



GEORGETOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Prepared By

Chief DeWitt



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Message from the Chief



Fire Chief Matt DeWitt

Georgetown Fire Department

I was honored to be sworn in as Fire Chief at the beginning of 2024. After 32 years of serving this community as a firefighter, I have recognized one key priority in my new role: our community is growing, and we owe it to our residents to provide the highest level of service possible.

During an emergency, when a homeowner or business owner opens their door, they are not concerned with who is responding—they simply expect skilled, reliable assistance in their moment of crisis. This report highlights how our fire department has evolved in 2024 to meet the changing needs of our community.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our current Superintendent, Rob Blichok, and Assistant Superintendent, Justin Stadt, for their unwavering support. I also want to thank the Township Board—without their dedication, none of this progress would be possible.

Thank you to the citizens of Georgetown Township for your support. - Chief DeWitt

Over the past 25 years, calls for service have more than doubled from 478 to over 1,000 calls per year and the population grew from 41,823 (2000) to an estimated 55,145 (2023) or 24.2%. The number of businesses in Georgetown has grown from 600 to 919 during the same period.



24.2%

Population increased growth over 25 years.



35%

Business increased growth over 25 years.



Department Overview

The GTFD provides fire, emergency medical, and rescue services for the residents and visitors of Georgetown Township. These services are provided by three (3) full-time personnel during the day, Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM. The three (3) positions include the Fire Chief, Firefighter/Fire Inspector, and Firefighter/Maintenance Technician. From 5:00 PM - 8:00 AM and on the weekends, the approximately 60 part-time paid personnel respond to the station to retrieve a response vehicle and then respond to the call for service from one of the three (3) strategically located fire stations:



Station 1 - 1414 44th Street
Staffed by Firefighter/Inspector

Station 2 - 7518 Church Court
Staffed by Firefighter/Maintenance

Station 3 - 7480 36th Avenue
Unstaffed

Mission Statement

To provide the highest level of life safety and property protection through fire prevention and suppression, as well as educating the residents of Georgetown Township in fire safety.

The Fire Department adheres to the following values:
Respect, Integrity, Accountability, Teamwork, and Service.

Department Overview



Station 1

1414 44th St

Daytime - Staffed by Firefighter/Inspector
Paid on Call: 18 Firefighters

Back Up Engine, Ladder Truck, Primary
Engine, EMS/Inspector Squad
Not pictured: Utility Trailer



Station 2 7518 Church Ct

Daytime - Staffed by Firefighter/Maintenance
Technician
Paid on Call: 20 Firefighters

EMS/Maintenance Squad, Back Up Engine,
Primary Engine, Heavy Rescue
Not pictured: Dive Trailer

Station 3 7480 36th Ave

Day time - Unstaffed
Paid on Call: 21 Firefighters

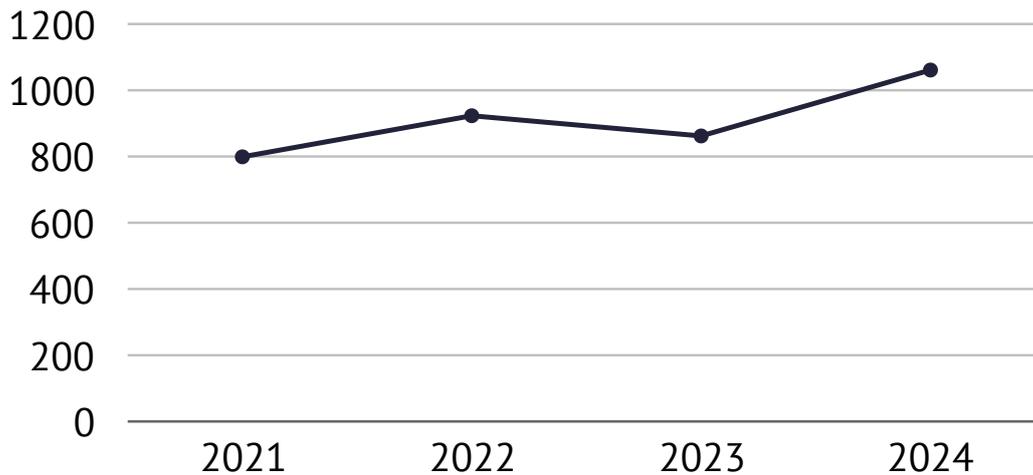
Back Up Engine, Primary Engine, EMS
Squad
Not Pictured: Dive Rescue Boat and
Insulation Vacuum Trailer



