



*The Walker Fire
Department
Proudly Presents*

2010 Annual Report

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Citizens of Walker,

It is my privilege to provide you with the 2010 Annual Report on the activities of the Walker Fire Department.

Each year the Annual Report provides a summary relating to the operations of our Fire Department. This includes information regarding training, personnel, programs, and accomplishments during the year. It also contains statistical data regarding a number of topics concerning our Fire Department and the vital role it plays in our community.

In these difficult economic times for government at all levels, it is a challenge to provide the resources necessary to adequately safeguard our lives and property, protect citizens from violence and disorder, and enhance the quality of life in the community. The men and women of the Walker Fire Department have risen to the challenge and earned the support of the schools, churches, neighborhoods, and business community in Walker.

The City Commission extends its heartfelt thanks to the Fire Department and encourages our entire community to offer its support and encouragement.



Sincerely,

Rob VerHeulen
Mayor
City of Walker

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

During 2010 the City of Walker made two major changes that affected operations at the Walker Fire Department. First, with the sudden retirement of Walker Fire Chief William Schmidt the City Commission appointed Deputy Chief Bob Walker as interim Fire Chief while they investigated options concerning Fire Department Administration.

On July 1st they appointed me to the position of Public Safety Director over both the Fire and Police Departments. Each department continues to have organizational separation with a Deputy Director to assist with day-to-day operations although I am in charge of both. Bob Walker was appointed as the Deputy Director of Fire Department Operations. As a result this annual report will continue to provide summary information exclusively for the Walker Fire Department.

A second change that occurred in 2010 was the closure of dispatch operations in Walker. This was to streamline emergency call taking within Kent County, not just in Walker. The Kent County Sheriff's Department now handles all dispatching services for Walker's Fire and Police Departments.

Despite difficulties we have encountered due to layoffs and attrition positions, the men and women of our agency have continued to work together in order to serve and protect this community each day. This has only been possible because the dedicated fire personnel have helped to address community concerns and school related events as they have occurred.

Finally, it is important to give thanks to the citizens, business community, Mayor, City Commission, City Manager and Assistant City Manager for their support. Without this important ingredient we would not be able to provide the efficient, professional services we do while maintaining a safe and friendly environment for everyone.



Sincerely,

CATHERINE M. GARCIA-LINDSTROM
PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR
WALKER POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Administration and Operations

2010 was a challenging year to say the least, still in the forefront is the economic status of our City. Due to continued reductions in revenue from the State, income tax, property tax, and other sources, many difficult changes occurred. The Walker Fire Department continues to strive to do its best to maintain the level of services the citizens and businesses of Walker deserve.

We continue to operate the Administrative Offices on the 4 day work week, with our hours of 07:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Our Administrative staff with the exception of the Deputy Director is continuing to work 38 hours weekly. Our fulltime crew also has had its hours reduced, but we have compensated to make sure we have fulltime coverage with one station from 07:00 AM thru 6:00PM Monday through Friday.

Chief Schmidt retired on March 6, 2010 and Deputy Fire Chief Bob Walker was appointed to the position of Acting Fire Chief. During the period the City Commission's subcommittee explored various possibilities for administering the Fire Department and settling on a course of action.

On July 1, 2010 we became a modified Public Safety Department with a Public Safety Director administering both the Fire and Police Departments. Catherine Garcia Lindstrom, formally the Police Chief, was appointed to the Director's position with Greg Long being promoted to Deputy Director of Public Safety for Police Operations and Bob Walker being promoted to Deputy Director of Public Safety for Fire Operations. The transition has been smooth with both disciplines making the adjustment to the new format.

In September of 2010 both agencies, Fire and Police, transferred our dispatching for alarms to the Kent County Sherriff's Department as an additional cost cutting measure for the City. The transition to this new dispatch has been a real smooth operation with a minimal amount of problems. Both Deputies and the Director continue to work with the Sheriff's Department as an upgrade to the new CAD software moves forward.

Staffing Changes

As a combination full-time and paid-on-call fire agency we have to routinely deal with attrition on an annual basis. As a result, we conducted a paid-on-call hiring program that commenced in June and continued until October. Twenty-one (21) applications were submitted by individuals who attended our orientation session. After the orientation process concluded there were thirteen (13) applicants who continued to express an interest in moving on with the interview process. We processed their applications by completing background checks and panel interviews of each applicant. Six candidates moved forward to the next phase of the selection process that included a physical agility test and employment physical. One of the applicants was already trained at Firefighter I & II and Haz-mat Operations levels which enabled us to utilize him sooner.

