

City of Virginia Beach - Fire Department - 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan



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Virginia Beach Fire Department



Message from the Chief

To be the Fire Chief of the Virginia Beach Fire Department, which has a rich history of dedicated and professional service delivery to both the citizens and visitors of our great city, is both an honor and privilege. With that privilege, I am pleased to present the City of Virginia Beach Fire Department (VBFD) Strategic Plan for the years, 2020 - 2025.

This plan is a result of the combined effort and input from our firefighters, civilian staff, department leadership, and citizens of the City of Virginia Beach. The plan development focused initially on input from internal stakeholders (our firefighters, civilian staff, and department leadership) and then expanded to include input from external stakeholders (our citizens) collected through an online survey process.

The VBFD is consistently working to achieve and maintain the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those we serve, and this plan will contribute to such. Our firefighters train diligently in the academy to earn the right to wear the VBFD uniform. Once assigned to the field, their education continues as they continually train, follow guidelines they have learned, and

look to the example set by the more senior members within the VBFD. On every call, each responding member has a clear role and an important task to accomplish. The individual commitment at every level of the VBFD is what enables our success.

Our strategic plan, with its foundation based in community and membership input, revisits the department's mission, vision, and values and sets forth a continuous improvement plan that offers a road map for the justifiable and sustainable future. I am confident that the goals detailed in the pages of this plan will make us a stronger department today and for years to come.



David W. Hutcheson

Fire Chief, Virginia Beach Fire Department



HISTORY



The VBFD began as an all-volunteer department in 1906 when the Town Council noted the need to provide fire equipment to protect the rapidly growing resort area. In 1928, the town hired a paid staff of firefighters that also performed the duties of police officers. With the help of the volunteers, this combination system maintained fire protection for the Town of Virginia Beach from one fire station and numerous “volunteer” departments that sprang up during the 1940’s and 1950’s that maintained fire protection in Princess Anne County. On January 1, 1963, the Town of Virginia Beach

merged with Princess Anne County to form the City of Virginia Beach and the VBFD. The volunteer departments maintained their volunteer Fire Chiefs and Chief E.B. Bayne was appointed as the first Fire Chief of the Beach Borough Fire Department.



On September 1, 1971, Chief Bayne was appointed as the first Fire Chief of the City of Virginia Beach Fire Department and remained in this capacity until his retirement in June 1974.

Since the merger in 1963, the Department has 6 stations that have been rebuilt or relocated; 3 that have been rebuilt on or next to the older facility site; and 6 new facilities that have been built in new areas of development. The remaining stations are scheduled for replacement or rehabilitation as funding permits. Additionally, the VBFD has grown from a career staff of 11 members in 1963 to over 500 career members, more than 42 civilians support staff members, over 800 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer members, and numerous volunteer firefighters and support team members. Today the VBFD, a metropolitan-sized organization, provides an all-hazard response

that includes: Fire Suppression, Emergency Management, Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue, Marine, Fire Inspections, Fire Investigations, Life Safety Education, Fire Training, Safety, Health and Wellness, and Disaster Response from Virginia Task Force 2, a FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Team. In addition, the Department is a member of the Virginia Beach Emergency Response System and provides emergency medical technicians and paramedics to assist the Department of Emergency Medical Services with providing Advanced Life Support response to the community. The VBFD received its Accredited Agency status with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). The Department was initially accredited in 2001 and reaccredited in 2006, 2011, and 2016. The VBFD has established itself as a local, regional, state, and national leader in numerous areas and continues to strive for excellence in delivering services to the City.

THREE YEARS IN REVIEW ~



2018 ~

- First Fire Department UAS operations on incident scenes
- Implementation of new computer aided dispatch system
- E15 staffed at Fort Story (first local/federal government partnership of this type)
- Fire Department Resource Management located to new facility

2019 ~

- May 31st Building Two tragedy
- Spartan Street fire with 2 children rescued
- Blackfriar's Chase Court fire with second floor rescue
- Ballistic vests added to PPE ensemble department wide
- Inagural *Something in the Water* event at the Oceanfront
- Lease renewal with the military for Fort Story



2020 ~

- Professional Development pay changes instituted
- High rise live fire training at the Oceanfront Belmont Hotel
- ALS tuition reimbursement added for continuing education
- High rise bridge regional response rescue
- Support for multiple mass gatherings for equal rights and justice reform

