

# Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services Annual Report FY2024



Mayor Tom Perciak

Safety Director Charlie Goss

Fire Chief Jack Draves



# **MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF**

## **JACK DRAVES, FIRE CHIEF**



Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services is an all-hazards emergency response agency staffed, trained, equipped, and ready to respond to your call for help due to fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical and trauma emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescue incidents, and many other less serious incidents. Our Firemedics take great pride in delivering professional, competent, and compassionate services to the residents and businesses of Strongsville.

I believe the stability and success of the organization rests on four pillars: **Professionalism**, **Competence**, **Compassion**, and **Pride**. These four pillars are the foundation and guiding principles of our department. By focusing on these principles, we provide the best possible services despite the many economic, political, and social challenges we face locally and across the nation.

As an organization, safety remains our top priority. We are committed to protecting the lives and property of our residents and ensuring our businesses maintain a safe environment for their workers and patrons. Our commitment to safety is reflected in our fast and efficient emergency response, dedication to enforcing the fire code and safety standards, providing quality fire and life safety education to the entire community, and providing the necessary resources and skills to our members to keep them engaged and successful as a first responder.

In 2024, the Department logged 7,187 calls for service; this was a 1.6% increase over 2023. Emergency Medical Services continues to represent nearly 70% of the call volume, and 70% of our emergency calls for service have at least one other call occurring at the same time. The average response time for the first unit to arrive at an emergency incident is six minutes and forty-two seconds. The number of calls for service has increased 200% in the past 20 years—2,339 calls for service in 2004 and 7,187 calls for service in 2024. The question you may ask yourself is why? City population has increased over the years, but more importantly the population has also aged. As residents age, they don't want to leave Strongsville so we have seen an increase in skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and senior independent living facilities. With the advances in medical technology, medical procedures, and medications, people are living longer. In general, the older population tends to use emergency medical services more often, which has a direct effect on our call volume and our ability to deliver timely, high-quality emergency services.

To this end, the City has committed to the construction a fifth fire station on Royalton Road just west of Pearl Road. The City awarded an agreement to DS Architecture to perform architectural design and consulting services for the new fire station. In December 2025, the City awarded an agreement to RFC



Contracting as the Construction Manager-at-Risk. The design is complete and plans are currently under review by the City. Once plans are approved and construction begins, the fire station is expected to be completed in about 12 months. The new fire station will put more firefighter/paramedics on the streets and will help improve response times and make operations more efficient, especially to incidents along the central corridors of Royalton and Pearl Roads.

In 2024, the Fire Department was audited and evaluated by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). ISO is an independent company that serves insurance companies, communities, fire departments, and others by providing information about risk. ISO collects and evaluates information from communities on their fire suppression capabilities. Data is analyzed using the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) and then a Public Protection Classification (PPC) grade is assigned to the community. The PPC is used by the insurance companies to determine residential and commercial insurance rates. The better the classification, the lower the insurance rate. The FSRS considers fire department operations, equipment, staffing, training, water supply, and emergency communications. I am happy to announce that Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services received a PPC 2. This is an improvement from 2019 when we were a PPC 3. A PPC 2 puts Strongsville Fire in the top 6% of **ALL** fire departments across the country.

We are doing many great things to serve the community, but we must always be looking to improve emergency operations so that we operate more safely, effectively, and efficiently. We must also be responsive to the changing needs of the community and how we may be able to better serve our residents. I encourage you to read through the entire annual report to get a better sense of our operations, our accomplishments, and the dozens of ways in which we interact and serve the community every day. If you have any questions or you would like more information on a topic, please do not hesitate to contact me.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your Fire Chief. I have the great fortune to work alongside many talented, dedicated and highly-trained Firemedics and Officers. These individuals have dedicated their lives to helping others by providing quality services to our residents, businesses and visitors on a daily basis. They provide these services with near flawless perfection, often under the most stressful and dangerous circumstances. Thank you to the entire Strongsville community for your continued dedication and support of our mission.

Respectfully,  
Jack Draves  
Fire Chief



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## OUR VISION

The VISION of Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services is to continue being the finest fire and emergency services organization possible by utilizing and developing our members to their fullest potential, maximizing the use of our available resources, and being responsive to the growth and changing needs of our community.