We offered employment to the following individuals: Clay Hoover and Phil McCormack III (to be assigned to Station #1); Ben Jachim, Luke Stewart, and (Travis Snyder, not pictured), (to be assigned to Station #3); and Dirk Baas (to be assigned to Station #2). With the exception of Ben Jachim (who was already trained as a fire fighter I & II) the five new firefighters started attending the Firefighter I & II Academy in Plainfield Township.



C. Hoover

P. McCormack

B. Jachim

L. Stewart

D. Baas

On November 14, 2010 we were distraught to respond to a medical call involving one of our own fire fighters. Tom Tygesen from Station #1 passed away from complications he suffered during a seizure he had shortly after returning home from his Sunday duty. He was only 44 years old and had 10 years on the Department when he left us. Tom will be greatly missed by his fellow firefighters and we wish Tom's family our condolences.



We had 3 retirements during 2010. Chief William Schmidt retired with 16 years with the Walker Fire Department.



Captain Tom Verhey from Station #1 retired with 30 years of service.



Firefighter Eric Hutchinson from Station #2 retired with 10 years of service.

In addition, two firefighters resigned from the Walker Fire Department for personal reasons. Sam Powell resigned from Station #3 with 9 years of service, and one of our new recruits, Travis Snyder, assigned to Station #3 resigned due to health reasons.

Lieutenant Don Munn (from Station #1) was promoted to Captain as a result of the retirement of Tom Verhey. Don has twenty years experience in fire service.



In addition, Kevin DeGroot (from Station #1) was promoted to Lieutenant. Kevin has 14 years experience in fire service and both newly promoted candidates are already trained in fire supervision.



Six of our firefighters (hired during the 2009 calendar year) completed their probation period during 2010. As has been our custom these individuals were presented their helmet name plates at a formal ceremony commemorating this event.

The proud recipients are: Eric Bakhuyzen (from Station #1), Jeff DeYoung, Robert Harrison, and Mike Thomasma (from Station #2), and Randy DeVoogd, David Hood, and Casey O'Rourke, (not pictured) are all from Station #3.

We had two members of the Department off on extended medical leaves of absence for the remainder of 2010. Bill Mucinski (from Station #3) and Chad Byrd (from Station #2) continue to be off into 2011. Both members are hoping to recover and return during the next calendar year.

Another long-term leave of absence is from Brian Gillikin (from Station #2) who is on extended leave while he is in Iraq. We are unsure when he will return to work with the Department.

Daily Operations Summary

We responded to 477 calls for service in 2010. This is a 3% increase over 2009. Of the four hundred and seventy-seven (477) alarms we responded to, the majority were of a priority nature. Three hundred thirty-six (336) of our alarm calls for service required an emergency response and one hundred forty-one (141) required a non-emergency response 44 of these were canceled while we en-route to the call.

We strive to respond to our calls in less than 5 minutes whenever we receive an emergency call for service. During this past year we responded to between 15% and 20% of all emergency calls in less than 5 minutes. The variation is a result of the number of calls that occur when our engine is staffed.

There were three incidents that involved cost recovery in 2010. We recovered \$687.12 from Consumers Energy for a standby on a transformer explosion and \$566.93 for the cleanup of a leaking fuel tank from the YMCA when one of their buses had a nozzle dislodged from the fill opening on the bus and spilled approximately 30 gallons of fuel on the concrete at the filling station. We have one pending recovery from Alpinist Endeavors, LLC for \$3,038.92. This resulted from our response to a report of natural gas leak in the basement of the facility. Upon our arrival we found the presence of an unknown gas substance in the basement from a 2" copper pipe that had been cut open with a saw. The GRFD Hazardous Materials Team was called and responded to the scene; they identified the gas and advised how to mitigate the situation.

During 2010 our fulltime fire suppression crew responded to 214 calls for service compared to 225 calls in 2009. They responded to 157 calls for service where they were the only crew needed to handle the situation. Examples (but not an all-inclusive list) are:

- investigations of wires down
- burning complaints
- general assists for services
- medical lift assists
- assist PD (i.e., for traffic, crash extraction or for MFR assistance)

In addition to their regular routine the full-time crew performed weekly checks and cleaned our emergency vehicles and did routine maintenance on all the fire stations. They assisted DPW personnel by performing minor repairs on our fire trucks (such as replaced wipers and replaced headlights, etc.) along with shuttling

the fire trucks to the garage when routine service and major repairs were required. The DPW garage has expressed their appreciation for the assistance our full-time crew gave them because it gave the garage personnel more time to concentrate on larger more complex maintenance and repair projects for the City's fleet. Our full-time crew was responsible for flushing 35% of all the hydrants in the spring and pumping 35% of the hydrants in the fall. They also kept the hydrants free of high weeds during the summer and they shovel the snow from around the hydrants in the winter.

