



City of Worcester

# FIRE

Department



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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# **A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF'S OFFICE**

## **Welcome to the City of Worcester Fire Department's 2022 Annual Report**

It is our pleasure to issue the first Worcester Fire Department annual report. This was a momentous year for the Worcester Fire Department as we accomplished many goals set forth in our strategic plan. The department began the year at an almost historically low uniformed staffing complement of 374 members and ended the year with 411, which is the strongest staffing level since 2005. This staffing allowed the department to implement a safer and more effective staffing policy, ensuring every apparatus has an assigned officer working and a crew that is familiar with the apparatus and its response area. Since July 1<sup>st</sup>, daily operations staffing averaged 76 members on-duty with five or six apparatus staffed to our goal of 3 firefighters and one officer.

This past spring, we rallied around our newly created Mission, Vision and Values statements. Our members are mission focused to serve the community and are doing the hard work to ensure they are always mission ready.

In support of our vision to be the premier provider of fire and rescue services in the nation, the department continued to focus on training. The Training Division ran two recruit training academies, graduating 55 new firefighters. They also conducted live burn training in the Spring and Fall along with other mandatory training such as First Responder, CPR and HazMat. Many members of the department sought training this year from sources around the country including the National Fire Academy, the Massachusetts Fire Academy, the Connecticut Fire Academy, National Fire Protection Association and the Center for Public Safety Excellence.

Looking forward to 2023, the department will run another recruit academy this spring, increasing our uniformed staffing to a projected 440. It is anticipated that, by September, staffing will be in place to operate every apparatus with one officer and three firefighters every shift. This increase in personnel will allow for safer, more effective firefighting and rescue operations, which will result in quicker mitigation of incidents with less property damage and a better chance for victim survival.

The City of Worcester is well served by its fire department. Our members responded to more than 33,500 calls for service and had over 8,000 fire prevention interactions with the community including public education events, community meetings, inspections and plans reviews. Our shared sense of mission and duty makes the City of Worcester a safer and better place to call home. It is our honor to lead this great department of extremely dedicated and talented individuals.

**John Powers**  
Assistant Chief

**Martin W. Dyer**  
Fire Chief

**Adam Roche**  
Assistant Chief



# MISSION

The Worcester Fire Department is dedicated to professionally serving the citizens and protecting lives and property in our community. We accomplish this mission through fire suppression, emergency response, prevention, and community risk reduction.

# VISION

The Worcester Fire Department aspires to be the premier provider of fire and rescue services in the country.

# VALUES

**Professionalism** - Worcester Firefighters shall be competent, accountable, safe, committed, and respectful.

**Integrity** - Worcester Firefighters shall conduct themselves ethically and morally and have the courage to do the right thing.