## OUR MISSION

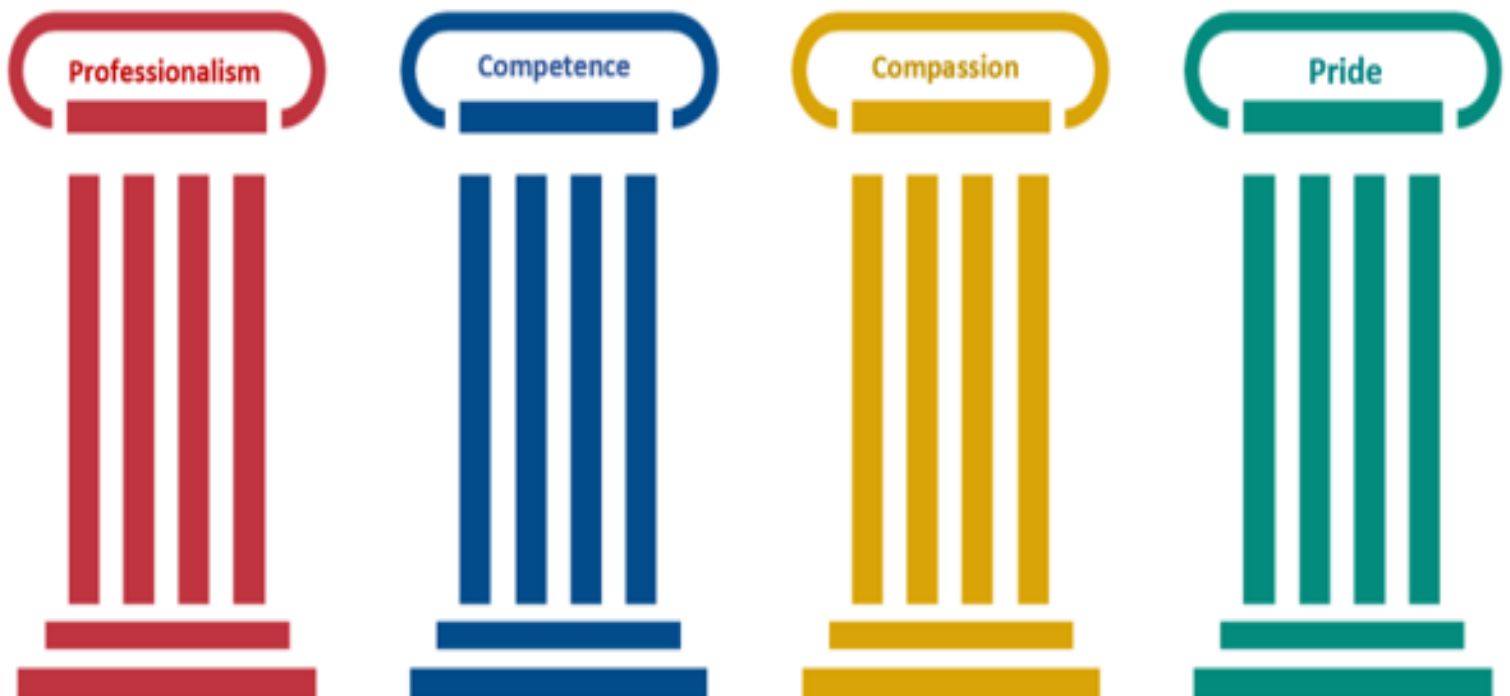
Our MISSION is to protect the lives, property, and environment of the people who live, work, or travel in Strongsville.

## OUR VALUES

The VALUES of Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services are to provide its members with a framework for making management decisions and guiding individual behavior. Our value system describes those attributes that make the organization and our members an asset to the community.

The VALUES of Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services are:

- HUMAN LIFE - OUR TOP PRIORITY
- SERVICE - OUR REASON FOR EXISTENCE
- EXCELLENCE - OUR GOAL
- INTEGRITY - THE BASIS FOR TRUST
- ACCOUNTABILITY - PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL
- INNOVATION - FOR CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
- EDUCATION- FOR GROWTH



## Four Pillars of Success



**Jack Draves**  
Fire Chief



**Neil Rozman**  
Asst. Chief



**AJ Aljabi**  
Asst. Chief



**Capt. Tom Sullivan**  
Training Officer



**Lt. Brian Tomeany**  
Adm. Officer



**Capt. Dave Haffner**  
A-Shift



**Capt. Scott Fridley**  
B-Shift



**Capt. Paul Filon**  
C-Shift



**Capt. Andy Green**  
Fire Marshall/FPO



**Lt. Mark Biley**  
**Lt. Matt Ditlevson**  
**Lt. Tony Hunt**  
**Lt. Paul Noel**



**Lt. Ray Bement**  
**Lt. Matt Kasza**  
**Lt. Joe Agresta**  
**Lt. Bob Pochatek**



**Lt. Matt Fabec**  
**Lt. Tom Zinn**  
**Lt. John Douglas**  
**Lt. Dave Boyle**



**Asst. FM Mike Pace**  
**Asst. FM Jamie Grimm**



**Brian Polasko**  
**Jamie Petrick**  
**Charley Walters**  
**Matt Zippay**  
**Brandon Sposit**  
**Matt Taylor**  
**Kyle Paul**  
**Dave Javor**  
**Johnathon Tibbs**  
**William Strizzi**  
**Ben Verbus**  
**Mike Fulton**  
**Mike Linek**  
**Tyler Bord**  
**Alex Nelson**