The fulltime crew assisted our DPW with snow removal at Station #2 and at Station #3 during the winter of 2009-2010, along with keeping the sidewalks salted for the community rooms at both stations. The fulltime crew assisted in setting up training and also delivering the training to the paid on call firefighters.

As part of their assignment the fulltime crew handled fifty three (53) re-inspections of buildings to assist our Chief Fire Inspector. They were responsible for entering all of the data required by the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) as required by state law, and updating the agency's fire hydrant data and hose testing data.

In 2010, at the collective suggestion of the fire command staff, we introduced a new method to help in the effort to reduce costs for maintaining our fire hydrants; we pump out each hydrant after we flush it in the spring. This methodology of doing hydrant maintenance has reduced the cost to the City of Walker by as much as twenty-five percent!

During the last part of the year we were able to complete the replacement process of all our personal protection equipment (PPE, aka "Turnout Gear") for the remainder of our firefighters. This was a costly program which was made possible by a FEMA Fire Act. We now have completed the process and all firefighters have had their gear replaced.

Grants

Our Department submitted a Fire Act Grant application this year in the hopes of being able to fund the purchase of a new fire engine to replace our oldest engine. This would have meant all of our apparatus would then be in compliance with the newer National Fire Protection Act's (NFPA) requirements (while improving firefighter safety) that fire personnel respond on apparatus in enclosed cabs. Unfortunately we were not awarded the grant.

Training Division

Fire Department training in most cases is conducted by members of our own agency who have received the specific certification to do the training. In 2010 we began a new program that created smaller training groups which allowed us to provide more hands-on time and a closer interaction between the participants and the instructor(s). This created a need for a larger pool of instructors and a need for additional planning and oversight. True to form several members of the department stepped up and volunteered to meet the need. As a result we selected two Firefighters Brad Heinrich (Station #1) and Dan Suttorp (Station #2) to become State Certified Instructors.

The training committee which is comprised of several department members recommended training goals for 2010. This recommendation was approved by the entire command staff of the agency. Those goals and the results were:

- Conduct repeated training sessions related to primary search and rescue at residential buildings
- Get all members proficient in deploying and advancing the various hose loads used by the department
- Hold an EMS focused mass casualty exercise
- Continue to develop our Hazardous Materials program through regular continuing education
- Place a renewed emphasis on the use of the department's accountability program

Other areas we addressed included vehicle extrication, pump and tanker operations, ventilation and fire fighting foam operations. We participated in numerous drills with neighboring fire departments and held continuing education session for our medical first responders.

Special Operations

Monthly training is conducted for this group with almost half of those sessions involving the team from Grand Rapids as well. Unfortunately due to personal commitments two team members stepped down in 2010 (Pete Brown and Tony Ritzenhein). Several members of the department expressed interest in joining the team, however no positions have been filled as yet. New members, once selected, should start their training by attending specialized training in rope rescue operations and confined space rescue equipment and techniques.

Training committee personnel continue to meet with Fire Department administration personnel to evaluate where we have been and where we want (need) to be. The intent for the next year is to begin the development of standardized methodologies and procedures that, when combined with specific performance goals, will improve our operations at the scene of fires and emergencies.

Fire Records

The Fire Department has one individual, Sue Kuklewski, who is responsible for performing a wide range of administrative duties to facilitate the effective operations of the agency. A not-all-inclusive list of her specific duties is as follows:

- Maintain and update the State of Michigan Log and Summary of Occupational Illnesses and Injuries listing all injuries and illness for City employees and prepares the year end summary for Department of Labor
- Work with the State of Michigan and Kent County EMS on our continuing education program for our Medical First Responder licensing of vehicles and Fire Department personnel
- Enter all payroll for the entire Fire Department and maintains several payroll spread sheets every month
- Assist insurance companies inquiring about property loss and damage and classification of property for fire hydrant location
- Assist with training preparations and maintains all training records
- Help coordinate corporate sponsorships for public fire safety educational materials to be distributed to area schools and businesses. She also schedules Fire Department personnel to participate in yearly Fire Prevention Week activities at area schools and businesses
- Handle all of the environmental requests for all businesses within the City
- Schedule siren maintenance, ladder testing, pump testing, air pack testing
- Compile articles for the City Newsletter
- Order fire truck equipment and firefighter gear
- Responsible for the processing and accuracy of all Fire Department invoices
- Assist with transporting vehicles for off premise service work
- Compile information for our Monthly and Annual Reports
- Coordinate the Alternate Staffing program for the Fire Department
- Assist residents on a daily basis with room rentals, grand opening events for area businesses, fire extinguisher training, car seat installation, open burning for residential and agricultural, and many additional questions regarding the services that the City offers