**Compassion** - Worcester Firefighters shall treat everyone with respect, kindness, and empathy.

**Dedication** - Worcester Firefighters shall serve the Worcester Community with enthusiasm and devotion.

# OPERATIONS

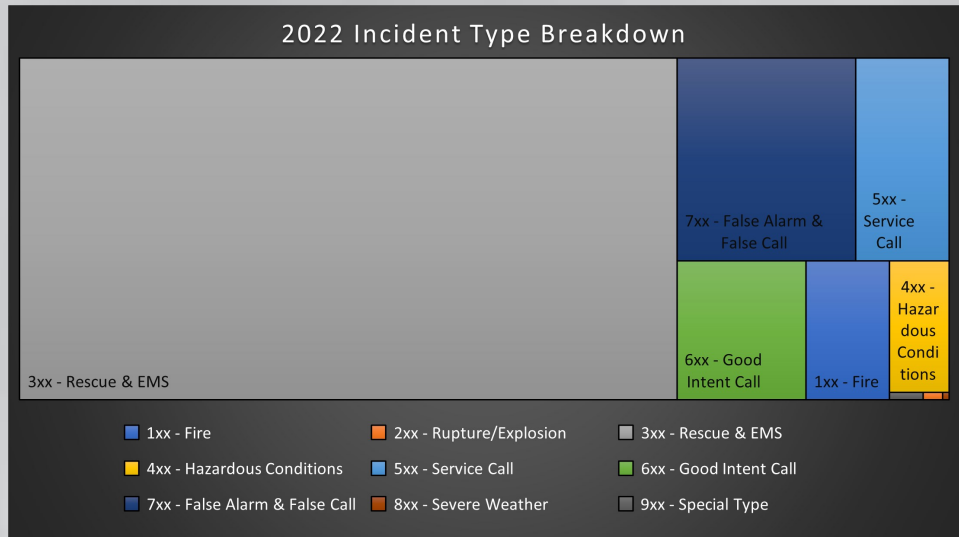
## Assistant Chief John Powers

The Operations Division is charged with protecting the City's residents and their property during emergencies by extinguishing fires, responding to emergency calls for service and mitigating of hazardous conditions. This Division has 8 District Chiefs, 21 Captains, 63 Lieutenants, and 304 Firefighters. Working a 24 hour, 8 day rotating schedule, the members of the Operations Division's 4 groups stand at the ready to respond to calls for emergency service at all times.

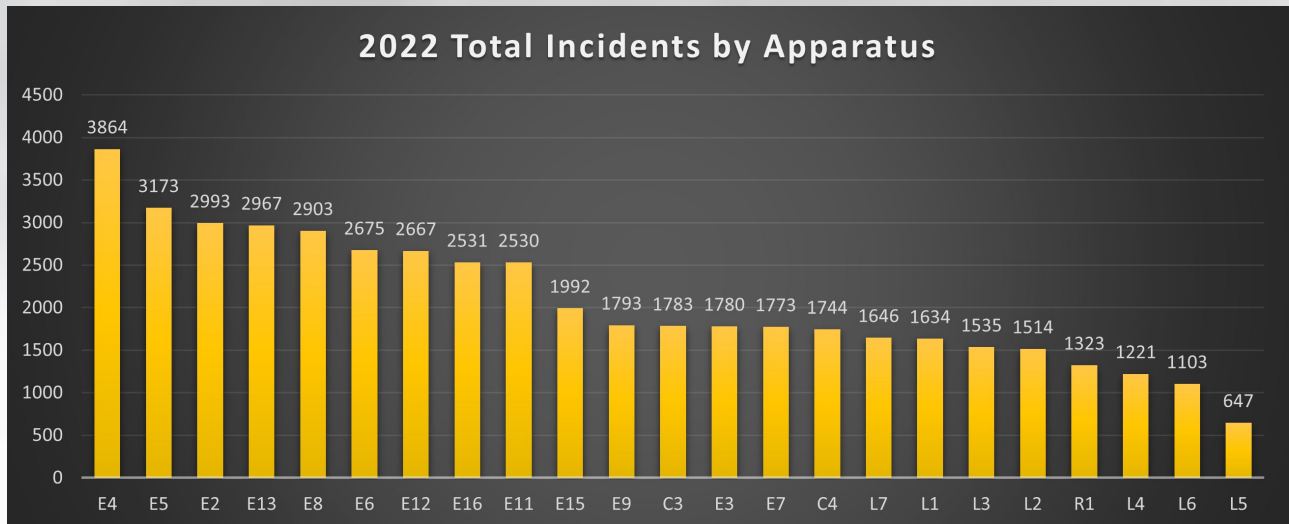
The Worcester Fire Department serves the City of Worcester's population of over 206,000 and covers 38.6 square miles with 21 Fire apparatus running out of 10 stations strategically placed throughout the city.

### 2022 Total Incidents

The Operations Division had a total of 33,591 calls for service in 2022. 17.6% of calls were fire related, 76.3% were EMS calls, and the rest (6.1%) were special/other types of calls. There was a 3.8% increase in call volume over 2021.