For more information about our equipment go to our website www.gtwp.com



Calls for Service



Busiest day of the week is Monday Busiest hours of the day 9 am - 7 pm

The heat map below shows the busiest times by color. The darker the red the more calls for that time and day in 2024.

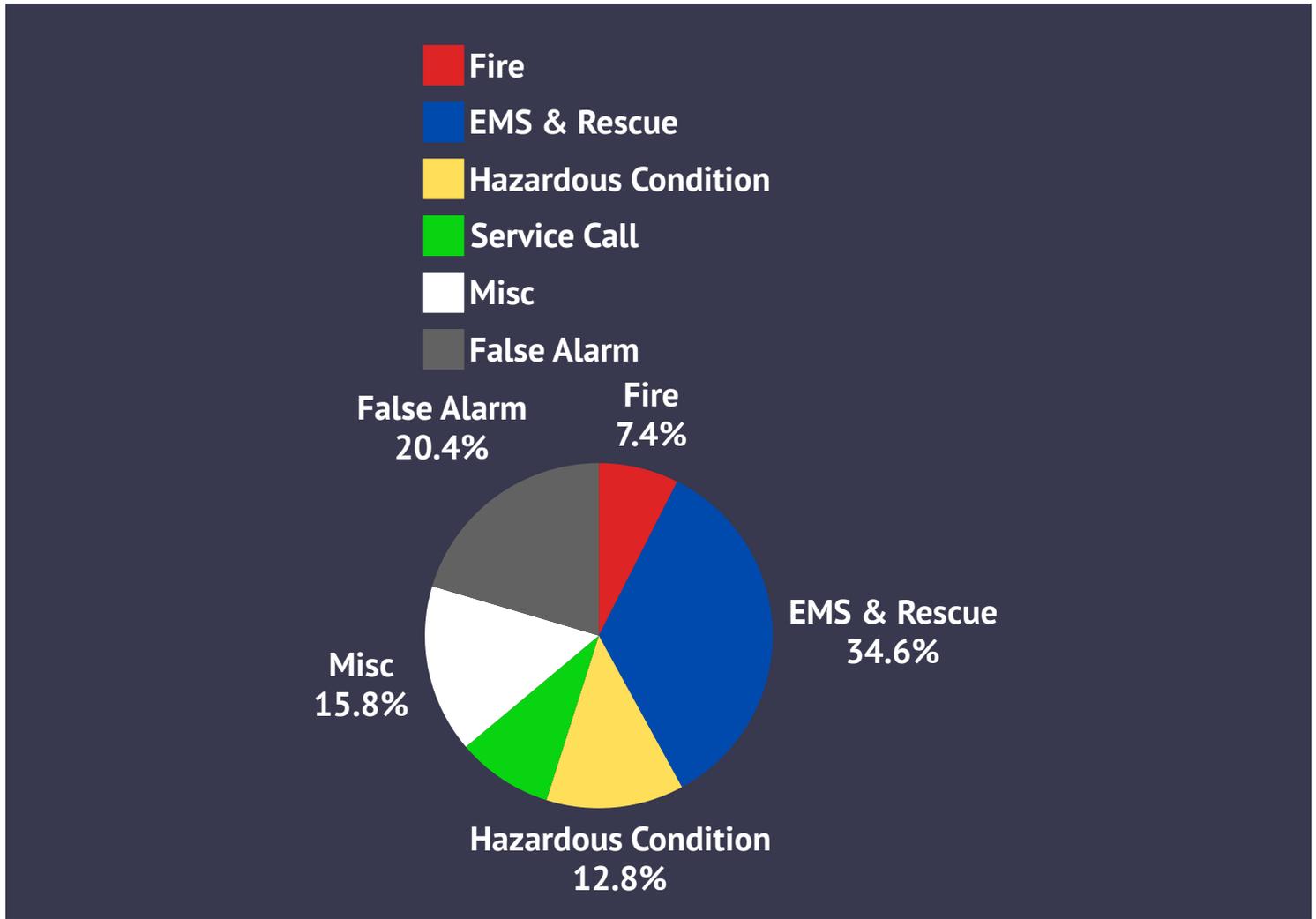
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
00:00	8	5	12	8	10	3	9	00:00
01:00	5	6	8	3	6	4	10	01:00
02:00	3	3	3	6	7	11	7	02:00
03:00	6	2	3	2	2	3	2	03:00
04:00	8	4	0	1	0	8	4	04:00
05:00	4	1	4	4	3	3	3	05:00
06:00	5	8	8	8	5	6	2	06:00
07:00	10	11	6	17	6	4	9	07:00
08:00	14	19	7	14	11	2	8	08:00
09:00	24	21	11	15	15	11	16	09:00
10:00	23	11	13	9	27	17	15	10:00
11:00	26	25	27	15	16	17	24	11:00
12:00	21	24	23	13	13	12	17	12:00
13:00	27	11	17	17	25	7	10	13:00
14:00	11	12	15	23	12	17	11	14:00
15:00	22	28	15	26	23	18	15	15:00
16:00	23	22	16	20	16	10	26	16:00
17:00	12	20	15	20	21	11	25	17:00
18:00	16	12	17	11	9	19	26	18:00
19:00	28	16	17	19	11	24	18	19:00
20:00	7	18	18	19	25	11	15	20:00
21:00	12	14	10	15	20	13	15	21:00
22:00	5	7	18	8	16	6	10	22:00
23:00	6	6	9	11	13	2	10	23:00
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	