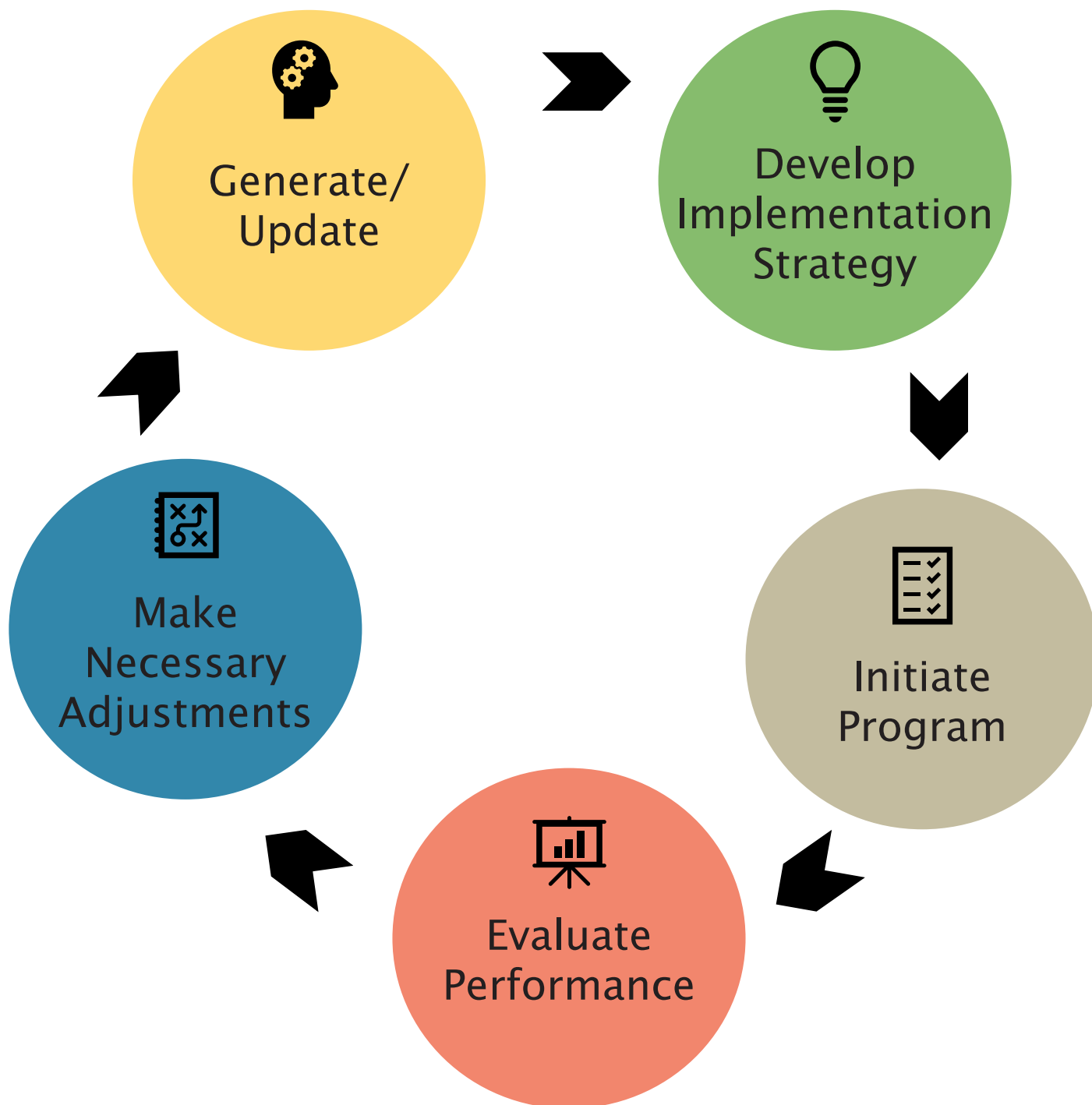
Strategic Planning Process

A strategic plan is a living management tool that provides direction, builds upon identified strengths and shared vision, documents goals, objectives, and accomplishments, and optimizes internal and external resources to accomplish the mission. In 2019, the VBFD set out to update its strategic plan. As an end result, the department established realistic goals and objectives using internal and external stakeholder input to chart the course for the continued future success of the organization.

The VBFD understands that strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify leadership, employees, stakeholders, and customers through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work to achieve a common purpose, and how progress and levels will measure success.

The VBFD strategic plan is a living document that will continue to change as it uses the following process:







VBFD leadership, with input from employees and citizens, assembled the necessary resources, provided guidance at key points, and ensured that the work of the planning process came to fruition in the form of a final Strategic Plan. Several work sessions were held as the plan came to fruition. Internally, we connected with employees across the Department to learn about their needs, challenges, and priorities. All employees were invited to participate in an anonymous survey of the Department and the work we do.

To better understand how we serve our community, a citizen survey was conducted. An online survey was created in collaboration with the City Office of Communications to reach out to the public. The survey was created for both citizens living in the City and individuals that worked in the City. 1,132 survey results were received, generating 25,513 responses and 448 comments. For a City of roughly 460,000 with a sample size of 1132 the survey has a confidence level of 99% plus or minus 3.8%. This survey was conducted in addition to a city-wide survey that is conducted annually and includes questions referencing the VBFD.

Citizen survey results and comments were then analyzed, categorized, and used to guide the formation of goals, strategies, and objectives alongside the internal results. The results from both the internal and external information gathering were used in updating the Fire Department's mission statement, vision statement, and values.

Engaging in robust internal dialogue and bringing in external perspectives helped us to understand emerging considerations, challenges, and opportunities related to the needs of our various stakeholders.

The VBFD will conduct an annual review and evaluation of the Strategic Plan to assess progress and make appropriate changes to reflect the current environment. The review will be conducted prior to July 1st, the start of the City's new fiscal year, via email or in-person meetings. A formal comprehensive review and revision of the Strategic Plan will be conducted every three years, at which point the VBFD will reconvene the Strategic Plan Working Group to work through the strategic planning process and revise the plan accordingly.





Develop Implementation Strategy

How to bring the Strategic Plan to life is defined during this phase of the planning cycle. The steps that we will take to turn this plan into the actions that will help accomplish our goals and objectives will be determined. We will outline the activities and decisions necessary to turn the strategic goals into reality.





During this phase of the planning process the real action takes place. It is during this phase of the process that the plan is transformed into actions or actual performance. The first two phases of the process identify the “what” and “why” of the activities of the organization. This phase of the process is about “how” the activities will be carried out, “who” will perform them, “when” and “how often” they will be performed.



Initiate Program

Strategy implementation is the stage that demands participation of the entire organization. The first two phases of the process are mostly in the hands of leadership, with the aid of senior management and key employees. When it comes to implementation, however, it is the workforce that will execute the strategic plan, with leadership overseeing the strategic plan.