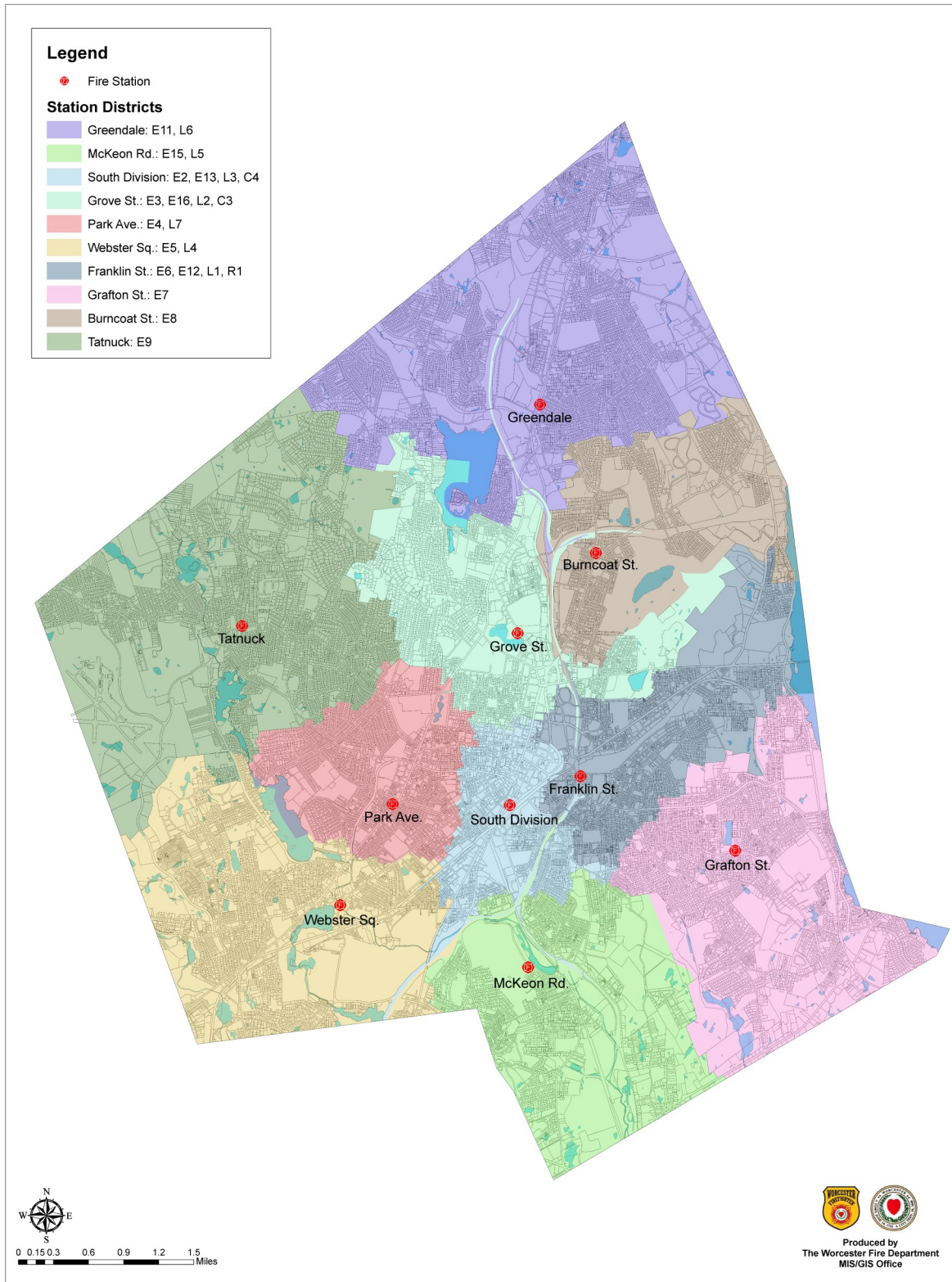
*Breakdown of all 2022 Incidents by Incident Primary Type*



*Total number of Incidents in 2022 for each Apparatus*

# OPERATIONS

## FIRE STATIONS & RESPONSE AREAS



# TRAINING

## District Chief Anthony Grokaitis

The Training Division provides educational resources and hands on training for members of the department. The Division is staffed by 1 District Chief, 2 Captains, 2 Lieutenants, and 1 Administrative Assistant.

