

# ANNUAL REPORT

Savannah Fire Department

# 2020





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# Fire Chief

On behalf of the men and women of the Savannah Fire Department, I wish to express that it is our honor and privilege to serve the citizens, businesses, and guests of the City of Savannah. This exceptional department is made up of dedicated professionals who provide extraordinary service.

2020 was a year full of challenges. Serving the community during a pandemic, economic recession, and through racial injustices, created the need for a cohesive team that was empathetic and understood we were there to serve regardless of the circumstances. Many would use those challenges as a reason to reduce service or stay with the status quo. Savannah Fire rose to the occasion and recognized the opportunities for the department to grow and expand.

In 2020, Savannah Fire expanded our role in Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Savannah Fire now responds on all critical EMS calls decreasing response times and providing quick, lifesaving service to those most in need. This expansion has touched and saved many lives since its inception on December 1, 2020.

Public Education was another area of expansion. The creative talents of the Public Information Officer and the Fire Prevention Bureau developed on-line educational programs and public service announcements. The reach to the community was astounding. Thousands were contacted despite stay at home orders. Important lifesaving videos, texts, stories, and other forms of communication were delivered to the community and State of Georgia.

The Fire Prevention Bureau performed more new construction plan reviews and inspections in 2020 than 2019. The commitment to life safety is paramount. Fire prevention was creative using modified staffing models to meet the needs of the community.

The department has continued to transform as a result of retirements. Assistant Chief Curtis Wallace retired after serving Savannah for 24 years. Assistant Chief Elzie Kitchen was promoted to fill this key leadership role in Logistics. Chief Fire Marshal Whitney Williams-Smith joined Savannah Fire to lead the Fire Prevention Bureau. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in fire prevention as well as firefighting experience. Three Battalion Chief promotions occurred. Steven Frazier, Nicholas Early, and Jeffrey Croslen were promoted to these senior leadership positions. Joe Shaw was named the Medical Services Officer-Battalion Chief. He will continue to pioneer Savannah's expansion in EMS. There were many Captain and Engineer promotions as well.

Fire Training was able to hold a Fire Academy, preparing 18 new firefighters to serve the community. The staff was creative in order to instruct this group while maintaining social distancing and protecting the candidates. This effort ensured staffing and service levels did not suffer.

As we enter 2021, Savannah Fire will continue to be confronted with many of the same challenges from 2020. The men and women of this organization are eager to meet these trials and will continue to provide exceptional services. We will continue to move forward and meet the vast needs of this changing community. It is an honor to serve alongside the men and women of Savannah Fire and to serve the citizens of Savannah.



**Derik Minard, MS, EFO**  
**Fire Chief**  
**Savannah Fire Department**



# Philosophy

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**VISION** We are committed to serving our community with the utmost levels of professionalism and efficiency in relation to the preservation of life and property

**MISSION** The Savannah Fire Department is committed to serving and educating our city with exceptional customer service and superior emergency response. Our services are designed to reduce community risks and mitigate hazards threatening life, property, and the environment in an atmosphere that encourages innovation, professional development, and diversity.

**CULTURE** Committed to those we serve

**VALUES**

- Customer and Employee Satisfaction
- Effective Communication
- Service Excellence
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Loyalty
- Safety
- Trust



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# Overview

The Savannah Fire Department (SFD) is a professional career Fire Department comprised of 318 uniformed firefighters and 18 administrative/support staff. SFD serves a population of 145,674 people in a 108 square mile service area, which hosts 14 million visitors annually.

Our service area includes an industrial component along the river basin and large tracks of commercial and residential structures. To protect our vibrant and diverse community, SFD provides a wide spectrum of services including Fire Suppression, Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). All of these response services are delivered from 15 Fire Stations. Within these strategically placed stations are 15 Engines, five Ladders, two Heavy Rescues, three Battalion Chiefs, Marine Units, and an assortment of support vehicles.

This report lists the activities of the three major sections within SFD—Operations, Logistics, and Emergency Management—and details the work of the divisions contained within each department. Our constant push for service excellence, and our culture of commitment to those we serve will continue in 2021.