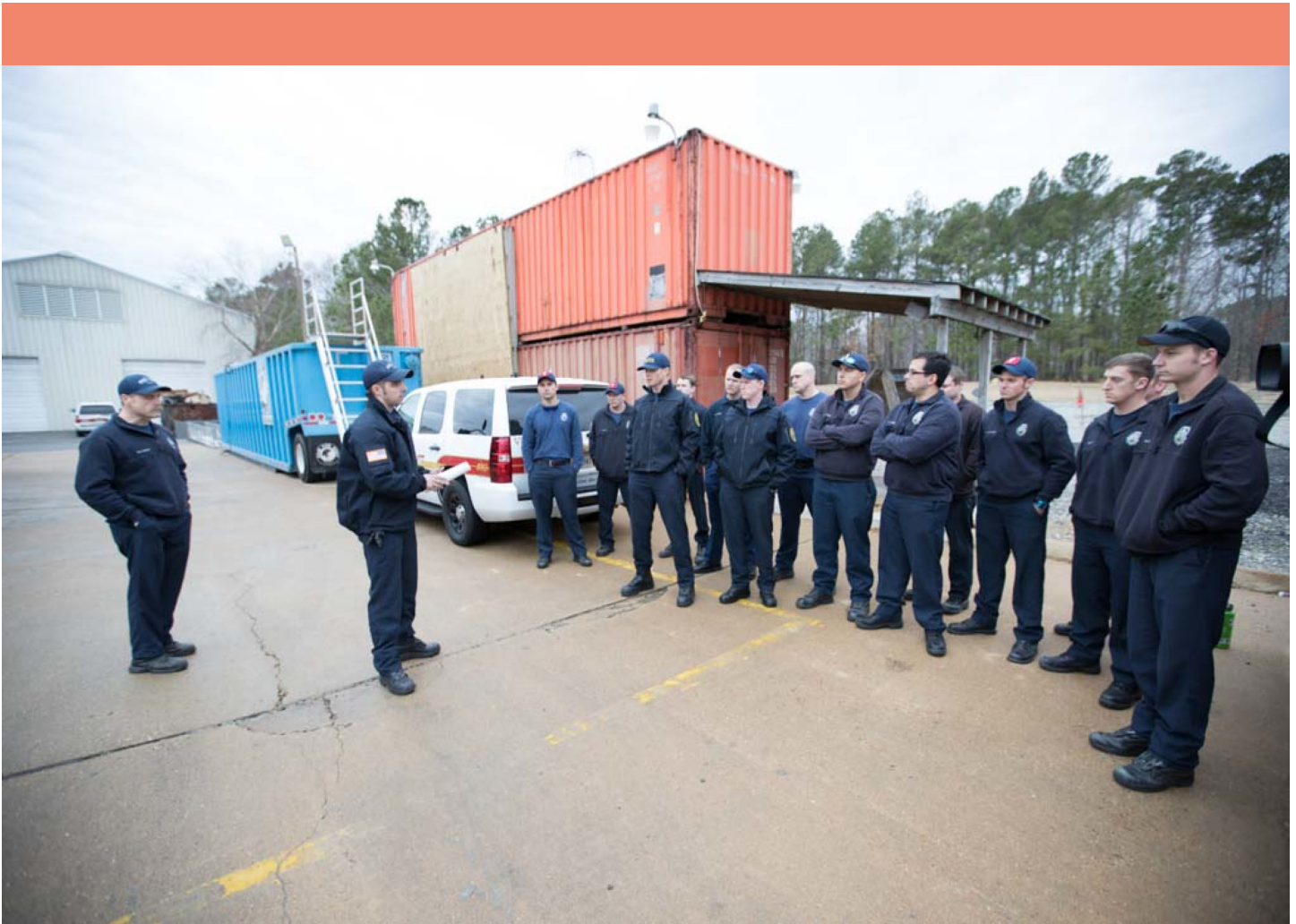




Evaluate Performance

The process of strategy evaluation is often overlooked in the overall strategic planning process. After the flurry of activity in the initial planning stages, followed by the reality check of executing the strategy alongside business-as-usual, strategy evaluation is often neglected. When this occurs, strategies quickly become outdated and out-of-sync with the changing face of the organization. To ensure this does not happen, the VBFD will utilize an automated tracking system that will be updated at least semi-annually.





The evaluation will be performed at the program manager level and will contain direct tie-ins between goals, strategies, objectives, and lastly, the task level. Goals are the end results the VBFD expects to accomplish. Strategy is the approach taken by the VBFD to achieve its goals. Objectives containing the specific and measurable actions taken to achieve the strategy. The tasks will exist on the program level evaluation form to provide context and feedback on progress or completion.

The intent of the evaluation is to provide direct linkage between the goals outlined in this strategic business plan and the work that is ongoing with the various programs of the VBFD. Linkage, coupled with feedback, will create a performance improvement system that will reflect progress and allow for adjustments to meet departmental and city level initiative changes.

A simple color-coded system of progress tracking, broken out at the individual strategy level, coupled with notes will be completed and reviewed by the program manager and oversight manager, providing a two-part oversight review and sign-off.

	Strategies and Goals			FY2020 Goal 1: Serve the community by providing exception	
	FY2021	July 2020			Strategy 1.1: Improve Effective Response Force Times.
	Owner	Name/Date			
	Oversight	Name/Date			
Objective 1.1.1: Periodic and continual review and update of the response matrix		Task Owner		Measured P	
Tasks		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>		In Process	
		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
Objective 1.1.2: Increase staffing to four-person minimum on all engines		Task Owner		Measured P	
Tasks		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>		In Process	
		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			

A summary page will provide high level oversight of the four overarching categories of: operations, training, human resources, and management.

nal public safety through preparedness and emergency service.

LEGEND (Use a 1 where applicable)