- Key
- 90th percentile
 - 80th percentile
 - 70th percentile
 - 60th percentile
 - 50th percentile
 - 40th percentile
 - 30th percentile
 - 20th percentile
 - 10th percentile
 - 1st percentile



Calls for Service Overview

Georgetown is following national trends in terms of service calls. EMS calls for service have increased, while fire incidents have declined. However, false alarms have also risen, partly due to more businesses and residents installing alarm systems as a preventative measure. These systems help detect potential fires early, ensuring we respond before a fire can escalate.



 **35%**
Increase in EMS calls.

 **25%**
Increase in calls for service from past year.



Apparatus

New Ladder Truck

In the fall of 2024, we traveled to the factory to approve the initial phase of a new ladder truck. It is expected to be delivered in 2025.



New Medical Truck

In the fall of 2024 we placed a new medical truck into service. Used by full-time staff during the day, it responds to EMS and fire calls. Additionally, it serves as a maintenance vehicle, assisting with snow plowing at fire stations, and equipment repairs.



Utility Truck

We retired this 2004 utility truck and replaced it with a 2015 truck already in our fleet (see Squad 874 below).

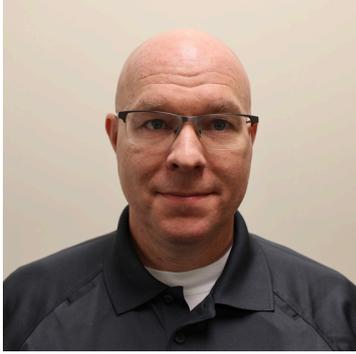


Utility Truck

Squad 874 is a 2015 GMC 2500 Extended Cab. It is a certified Medical First Responder for EMS calls and contains an AED defibrillator. This truck will be used to pull the rescue boat and insulation vacuum.