### Training by the Numbers

- Performed 222 Recruit Candidate Investigations
- Conducted two 13-week Fire Academies
- Trained 57 recruits
- Ran 144 live burns

### Major Accomplishments

- Increased participation in outside training programs
- Increased professional development delivered to all ranks
- Worked with the strategic plan training committee to develop a new company drill program



*Firefighters use an outside attack line to reach a 4th story window*



*Recruit Academy 22-02's First day of the WFD Training Academy*

# SPECIAL OPERATIONS

## District Chief Kurt Richards

The Special Operations Division manages specialized teams and equipment. Special Operations include the following incident types: hazardous materials, water rescue, confined space, structural collapse, trench, high angle rope and heavy truck and equipment rescue. These incidents require specialized equipment and training. Members of Rescue 1, Engine 5 and Ladder 4 along with select members throughout the department are assigned to special operations teams and maintain a regional special operations response vehicle. These teams respond outside of the city to support regional technical rescue teams. The Special Operations Division is staffed by 1 District Chief.



*Heavy Rescue Training at Drenzo's Towing*

### Training Highlights

As a major New England transportation corridor, the City of Worcester sees thousands of tractor trailers and rail cars pass through the city each day. Accidents involving these vehicles are complex and require advanced training and equipment. The team has utilized their training and equipment locally and regionally.

Special Operations conducted 10 training dives throughout the year at different bodies of water in the City. Most lakes are referred to as "black water," meaning zero visibility. The dive team recovered 3 victims in 2022.

### Construction Projects

Buildings are most dangerous when they are under construction. Special Operations trains on high angle rope skills to rescue construction workers and are skilled in confined space and structural collapse techniques to respond to and mitigate construction accidents.



*Worcester Firefighter at a Dive Training*



# ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

## Acting Deputy Chief Adam Roche

The Administration and Support Division is responsible for the Fire Prevention Division, Maintenance Division and the Administrative Office. The Deputy Chief of Administration and support leads all budget, personnel and grant responsibilities.



*Department Administration, City Administration, members of FEMA and Recruit Academy 22-02*

### Major Accomplishments

- During the 2022 Calendar Year, the Department applied for and received four grants totaling just over \$15,000,000;
  - FEMA SAFER Grant: \$14,095,155, covering recruit salaries for 3 years
  - FEMA AFG Grant: \$854,365.91, covering suppression equipment including radios, SCBA, and turnout gear to support increased staffing
  - MEOPS SAFE/Senior SAFE Grant: \$14,930, school-based and Senior Fire Education and Prevention programs
  - MEOPS Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant: \$47,905, covering suppression equipment including hoses, valves, nozzles, and chainsaws
- Created specifications and ordered 5 fire apparatus: 2 engines and 3 ariel platforms
- Led implementation of strategic plan

# ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

## New Initiatives

There are three new major programs that administrative staff have been working on in 2022 to help make the Worcester Fire Department the premier Fire Service in the country.

### **A new Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Record Management System (RMS):**

A once-in-a-generation technological shift is coming to the Fire Department. The City's current dispatch and public safety records management system has been in place for over thirty years, and is no longer supported. As such, this critical infrastructure is being replaced. This modern technology has a range of benefits including plan review, near real-time notes from Fire Alarm, apparatus visualization, mapping, incident reporting, inspection modules and integrations with other software used by the department.

### **A new Policy Repository and Learning Management System:**

Lexipol was built as a policy repository for public safety departments, and FireRescue1 is their fire-specific training module. By consolidating all of our policies and procedures in one place, they can be easily referenced and maintained; this replaces decades of scattered paper documents, memoranda, and guidelines written by dozens of people. By following Lexipol's guidance and using their best-practice, standardized, and legally-defensible language, the department ensures it complies with legal responsibilities and requirements. FireRescue1 is a training suite with hundreds of courses that support a well-trained, professional department. It also comes with the ability to create our own custom courses for WFD-specific trainings with the ability to assign courses and track user progress.

### **A new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System:**

Administrative Staff is working with the City to implement Workday, the new Enterprise Resource Planning system that will replace several aging systems. Our staff is participating in testing functional usability aspects of this program and providing feedback. This project is expected to take two years.



# ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

## Strategic Plan Initiatives

**Initiative 1: Fire Department Leadership:** An assessment center for the Chief of Department was held on December 7, 2022. An assessment center for Deputy Chief was held on December 14, 2022. When a certified list is received from HRD, the process to fill the permanent Chief of Department Position, as well as Assistant Chief of Administration, and four group deputies will be completed.