Community Involvement

We had very successful Fire Prevention Week in October 2010. The theme was “Smoke Alarms, A Sound You Can Live With.” This year we participated in the Silent Parade which was held in Alpine Township. We also participated in the City’s Memorial Day Parade and in the Marne Parade this year. We had a good turnout of firefighters and equipment.

We participated in the Walker Festival. Some of our equipment was on display and our paid on call firefighters set up our “Mini Combat Challenge.” The kids really enjoy going through the course. Some of the tasks include running through a serpentine course carrying a hose pack, coupling two pieces of 1½” hose together, squirting water on a simulated house that is on fire, and dragging a rescue dummy.

The Walker Firefighters’ Association sponsors an annual Halloween Open House at each of the fire stations and this past year was no exception. Community attendance to this initiative was good. What is also very impressive is that the fire fighters themselves donate time to come up to the three stations to make this event such a success! The stations all served donut holes, cider and coffee. As always, the children and parents enjoyed looking at the fire trucks and the tools and equipment that they carry. The Open Houses serve as a nice break for the parents and the children after trick or treating. We would like to give a great big “Thank you!” to the Firefighters Association for continuing this tradition.



Participation with Outside Organizations

Throughout the year Director Garcia-Lindstrom and Deputy Director Walker have participated in numerous activities with the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs, the Joint Fire Chiefs Executive Board, Western Michigan Fire Chiefs Association, and the Kent County Fire Chiefs Association in order to keep the Department members current on all possible grant, training, and regional networking opportunities.

Risk Management and Emergency Management

Throughout the year we are constantly working to update our Chemical Survey tracking. This is in keeping with Michigan OSHA requirements under the “Firefighters Right to Know Act.” The Act states that every business must complete a Chemical Survey for their facility annually. This survey indicates whether they have any chemicals on site. If they do they must provide information of the name and quantity of the chemical(s) they have on site at their facility. We are required to have a current Chemical Survey on file for every business within our City. One of the challenges is the ever-changing list of businesses we have moving into and out of our city. This list of new businesses and defunct businesses keeps us very busy. Additionally we have to send out updates for all the surveys that were older than five years. Once the surveys are returned we have to manually enter them into our computer system to update our files.

At the beginning of each year businesses must submit their reportable quantities of hazardous materials to the Fire Department. We review these documents individually. If there are changes in the quantities from previous years, or changes in the types of chemicals used, we must update the fire response plan (if an existing plan exists) or develop a new plan for fire response to that occupancy.

Throughout the year, the City’s Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) files are updated. MSDS sheets are supposed to be kept for every chemical used by the City, including that material kept at the Walker Ice and Fitness Center. This can be a very large task considering the amount of different chemicals being used at all of our City facilities. We rely on our Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Ice and Fitness Center personnel to send us any new MSDS sheets they have so that we can update the Department’s files.

Fire Prevention Bureau

The Fire Prevention Bureau was very busy in 2010. The Fire Department completed another year with no reported fire related deaths or injuries to any of our residents or firefighters. We continue to convey our message for fire safety to our citizens and they are hearing us.

We had another successful Fire Prevention Week in 2010. The theme for Fire Prevention Week was “Smoke Alarms, A Sound You Can Live With.” We conducted all of our activities and school visits around that theme. Our annual open house at Station #2 was again very successful. We had several hundred people visit the station. We provided information on home fire safety, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers. We conducted some live fire extinguisher training and had our fire trucks available for viewing.

This past year was the second year we were unable to present the “Safe at Home” program due to budgetary limitations. While we have had some limited contact with the students in our schools, we are still striving to maintain a good fire safety record as it relates to children and fire. We are working on different ways to continue our public education program. One method has been to become more involved in the City’s Neighborhood Watch program. This contact we hope will allow us to continue our work on the residential fire safety program thorough distribution of our self inspection list.

