



Providing progressive high quality emergency services
to the citizens of Burlington for over 120 years

Burlington Fire Department 2020 Annual Report

Burlington Fire Department

Our Department Mission:

Proudly serving our community with a commitment to compassion and professionalism.

Our Vision:

An integral partner in ensuring a safe and vibrant Burlington Community.

We achieve this through:

- Community engagement
- Progressive high quality emergency services
- Promoting personal well-being for the success of our team

Our Values:

- Do your job
- Treat people right
- Give all-out effort
- Have an all-in attitude

Organizational Priorities:

1. Provide emergency response to those in need
2. Provide for crew readiness
3. Provide training and staff development opportunities
4. Provide community education and risk reduction
5. Program management for successful operations
6. Conduct pre-incident survey and tactical consideration to commercial properties
7. Provide company strength and conditional opportunities

Burlington Fire Department

Office of the Chief

On behalf of the members of the Burlington Fire Department, I am pleased to present our 2020 annual report. To say that 2020 was an interesting year would be an understatement. The department had just completed its first year as an EMS transport agency, and was adjusting to our new service model. I had just been promoted to serve as the new Fire Chief, and was in the process of recruiting a new Assistant Chief (Steve Riggs), and hiring a new Paramedic (Adam Wunsch). The year began with promise, and in March, the Burlington community and the world at large were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 virus. It goes without saying that 2020 became a challenging year for everyone. As we faced a worldwide pandemic, many of our programs were impacted. In person community outreach programs and public education events were cancelled. With public buildings closed, we were unable to visit our schools or host station tours for the community. Hands on fire training was greatly reduced or replaced with online education. Despite the many restrictions and challenges we encountered, the members of this Fire Department stood true to our mission to *“Proudly serve our community with a commitment to compassion and professionalism”*.

Pandemic or not, when our citizens needed us, we were there. In 2020 the Burlington Fire Department responded to 3440 calls for service. With the ever changing guidance from the CDC and public health officials, our crews remained on the front lines and adapted to the use of new personal protective equipment (PPE) and decontamination procedures. These procedures were vital to ensure the safety of our members, and to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to those we encounter.

We continued to our efforts to build a more robust EMS system by implementing a Basic Life Support (BLS) transport program. Historically, all EMS transports were performed by a Paramedic unit. This new program trained and evaluated EMT's to transport less critical patients which allows our Paramedics to remain available for the more critical calls. The program was reviewed and approved by the Skagit County Medical Program Director, and the EMS Director, and is being implemented today.

While we worked to develop our EMS service, we also continued our efforts of integrating our Paramedics into the new Fire-Based model. After completing basic fire training in 2019, our Paramedics began taking assignments on the Fire Engine and Ladder Truck in a dual role as Firefighter/Paramedics. This is a major accomplishment and capability for our department, as this provides a greater degree of flexibility to respond to the wide variety of emergencies we encounter each day.

These are only a few examples of our department's accomplishments in 2020. This report will expand on our programs and services, but none of our goals or accomplishments are achieved without the collaboration, teamwork and support from our members, the Mayor, City Council, other City Departments, as well as outside Fire/EMS agencies. Their continued commitment enables us to realize our vision of being *an integral partner in ensuring a safe and vibrant Burlington community*.

It is still too early to tell what the new normal is going to look like, but I can assure you that each and every person in this department is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all who live and visit this community. I look forward to the opportunities and challenges of the coming year, and could not be more proud to serve the City of Burlington and lead this team of exceptional men and women.

