community**, building relationships and making a lasting positive impact. Their dedication was **recognized and commended** by event organizers, sponsors, and the families of participants.

VBFD's efforts were part of a coordinated public safety response in partnership with the **Virginia Beach Police Department (VBPD), Virginia Beach Emergency Medical Services (VB EMS), and the Virginia Port Authority**—ensuring a smooth, successful, and unforgettable day for all involved.



## *They Will Surf Again Virginia Beach/Surfers Healing Camp*

The VBFD played a vital role in **two major 2025 oceanfront events** that celebrated empowerment through surfing and showcased the healing power of the ocean.

At **They Will Surf Again – Virginia Beach**, hosted by the **Life Rolls On Foundation**, VBFD's **Marine Team and Rescue Swimmers** joined more than **300 volunteers** to support individuals with disabilities, helping ensure their safety as they experienced the thrill and freedom of catching waves.

The VBFD also provided in-water and beachside support at the **19th Annual Surfers Healing Camp**—a transformative two-day event dedicated to children on the **autism spectrum**. Firefighters worked hand-in-hand with experienced instructors known as **"Healers,"** helping young surfers build confidence, overcome fear, and connect with the therapeutic rhythm of the ocean. Founded by former professional surfer Izzy Paskowitz, the camp continues to serve as a beacon of hope, resilience, and joy.

For the **17th consecutive year**, the **City of Virginia Beach** proudly welcomed the Surfers Healing Foundation Team, reinforcing the VBFD's steadfast commitment to **inclusion, community connection, and compassionate service**.

## *Swift Water Team Deployments*

The VBFD's **Swift Water Team** demonstrated its expertise and commitment during **two major emergency deployments**, reinforcing its reputation as a trusted unit in flood rescue operations and disaster response.



In **February 2025**, nine Swift Water Team members were deployed to **Lebanon, Virginia**, to assist with a **severe flooding event**. Working alongside local emergency responders, the team conducted **swift water rescues, evacuated residents** from flooded homes, and provided **critical support** in hazardous conditions. Their **specialized training and equipment** ensured the safety of those affected and reflected the VBFD's commitment to **statewide mutual aid**.



Earlier, in **September 2024**, the team was activated in response to **Hurricane Helene**, which caused widespread flooding across **Southwest Virginia**. VBFD personnel conducted **high-risk rescues**, assisted **stranded individuals**, and supported local efforts to **mitigate flood-related dangers**. Their presence was pivotal in **strengthening community resilience** and delivering lifesaving assistance during the storm's aftermath. Through both deployments, the VBFD exemplified its **unwavering dedication to protecting lives**, not only within city limits but across the Commonwealth—solidifying its role as a reliable emergency response resource in **water-related disasters**.



## Hazardous Materials Bureau

The VBFD **Hazardous Materials Response Team** is a **highly trained unit** specializing in **hazardous materials emergencies, accidental releases, and technological incidents** involving dangerous substances. The team consists of **27 members**, distributed across **three shifts** and based at **Fire Station 3** in the **London Bridge section** of the city.



All team members are certified to at least the **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) “Technician” level**, with over **75% holding “Specialist” certifications**—OSHA’s **highest level of hazardous materials training**. These qualifications are maintained through ongoing education and a strong partnership with the **Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)**.

The VBFD serves as a **core component of the Southside Regional Hazardous Materials Team**, working alongside the cities of **Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Chesapeake**. Together, the regional team is responsible for **managing hazardous materials incidents across southeastern Virginia**, ensuring a coordinated, expert-level response wherever needed.

In addition to their primary mission, all team members are **cross-trained in technical rescue operations**, enabling them to support the VBFD’s **Technical Rescue Team** and provide **operational redundancy** during complex emergencies.

### *Hazardous Materials Technician Course*

The VBFD hosted a **two-week Hazmat Technician Course** in partnership with the **Southside Regional Hazardous Materials Team**. Held at the **Harry E. Diezel Fire Training Center**, the course welcomed **22 firefighters from across the region**, all of whom successfully completed the **80-hour program** to become **certified Hazmat Technicians** in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Instruction was provided by a **cadre of experienced Hazmat Specialists** representing **Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake, and Portsmouth**. The course blended **classroom-based instruction with hands-on training scenarios**, equipping participants with the knowledge, skills, and operational readiness required to respond effectively to hazardous materials incidents.



This marks the **fourth jointly delivered Hazmat Technician course** supported by the VBFD, the **Southside Regional Team**, and the **Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)**—a testament to the region’s ongoing investment in **interagency coordination, public safety readiness, and technical training excellence**.

## Technical Rescue Bureau

The VBFD **Technical Rescue Team (TRT)** is a highly trained unit specializing in **complex rescue scenarios**, including:

- **Structural collapses**
- **Confined space incidents**
- **High-angle rescues**
- **Trench collapses**
- **Vehicle entrapments**

The team consists of **27 members**, operating across **three shifts** and based at **Fire Station 7** in the **Town Center area**.