## RESOURCES

Stations	Operations	Admin	Engines	Rescues	Trucks	Marine
15	318	18	15	2	5	2

## INCIDENTS

Year	Fires	Technical Rescue	Hazardous Materials	Emergency Medical	Non- Fires	Total Incidents
2020	920	187	688	1531	4215	7543
2019	941	190	694	1682	3594	7798
2018	905	156	747	1609	4342	7759
2017	927	212	747	1613	4471	7920
2016	1278	217	920	1789	4248	8447
5 Year	4971	962	3796	8224	20,870	39,467

## BUDGET

Year	Fire Chief	Emergency Management	Operations	Hazardous Materials	Total
2020	\$7,530,242.00	\$247,962.00	\$26,475,735.00	\$678,485.00	\$34,932,424.00
2019	\$9,422,953.00	\$266,326.00	\$22,655,518.00	\$474,575.00	\$32,819,372.00

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# Goals

## DEVELOPMENT

- Design and implement a career development pathway that ensures equity
- Utilize the City of Savannah's Learning Management Software program for continuing education and to maintain EMS certifications

## SAFETY

- Identify vulnerable populations and address fire safety issues
- Develop a Standard Operating Guideline on Cancer Prevention initiatives and actions for SFD personnel
- Utilize a software program to ensure SFD's documentation is managed and disseminated to all employees for consistency

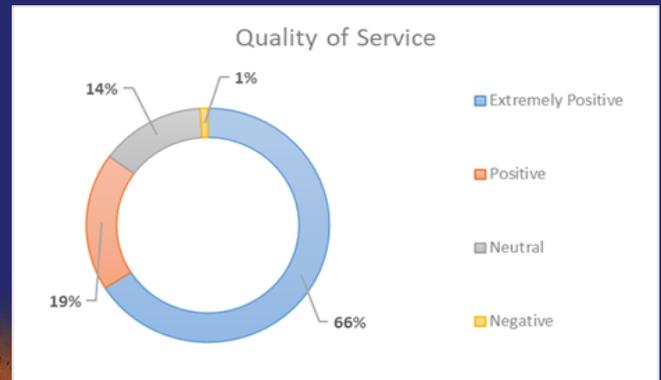
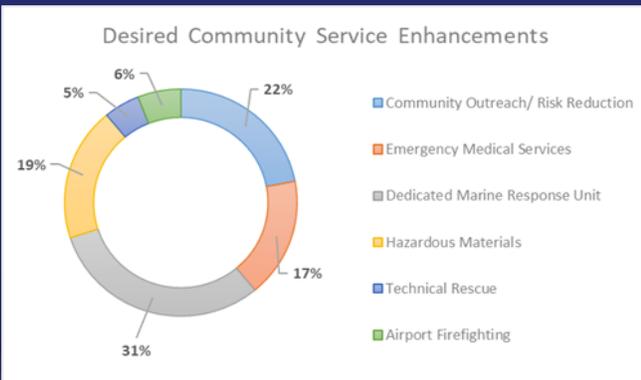
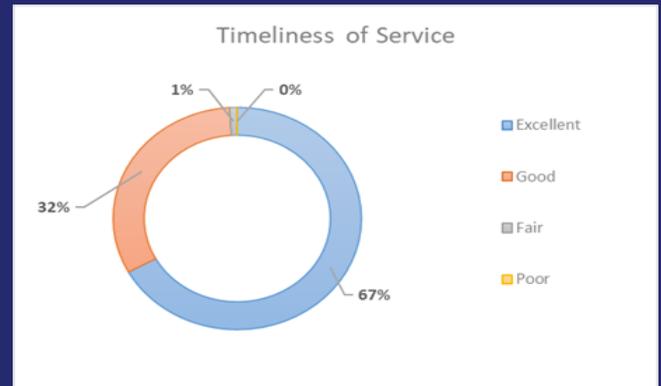
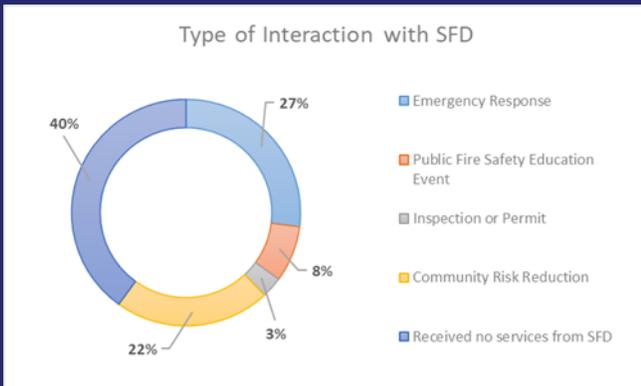
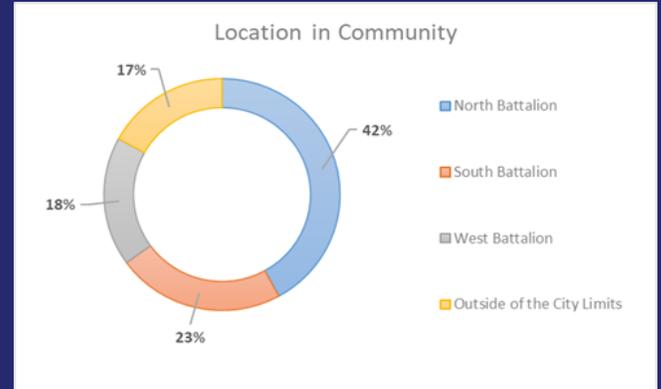
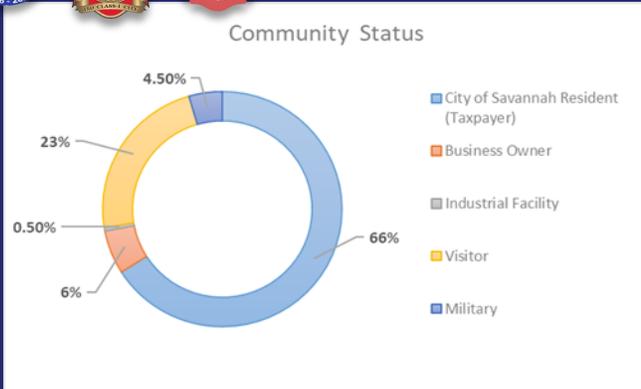
## ACCOUNTABILITY