Burlington Fire Department

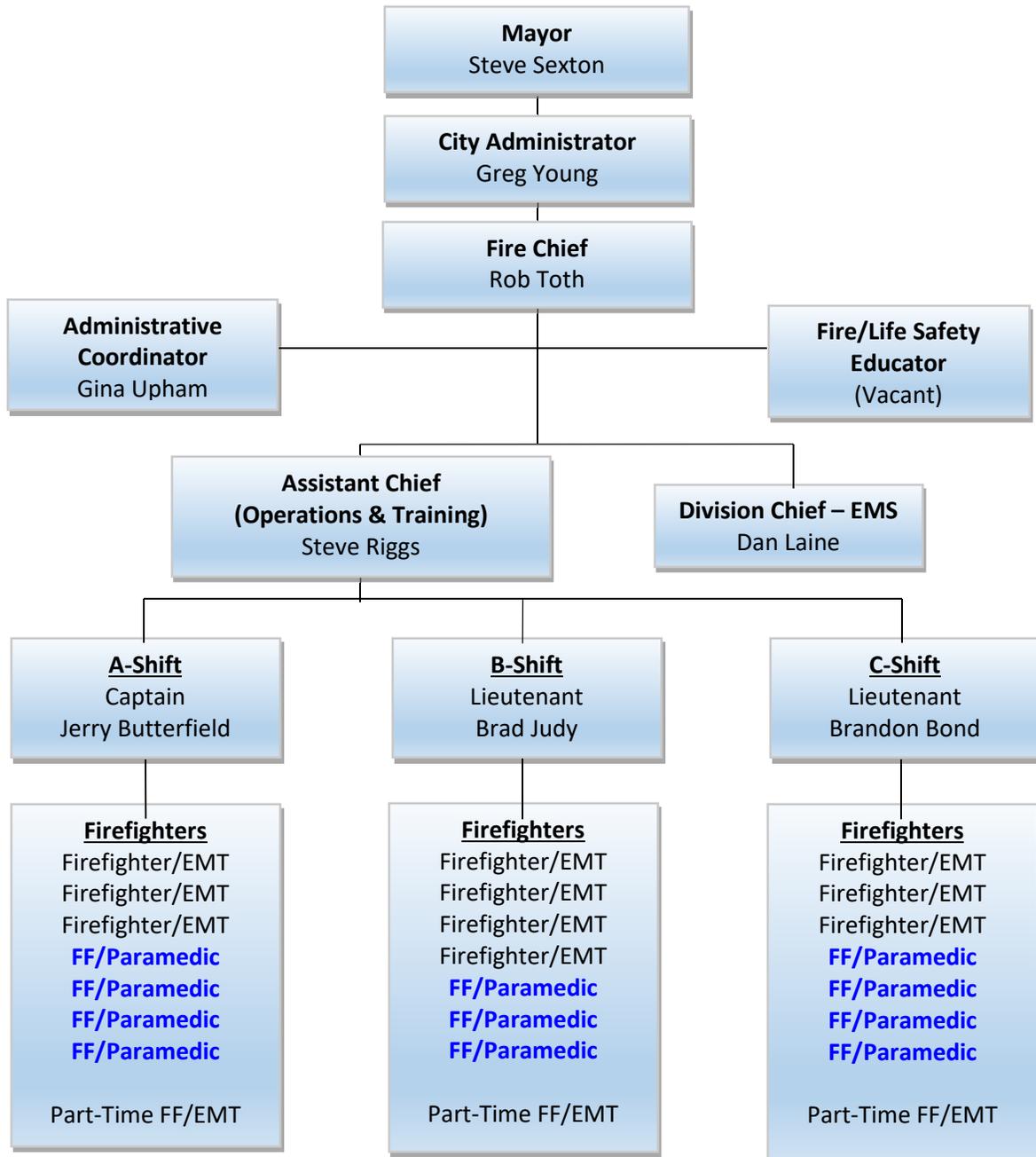
Accomplishments for 2020

- **BLS Transport Pilot Program** – allowing the Burlington Fire Department to operate a BLS response and transport program under the supervision of our EMS Director and Medical Program Director.
- **Cooperative group purchasing** – Entered into an agreement with the support of our administration and council to purchase EMS supplies through a large purchasing pool.
- **BLS Technician and transport program** – Developed an in-house program to provide training and development to our EMT's for BLS transport.
- **COVID-19 response and PPE procedures** – Modified our response and limited work related exposures through the use of PPE designed for COVID response.
- **Organizational Priorities** – Defined organizational priorities to better assist in daily operations and time management.
- **Safety Committee** – formally created a safety committee to review and recommend safety procedures to reduce risk within the organization.
- **Station safety inspections** – Created a formal process for conducting station safety inspections.
- **Program development** – Identified program areas within the organization and started to define those programs and how they operate.
- **SCBA fill station** – researched and purchased a new SCBA fill station to replace the 25 year old system that ha experienced a catastrophic failure.
- **High School Graduation** – Participated in helping our local seniors in their graduation ceremony during a unique and difficult time.
- **New employees** – We welcomed Firefighter-Paramedic Adam Wunsch and Assistant Chief Steven Riggs to the Burlington Fire Department Family.

Burlington Fire Department

Fire Administration & Organizational Chart

The Fire Chief is the administrator that provides overall leadership, fiscal budgeting and strategic planning for the department. The Fire Chief also serves as a command officer, responding to emergencies when needed. The fire department is divided into three specific divisions: Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Public Education.



Burlington Fire Department

Fire Operations:

Welcome, from the Operations and Training Division of the Burlington Fire Department. The Burlington Fire Department strives to meet the demands of our community through our commitment to compassion and professionalism to our community. We take pride in our progressive, high quality emergency services while staying engaged with our community.

Our Operations start with the life line of our organization, our personnel. We have a total of 24 full time line staff, 10 of those being firefighter paramedics. We also utilize a part-time firefighter program which helps maintain our staffing levels and provides flexibility in our response to emergencies. Our part-time firefighter program provides experience and training for those interested in making the fire service a career. The BFD operates with a minimum of 9 part-time firefighters, three assigned to a shift. We operate out of a single fire station that was strategically placed to provide the best coverage for our growing community. Our Operations consist of three shift assignments: A, B and C shifts. Each shift is supervised by a commissioned fire officer, and works a 48/96 work cycle (2-24 hour shifts on / 4 days off). In 2019, Central Valley Medic 1 was dissolved and the Burlington Fire Department absorbed a portion of that service. In doing so, we took on a greater role in providing EMS services to our community and surrounding neighbors. Our primary response areas for ALS coverage include Skagit County Fire Districts 5, 6, 12 and 14, however; as a county-wide EMS system, our ALS units can be called to any part of our county where the primary ALS unit is already on an emergency response. In 2020 our staff responded to 3440 calls for service. This was down from 2019, most likely a result of COVID-19 and the state wide shut down.

The Burlington Fire Department is a full service fire department. Approximately 80% of our emergency responses are EMS (Emergency Medical Service) which includes motor vehicle accidents. We also respond to hazardous material incidents, all reported fires and provide technical rescue responses for water rescue, medium and low angle rope rescue and confined spaces.