Training



Deputy Chief (DC) Ryan Tibbets has served as our Training Officer for 20 years, ensuring that all state-mandated topics and MIOSHA requirements are covered annually. Firefighters train twice a month on Thursdays, with sessions that include both classroom instruction and hands-on training.

This year, we focused on strategies for combating electric vehicle fires. A Georgetown citizen generously allowed us to examine his Cybertruck during a training session. This hands-on experience provided firefighters with valuable insight into the vehicle's design, including battery locations, to better prepare for emergency situations.



**2,355 hours of
training completed
in 2024**

Dive Team



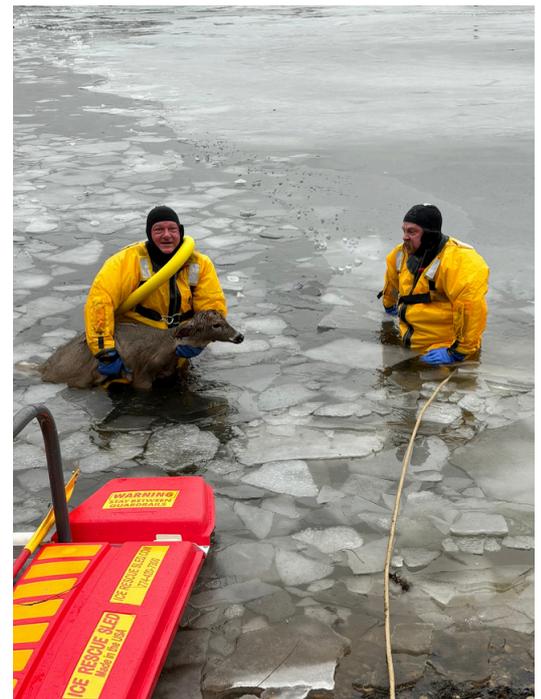
Captain Tim Kluz leads our dive team, consisting of nine divers and support team. They train monthly to maintain and enhance their skills. GTFD has a Dive Trailer and Rescue Boat.



Deer Rescue

Dog Rescue

In 2024, we responded to two calls involving dogs, including one where a dog chased a deer onto the ice. We were able to rescue both the deer and the dog.



Recruitment & Retention



Lieutenant Todd Hower oversees the Recruitment and Retention committee. It's becoming increasingly difficult to find individuals willing to invest the time and energy required to serve on a paid-on-call fire department. To generate interest and answer questions about what it takes to become a firefighter, we share information at our annual fire department open house.



EMS



Captain Phil VandenHeuvel leads our low-angle rescue team, which trains quarterly throughout the year at various locations in the township with difficult-to-access areas, preparing for potential injuries. The team, made up of members from all three stations, stores its equipment at Station 1. In addition to his role with the low-angle team, Phil also oversees the EMS Committee, ensuring our firefighters are up-to-date on their training and equipment is stocked and ready for use in an emergency.



Low Angle Rescue

Radios



Lieutenant Ben Momber leads our radio committee, overseeing all radio operations. This includes mobile radios in the fire trucks, pagers for each team member, and portable radios to ensure seamless communication during operations.



Repairs



This year, we started repairing our own pagers, saving tax dollars by handling the repairs in-house instead of outsourcing the work.



Mental Health



Captain Rob Holland helps guide us through mental health challenges, as firefighters often encounter difficult situations that can create emotional strain. In 2024, we began discussions on implementing a peer-to-peer support system, which we aim to have in place by 2025. Additionally, Rob serves as our quartermaster, ensuring all members have the proper gear for safety during fire calls. This includes pants, coats, boots, gloves, hoods, helmets, and safety vests.



Personal Protective Gear

Honor Guard



Lieutenant Kent Selders leads our Honor Guard team. Each year, the team participates in the Memorial Day parade and is available to serve at funerals or other events that request an Honor Guard. Kent is in charge of all firefighters uniforms and related clothing items.