All TRT personnel meet **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) "Technician" standards**, achieved through rigorous training conducted in collaboration with the **Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP)**.

The VBFD serves as the **lead agency** for the **Tidewater Regional Technical Rescue Team (TRTRT)**, working in partnership with **Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Suffolk** to deliver coordinated regional responses to specialized incidents across the Tidewater area. To bolster flexibility and resilience, TRT members are **cross-trained as Hazardous Materials Technicians**, enhancing the team's **multi-discipline readiness** and supporting **operational continuity** during large-scale or overlapping emergencies



### *Rapid Dive Program*

In **2024**, the VBFD expanded its **Technical Rescue Team (TRT)** capabilities by launching a **Rapid Diver Program** focused on improving response to **water-related emergencies**, such

as **drownings in lakes, retention ponds**, and other inland water bodies.

This initiative enhances the VBFD's ability to quickly deploy qualified divers during time-sensitive incidents. Approximately **40 personnel have completed or are nearing completion** of diver certification, developed in collaboration with **Lynnhaven Dive, the Virginia Beach Police Dive Team, and Virginia Beach Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**.

The Rapid Diver Program builds on TRT's existing strengths, offering an added layer of **specialized response** and further demonstrating VBFD's **commitment to public safety, operational innovation, and multi-discipline technical readiness**.

## *Structural Collapse School*

In the past year, **five VBFD members** successfully completed the intensive **eight-day Structural Collapse Specialist (SCS) course** hosted by **Virginia Task Force 2 (VATF-2)** in partnership with **Spec Rescue International and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**.

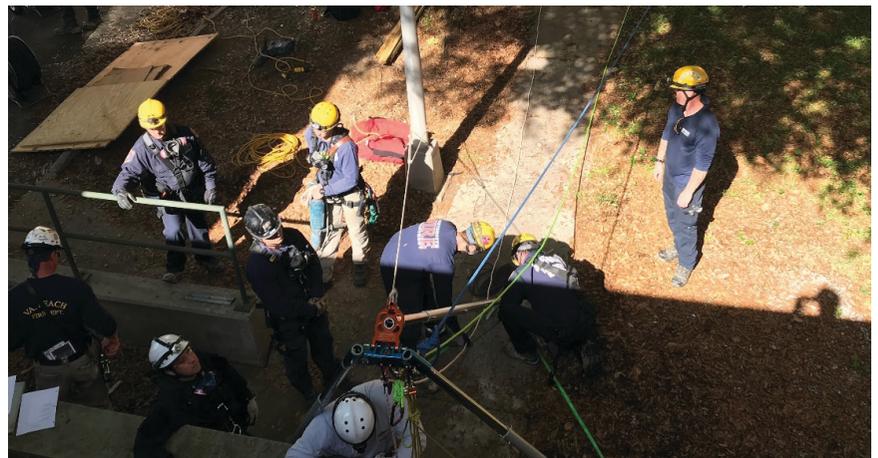
This advanced program delivered hands-on instruction in:

- **Shoring and structural stabilization techniques**
- **Heavy lifting and rigging operations**
- **High-pressure airbag systems**
- **Metal cutting tools and techniques**
- **Vehicle and structural extrication**

The training culminated in a **large-scale, scenario-based exercise**, reinforcing technical proficiency and readiness for complex urban search and rescue operations.

The course welcomed **144 participants from across the United States**, including firefighters and rescue specialists traveling from as far as **Washington State**. It provided critical capabilities for emergency response teams operating within the **Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) framework**.

VBFD's involvement underscores the department's ongoing commitment to **technical excellence, advanced training**, and its leadership role within **regional and national response networks**.



## FBI SWAT Medic Team

For nearly **30 years**, the VBFD has proudly partnered with the **FBI's Norfolk Field Office** to provide **advanced life support and tactical medical care** during high-risk operations. Established in **1995**, this collaboration remains a **national model** for local–federal integration in emergency response.

Today, the **SWAT Medic Team** includes **eight experienced firefighter-paramedics and one emergency physician**, all highly trained to support the **FBI SWAT Team** during:

- **Warrant services**
- **Critical incidents**
- **Dignitary protection missions**

To sustain operational strength, VBFD welcomed **two new medics** this year, ensuring smooth succession planning as veteran members approach retirement.



### *Beyond the Mission: Building Regional Readiness*

VBFD's SWAT Medics are also **leaders in training**. Over the past year, they delivered **life-saving workshops** to regional law enforcement agencies, sharing skills rooted in **military battlefield medicine**—including:

- **Bleeding control**
- **Tactical trauma care**
- **First responder resiliency practices**

These sessions empower officers across **Hampton Roads** to respond effectively during medical emergencies, reinforcing safety for both responders and the community.