- Develop Automatic Aid Agreements with other local fire agencies.
- Conduct annual training activities with SFD partners with a mutual aid agreement.
- Research a clothing allowance program to reduce uniform budget expenditures by 10%.



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# Survey





# Promotions

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## ASSISTANT CHIEF

Elzie Kitchen



ASSISTANT CHIEF  
Elzie Kitchen

## BATTALION CHIEF

Joseph Shaw  
Jeffrey Croslen  
Nicholas Earley  
Steven Frazier



BATTALION CHIEF  
Joseph Shaw

## CAPTAIN

Kenneth Baker  
Brian Billotto  
Michael Dodd  
Christopher Hanks  
Captain Joel Hiers  
Captain Jeffrey Hobart  
Captain Joshua Homan  
Captain Jason Jacobs  
Captain Shamir Johnson  
Captain Ryan Stigall  
Captain Jonathan Sturgis



BATTALION CHIEF  
Jeffrey Croslen

## Engineer

Christopher Berry  
Nicholas Brigante  
William Fulton  
Justin Goldberg  
Sean O'Connor  
Chad Osterlund  
Christopher Schonfeld  
Roger Williams  
Tyler Hall  
Dwayne Hendrix  
Trevor Jaha  
Matthew Maringola  
Evan Mobley



BATTALION CHIEF  
Nicholas Earley



BATTALION CHIEF  
Steven Frazier

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# Awards

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**CHIEF OFFICER OF THE YEAR**  
**Nathan Gaskill**



**FIRE OFFICER OF THE YEAR**  
**Gregory Jacobs**



**ROOKIE OF THE YEAR**  
**Lucas Abrunzo**



**FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR**  
**Ben Spence**



**FITTEST**  
**Curtis Parker**



**FITTEST**  
**Matthew Woodberry**



**FITTEST 50+**  
**Dietrich Chapple**

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# Operations

Operations has been very fortunate to enhance the Medical Services Office and reclassify three positions, making them permanent HSO Captains who ride as Safety 1. They were part of the large group of personnel that has been promoted since last August — four battalion chiefs, seven captains and six fire engineers. What an exciting time of opportunity and upward mobility for young leaders in our department.