NOT STARTED

STARTED

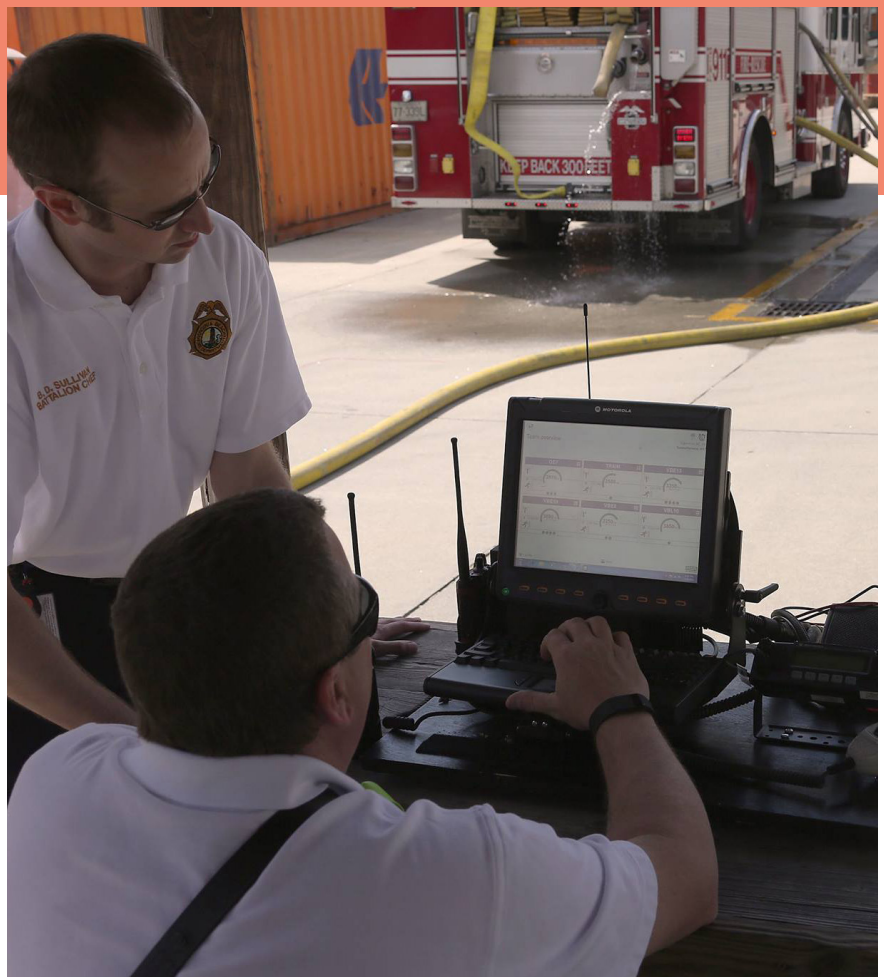
COMPLETE

Progress

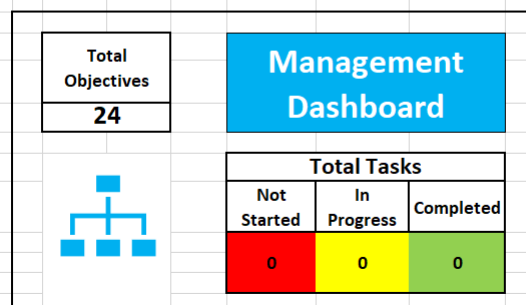
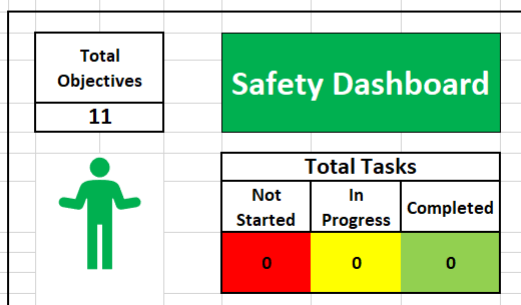
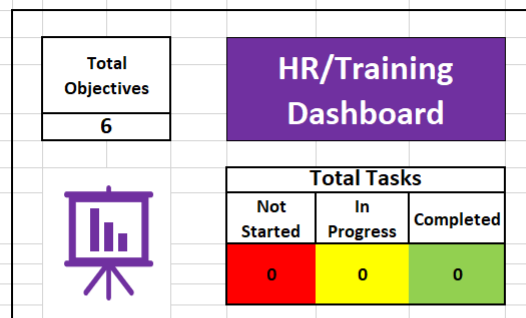
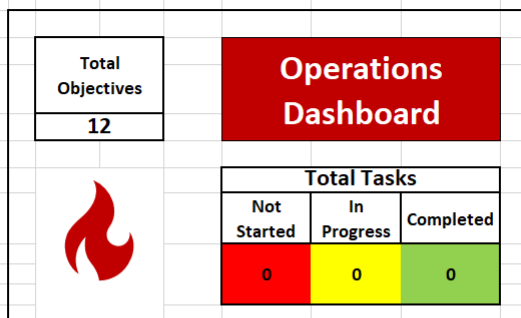
Next steps

Progress

Next steps



Virginia Beach Fire Department FY2020 - FY2025 Strategic Plan Summary





Make Necessary Adjustments

The semi-annual review process does not mean that the VBFD will formally amend or modify its Strategic Plan every time strategy performance is reviewed. However, using this process does mean that “micro-changes” may be made. As previously noted, the VBFD strategic plan process is continuous; the plan and its elements will be constantly reassessed, and we will pivot as needed. During semi-annual reviews new factors affecting the VBFD environment will be identified and assessed and it will be determined what adjustments, if any, should be made.



VIRGINIA BEACH

City Council Goals & Priorities



In addition to the direction received from leadership, input from citizens and employees, the VBFD strategic planning process is guided by the goals and priorities that have been established by City Council. The VBFD Strategic Plan supports the goals and priorities as follows:



By aligning department goals to meet the City's needs, the VBFD allows for continuity of efforts between elected officials and local government, thereby reducing disconnects between the overall City mission and departmental services.



VB City Council's 10 Goals

1. Grow the Local Economy
2. Create a Financially Sustainable City Providing Excellent Services
3. Improve the Transportation System
4. Revitalize Neighborhoods and Plan for the Future
5. Be a Competitive First-Class Resort for Residents, Businesses, and Tourists
6. Be the Safest City in Virginia
7. We are an Inclusive Community that is Welcoming and Empowers All
8. Our Community has World Class Schools and Educational Programs
9. Data and Technology is Used to Enhance Community Livability, Prosperity, and Sustainability
10. City Assets and Infrastructure are well maintained and meet Community Expectations

VB Fire Department's 5 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 and Information Technology Capabilities

VB City Council's 5 Priorities

1. Sea Level Rise / Stormwater
2. Education
3. Public Safety
4. Transportation
5. Economic Development

VISION STATEMENT

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.



MISSION

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



VALUES



SERVICE

Professional and trained workforce, providing for other before self



CARING

Using empathy and sympathy for addressing situations



HONESTY

Just behavior principled in intention and actions



TRUST

Reliance on the department and individuals following our core values



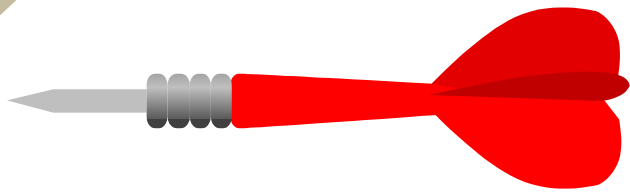
INTEGRITY

Moral and ethical conduct at all times

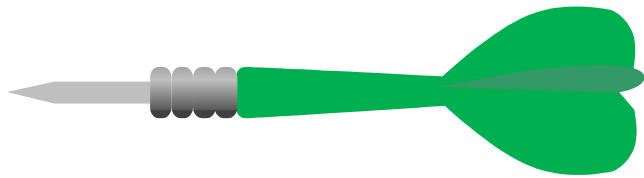
Goals, Strategies, and Objectives

The following definitions are used in connection with this plan:

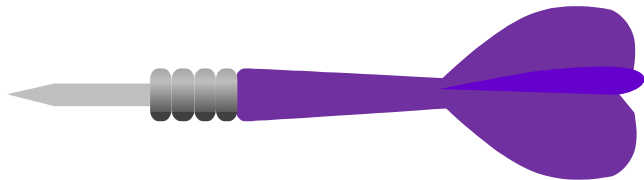




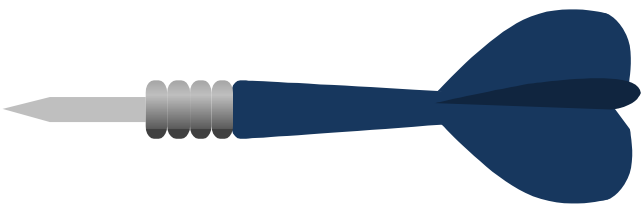
Red: Operations



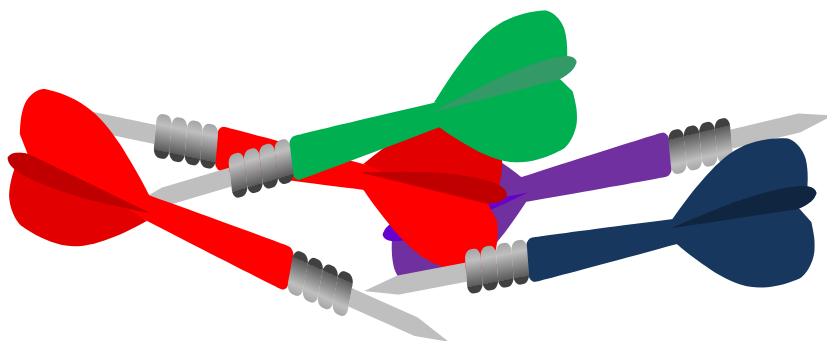
Green: Safety



Purple: HR/Training



Blue: Management



GOAL 1:

Serve the community by providing exceptional public safety through preparedness and emergency service.