To better serve our community, we have automatic response agreements or mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments to assist in larger emergencies and to help cover the City when our crews



are already on an emergency. The City of Mount Vernon Fire Department automatically responds with an Engine or Ladder Company and a Battalion Chief to any working fire in the City of Burlington.

Skagit County Fire District 6 also responds with their part time staff. In return, we respond to our neighbor's response areas to provide staffing and equipment when needed for a fire response.

Burlington Fire Department

Most are aware, 2020 was a challenging year for us all. We had to get educated on a virus that did not have a history behind it. Our operations had to change to provide a safe working environment for our staff. Our use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing was the most significant change for our staff. Properly fitted masks, eyewear and gowns became the new normal for our staff, while still maintaining the highest level of care. Operations in the fire station changed as well. We separated staff by operating one of our ALS units out of city hall to reduce the potential of an exposure, and developed new daily cleaning procedures including fogging of our crew and administrative spaces. Through all this, we have been able to maintain our response to emergency calls for service.

In 2020 we added one new full-time firefighter paramedic and 4 new part-time firefighters. These positions are primarily replacements for existing vacancies due to employees leaving the department.

Our firefighting vehicles and ambulances remained strong for 2020. In 2019 we replaced our 1996 LTI ladder truck with a new Quint (engine/ladder combination). The new quint provides flexibility in our response to building fires within the city. The ability to have one vehicle that can pump water and provide an elevated advantage for rescue or fire streams is essential in a small organization like ours. In 2021 we will begin working on the replacement of one of our older ambulances and a command vehicle.



2020 saw our department engaged in better defining important program areas and assigning line staff to them. This implementation provided streamlining in communications, equipment maintenance and repair, and safety within our organization. Some of the programs that were defined include: EMS supplies and inventories, safety clothing including body armor and safety wear. We established a formal safety committee that addresses safety concerns while providing guidance to reduce work related injuries and illnesses. We started working towards a formal Peer Support program and expanding our “healthy in, healthy out” station living. This program focuses on reducing contaminants and exposures to our line staff by a cleaner way to live and work in the fire Station.

We are fortunate to have the opportunity to serve our community in the capacity we do. The Operations Division of the Burlington Fire Department is the uniformed personnel you see on the streets taking care of people or mitigating a situation when the call for service comes in. Although 2020 was a difficult year to navigate through, our calls for service remained steady and our personnel stood ready to respond during that critical time.

Burlington Fire Department

Department Training:

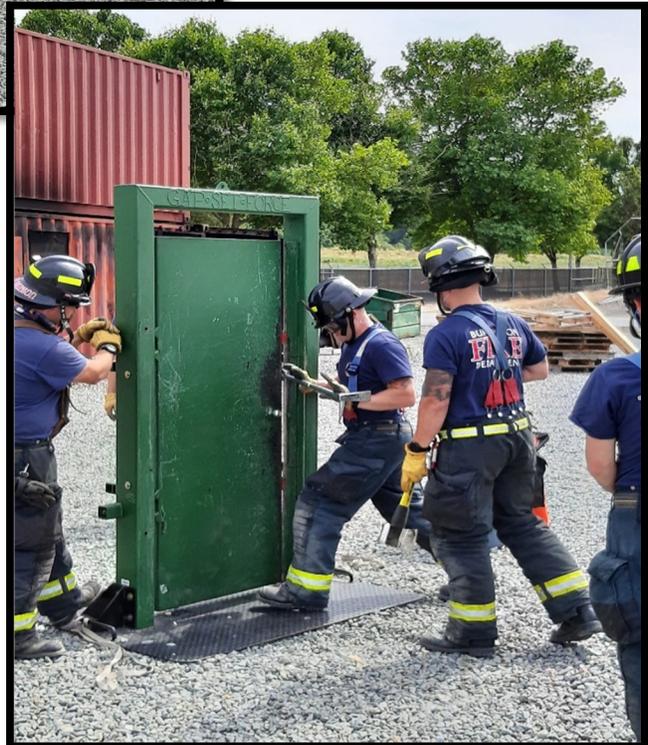
Training in 2020 was for the most part put on hold, but we were able to meet the minimum requirements of Washington State (WAC's) and essential company training. This training was completed at the fire station, or at our training facility. Due to COVID we were unable to train with neighboring departments or



send line staff to outside training. Like many, Zoom meetings became the norm for us in 2020. It was a platform that everyone could use that provided options like screen sharing so that we could hold trainings and meetings in a remote environment.

As we assessed new ways to approach training for our

department, we began collaborating with other agencies in our area. This led to the formation of the Northwest HUB Fire Training Group. The Northwest HUB is made up of the Burlington Fire Department, Skagit County Fire Districts 5, 6, 12 and 14. The purpose of this group is to develop a 6-year training plan that our HUB fire departments could work from. It provides consistency in how we all train and operate in our zone. This is essential as we rely on one another for support in large scale incidents. As the group continues to meet, its goal is to standardize training, operations and provide large scale multi-company operations (MCO's) quarterly.



We were able to conduct an in-house mini-fire academy for 4 new part-time firefighters. The academy is a two week intense skill review and provided additional skill sets that meet our mission and operations. The academy instructors are mainly career staff working in their area of expertise. At the end of the academy is a live fire exercise held at our training facility on South Section Street.