**William Handy**  
**Assistant Chief Operations**

Additionally, crews are now responding to seven new EMS incidents of critical nature. This truly saves lives and is making a wonderful impact on our citizens. We have received a tremendous amount of positive feedback from the primary medical provider, Chatham Emergency Services. This feedback not only came from their leadership, but the paramedics and EMT's that work side by side with Savannah Firefighters on critical nature EMS calls. They have said:

- “Blessing to see that extra set of hands”
- “SFD crews are highly professional”
- “Impressed as to the knowledge base displayed and used on scenes”

These comments make it clear that you are making a difference that is seen and appreciated. Continue the great work. It is because of you that we are able to make a positive impact in our emergency responses— from fire, medical and hazmat, to technical rescue and marine. This is a perfect depiction of who we are as a department.

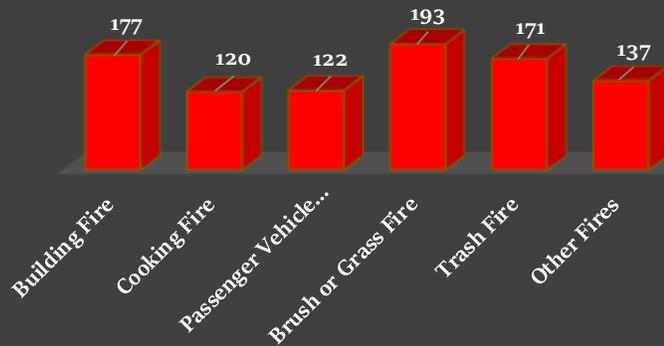


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# Fire Analysis



## 2020 FIRE OVERVIEW



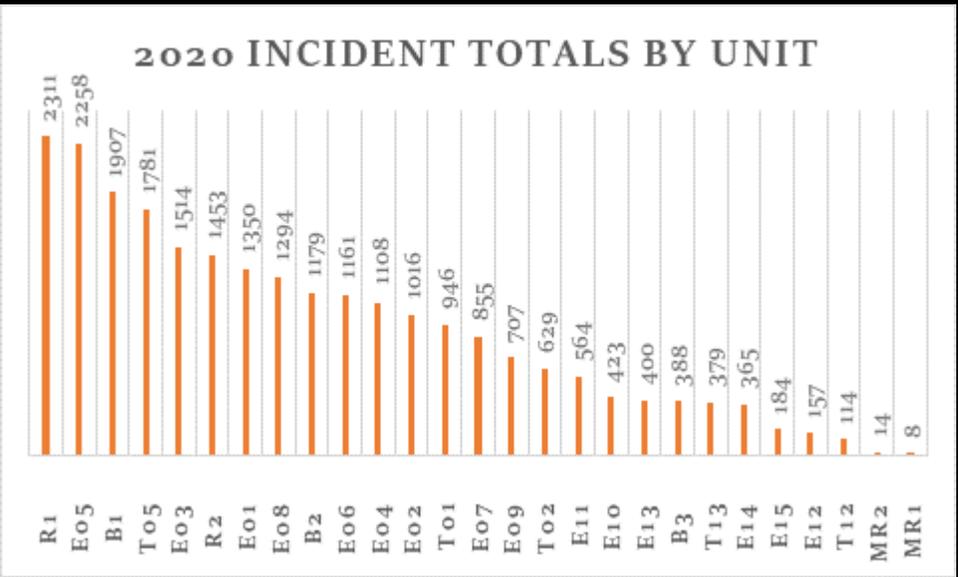
## 2020 Building Fires by Hour



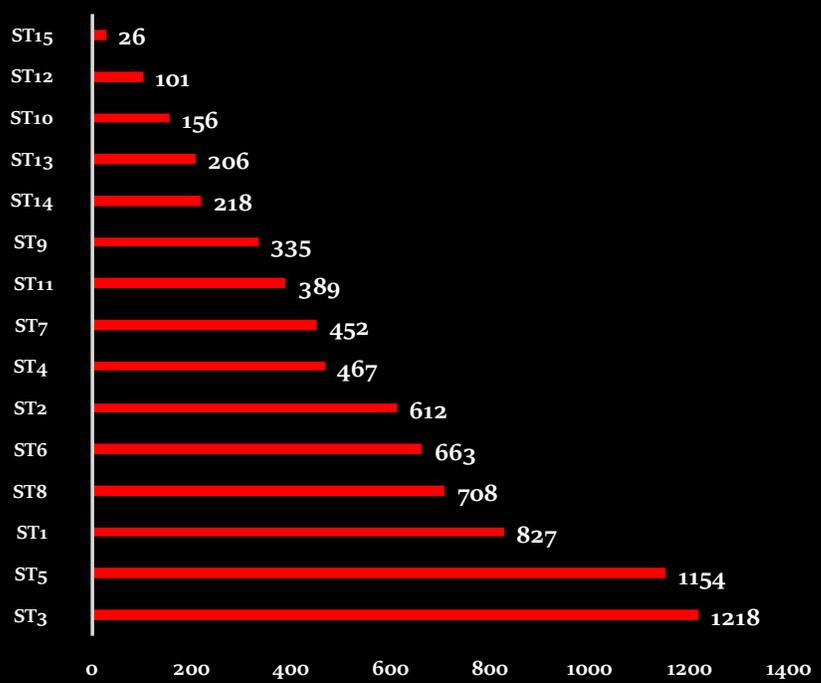
Building Fires in COS	Building Fires Requiring Full Response	Percentage
176	139	79%
Building Fires Requiring NFPA 1710 Benchmarks	SFD Response Meeting NFPA 1710 Benchmarks	SFD NFPA 1710 Success Percentage
139	128	92%