Strategy 1.1: Improve Effective Response Force Times.

Objective 1.1.1: Periodic and continual review and update of the response matrix

Objective 1.1.2: Increase staffing to four-person minimum on all engines

Objective 1.1.3: Provide for an Advanced Life Support provider on all engines

Strategy 1.2: Improve apparatus response reliability.

Objective 1.2.1: Operationalize data analysis trends affecting apparatus availability

Objective 1.2.2: Adjust fire station staffing and apparatus

GOAL 1:



Strategy 1.3: Enhance capabilities of community risk reduction.

Objective 1.3.1: Increase fire inspection completion percentage by 3% annually

Objective 1.3.2: Increase community risk reduction staffing to facilitate new and existing programs

Objective 1.3.3: Incorporate new technology for tracking and compliance of fire prevention programs

Objective 1.3.4: Increase awareness of community outreach programs

Strategy 1.4: Prepare a plan for natural or man-made disasters.

Objective 1.4.1: Develop plans with regional partners for response through recovery

Objective 1.4.2: Acquire and maintain equipment cache to support disaster response

Objective 1.4.3: Evaluate readiness by conducting joint training with outside agencies and departments



GOAL 2:



Promote a healthy and safe work environment.

Strategy 2.1: Establish and maintain a culture of healthy living.

Objective 2.1.1: Complete annual physicals and fitness assessments for all uniform members

Objective 2.1.2: Provide and maintain current fitness equipment at all fire stations, wellness center, and training center

Objective 2.1.3: Provide fitness programming to all levels of department members

Objective 2.1.4: Provide programming for healthy diet choices



GOAL 2:

Strategy 2.2: Establish a culture of promoting and maintaining mental wellness.

Objective 2.2.1: Train and educate workforce to develop resiliency

Objective 2.2.2: Establish programs to evaluate and monitor policy and practices that support and help individuals

Objective 2.2.3: Lobby at the legislative level to develop bills that recognize and address firefighter mental illness





Objective 2.3.1: Reduce exposure to environmental and physical hazards

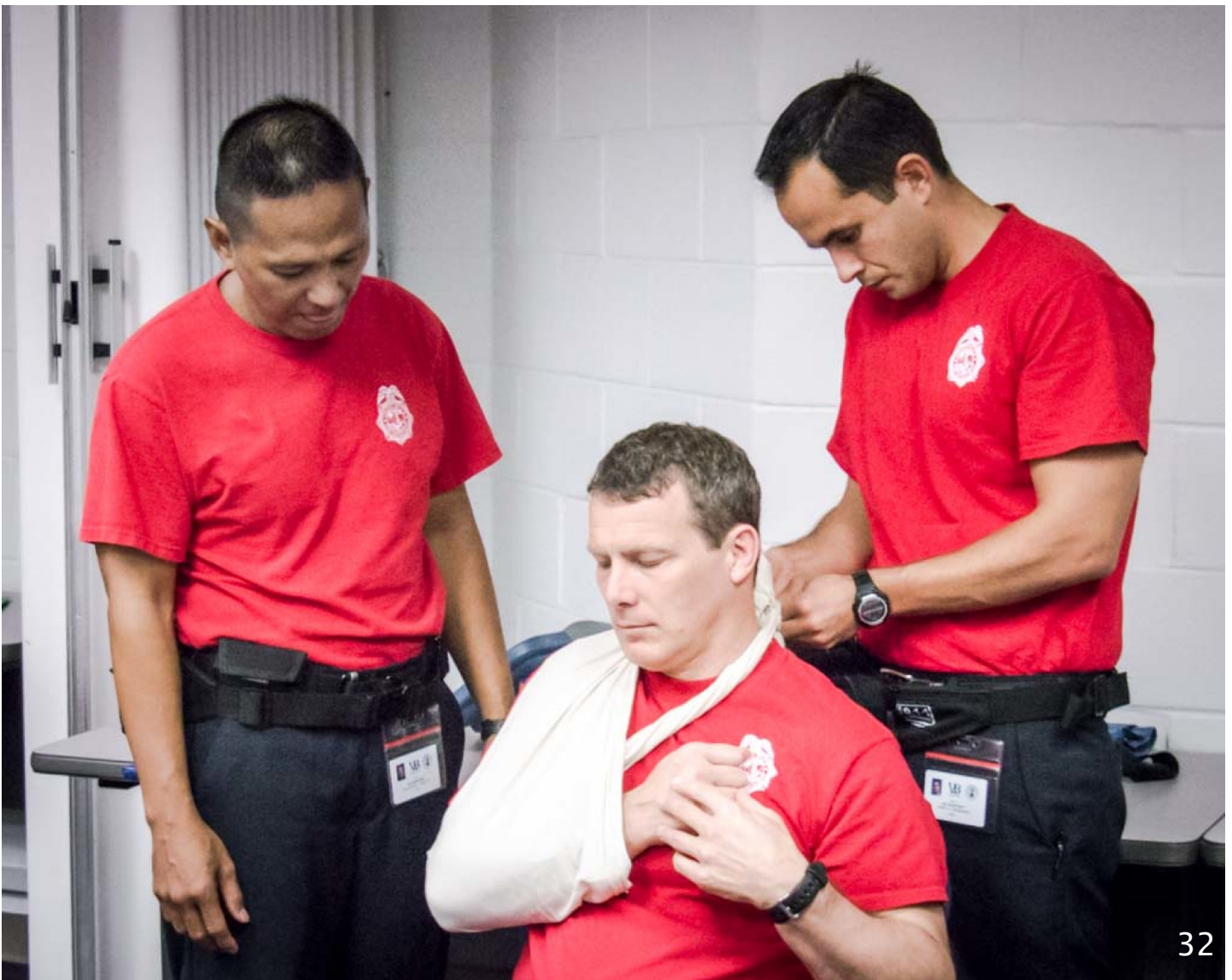
Objective 2.3.2: Promote and maintain a positive work environment for all employees

Objective 2.3.3: Improve security measures at fire department locations

Objective 2.3.4: Tailor city practices to fire department specific needs

GOAL 3:

Recruit, hire, train, and maintain a fit, highly diverse, and skilled workforce.