Burlington Fire Department

Fire Prevention and Education:

The Burlington Fire Department has always provided fire education to our community. In 2019 we lost our Fire Prevention Specialist position because of a budget short fall. This left a large gap in our education programs that were a part of this position. Our line staff participates in many public education events throughout the year with the favorite being station tours. COVID put a stop to all of our in-person activities so we had to become resourceful and move more to a multimedia platform to get the word out. Through our Facebook page, we were able to reach many community members with safety messages. We continue to look for new methods and partnerships in 2021 to help get the messages out and continue our effort to provide a safe Burlington

Community, we had the joy of participating in a few community events, like, drive-by parades for birthdays and anniversaries. This always turned out to be a fun event. We were invited and gladly accepted to participate in Burlington Edison High School graduation. The seniors and their families got to drive under our large American flag that hangs on the end of our ladder truck.



Our code enforcement and fire inspections are completed through the city's Fire Marshal's Office. The Fire Marshal's office is directly supervised by the city's Development Services Division. This format allows for easy access to the fire marshal for plan reviews and code enforcement issues. The City of Burlington is one of the fastest growing cities in the county, even throughout the challenges of 2020. Developers and contractors continued to build once the state removed the restrictions.

Fire prevention inspections to our commercial occupancies provide a solid foundation to maintain a minimum level of fire safety. The city uses the 2015 International Fire Code and Burlington Municipal Code for providing the guidance needed to complete a quality inspection. In 2020, our inspection program was also restricted once the state mandates came into play.

Burlington Fire Department

EMS in 2020, Year of a pandemic

The Burlington Fire Department started 2020 like any other year, fully anticipating being busy with emergency responses, training, planning and community outreach. Little did we know that the day to day of our jobs would change dramatically with the COVID-19 Virus. COVID -19 HAS PAVED THE WAY FOR A NEW NORMAL FOR EMS, which will likely remain with us into the foreseeable future and beyond. EMS has had to evaluate and re-evaluate our responses, our approach to care, our personal protective equipment (PPE), staffing, through relocation to provide social distancing as well as the potential to have some or all of our personnel out to exposure or illness. Documentation of vehicle use and status, gear carried and decontamination are some of the logistical challenges confronting emergency services. While challenging, our staff has risen to the challenge and worked diligently to ensure the safety of each other, city staff, patients and the community at large. This has been a very challenging year for everyone, from our organization, to the community, state and nation. The Burlington Fire Department continues to stay focused on our mission of “Proudly serving our community with commitment to compassion and professionalism”.



In 2020, the Burlington Fire Department responded to 3,440 requests for service. 3,203 of those requests were for EMS response. We also had 1,359 patient transports to local hospitals.

Improving service delivery; since the addition of ALS services in 2019, a primary goal for us was to provide a true EMS tiered response system to our communities. In June of 2020, The Burlington Fire Department submitted a proposal to Skagit County EMS and Skagit County Medical Program Director to pilot a BLS response and transport service within the City of Burlington. Burlington was granted the pilot program which started on July 7, 2020. The BLS pilot program would evaluate through quality assurance and

Burlington Fire Department

improvement measures, that the process for every BLS response would be reviewed by staff to ensure that the appropriate response was being sent. Our paramedics were an essential part of the quality assurance/improvement process and worked closely with our BLS staff to provide the support and direction to be successful. On October 31, 2020 the pilot program ended and would be reviewed by our organization, Skagit County EMS and Skagit County Medical Program Director. During the pilot program period, our BLS unit responded to 91 calls for service, 12 of those service calls were transported under ALS and 4 of those 12 were upgraded by



our communication center. Out of the 91 calls for service 83 were appropriately handled at the BLS level. As a result of the pilot period, the high level of competency and professionalism in care, the Burlington Fire Department was granted permission to continue on a full-time basis for BLS response and transport, a true tiered system within the City of Burlington.

Training changed for us as well in the EMS world. All annual practical skills training was put on hold but we continued to

meet our classroom requirements through online learning. We were able to provide live training with our air transport partners. Thanks to the Burlington Edison High School staff, we utilized the playfields to land the helicopters and practice hot and cold patient loading. We were even lucky enough to have the NAVY rescue helicopter come out for the day.



Burlington Fire Department

Station, Fleet and Equipment.

The Burlington Fire Department operates out of a single station located on Sharon Avenue. The Station was constructed in the late 1990's and was built for a predominately volunteer firefighter operation. Over the years the station has seen modifications to better accommodate the changing needs of our organization. The station now sleeps up to 8 personnel and has crew quarters that can accommodate a 24/7 operation. The station also contains our administrative offices and a large training room.



Burlington Fire Department

Apparatus.

The Burlington Fire Department operates under a two tier system, Fire response and EMS response. Being a single station we operate one primary vehicle for all fire responses. That vehicle is a 2019 Pierce 107-foot quint.



This type of vehicle maximizes our operations allowing us to set up and work incidents based on the incident needs. We operate this vehicle with a daily staffing of 3. Because of the complexity of the vehicle and to operate it safely the

three person crew is essential.