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# Incident Analysis



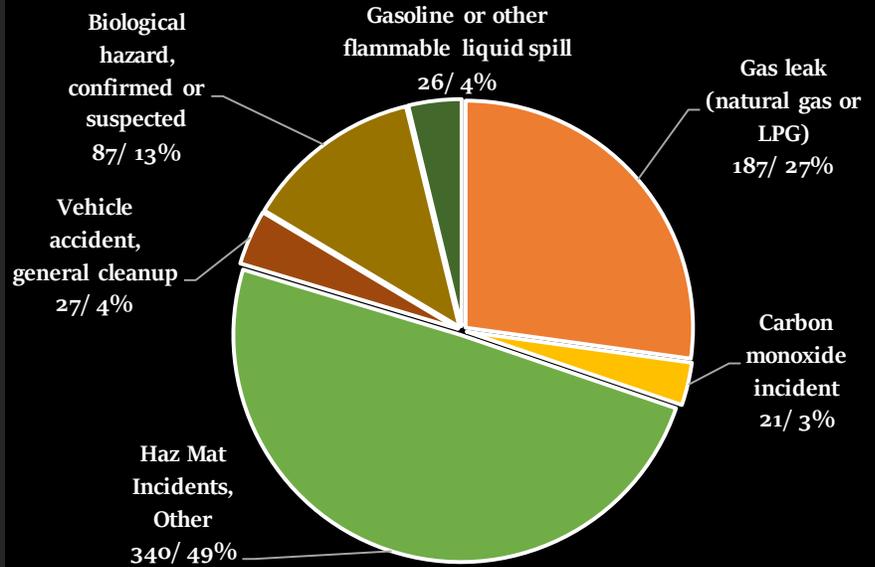
### 2020 INCIDENTS BY STATION



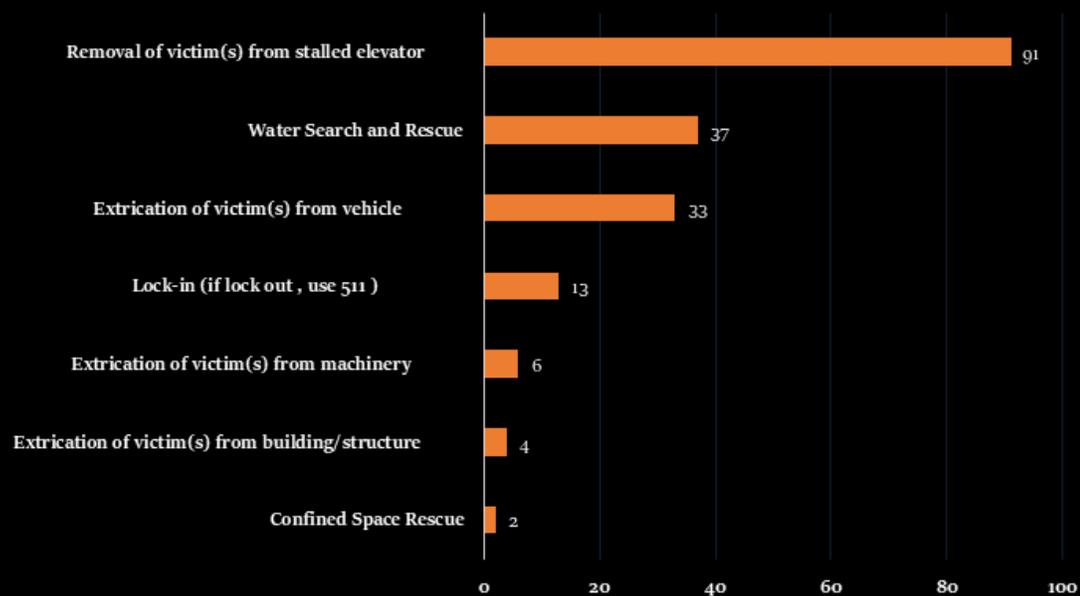


# Special Ops

## 2020 Hazardous Material Overview



## 2020 Technical Rescue Overview



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# Logistics

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**Elzie Kitchen**  
**Assistant Chief Logistics**



As we start our voyage through 2021, I pray you and your families are healthy and doing well. Despite COVID-19 pandemic challenges, we excelled in 2020 thanks to you. So far this year we have been preparing for Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) reaccreditation and moving to paperless systems. In order to ensure success and meet goals, leaders know that programs must be evaluated, and results must be measured. Without an evaluation process, organizations have no way to measure the effectiveness of their services. Many of you have asked why we strive to maintain accreditation. Some have questioned the benefits and wondered if accreditation is just another feather in our administrative hat.