Strategy 3.1: Hire and maintain a workforce more reflective of the community.

Objective 3.1.1: Continually reevaluate recruitment to account for changing demographic factors

Objective 3.1.2: Partner with community organizations that engage with diverse members



GOAL 3:



Strategy 3.2: Develop and maintain a culture of emotional intelligence and empathy in all interactions.

Objective 3.2.1: Develop training to enhance emotional intelligence and empathy to improve public interactions

Objective 3.2.2: Develop evaluation measures for assessment of emotional intelligence and empathy

Strategy 3.3: Provide opportunities for professional development and advancement.



Objective 3.3.1: Increase awareness and notice of professional development opportunities

Objective 3.3.2: Improve efficiency of the training approval process



GOAL 4:

Predict and forecast emerging trends and challenges.

Strategy 4.1: Evaluate and plan for environmental trends affecting response.

Objective 4.1.1: Evaluate high water impact on station and apparatus

Objective 4.1.2: Develop a hazardous materials response plan for environmental disasters

Objective 4.1.3: Maintain and plan for the environmental impacts of development and population growth

Strategy 4.2 Evaluate and plan for societal diversity trends.

Objective 4.2.1: Evaluate station design for inclusion and privacy

Objective 4.2.2: Develop and provide diversity training and education reflective of current society

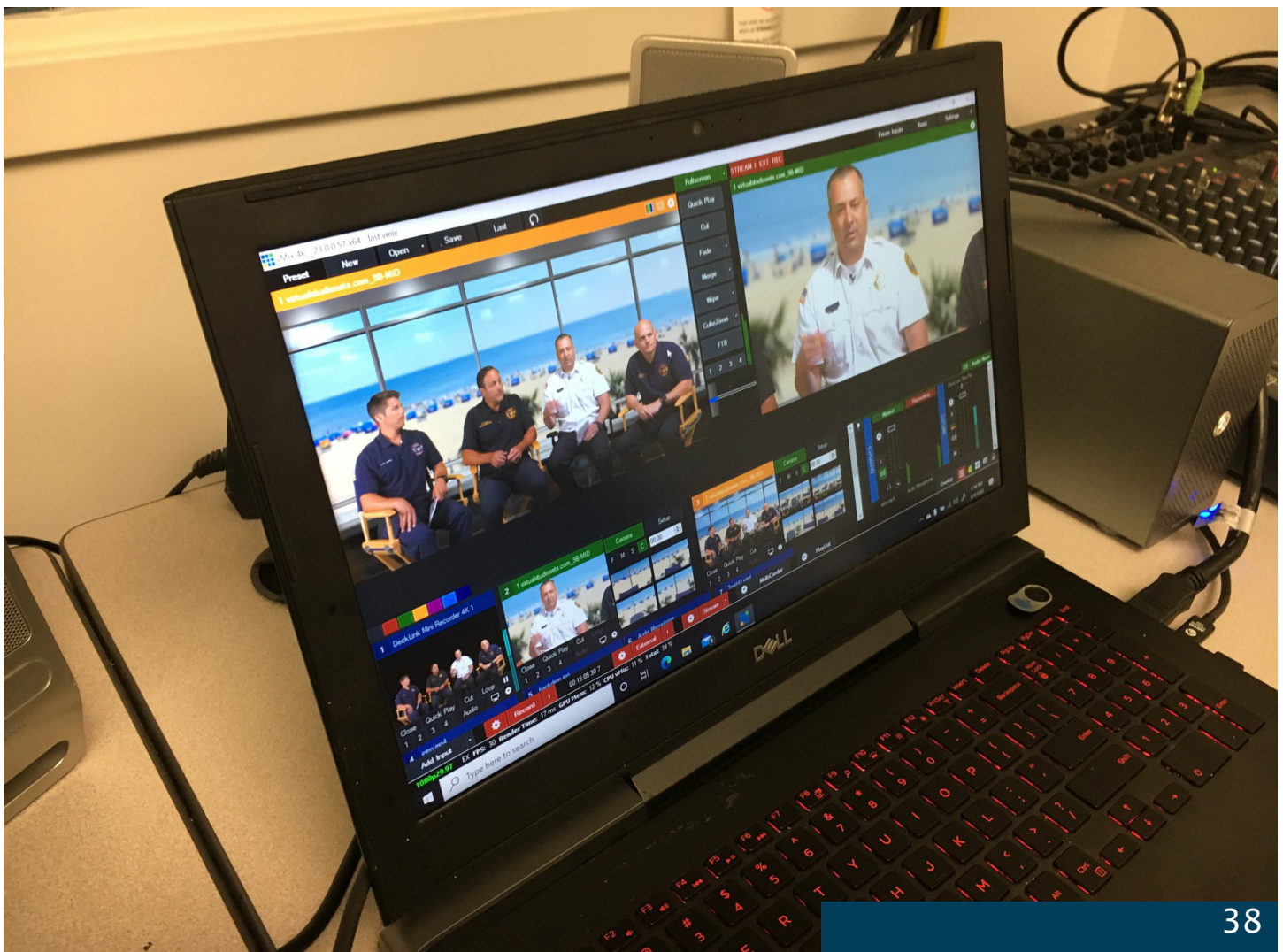
Objective 4.2.3: Evaluate and develop tools to assist with communication barriers

Strategy 4.3: Evaluate economic situations to provide fiscally sound practices.

Objective 4.3.1: Improve purchasing and contracting processes to streamline and reduce costs

Objective 4.3.2: Reduce operational costs by utilizing available meeting and training technology to address departmental needs

Objective 4.3.3: Evaluate and improve Small, Women-owned, and Minority-owned (sWaM) vendor purchases





Strategy 4.4: Evaluate current standards and best practices for implementation.