We also operate with two fire engines. Our 2009 Crimson pumper is our first response to help our neighbors in the outlying areas. Because of the

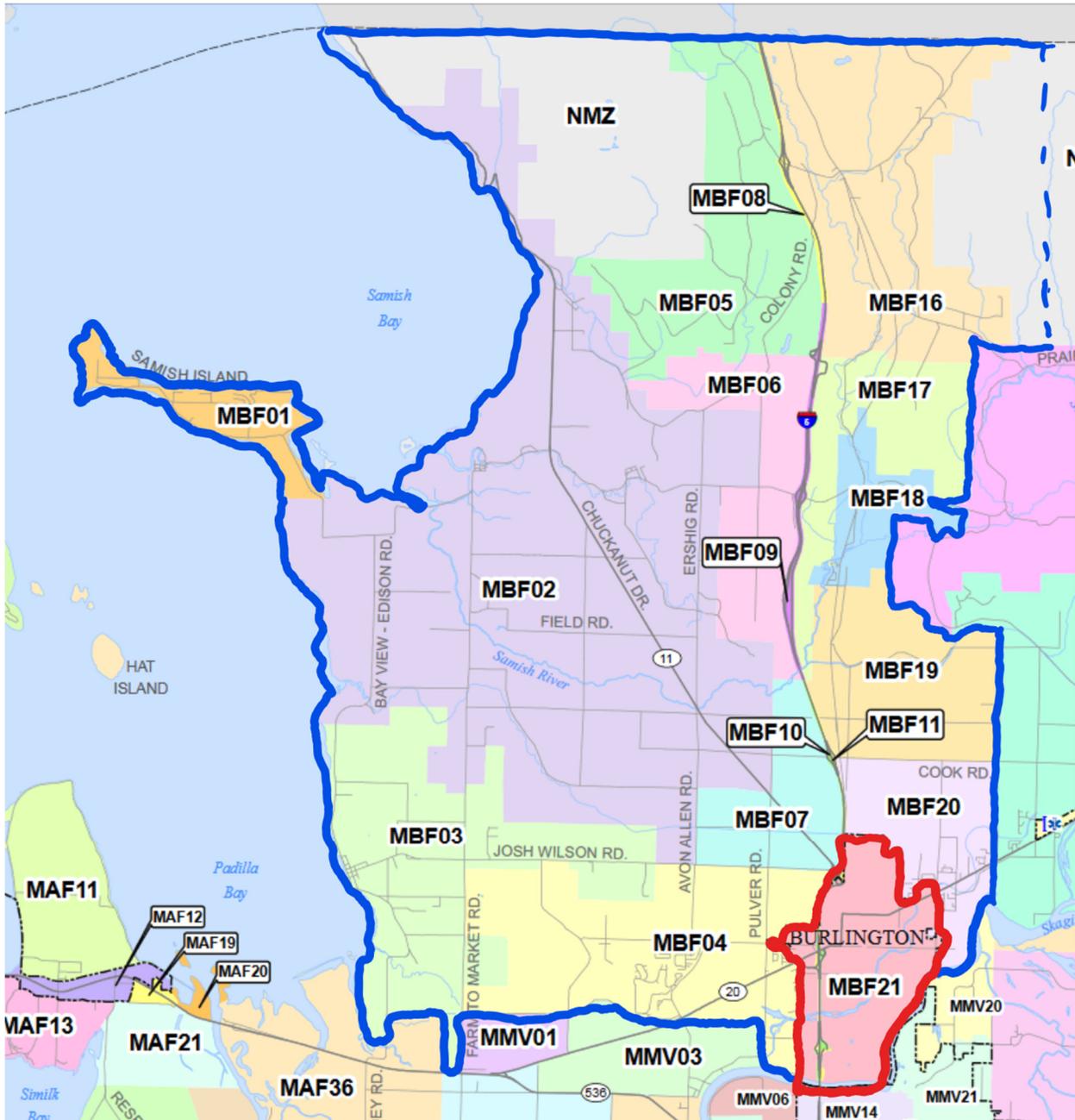


limited water availability in our neighboring fire districts, this pumper can be utilized more to transport needed water and personnel to emergency scenes. Our 2003 Pierce is our primary training engine and provides response as a back-up pumper when required.

Burlington Fire Department

Response and Service area

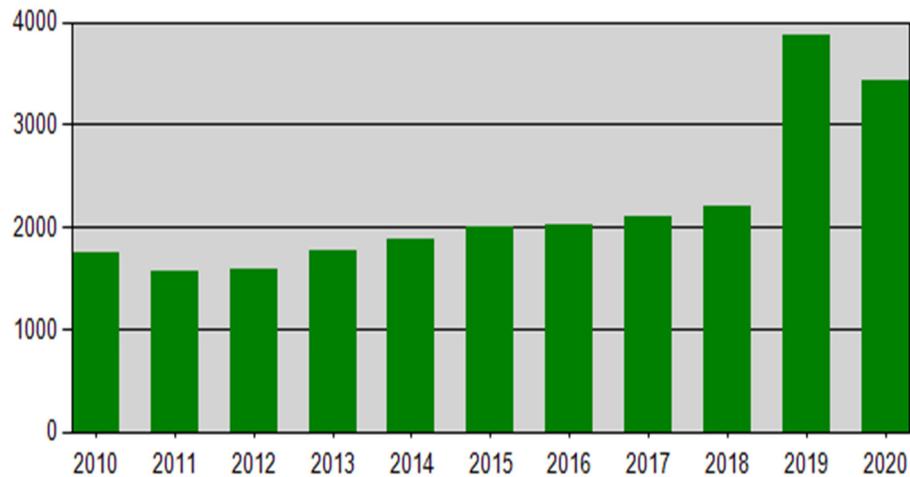
Below is a rough map of our service area. In red is our primary response for fire and EMS services for the City of Burlington. Outlined in blue is our primary contract area for EMS services and the fire districts participating in the fire and EMS training HUBS.