### *Expanding Reach and Capabilities*

The team continued to grow its influence by:

- Forming new partnerships with the **Virginia State Police**, enhancing care for **officers and K-9 partners**
- Expanding **joint training with Naval Special Warfare units**, staying aligned with **cutting-edge tactical medicine practices**

With **more missions completed than last year**—and time still remaining in the federal fiscal year—VBFD's SWAT Medic Team remains steadfast in its commitment to **readiness, innovation, and service excellence**.

They are a quiet but **crucial force behind the success and safety** of the region's most complex and high-consequence public safety operations.

# FEMA – Virginia Task Force 2

The **National Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Response System**, established by FEMA in 1989, unites federal, state, and local emergency response teams into integrated task forces. These teams specialize in **urban search and rescue, disaster recovery, and emergency medical services**. Task forces are **deployable within six hours** and are often **strategically pre-positioned** ahead of anticipated disasters.

The VBFD has served as the **sponsoring agency for Virginia Task Force 2 (VA-TF2)** since the task force's inception. VA-TF2 includes **220 members** from **14 agencies** across Southeastern Virginia, including **90 VBFD firefighters**. As the sponsoring agency, VBFD **coordinates operations, manages federal funding, procures specialized equipment, oversees training, and directs deployment activities**. VA-TF2 has responded to **more than 35 missions** across the United States, as well as international responses in **Haiti and Puerto Rico**.

The task force delivers a **comprehensive range of capabilities** critical to disaster response. VA-TF2 performs **structural search and rescue**, provides **emergency medical care**, and conducts **damage assessments** and **utility shut-offs** to ensure safety. The team also conducts **hazardous materials surveys**, evaluates **structural integrity for immediate occupancy**, and carries out **building stabilization**. Additional specializations include **hazardous materials equipment deployment** and **swift water rescue operations**, allowing for versatile response in high-risk environments.

VA-TF2 has played a key role in several **high-profile missions**, including the **1995 Oklahoma City bombing, 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, and the 2001 Pentagon attack**. The team also supported the **2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the 2010 Haiti earthquake**. More recently, the task force responded to **Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the 2021 Champlain Towers collapse in Florida, and several major incidents in 2024:**

Activated for **Tropical Cyclone Debby** in August 2024. FEMA deployed the task force to **Columbia, South Carolina**, ahead of the storm's landfall to assist with anticipated flooding and emergency response efforts. Approximately **45 members** of the team—including specialists in medical care, HAZMAT, and structural rescue—were mobilized to support local agencies and conduct operations such as **swift water rescues, structural evaluations, and medical support** for both civilians and team members<sup>3</sup>.

- In **September 2024**, VA-TF2 deployed to **Florida and North Carolina** in response to **Hurricane Helene**, conducting **structural assessments, humanitarian aid, and search and rescue operations**.
- Weeks later, the team mobilized for **Hurricane Milton**, performing **water rescues** and supporting **recovery operations in flood-impacted communities** across Florida.

These missions reaffirm VA-TF2's **unwavering commitment to protecting communities and saving lives** in the face of complex emergencies.



## City Proclamation

In a formal presentation held by the Virginia Beach City Council, members of **FEMA Virginia Task Force Two (VA-TF2) Urban Search and Rescue** were honored for their heroic response to the devastating impacts of **Hurricanes Helene and Milton**. A proclamation dated **November 12, 2024**, and signed by Mayor Robert M. "Bobby" Dyer, officially recognized the team's **extraordinary actions** and **unwavering commitment to public safety and disaster relief**.

The proclamation outlined the **formidable challenges** brought by **Hurricane Helene**, highlighting VA-TF2's **swift deployment and critical support in search, rescue, and recovery operations**. Their service did not end there—the team was once again called upon in the aftermath of **Hurricane Milton**, responding with the same **determination and professionalism**.

This commendation not only celebrated the team's **bravery and technical skill**, but also emphasized the **essential role of community support and cooperation** during emergencies. The City Council's recognition serves as a **public affirmation** of the **selflessness and dedication** embodied by these responders and underscores the **importance of readiness** in the face of natural disasters.



# Volunteer Bureau

## Oceana Volunteer Fire Department

The **Oceana Volunteer Fire Department (OVFD)**, incorporated in **1948**, is the **only remaining active volunteer fire organization** within the **City of Virginia Beach**. Operating under the umbrella of the VBFD, OVFD members contribute a wide range of services that ultimately benefit both the department and the community.

The department's volunteer roles include:

- **Volunteer Support Technicians**
- **Firefighters**
- **Certified Training Instructors**
- **Administrative Personnel**

These roles accommodate a diverse array of job skills and schedules, making OVFD a flexible and inclusive avenue for civic engagement.

### *Operational Support*

**Volunteer Support Technicians and Firefighters** augment the VBFD's career staff by assisting with **air, light, and equipment support**.