Objective 4.4.1: Improve Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating

Objective 4.4.2: Enhance and standardize special events management

Objective 4.4.3: Expand military and local auto/mutual aid operations

GOAL 5:



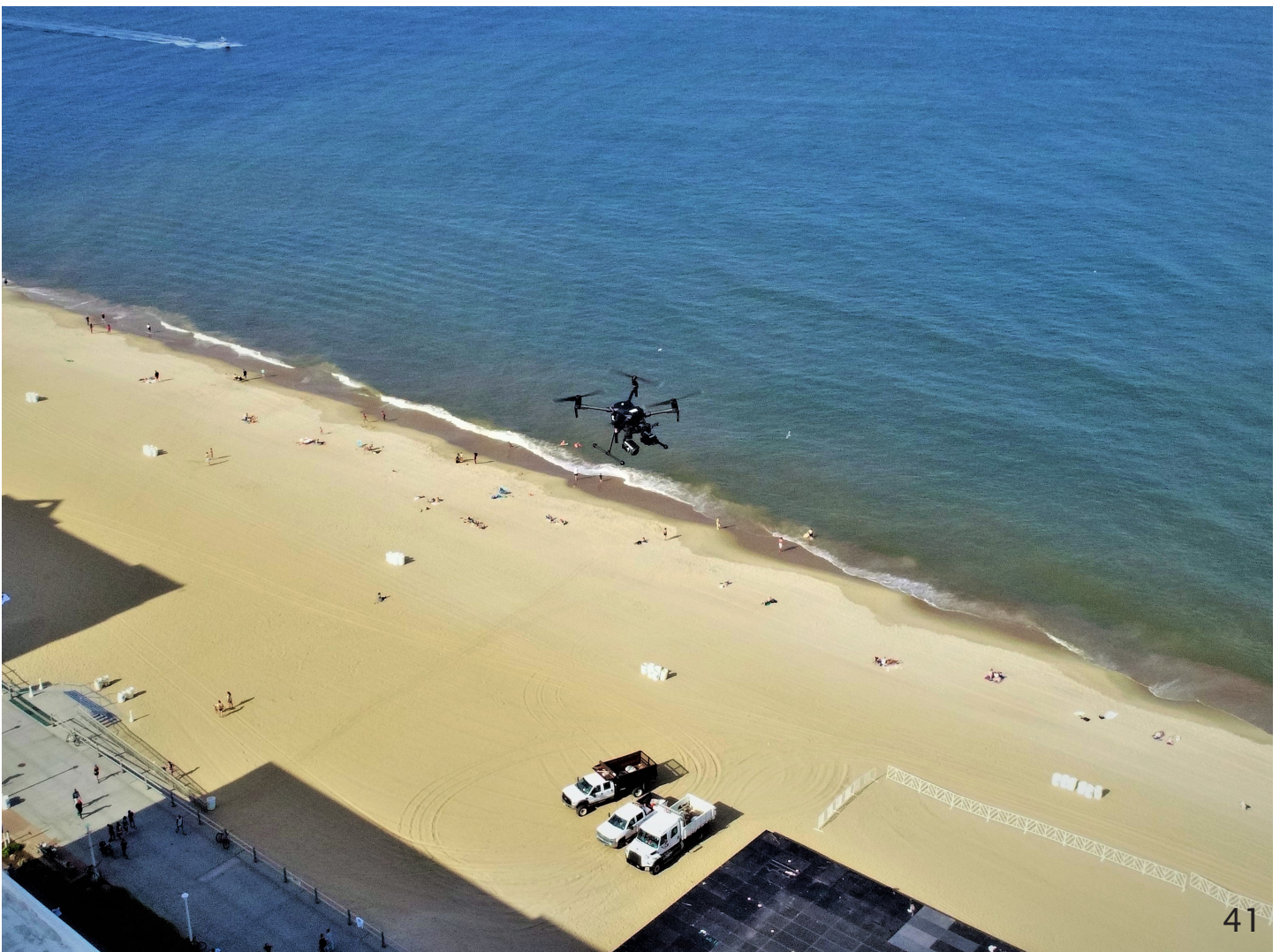
Enhance Business Intelligence (BI) and Information Technology (IT) capabilities.

Strategy 5.1: Develop a comprehensive BI capability.

Objective 5.1.1: Develop BI capability that provides reporting and dashboarding of metrics required for key business needs and accreditation

Objective 5.1.2: Develop BI capability that provides key statistical data to the public through Open Data

Objective 5.1.3: Develop BI capability that provides self-service to BI reports, dashboards, and automated exports



Strategy 5.2: Implement new technology to improve firefighter and public safety, situational awareness and common operating picture.



Objective 5.2.1: Implement Internet of Things (IoT) connected apparatus to improve responder and citizen safety

Objective 5.2.2: Implement IoT connected Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to improve firefighter safety

Objective 5.2.3: Expand remotely operated systems to provide incident support

Objective 5.2.4: Expand use of mobile devices for improved operational effectiveness

Objective 5.2.5: Implement digital incident management solutions

Strategy 5.3: Consolidate and improve data management.

Objective 5.3.1: Implement a department-wide asset management system

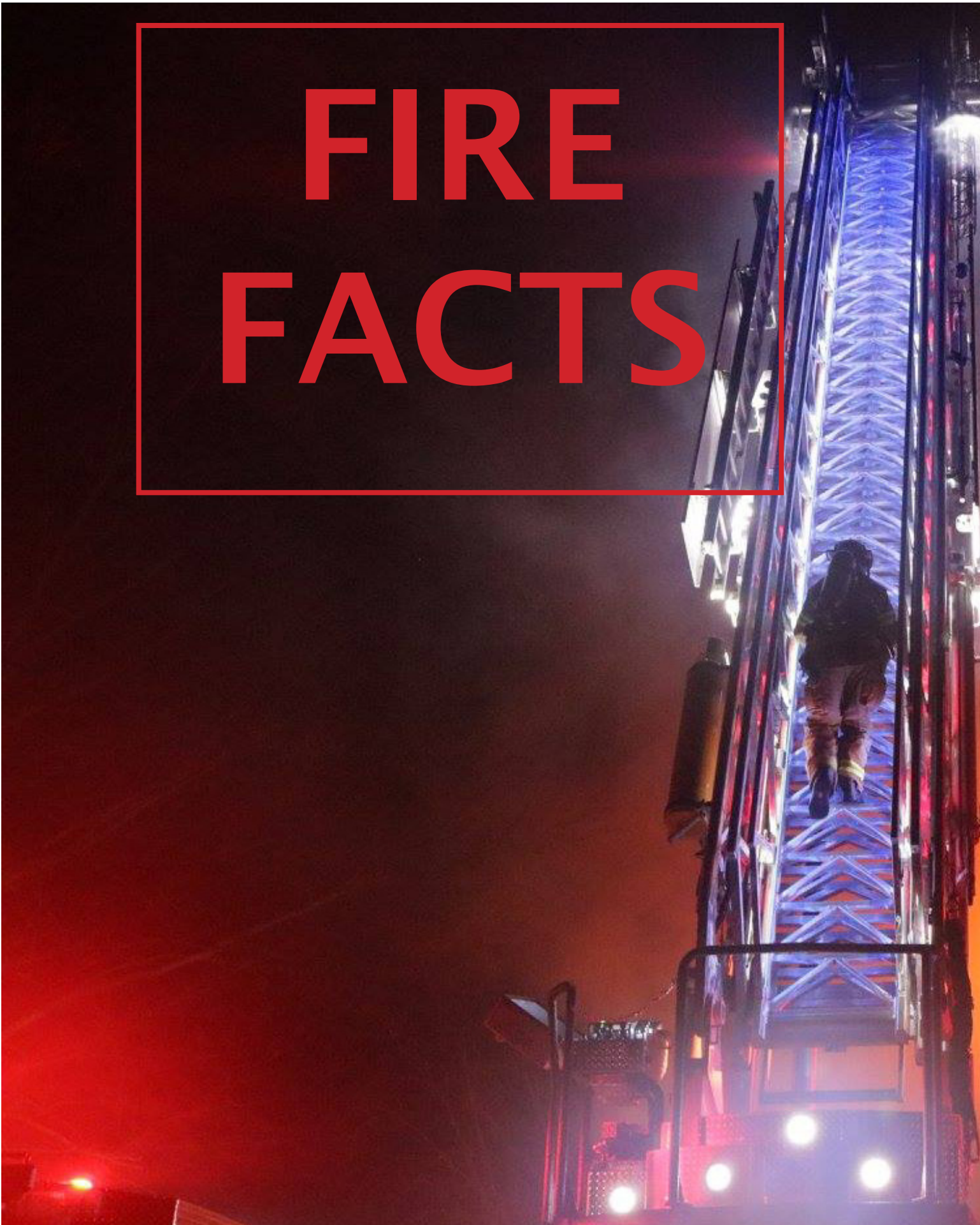
Objective 5.3.2: Implement a learning management system for training