CFAI Accreditation is a comprehensive self-assessment and evaluation that allows organizations to analyze and measure their performance against fire service best practices. In firefighter terms, the accreditation process helps an organization define and determine the level of service it provides. It also enables a department to create a Strategic Plan based on community input, develop a risk assessment, set realistic and achievable goals, plan for continuous performance improvement, address safety needs, and ensure professional growth. Accreditation makes us evaluate how we provide services, develop our people, and move forward. With this process in place, Savannah Fire will have informed members who always embrace change, improve, make progress, and get better.

Our move to paperless systems is one of many ways we are working to make things better. This pandemic created pressure to improve efficiency and cut costs, while still maintaining a high customer service level. One great way to accomplish this is by going paperless. It will reduce up to 50 percent of our business waste and significantly reduce our carbon footprint. We will ultimately keep everything digitally stored on the OneDrive cloud-based storage system, which can be accessed anywhere. But we have to be patient; ITS is still working to make this change happen.

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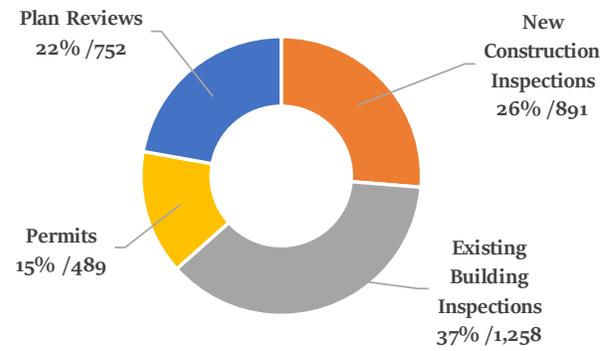


# Stats



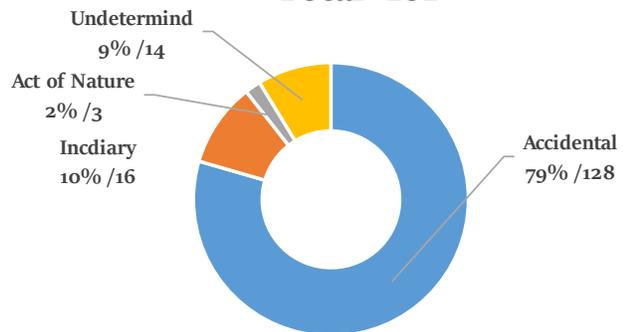
## 2020 Fire Inspections Overview:

Total- 3,390

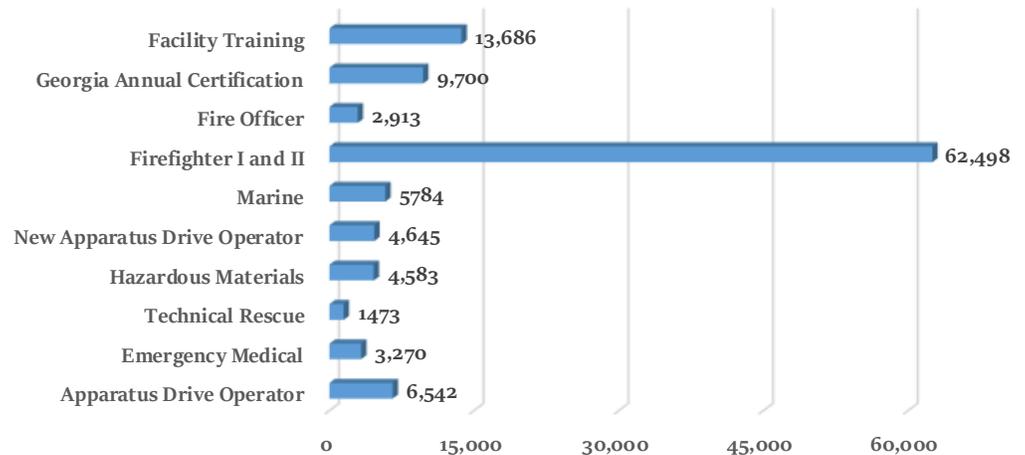


## 2020 Fire Investigations Overview:

Total- 161



## 2020 Training Overview



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# Emergency Management

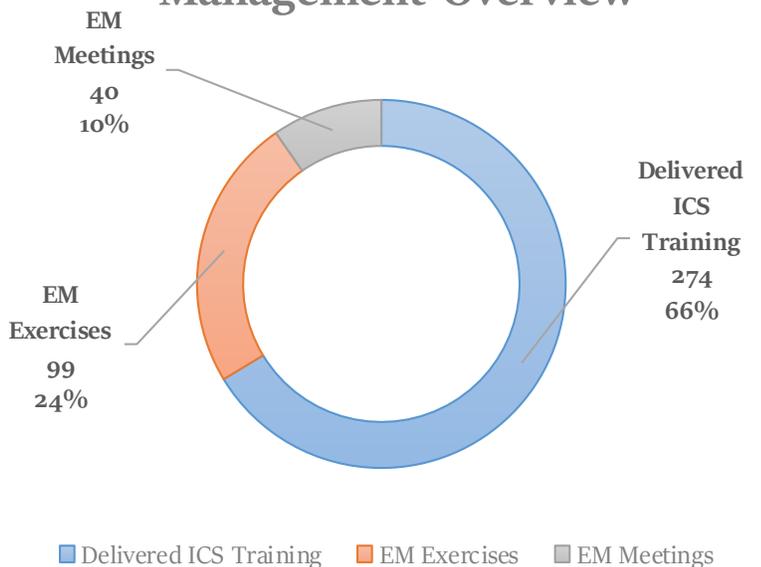


**David Donnelly**  
Emergency Manager

Savannah Emergency Preparedness is a division of the Fire Department. The mission of Emergency Preparedness is to ensure a safe and resilient community through effective implementation of best practices and innovative approaches. This is accomplished through planning, training and exercises that prepare City staff to respond to and recover from disasters, as well as to mitigate and prevent hazards and threats. The Emergency Preparedness Team meets regularly to develop emergency plans and procedures. The City of Savannah Incident Management Team carries out the plans in order to maintain public safety, restore infrastructure, assist in economic and community recovery, and to ensure good government by tracking and recouping costs. City of Savannah personnel honed their incident management skills by responding to Hurricanes Dorian, Irma and Matthew as well as the 2018 winter storm. Emergency Preparedness works with partners, such as Georgia Ports Authority, the Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Chatham County in planning and participating in disaster exercises.