Their **support truck** also functions as the department's **primary Rehabilitation (REHAB) unit**, delivering **on-scene refreshment and rehab services** to emergency personnel during critical incidents.

OVFD volunteers respond to a wide spectrum of emergency calls—from **automobile accidents to large structural fires**—providing crucial operational support across incident types. Training and Administrative Contributions



In partnership with the VBFD's career counterparts, **certified volunteer instructors** support the delivery of a **high-quality training program**. Additionally, OVFD's **administrative personnel** manage essential functions such as:

- **Monitoring of personnel actions**
- **Documentation of departmental business affairs**

**With a proud legacy spanning more than 75 years**, the OVFD continues to play a vital role in advancing the mission of the VBFD—through service, partnership, and an enduring commitment to public safety.

## *Celebrating 20 Years of Volunteer Service: Eric Paul Honored for His Dedication to VBFD*

On **February 25, 2025**, Fire Chief **Ken Pravetz** and the VBFD formally recognized **Eric Paul** for achieving a significant milestone: **20 years of service** as a **Volunteer Support Technician**. Eric began volunteering with the VBFD in **September 2005**, consistently providing dedicated support to department operations and the Virginia Beach community. This recognition celebrated Eric's long-standing commitment, reliability, and contribution to the department's mission. The VBFD expressed its sincere gratitude for his service and leadership, which have set an enduring example for volunteer excellence.



## *Volunteer Support Technician Graduation Ceremony*

On **March 14, 2025**, the OVFD hosted a **graduation ceremony** for the latest class of **Volunteer Support Technicians (VSTs)** at the **Harry E. Diezel Virginia Beach Fire Training Center**. The event marked the successful completion of the department's **8-week training program**, which prepared participants to provide essential support during incidents and special events throughout the city.

The VBFD proudly **congratulated the graduates** for their dedication and readiness to serve the community. Their commitment reinforced the vital role that volunteer support personnel continue to play in enhancing the department's mission and operations.



**Front Row:** VST Brian Sikes, VST Garrett Pacey, VST Ashley Evans, VST Cynthia Artimisi.

**Back Row:** VBFD Assistant Chief Paul Pureza, Oceana Volunteer Fire Chief Wayne Richardson, OVFD Administrative Assistant Kelli Barnhart, OVFD Training Office David Hubert, VST Nikita Jablonski, VBFD Fire Chief Ken Pravetz and Oceana Volunteer Deputy Chief Steven Kennedy.

# Employee Recognition

## National Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial: Honoring Captain Matthew “Chevy” Chiaverotti

On **September 21, 2024**, firefighters from across the country gathered at the **National Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial** in Colorado Springs beneath the shadow of **Pikes Peak**. The ceremony added **308 names** to the Memorial Wall, including **Captain Matthew “Chevy” Chiaverotti’s**, ensuring his **sacrifice is forever remembered**.

Colleagues, family, and friends stood in solemn tribute, sharing stories of his **fearless leadership**, mentorship, and the culture of **safety, compassion, and teamwork** he inspired throughout his career. In a poignant gesture of international camaraderie, the **Calgary Firefighters Association** presented one of their signature **white dress hats** to Chevy’s young son, **Gus**, symbolizing **respect, continuity**, and the **global solidarity** of the fire service.

**Captain Matthew “Chevy” R. Chiaverotti**, age **44**, passed away on **April 17, 2023**, after a valiant battle with **Anaplastic Thyroid Cancer**. As a **20-year decorated veteran** of the VBFD, he served as the **A-Shift Captain of Engine 7**—the department’s “Busiest Engine”—and dedicated over **16 years** as a **FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Team Manager** with Virginia Task Force 2.

Across **thousands of emergency calls**—from the F-18 jet mishap in Virginia Beach to structure fires, hazardous-materials incidents, medical emergencies, and technical rescues—Chevy **charged hard** alongside the finest firefighters, always putting the community’s needs first.

**May the memory of Captain Matthew “Chevy” R. Chiaverotti continue to inspire courage, leadership, and compassion in every firefighter’s heart.**

## UNVEILING OF INTERSTATE SIGN HONORING FORMER VBFD CAPTAIN MATTHEW “CHEVY” CHIAVEROTTI

On **July 2, 2025**, at **Virginia Beach Fire Station 7**, the department held a **formal unveiling ceremony** commemorating the installation of new signage designating the Interstate 264 bridge over South Rosemont Road as the **VBFD Fire Captain Matthew “Chevy” Chiaverotti Memorial Bridge**. This honor recognizes Captain Chiaverotti’s **exceptional service and lasting impact** on both the VBFD and the wider community.