Burlington Fire Department

Calls for Service

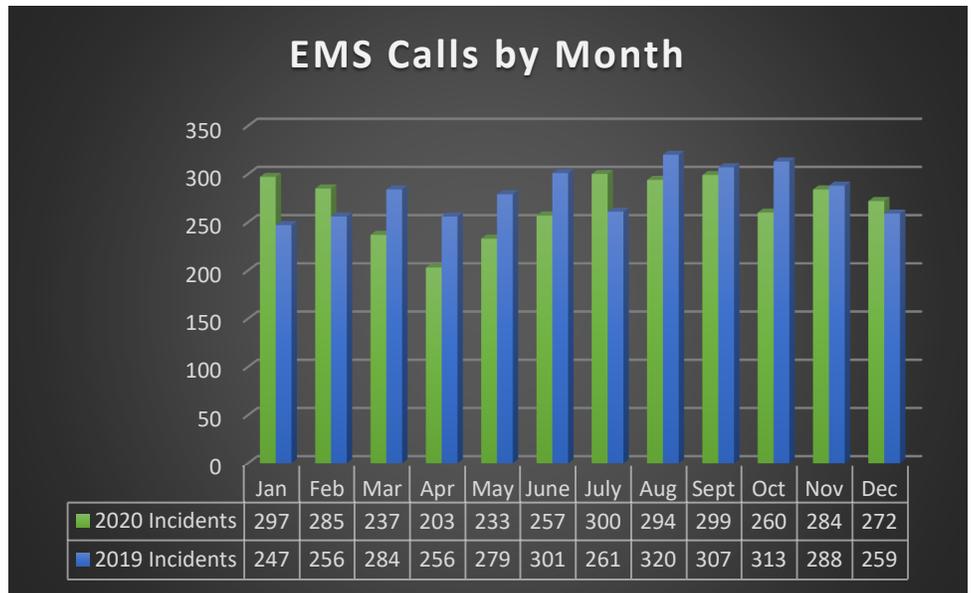
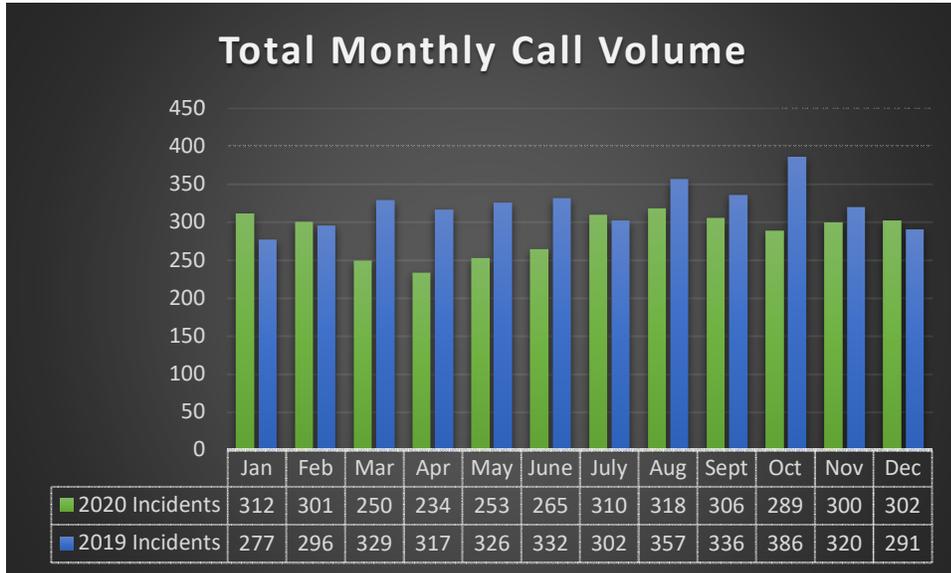
The graph below represents the total calls for service over a 10 year span. The jump in 2019 was the first year for paramedic service under the direction of the Burlington Fire Department.



YEAR	Calls for Service
2010	1732
2011	1567
2012	1579
2013	1763
2014	1877
2015	2000
2016	2022
2017	2106
2018	2196
2019	3869
2020	3440