## 2020 Emergency Management Overview

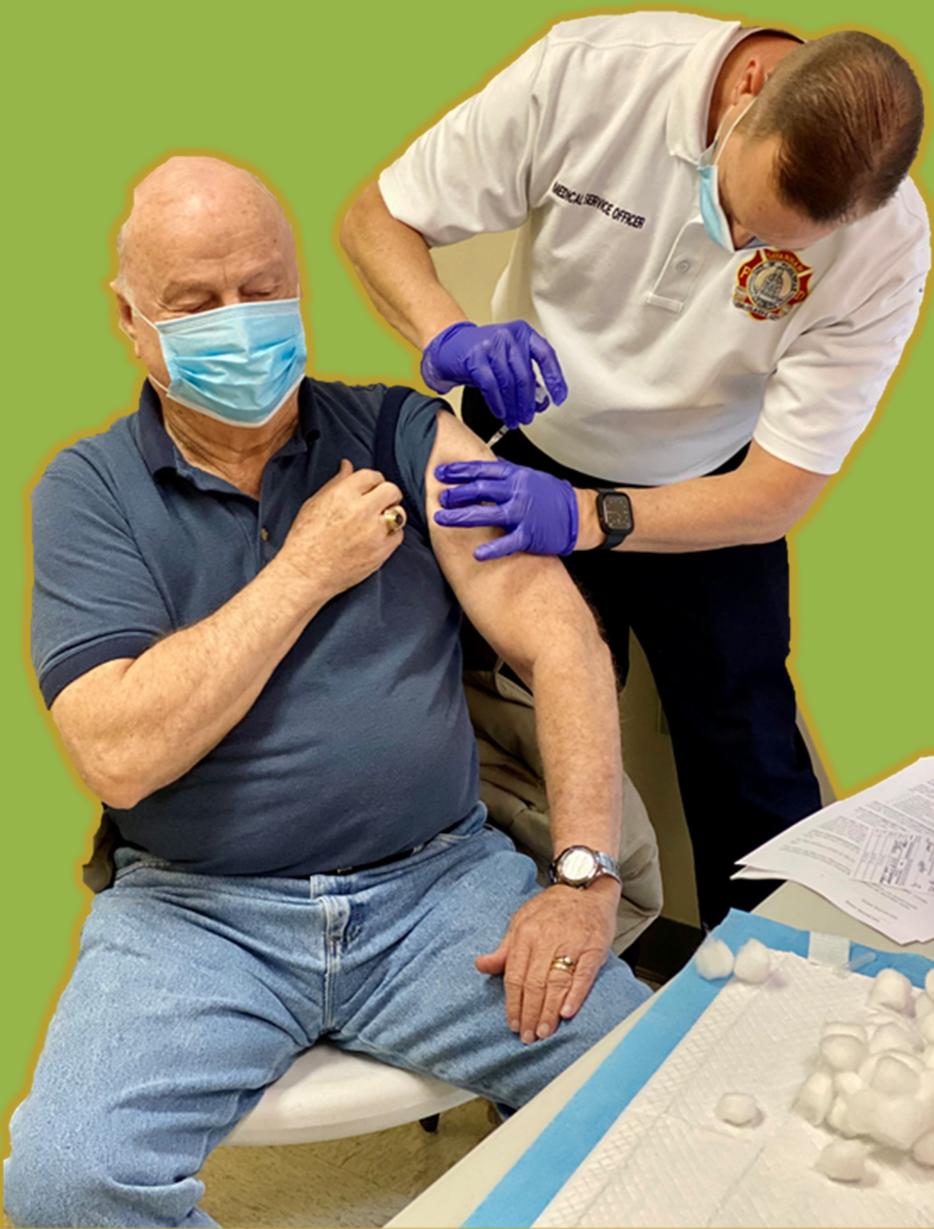


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# COVID

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Savannah Fire was presented a new challenge in 2020—the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many other communities across the United States, we adapted to a new way of life. In 2020, 13,600 confirmed COVID cases and 239 COVID-related deaths were reported in Chatham County. The Savannah Fire Department overcame COVID-related challenges by taking steps designed to keep employees safe, without impacting the exceptional level of professional emergency response that we provide citizens and visitors to the City of Savannah. Our COVID-prevention process included the development of disinfectant procedures and extra cleaning of all fire facilities fire apparatus. This new way of operating ensured the safety of our constituents was never compromised. We also developed virtual fire station tours and virtual public fire safety education programs to maintain our commitment to educating the public about fire safety. In 2021, Savannah Fire Department will join the community fight to stop the spread of COVID-19 by assisting with the administration of COVID-19 vaccinations. We stand with the City of Savannah to win the COVID-19 battle.

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