His legacy lives on through this designation, made possible by **House Bill 1793**, introduced by **Delegate Michael Feggans** during the 2025 General Assembly session. The bill passed with **unanimous support—99–0 in the House and 40–0 in the Senate—** and was **signed into law by the Governor on March 24, 2025**. In **January 2025**, the **Virginia Beach City Council** unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the bridge renaming and **committed to funding** the signage. The **Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)** completed fabrication of the new signage.

This meaningful ceremony not only honored Captain Chiaverotti's legacy but also highlighted the **collaborative efforts** among state and local leaders that brought this tribute to reality.

### *Workout in Honor of Captain Matthew “Chevy” Chiaverotti*

In April, VBFD personnel, alongside **family and friends** of Captain Matthew “Chevy” Chiaverotti at **Mt. Trashmore** for a commemorative workout. Support also came from the **Williamsburg Fire Department**, uniting everyone to celebrate Chevy's life in true firefighting spirit.

One of Chevy's guiding mottos, **“Live Life at a 10,”** reminded participants to embrace every moment, while his call to give **“Maximum Effort”** underpinned the day's challenges. With that energy fueling them, the group pushed through every set.

The workout consisted of:

- A **1.5-mile run** to kick off the session
- **10 rounds** of hill sprints, each followed by:
- **10 burpees** at the hilltop
- **10 push-ups** at the base
- A finishing **1.5-mile run** to close out the circuit

After completing the circuit, participants paused for a **moment of reflection**, honoring Chevy's legacy of perseverance, leadership, and camaraderie on and off the fireground.

### **28th Annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters & EMS Memorial Service: Honoring Master Firefighter Matthew Gallina**

On **June 7, 2025**, the **28th annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters & Emergency Medical Services Memorial Service** was held in the Main Exhibition Hall at the Richmond International Raceway Complex. The ceremony paid tribute to the **bravery and sacrifice** of Virginia's firefighters and EMS providers.



The service was **streamed live** for those unable to attend in person, and members of the public joined from across the state to honor the fallen. **Twelve heroes** were recognized during the event, including **Master Firefighter Matthew Gallina** of Virginia Beach.

MFF Gallina was celebrated for his **unwavering dedication** to community safety, his **mentorship of new recruits**, and his **exemplary leadership** on countless emergency calls. Colleagues and loved ones shared stories of his **courage and compassion**, underscoring the profound impact he had on the department and the community.

As the names of each honored first responder were read aloud, attendees observed a **moment of silence** and reflected on the promise to **never forget** those who gave their lives in service. The memorial concluded with a final **roll call** and the playing of **"Taps,"** leaving all who attended and watched online with a renewed commitment to uphold the values these heroes embodied.

## Firefighter of the Year

### *Master Firefighter Christopher Daugherty*

**Master Firefighter (MFF) Christopher Daugherty** was selected by his peers to receive the **2024 VBFD Firefighter of the Year award**. His recognition is based on his **exceptional performance, dedication to training, and significant contributions to fire service excellence**. He is currently assigned to **Fire Rescue 2 on B Shift**, where his exemplary service and commitment have made a **lasting impact** on both colleagues and the community.

MFF Daugherty has consistently established a **high baseline for performance** across a range of roles, demonstrating **unparalleled focus and commitment** on every shift and assignment. His dedication to excellence is evident in every task—whether serving as a **ladder operator** or through his recent transition to the **rescue company**.

As a **Ladder Academy Instructor, Mayday Lead Instructor, and Virginia Fire Rescue Conference Truck School Instructor**, MFF Daugherty has **played a pivotal role in shaping the department's training landscape**. His additional responsibilities include:

- **FEMA Rescue Component Member**
- **Squad Officer at Rescue Challenge**
- **Structural Collapse School Lifting and Moving Instructor**
- **Command Sims Team Member**



Recently, MFF Daugherty **planned and led a multi-unit drill for Battalion 5-B**. The success of this initiative led to requests for similar sessions across **all of B Shift**, underscoring his dedication to **team readiness and skill enhancement**.

One of his most impactful contributions has been his leadership in **modernizing the Mayday/Firefighter Survival program**. He spearheaded a comprehensive overhaul focused on:

- Introducing **enhanced teaching methods** to improve recruit success rates
- Updating **presentation materials**
- Redesigning **skill sheets and instructor guides**

His work has had a **statewide impact**, with over **90% of his revised curriculum adopted by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs**.

**MFF Christopher Daugherty embodies the highest standards of the fire service profession**. His **innovative training methods, commitment to excellence**, and lasting contributions to the **VBFD's reputation as a leader in fire service excellence** make him a truly deserving recipient of this prestigious honor.

## Outstanding City of Virginia Beach Employee 2024 Award

**Assistant Chief Lorna Trent** was recently honored with the **Outstanding City of Virginia Beach Employee 2024 Award** by the **Virginia Beach Rotary Club**. **Fire Chief Ken Pravetz**



commended her for her **exceptional commitment to excellence, strong leadership, and dedicated community service**.