The Honor Guard team consists of 10 members who meet a few times a year to train on marching and presentation.



Fire Prevention

Each October, we send two fire engines and a team of firefighters to visit all the elementary schools and many daycares in Georgetown Township for Fire Prevention Month. This year we reached over 2,000 children. Additionally, we bring fire trucks to block parties, school events, and educational programs. In total, we participated in over 62 events throughout the township. These community engagements are essential for showcasing the resources available to our taxpayers and how they are utilized.



This year, we extend our gratitude to everyone who participated in this year's open house: Hudsonville, Allendale, Blendon, and Jamestown Fire Departments, Life EMS, the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office, Ottawa County Dispatch, Ottawa County Emergency Management, Safe Kids USA, Grand Valley Towing, the Skywarn team, Wesco, and our officer wives who assisted with food.

Over 2000 children educated in fire prevention in 2024

Our annual open house is held during Fire Prevention Week each October. This year, nearly 900 adults and children attended. The event provides an opportunity for kids to explore all of our equipment, spray water from a fire hose, learn how to get out of a smoke filled room, see how the Jaws of Life are used, and more.



Attended 62 local events



Southeast Ottawa County Fire Officers

The Georgetown Fire Department has partnered with the City of Hudsonville and the townships of Zeeland, Jamestown, and Blendon to collaborate and share knowledge across our departments. We meet quarterly to discuss important topics that impact us all, including the latest advancements in fire service, dispatcher updates, improved response strategies, and new tools and techniques. This collaboration strengthens our ability to work together and respond effectively to mutual aid requests when needed.

Deputy Chief

Ryan Tibbets



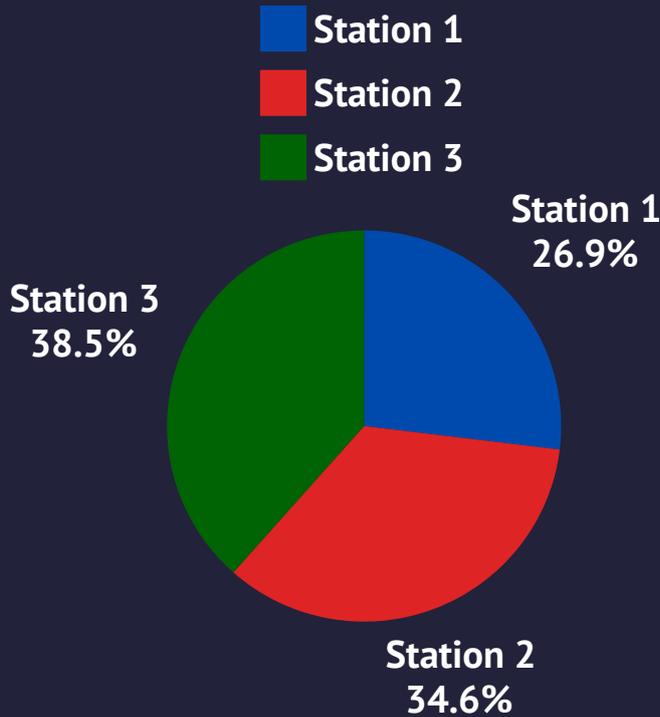
We appreciate Georgetown Deputy Chief Ryan Tibbets for organizing this group, and helping to enhance coordination and preparedness with our neighboring departments.





Staffing Report

Total calls per station



Becoming a firefighter requires completing a six-month Fire Academy to obtain Firefighter I & II and Hazardous Materials Operations certifications. Followed by a three-month Medical First Responder class. These courses are time consuming and require dedication and commitment for the new firefighter and his/her family. Additionally, state requirements for maintaining these certifications have become more rigorous.

This year we welcomed five new paid-on-call firefighters to our team: three members at Station 2 and two members at Station 3.