Our inspection program continues to show some increases, in spite of a reduction of hours in our Fire Prevention Bureau. We are getting help with inspections from our full time crew. In 2010 we conducted 345 inspections and 118 re-inspections.

Our fire inspector reviewed thirty two (32) plans and responded to forty-seven (47) daytime alarms, and one open burn complaint. He also conducted three “Firematch intervention” program interviews and conducted 14 fire extinguisher trainings for area businesses.

Inspection Volume

Filters:

- Start Date: 1/1/2010 12:00:00 AM
- End Date: 12/31/2010 11:59:59 PM
- Inspector: McCormack, Phil; Staff, Fulltime
- Occupancy Type: -all-
- IFC Occupant Class: -all-
- Occupancy Number: -all-
- Zip Code: -all-
- Location: -all-
- Inspection Type: Acceptance, Annual, Complaints, Events, Final - Occupancy, Fireworks, Holiday Storage, Knox Box Maintenance, Plan Review, Re-inspect, Service/gas station, System Inspection Follow-up
- Section Number: -all-

Volume by Inspector

McCormack, Phil	# of Inspections ¹	Violations Cited	Occupant Sq. Ft.
Acceptance	19		0
Annual	171		0
Complaints	12		0
Events	5		0
Final - Occupancy	12		0
Fireworks	1		0
Holiday Storage	1		0
Plan Review	32		0
Re-inspect	93		0
Annual (93)			
Total 93 ³			
System Inspection Follow-up	21		0
Total	367	105	0

Staff, Fulltime	# of Inspections ¹	Violations Cited	Occupant Sq. Ft.
Acceptance	2		0
Annual	19		0
Holiday Storage	7		0
Knox Box Maintenance	96		0
Re-inspect	25		0
Annual (25)			
Total 25 ³			
Total	149	75	0

Totals

	# of Inspections ¹	Violations Cited	Violations Cleared ²	Violations Remaining	Occupant Sq. Ft.
Acceptance	21				0
Annual	190				0
Complaints	12				0
Events	5				0
Final - Occupancy	12				0
Fireworks	1				0
Holiday Storage	8				0
Knox Box Maintenance	96				0
Plan Review	32				0
Re-inspect	118				0
System Inspection Follow-up	21				0
Total	516	180	201	-21	0

Number of Occupants Inspected

Filters:

- Start Date: 1/1/2010 12:00:00 AM
- End Date: 12/31/2010 11:59:59 PM
- Inspector: McCormack, Phil; Staff, Fulltime
- Occupancy Type: -all-
- IFC Occupant Class: -all-
- Occupancy Number: -all-
- Zip Code: -all-
- Section Number: -all-
- Inspection Type: Acceptance, Annual, Complaints, Events, Final - Occupancy, Fireworks, Holiday Storage, Knox Box Maintenance, Plan Review, Re-inspect, Service/gas station, System Inspection Follow-up

Inspector	# Occupants Inspected
McCormack, Phil	365
Staff, Fulltime	147
Total Occupants Inspected	512

Top 10 Findings by Fire Code

Filters:

- Start Date: 1/1/2010 12:00:00 AM
- End Date: 12/31/2010 11:59:59 PM
- Location: -all-
- Section Number: -all-
- Occupancy Type: -all-
- Occupancy Number: -all-
- Zip: -all-
- Fire Code Source: International Fire Codes 2006
- Structure Extinguishing Sys. Type: -all-

Summary - International Fire Codes 2006

Rank	Findings	FireCode Group	Fire Code	Fire Code Description
1	<u>35</u>	MEANS OF EGRESS	<u>1027.5</u>	Illumination emergency power.
2	<u>30</u>	FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS	<u>901.6</u>	Inspection, testing and maintenance.
3	<u>29</u>	MEANS OF EGRESS	<u>1027.3</u>	Exit sign illumination.
4	<u>17</u>	BUILDING SERVICES	<u>605.5</u>	Extension cords.
5	<u>9</u>	FIRE RATED CONSTRUCTION	<u>703.1</u>	Maintenance.
6	<u>8</u>	BUILDING SERVICES	<u>605.6</u>	Unapproved conditions.
6	<u>8</u>	MEANS OF EGRESS	<u>1027.4</u>	Power source.
7	<u>6</u>	FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS	<u>903.3.3</u>	Obstructed locations.
8	<u>5</u>	BUILDING SERVICES	<u>605.3</u>	Working space and clearance.
8	<u>5</u>	HAZARDS	<u>3003.5.3</u>	Securing compressed gas containers, cylinders and tanks.
9	<u>4</u>	BUILDING SERVICES	<u>315.2.3</u>	Equipment rooms.
10	<u>3</u>	CHAPTER 10 MEANS OF EGRESS	<u>1008.1.8</u>	Door operations.
	159	Total		