**Initiative 2: Communication Network:** The focus of this group is long-term internal and external communication. The new CAD/RMS software will address many of the objectives in this initiative.

**Initiative 3: Chain of Command:** This initiative is completed with the implementation of our chain of command guideline. Continuous reinforcement is ongoing.

**Initiative 4: Standard Operating Procedures:** New Policy and Procedure Manuals have been created using Lexipol that consolidate all historical Worcester Fire Department documents into two manuals.

**Initiative 5: Training:** An annual training calendar has been developed and implemented as of December 1, 2022. Recruit training will continue in order to increase our complement to our authorized 452. Proficiency training is continuing with the addition of more live burn programs along with multiple other proficiency training programs that are necessary to maintain our skills.

**Initiative 6: Promotional Process Including Professional Development:** Professional development opportunities for all members are being identified, and the ability to attend outside trainings and seminars is being provided.

**Initiative 7: Recruitment, Application, and Hiring Process:** The department continues to adhere to our strict candidate investigation process and recruit training metrics.

**Initiative 8: Operational Staffing:** Increased staffing complement from 409 members to 452 members. This will take approximately 2 years to accomplish with the running of consecutive drill schools for at least 18 months.

**Initiative 9: Support Services Staffing:** Job descriptions for all administrative jobs have been written based on interviews with members of the administration and representatives from the support services divisions. A second Captain position has been added to the Training Division to focus on department proficiency training.

**Initiative 10: Emergency Response Deployment:** The integration of the new CAD/RMS that is currently being finalized and will be a driving force in the completion of several objective under this initiative. An internal evaluation of the stations has been conducted with several deficiencies at all stations being noted. We are currently working with the Department of Public Facilities on a holistic evaluation of all Worcester Fire Department buildings.

# FIRE PREVENTION

## District Chief Jason Ehrets

The Fire Prevention Division has 4 main responsibilities: engineering, education, enforcement and fire investigation. The Division is run by 1 District Chief, 1 Captain, 6 Lieutenants, 11 Firefighters, 1 Fire Protection Engineer, 1 Signal Maintainer and 1 Principal Clerk.



*FIU receives commendations from DA Early for their investigation that led to a prosecution*

## Fire Prevention by the Numbers

- Issued 6,236 Permits
- Conducted 5,533 Inspections
- Resolved 1,387 Complaints
- Investigated 128 Fires
- Visited 167 Classrooms, reaching 4,175 students
- Visited 76 Senior Homes
- Conducted 17 Senior Home Fire Safety Workshops



*Public Education brought their new Fire Safety house to Kindergarteners to give them Fire Safety tips*

## Major Accomplishments

- Two members of our Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) received commendations from District Attorney Joseph Early for their work in the investigation and prosecution related to the Line of Duty Death at 5-7 Lowell St
- Members within FIU received their Fire Investigator Technician credentialing through the International Association of Arson Investigators
- A new position was established within our code enforcement division to conduct inspections and enforce NFPA 241 Standards for safeguarding construction, alteration and demolition operations
- Public Education completed the "Kitchen Project," which outfitted 2,981 Worcester Housing Authority apartments with the Smart Burner effectively ending the occurrence of cooking fires in those apartments

# MAINTENANCE

## Chief Mechanic John Santimaw

The Worcester Fire Department's Maintenance Division is responsible for all WFD apparatus and equipment acquisition, maintenance and repair, as well as the maintenance of all 11 WFD facilities. The Maintenance Division is run by 1 Chief Mechanic, 1 Senior Apparatus Repairman, 3 Working Foreman and 1 Plant Engineer.



*NFPA Ladder Testing on Ladder 4*

### Testing

In October, NFPA Ladder Testing and certification was conducted by NETS on 9 aerial ladders and 121 ground ladders. 13 front line and 6 spare engines passed independent NFPA pump tests.

### Emergency Service

One of the four fire apparatus mechanics is always on call to respond when an apparatus breaks down. Mechanics respond to fires on a third alarm to ensure all emergency equipment is functioning properly during and after the incident.