Fire Chief Ken Pravetz highlighted her:

- **Impressive performance**
- **State and national recognition**
- **Meaningful community involvement**
- Ongoing pursuit of **professional and personal growth**

These qualities make her a **truly deserving recipient** of this prestigious honor.

**Congratulations to Assistant Chief Trent** for her continued **dedication and service to the VBFD and the broader community**—a shining example of public service leadership at its finest.

## Chamber of Commerce Award

In **July 2024**, VBFD **Captain Matthew Cooley; Master Firefighters Christine Barakey, Kevin Wirth, and Timothy Heard**; and Retired Captain Rob Valentine were recognized at the **Hampton Roads Chamber's 2024 Valor Awards** ceremony. They were honored for their **exceptional merit and remarkable bravery** in response to a **residential fire on Sand Bend Road on July 5, 2023**.

The actions taken that night by the **crew of Engine 17** and **Retired Captain Valentine** resulted in the **rescue of two individuals** from a **third-floor balcony** while fire **engulfed the structure** around them.



This **courageous act** exemplifies the **unwavering dedication and skill of VBFD personnel**, further solidifying their reputation as **true heroes within the community**.

## Crisis Intervention Graduates

In **November 2024**, **Captains Greg Vogel, Marquel Davis, Eric Ashley**, and **Master Firefighter Miles Stith** of the **Virginia Beach Fire Department** successfully completed **Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)**—a specialized program designed to equip first responders with the skills to compassionately support individuals experiencing mental health crises.

On **February 7, 2025**, **Firefighters Sean Grady, Taylor Ewing, Master Firefighter Mike Scharfe**, and **Firefighter Victoria Bryant** also completed **CIT**, continuing the department's commitment to enhancing mental health response capabilities across the city. The **Virginia Beach CIT program** is a collaborative initiative involving **law enforcement, mental health providers, and first responders**, dedicated to assisting community members affected by **mental illnesses and other brain disorders**. The program includes **40 hours of comprehensive training**, focusing on **verbal de-escalation tactics, mental health awareness**, and compassionate intervention strategies.



Thank you to all the **VBFD members** who completed this training for your continued dedication to the **safety, well-being, and dignity** of the **Virginia Beach community**.



## LEAD757

**Assistant Chief Michael Brashear** graduated from the **prestigious LEAD757 Class of 2024**. His completion of this intensive eight-month leadership development program marked a significant milestone in his ongoing dedication to community service and regional collaboration.

LEAD757 brought together professionals from across Hampton Roads to address key regional challenges through **education, strategic partnerships, and innovative leadership**. During the program, **Chief Brashear** engaged in **dynamic**



**discussions, regional tours, and collaborative projects** focused on **enhancing quality of life** and fostering **sustainable progress** throughout **Greater Hampton Roads**.

**Congratulations to Chief Brashear and all graduates of the LEAD757 Class of 2024—**your **dedication and leadership** helped shape a **stronger future** for the region.

## Leadership in Police Organizations

In **June 2025**, **Captains Edward Lane and Marquel Davis** of the **VBFD** graduated from the **Leadership in Police Organizations (LPO) Course**, a rigorous **three-week leadership development program** designed to strengthen leadership capabilities at the **individual, group, and organizational levels**.

The **LPO course**, delivered by the **International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)** and taught by **certified subject matter experts from the Virginia Beach Police Department**, is considered the flagship program for leadership in law enforcement. While it is **primarily tailored to law enforcement**, its **leadership theories and principles** are broadly applicable and beneficial to **leaders across all professions and disciplines**.

**Congratulations to Captains Lane and Davis** for completing this prestigious training and continuing to build a culture of strong, effective leadership within the VBFD and the broader public safety community.



## Promotions

The VBFD congratulates the following members who were promoted during fiscal year 2025:

- Battalion Chief Reagan, James
- Battalion Chief Xenakis, Joshua
- Captain Boyd, Nicholas
- Captain Conlon, Andrew
- Captain Diffley, Nathan
- Captain Hering, Mark
- Captain Jones, Cleon
- Captain Millard, Sean
- Captain Roenker Jr., Paul
- Captain Shook, Ryan
- Captain Snead, Keith

## Military Deployments

The VBFD would like to recognize the following members who were deployed for military service during fiscal year 2025 and thank them for their service:

- Master Firefighter II Asencio, Jeremy
- Master Firefighter II Boone, Randy
- Master Firefighter II Lockhart, Preston
- Master Firefighter Hine, Brittany
- Master Firefighter Sdankus, Brian
- Firefighter II Dixon, Milissa
- Firefighter Jones, Triston
- Firefighter Virgili, Joshua

## Annual Awards

The following members were recognized at the VBFD Awards Ceremony in October 2024:

### *Medal of Merit*

- Captain Degges, Derek
- Captain Mitchell, Todd
- Master Firefighter Wood, Justin