Statistics for 2010

Number of calls for service/incidents 477, up 3% from 2009

Of the 477 calls for service/incidents 336 were emergency calls, 141 were non-emergency calls

Station % of calls for 2010 Station #1= 24%, Station #2= 24%, Station #3=52% = 100%

Types of calls for service:

Some type of fire 63 calls = 13%

Rescues / Medicals 49 calls = 10%

Hazardous Conditions (no fire) 65 calls = 14%

Service calls (Assists) 88 = 18%

Good Intent calls 98 = 21%

False Alarm calls 109 = 23%

Weather calls 3 = 0.6%

Specials Incidents 0= 0%

Average # of firefighters per incidents 11 for 477 incidents

Value of property subject to lose = \$ 686,250

Value of property lost = \$ 183,650

Value of property saved = \$ 502,600

Busiest time of day between 14:00 hours and 15:00 hours (2PM -3PM)

Busiest day of week Tuesday 19% of calls followed by Monday with 16% and Wednesday with 16%

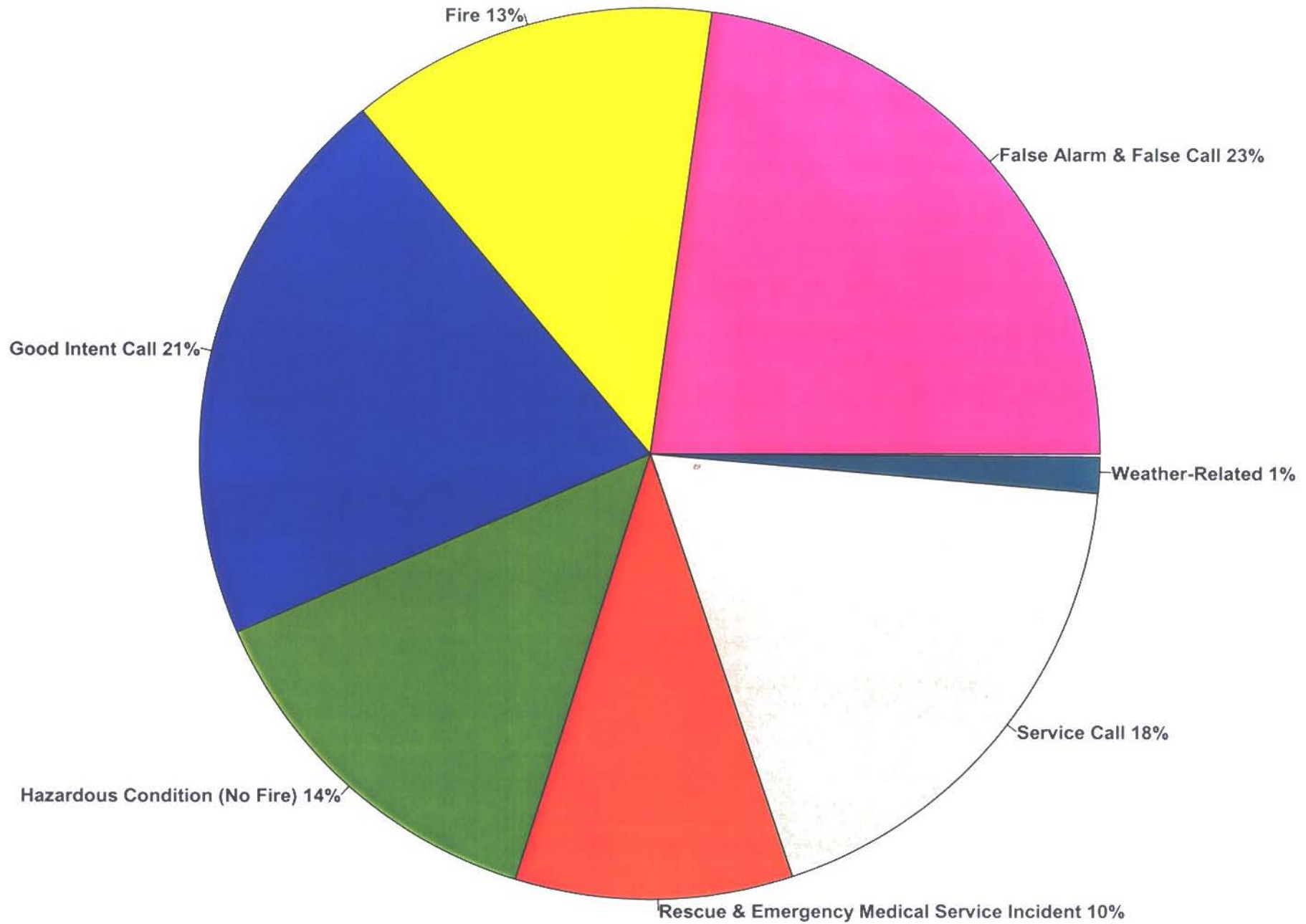
Mutual Aid / Given = 6 times

Auto Aid / Given = 8 times

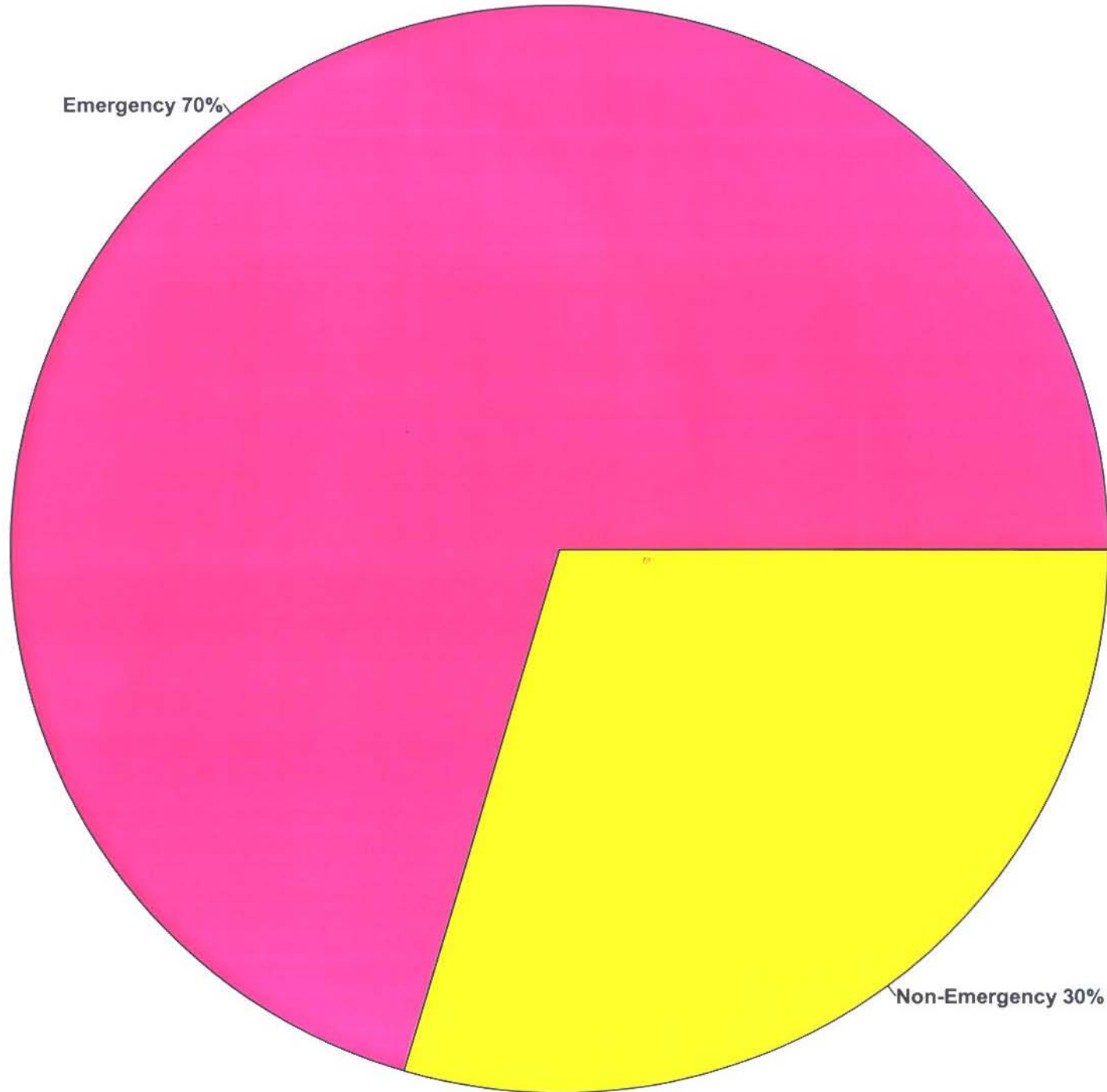