Burlington Fire Department

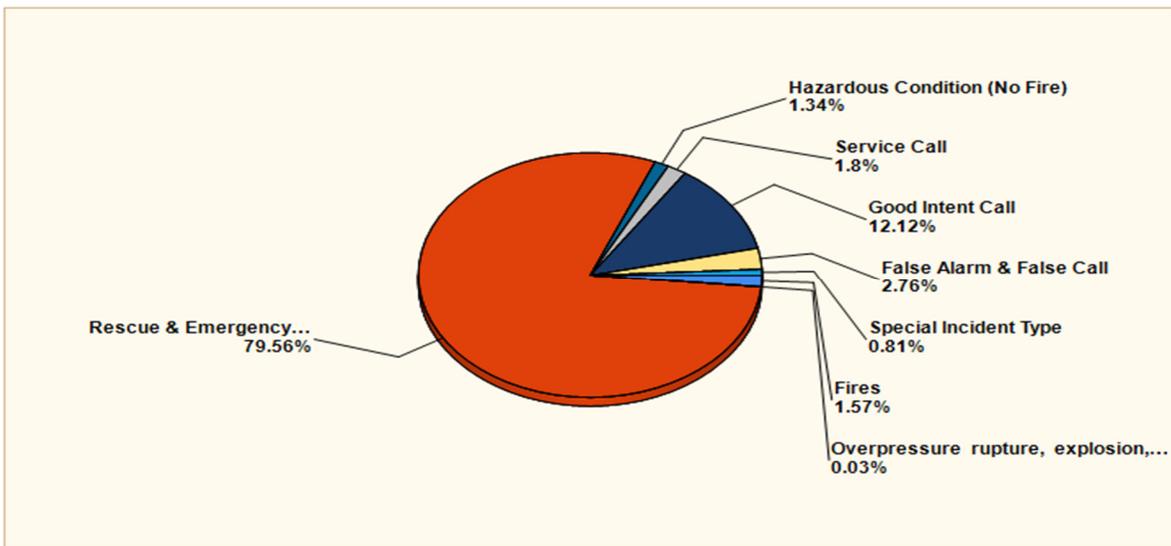
Calls for service continued for 2020



Burlington Fire Department

Calls for service continued for 2020

The pie chart represents the most common call types we receive. EMS responses have become our primary call volume over the years. Good intent calls are those where the caller felt there was a concern that needed to be investigated. Some examples would be; smoke or an odor problem, overheated vehicle on the side of the road or steam from a building thought to be smoke.



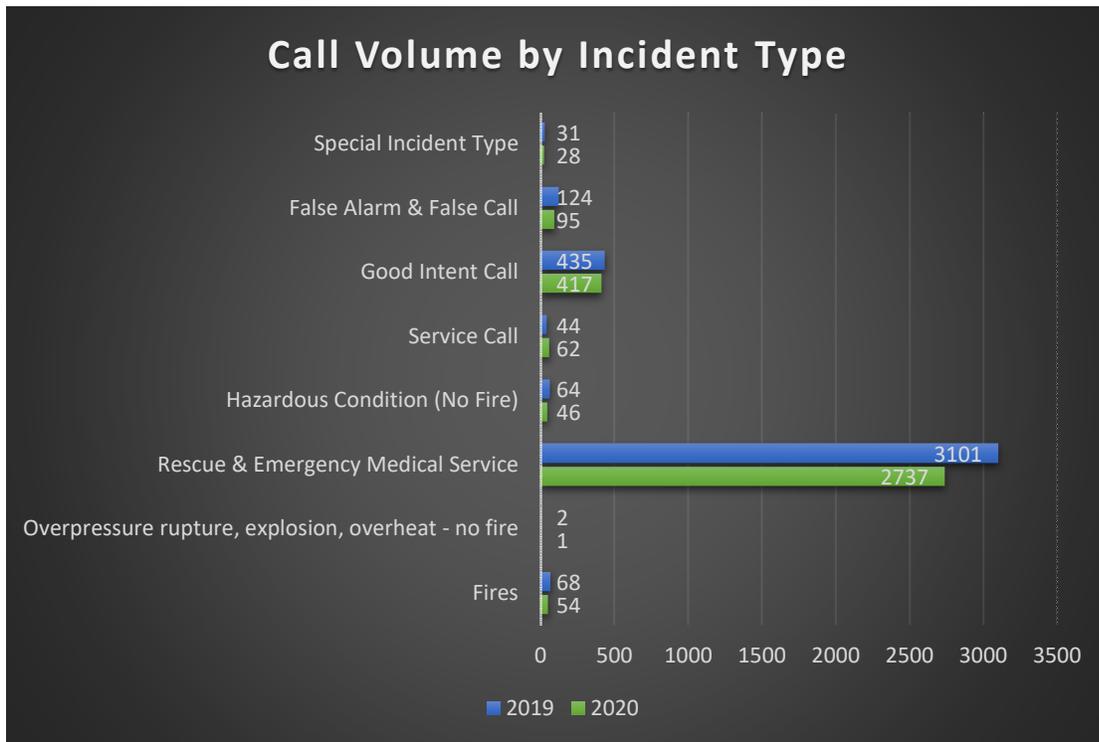
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	54	1.57%
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheating - no fire	1	0.03%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	2737	79.56%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	46	1.34%
Service Call	62	1.8%
Good Intent Call	417	12.12%
False Alarm & False Call	95	2.76%
Special Incident Type	28	0.81%
2020 TOTALS	3440	100%

EMS	2737
Fire/Other	703
Total Incidents	3440

Burlington Fire Department

Call volume and Incident type over a two year period

The information below compares the incident type over the years 2019 and 2020. There was a reduction in calls for service in 2020. We believe that has a direct correlation with the state mandate to lock down in March and April of last year.