### *Life Saving Award*

- Captain Aguerrebere, Jose
- Captain Bayly, Mark
- Captain Beauchaine, Scott
- Captain Brennaman, Jeffrey
- Captain Carr, Ronson
- Captain Creamer, Joshua
- Captain Davis, Troy
- Captain Dextrateur, Dillon
- Captain Duchene, Henry
- Captain Garo, Noel
- Captain Hale, Joseph
- Captain Hewitt, David
- Captain Lane, Edward
- Captain Meller, Daniel
- Captain Michel, Jeffrey
- Captain Raftery, William
- Captain Riley, Mitchell
- Captain Rouse, Daniel
- Captain Sass, Shawn
- Captain Scherrer, David
- Captain Stevens, Nicolas

- Captain Todd Jr., James
- Captain Vogel, William
- Captain Wazlak, Alex
- Captain White, Andrew
- Captain Woods, Daniel
- Master Firefighter Biddle, Adam
- Firefighter Bailey, Adam
- Firefighter Barnes, William
- Firefighter Bernotas, John
- Firefighter Bjorklund, Andrew
- Firefighter Bonniwell, Benjamin
- Master Firefighter Breen, Kevin
- Firefighter Carlson, Henry
- Firefighter Conner, Jason
- Firefighter Conover, Trevor
- Firefighter Crane, Jeremiah
- Firefighter Crawley, Evan
- Firefighter Csenar, Theodore
- Firefighter Davidson, Austin
- Firefighter Dick, Christian
- Firefighter Dickerson, Benjamin
- Master Firefighter Diffley, Nathan
- Firefighter Eason, Patrick
- Firefighter Edwards, Andrew
- Firefighter Florio, Joseph
- Master Firefighter Geller, Christopher
- Firefighter Gerhardt, Taylor
- Master Firefighter Gieske, Amy
- Master Firefighter Gilmore, Brian
- Gonzalez, Troy
- Firefighter Grulke, Justin
- Master Firefighter Harris, Nicholas
- Firefighter Harrison, Preston
- Master Firefighter Hauser, Benjamin
- Firefighter Hewitt, Brandon
- Firefighter Hierholzer, Cole
- Firefighter Hill, Patrick
- Firefighter Holmes, Robert
- Firefighter Hughes, Justin
- Firefighter Hunt, Cameron
- Firefighter Jackson, Shaun
- Firefighter Jardine, Brian
- Firefighter Johnson, Isaac
- Firefighter Karlov, Lukian
- Master Firefighter Keane, Matthew
- Firefighter Kidd, Kyle
- Firefighter Kornegay, Caleb
- Firefighter Langston, Nathan
- Master Firefighter Lowery Jr., Ned
- Firefighter Lyons, Kathleen
- Firefighter Martin, Brian
- Firefighter McNemar, Ryan
- Master Firefighter McQuarrie, Matthew
- Firefighter Mercadante, Jared
- Firefighter Mesecher, Jamin
- Master Firefighter Mezzapeso, Richard
- Master Firefighter Millard, Sean
- Master Firefighter Milliner, Bradford
- Firefighter Muse, Joseph
- Firefighter Naggy, Joseph
- Firefighter Ng, Hoi-Koeng
- Firefighter Nightingale, Ian
- Firefighter Noaksson, Erik
- Firefighter Oakley, Ryan
- Master Firefighter Padgett, Draper
- Master Firefighter Pagano, Cody
- Firefighter Pickett, Christopher
- Master Firefighter Pool, Matthew
- Master Firefighter Pugh, Bradley
- Master Firefighter Purser, Robert

- Master Firefighter Ramstad, Brady
- Firefighter Rhodes, Jonathan
- Master Firefighter Rillon, Jeffrey
- Master Firefighter Roenker, Jeffrey
- Master Firefighter Rosenberger, Kevin
- Firefighter Schmidt, Robin
- Firefighter Scillia, Michael
- Master Firefighter Sdankus, Bryan
- Master Firefighter Shook, Ryan
- Firefighter Shute, Jace
- Master Firefighter Sigwart, Paul
- Firefighter Six, James
- Master Firefighter Skelaney Jr., William
- Firefighter Smith, Ryan
- Firefighter Sonsteng, Heather
- Firefighter Stalder, Nicholas
- Master Firefighter Stambaugh, Douglas
- Master Firefighter Stamos, Stephen
- Master Firefighter Stith, Miles
- Firefighter Strawhand, Jacob
- Firefighter Strovers, Paul
- Master Firefighter Struckmeyer, Steven
- Firefighter Swindell, Adam
- Master Firefighter Tabora, Justin
- Firefighter Tacey, Kari
- Firefighter Taylor, Scott
- Master Firefighter Taylor, Cole
- Torres, Miguelangel
- Firefighter Truss Jr., Frederick
- Firefighter VandeLinde, Cody
- Firefighter Ventrice, Kaitlin
- Firefighter Vest, Ellie
- Firefighter Ware, Jeffrey
- Master Firefighter Wenger, Brian
- Firefighter Wilkes, Isiah