Mutual Aid / Received = 2 times

Auto Aid / Received = 6 times

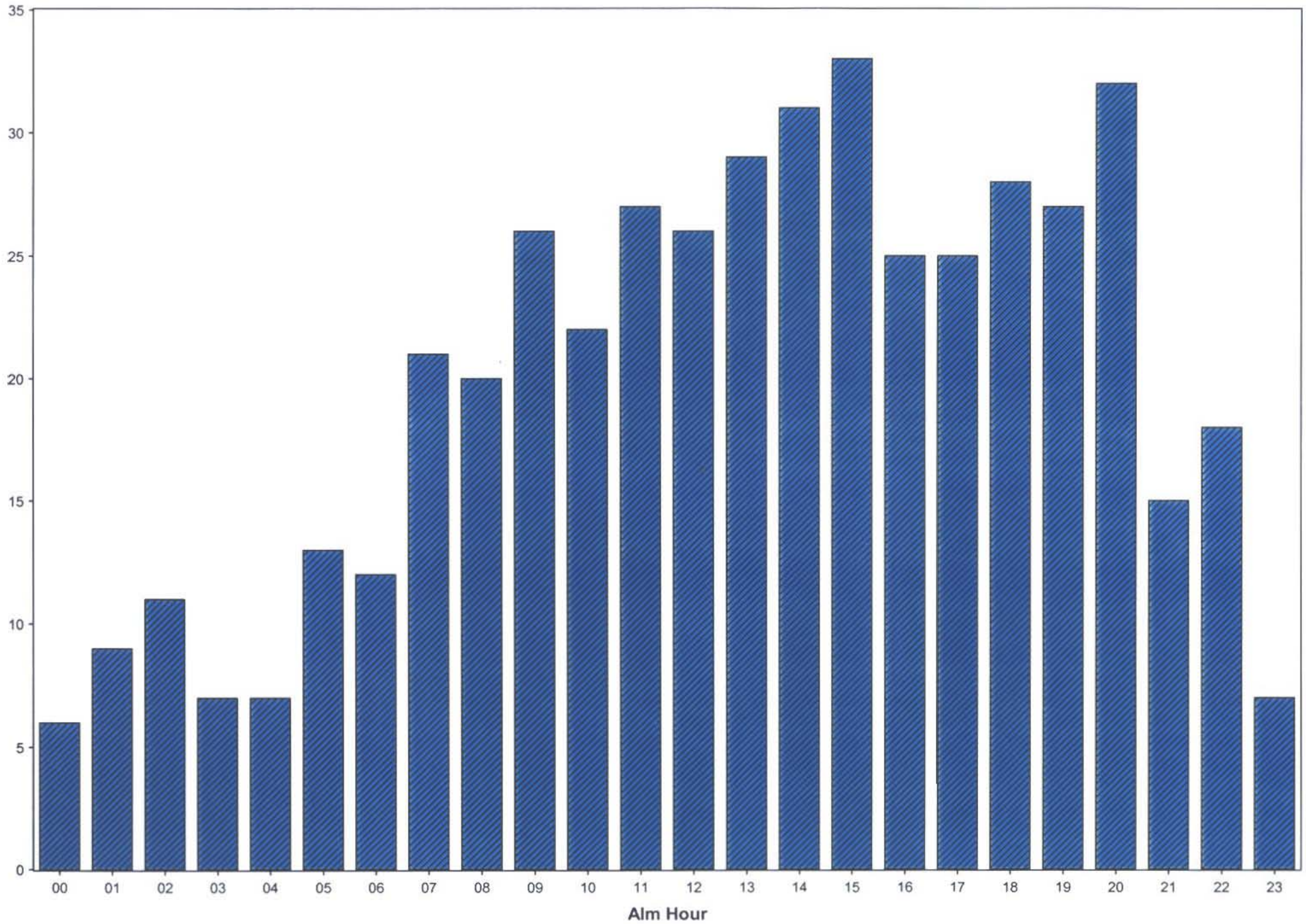
Incident Type Summary
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2010} And {12/31/2010}



Type of Alarm Summary Graph
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2010} And {12/31/2010}



Count of Incidents by Alarm Hour
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2010} And {12/31/2010}



Fire Loss Analysis
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2010} And {12/31/2010}