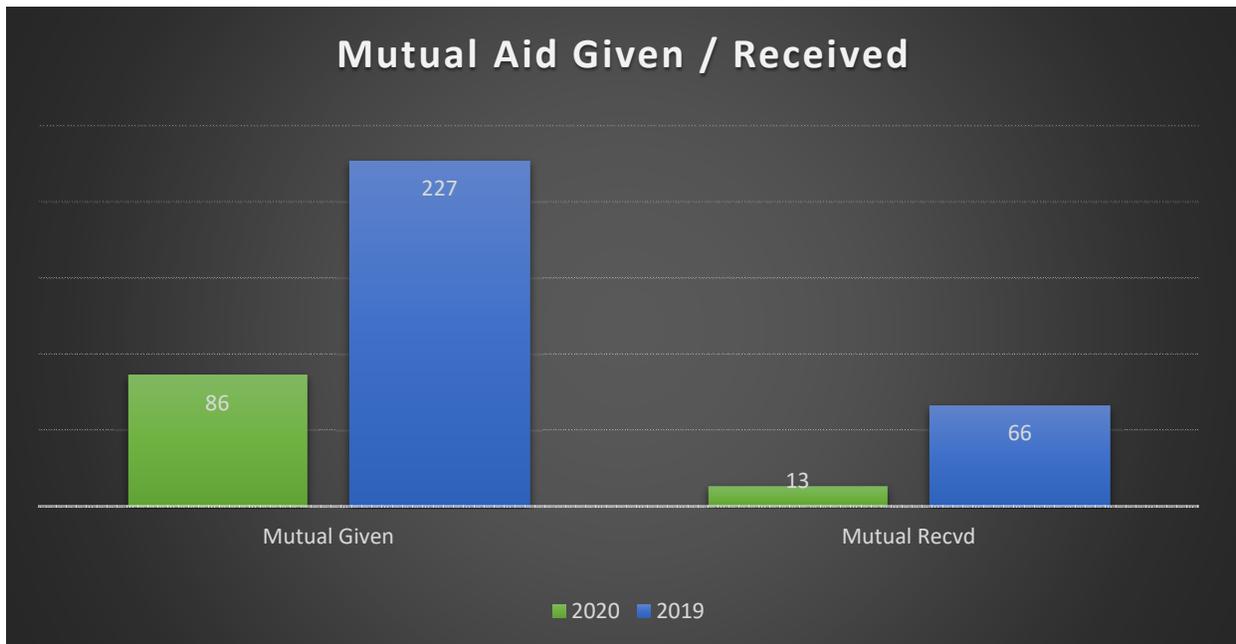


INCIDENT TYPE	2020	2019
Fires	54	68
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overhear - no fire	1	2
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	2737	3101
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	46	64
Service Call	62	44
Good Intent Call	417	435
False Alarm & False Call	95	124
Special Incident Type	28	31
Total Incidents	3440	3869

Burlington Fire Department

Calls to neighboring departments

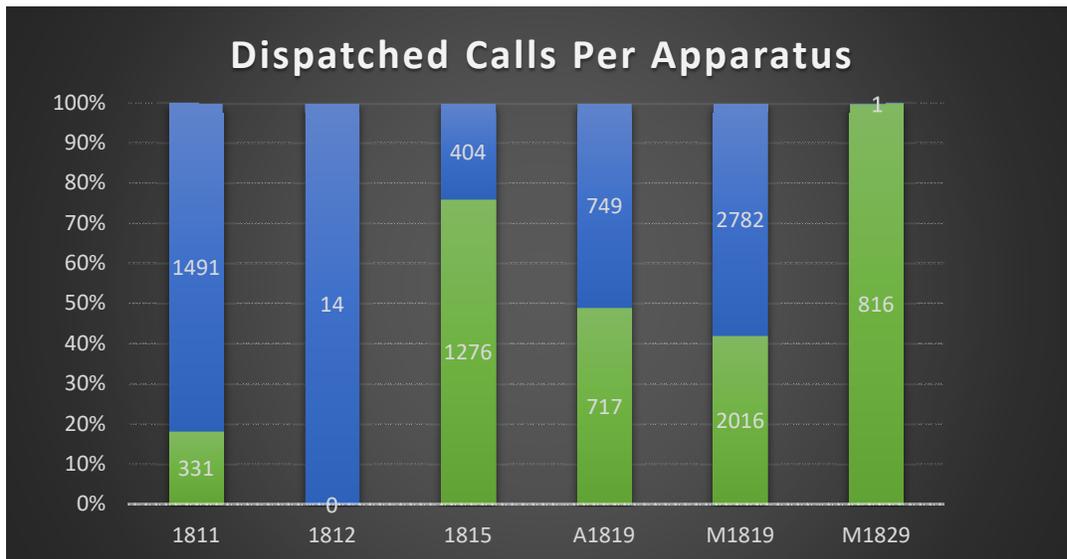
The Cities and fire districts of Skagit County have different types of agreements to help one another. One of the agreements is known as Mutual Aid, County and city fire departments sign an agreement that upon request a neighboring fire department will provide assistance. Automatic aid is an agreement between two or more fire departments that provide automatic response to specific incident types or geographical locations. Contracts are the next most common type of agreement. When local fire departments took on EMS transports they signed contracts with Skagit County EMS to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) coverage to specified response areas.



Burlington Fire Department

Calls per apparatus

The Burlington Fire Department runs primarily with two units. Ladder 1815 and Medic 1819. Where staffing allows we can run additional apparatus to cover calls for service. Aid 1819 is our Basic Life Support Unit (BLS) and Medic 1829 is our secondary ALS unit. Our two engines 1811 and 1812 are primarily used for response to a fire district, replaces Ladder 1815 when out for service, or to back up Ladder 1815 when multiple calls for service come in.



APPARATUS	2020	2019
E1811	331	1491
E1812	0	14
L1815	1276	404
A1819	717	749
M1819	2016	2782
M1829	816	1
Totals	5156	5441