- Firefighter Yeager, Svetlana
- Master Firefighter York, Justin
- Firefighter Young, Kalib
- Firefighter Zamenick, Rudy

### *Meritorious Conduct Award*

- Master Firefighter Smith III, Vincent

### *Commendation Award*

- Battalion Chief Fulgham Jr., Fletcher
- Master Firefighter Harper, Cayla
- Master Firefighter Schwaner, Matthew
- Achesinski, April
- Schwaner, Christopher

### *Meritorious Unit Citation*

- Captain Howard, Michael
- Captain Mitchell, David
- Captain Rigolo, John
- Captain Walker, Michael
- Captain Xenakis, Joshua
- Master Firefighter Boyd, Nicholas
- Master Firefighter Brenon, Cody
- Master Firefighter Herring, Mark
- Master Firefighter Mauch, David
- Master Firefighter Padgett, Draper
- Master Firefighter Perez, Jason
- Master Firefighter Sayre, Lawrence
- Master Firefighter Zuniga Rocha, Juan
- Firefighter Bunch, Brandon

- Firefighter Conner, Jason
- Firefighter Oakley, Ryan
- Firefighter Truss Jr., Frederick

### *Commendation Unit Citation*

- Master Firefighter Harrell, Daniel
- Master Firefighter Ussery, Kristina

### *Fire Chief's Award*

- Watkins, Mike
- Zeman, Mike

### *Outstanding Service Award*

- Cave, Mark
- Cebrian, Cynthia
- McMahon, Kevin
- Nolasco, Nicholas
- Simmons, Shane

### *Certificate of Appreciation*

- Conger, Casey
- Dunn, Lei
- Ryberg, Kris
- Sourbeer, Amber

### *Certificate of Recognition*

- Armstrong, Gregory
- McManus, Michael

### *Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) Scholarship Recipients*

- Master Firefighter Bovard, Matthew
- Master Firefighter Daugherty,  
Christopher
- Master Firefighter Miller, Thomas
- Firefighter Crawley, Evan

## Retirements

The VBFD congratulates the following members on their retirement during fiscal year 2025 and thank them for their service to the community and the department:

- Battalion Chief Rutherford, James V. – 22 Years
- Battalion Chief Schreiner, Daniel J. – 26 Years
- Captain Branch, James A. – 37 Years
- Captain Gaspar, Joseph R. – 22 Years
- Captain Gerstein, William Fred Jr. – 26 Years
- Captain Rigolo, Jonathan A. – 40 Years
- Captain Taylor, Jonathan J. – 33 Years
- Captain Umphlett, Gary A. – 40 Years
- Master Firefighter II Allen, Bert III – 27 Years
- Master Firefighter II Darden, Robert E. – 28 Years
- Master Firefighter II Davis, Randy A. – 20 Years
- Master Firefighter II Greer, Stephen J. – 20 Years
- Master Firefighter II Harris, Kenneth M. – 24 Years
- Master Firefighter II Hiltibran, Mark K. – 27 Years
- Master Firefighter II Parker, Gregory T. – 29 Years
- Master Firefighter II Porter, Jason L. – 25 Years
- EMS Instruction Supervisor Achesinski, April L. – 3 Years
- Public Safety Training Specialist Gill, Kathleen K. – 25 Years



# Resources

## Join Our Team!

The VBFD is interested in working with dedicated, compassionate, and hardworking people. If you are looking for a rewarding career as part of our highly trained and professional team, visit our website (<https://fire.virginiabeach.gov/>) to inquire about the application process. Volunteer opportunities are also available for adults and teenagers!

Minimum requirements include:

- At least 18 years old at time of written test.
- High school graduate or GED at time of eligibility list.
- Valid driver's license at time of application.
- Eligible to work in the U.S. at time of application.

## Programs

### *Operation Smoke Alarm*

In need of a smoke alarm or assistance? The Operation Smoke Alarm program is designed to provide and install smoke alarm(s) free of charge to Virginia Beach residents who own AND live in the requested home.

Factors considered for providing this service:

- Not having a working smoke alarm in the home.
- Not being financially able to purchase alarms.
- Having at least one child under the age of 18.
- Having anyone over 60 years of age living in the home.
- Not being physically able to install an alarm on your own.



To apply, contact the VBFD Life Safety Education Division at 757-385-2875 or scan the QR code above.

### *Child Passenger Safety Program*

The VBFD Life Safety Education crew is available to provide you with the tools, resources, and assistance to install your child's car seat properly every time!

To schedule an appointment, contact the VBFD Life Safety Education Division at 757-385-2875 or scan the QR code here!





**Virginia Beach Fire Department**

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