### Maintenance Highlights

- Purchased a 2022 E-One Typhoon pumper (E4), replacing a 2003 E-One pumper. The old engine responded to over 66,000 incidents
- Purchased 3 new staff vehicles
- Over 1,100 Work Orders completed
- Preventive maintenance was performed on all vehicles and emergency generators



*Pump Testing on Spare Engine 27*

# **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

## **Supervisor of Administration Michelle Esposito**

**The administrative office provides administrative support to the department. This division is staffed by 5 civilians: 1 Supervisor of Administration, 1 Accountant, 1 Supervisor of Payroll, 1 Program Manager and 1 Data Analyst.**

### **Accounts Payable**

The operation of the fire department requires the purchase of a large amount of consumable products, utilities and fuel. The department processes thousands of purchase orders, invoices and payments every year.

### **Payroll**

With over 400 members, multiple bargaining units and a non-traditional work schedule, payroll is a monumental task. The department processes payroll for each employee every week.

### **Project Management**

The department has several long-term projects in process including: CAD/RMS Implementation, South Division building project, strategic plan implementation and accreditation. The program manager supports the department by managing each of these simultaneous projects throughout its life span.

### **Data Analysis and IT Support**

Over the last decade the technical needs of the department have grown tremendously. Tech support is available to all members, and a large inventory of technology devices are managed by the Data analyst. In addition, large amounts of data are compiled, analyzed and distributed.

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION

## **Diversity Officer Captain William Mosley**

The mission of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee is to recruit with the goal of creating a more diverse workforce, ensuring equitable access to career opportunities for our members. In addition, the committee works to ensure and provide advocacy and representation for any members dealing with discrimination in any form. This committee is staffed by 1 Diversity Officer and 5 department members.

### Diversity by the Numbers

- 6 Women and 12 BIPOC candidates were selected for our upcoming Recruit Academy in 2023
- Department makeup reduced from 91% White Male to 85%
- Welcomed over 150 WPS students to the Training Division to watch recruits perform live burn evolutions and learn about a career with the WFD

### Diversity Committee

Lt Michael Pierce  
FF Jeremiah O'Brien  
FF Gina Genatassio-Lauder  
FF Malki Velez  
FF Carlos Moro

### Major Accomplishments

- Established an ongoing relationship with Worcester Public Schools for regular interaction with students about career pathways
- Played an integral role in the reduction of the civil service exam price from \$400 to \$75
- Created a Diversity Committee to support the work of the Diversity Officer
- Established a library of promotional exam material
- Created and facilitated DEI training programs for the department
- Completed a department survey on race and climate

# SAFETY

## District Chief Brian McGurl

The Safety Division is dedicated to the health and safety of all members on and off the incident scene. Incident Safety Officers (ISO) are assigned to each group and respond to hazardous incidents with the singular focus of firefighter safety. The division is also responsible for wellness programs and the testing and maintenance of all the department's self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). This division is staffed by 1 District Chief, 4 Captains and 1 Firefighter.

### Safety by the Numbers

- Repaired 72 SCBA
- Responded to 232 odor of natural gas incidents
- Responded to 190 Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Responded to 67 structure fires on the first alarm
- Responded to 128 rescue and entrapment incidents



### Major Accomplishments

- Started a hood exchange program. After all structure fires and live burns, firefighters exchange their contaminated hoods for a clean one to reduce exposure to carcinogens
- Began a partnership with WPI, the University of Texas and UCLA on "Fighting Fire Toxicity: Improving Safety and Health via Novel Optical Sensors." The proposed research task is expected to yield a faster, more quantitative approach to assessing fire toxicity risk and lead to refined protocols to fighting structural fires to improve firefighter safety and health
- Scheduled a skin cancer screening for all Fire Department personnel at Polar Park, sponsored by the non-profit Detect Together
- Created a training video for the Emergency Button/Mayday Drill
- Conducted Mayday Drill with all firefighters



# LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023

## In 2023, the Worcester Fire Department is looking forward to...

- A new 30 Member Recruit Academy, scheduled to begin in March 2023
- 3 new Tower Ladders replacing Ladder 1, Ladder 3, and Ladder 7
- 2 new Engines replacing Engine 11 and Engine 13



- Command Staff reorganization, including the deployment of shift commanders in each working group
- Design phase of the South Division Fire Station Replacement Project

- Configuration of new CAD/RMS (dispatch and records management system)