Staffing Overview

2024	Station 1	Station 2	Station 3
Part Time	18	20	21
New Members Hired 2024	0	3	2
Maintenance	0	1	0
Fire Inspector	1	0	0
Full Time	1	1	0



Leadership



Fire Chief - Matt DeWitt
Full-Time Daily Operations

Matt is a 32-year veteran of GTFD and has held multiple positions over the years, serving as a firefighter, full-time fire maintenance technician, and fire inspector.



Deputy Chief - Ryan Tibbets
Part-Time Training Division

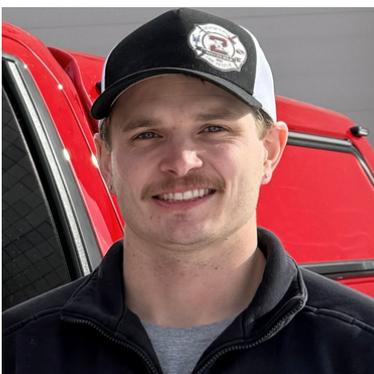
Ryan is a 25-year veteran of GTFD. He began his career at Station 2, working his way up to Captain of Station 2 before his promotion to Deputy Chief in 2024. He assists the Chief and oversees the training division.

Full-Time Team



Craig Scholma
Full-Time Fire Inspector

Craig was promoted to Fire Inspector in 2024. He also earned his Fire Investigation certification in 2024. Craig works Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm, with his office located at Station 1. He has served GTFD for 24 years .



Mitchell Kwantes
Full-Time Maintenance

Mitchell maintains the fire equipment and buildings. He works Monday through Friday 8 am -5 pm. His office is located at Station 2. He has served GTFD for 5 years.





Leadership - Stations



Captain Station 1

Phil VandenHeuvel

Phil was promoted to Captain in 2024. He leads both the EMS and Low Angle Rescue committees. He keeps EMS equipment stocked and manages EMS certifications for the firefighters.

He has served GTFD for 15 years.



Lieutenant Station 1

Ben Momber

Ben was promoted to Lieutenant in 2024. He leads the Radios and Pagers committee.

He has served GTFD for 10 years.

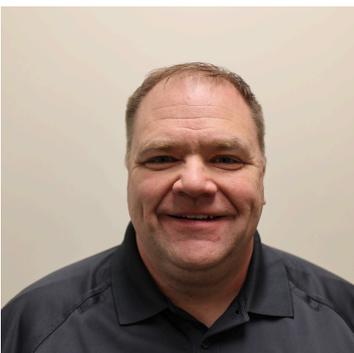


Captain Station 2

Tim Kluz

Tim was promoted to Captain in 2024. Tim Kluz leads the Dive Team.

He has served GTFD for 23 years.



Lieutenant Station 2

Todd Hower

Todd was promoted to Lieutenant in 2024. He leads the Retention and Recruitment committee and assists with Dive Team operations.

He has served GTFD for 29 years.



Leadership - Stations



Captain Station 3

Rob Holland

Rob was promoted to Captain in 2023. He serves as the Quartermaster and works with our Mental Health program.

He has served GTFD for 25 years.



Lieutenant Station 3

Kent Selders

Kent was promoted to Lieutenant in 2023. He leads the Honor Guard team and assists Rob Holland with Quartermaster responsibilities.

Kent has served GTFD for 13 years.



Retired Deputy Chief

Gene DeWitt

Gene faithfully served GTFD for over 50 years and retired in 2024 as Deputy Chief. We thank him for his years of service!



DPW and Fire Support Complex



In 2024, the township began construction on a new building located north of Fire Station 1. This facility will support both the Water Department and Fire Department operations. The expanded parking lot will provide space for testing fire hoses, while the on-site hydrants will be used to train new firefighters in pump operations. Inside the building, a dedicated training room on the second level will be set up for various drills, including search and rescue and ladder exercises. The collaboration with the Public Works Department has been excellent, and we appreciate the support from the Township Board and township management on this project.

The completion is scheduled for late summer 2025.





Contact Us



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Thank You