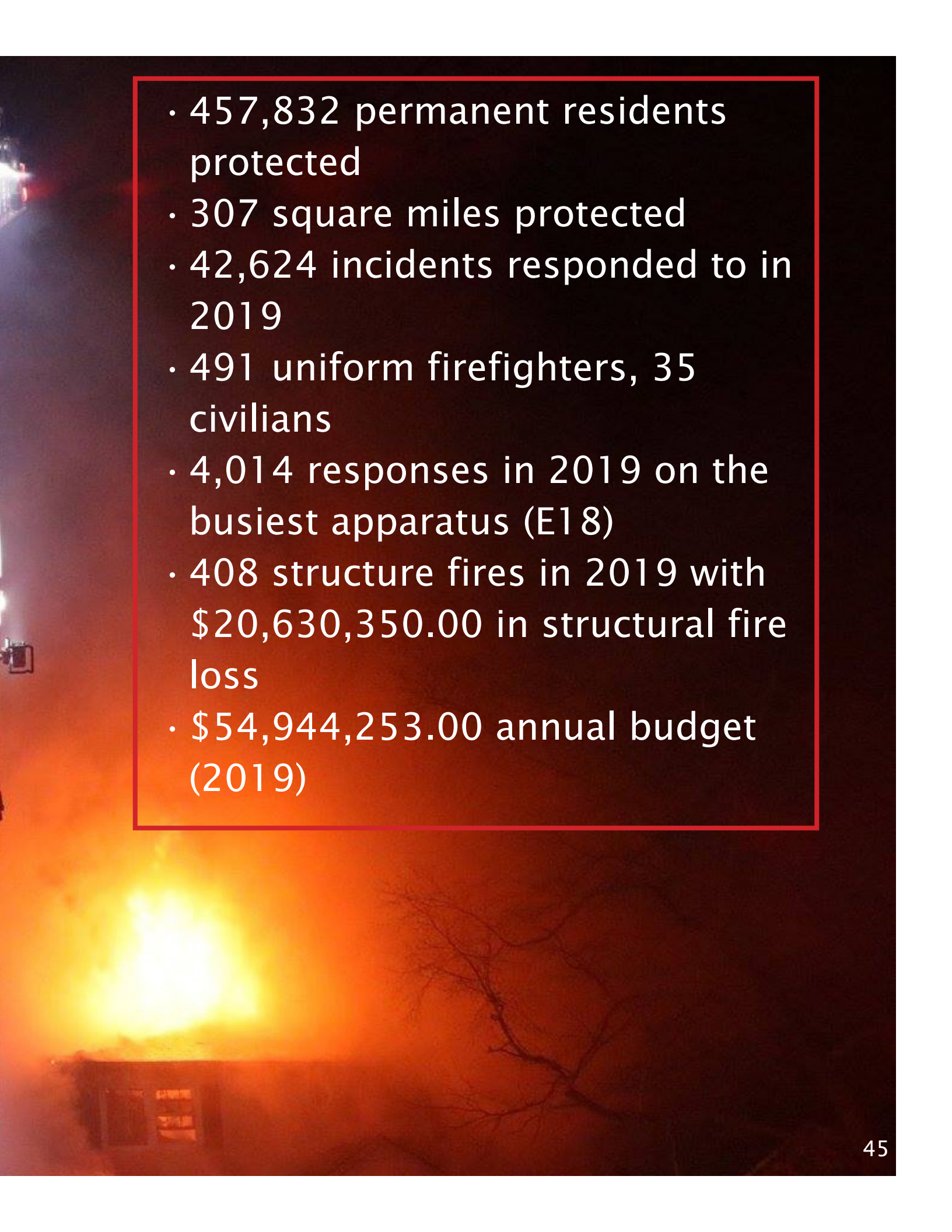
Objective 5.3.3: Implement a system for community risk reduction data management

Objective 5.3.4: Develop and implement solutions for pre-incident planning



FIRE FACTS



- 
- 457,832 permanent residents protected
 - 307 square miles protected
 - 42,624 incidents responded to in 2019
 - 491 uniform firefighters, 35 civilians
 - 4,014 responses in 2019 on the busiest apparatus (E18)
 - 408 structure fires in 2019 with \$20,630,350.00 in structural fire loss
 - \$54,944,253.00 annual budget (2019)



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- Deputy Chief V. Cooper
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- Battalion Chief L. Trent
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- Battalion Chief J. McIvor
- Dr. Evgeniy Ivanov
- Jennifer Whitley
- Orelious Walker
- Taryn Denham
- VBFD Multimedia Services Office
- Virginia Beach Communications Office
- Virginia Beach STiR Office



City of Virginia Beach

STiR Office

Strategy · Transparency · Innovation · Resiliency