**Tom Grucza**  
**Jason Cerovac**  
**Steve Siudowski**  
**Jon Cameron**  
**Doug Kallin**  
**Dominic Francini**  
**Josh Maslocha**  
**Adam Buga**  
**Stve Haines**  
**Anthony Sessin**  
**Dustin Baizar**  
**Sean Fox**  
**Christian Eyman**  
**Carson Hengst**  
**Joch Sargent**



**George Benedict**  
**Christian Flaherty**  
**Jim Loparo**  
**Mike Macejko**  
**Andy Smeader**  
**Matt Schenek**  
**Pat Barrett**  
**Jeremy Watt**  
**Alain Vue**  
**Grant Loeding**  
**Lee Brass**  
**Chris Milne**  
**David Haffner Jr**  
**Jason March**  
**Matt Janosek**







## Ward 1 Fire Station 11297 Webster Road

The station opened in April 2001 with 10,651sq. ft and serves the northeast quadrant of the city. The 2 ½ bay station has a community meeting room and serves as the Ward 1 police mini-station. The station is staffed by a Lieutenant and two Firemedics. Station 1 is equipped with a 100' aerial platform, an ambulance, and the Ohio Region 2 Urban Search and Rescue truck and trailer.



## Ward 2 Fire Station 15939 Drake Road

The station opened in April 1997 with 5,745sq. ft and serves the southeast quadrant of the city. The 1 ½ bay station also serves as the Ward 2 police mini-station. The station is staffed by a Lieutenant and two Firemedics. Station 2 is equipped with a pumper truck and an ambulance.



## Ward 3 Fire Station 22000 Albion Road

The station opened in March 1981 with 8,360sq. ft and was renovated in 2016. This station serves the northwestern quadrant of the city. The two-bay station has a hose tower and hose room. Station 3 also serves as the Ward 3 police mini-station. The station is staffed by a Lieutenant and two Firemedics. Station 3 is equipped with a pumper truck and an ambulance. It also houses a reserve ambulance and pumper truck.



## Ward 4 Fire Station 17000 Prospect Road

Station 4 opened in 2008 with 36,194sq. ft and serves the southwest quadrant of the city. This station is the Department's Administrative Headquarters and has 5 ½ bays which include a classroom, training tower and the police mini-station. The station is staffed by a minimum of a Lieutenant, two Firemedics, and a Captain as the Shift Commander. Station 4 is equipped with a 75-foot ladder truck, an ambulance, a pumper, a command vehicle, a reserve 100' aerial platform, a reserve ambulance, and several support vehicles. The station is also equipped with a SERT Hazardous Materials response vehicle and equipment.



# ASSISTANT CHIEF of ADMINISTRATION

## ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF NEIL ROZMAN

The Assistant Chief of Administration is responsible for human resources, payroll, facilities management & capital improvements, Health and Safety, and coordinating operations with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).








Seperation of Services			
Capt. Tilbert	Lt. Hunt	FM. Grucza	FM. Evans
			
Matt retired at the beginning of 2024 after 27 years of service. He was promoted to Lt in 2003, and Capt of FPO since 2016.	Tony was hired in 1996, promoted to Lt in 2016 and retired at the end of 2024.	Tom was hired in 1994 and retired after 30 years of dedicated service.	Mark was hired in 2013 and resigned in 2024.

### Human Resources

In 2024, Captain Matt Tilbert, Lt. Tony Hunt and Firemedic Tom Grucza retired. These vacancies created opportunities of the promotions of Captain Tom Sullivan as the new Training Officer and Lieutenant Paul Noel, Lieutenant Bob Pochatek and Lieutenant Andy Smeader. The department also hired five new Firemedics in 2024: Matt Janosek, Tyler Bord, Alex Nelson, Josh Sargent, and Joe Zidones.

Promotions			
Capt. Sullivan	Lt. Noel	Lt. Pochatek	Lt. Smeader
			
Tom was hired in 2007 and promoted to Lt. in 2018 and promoted to Training Captain in 2024.	Paul was hired in 2008 and promoted in 2024.	Bob was hired in 2013 and promoted in 2024.	Andy was hired in 2006 and promoted to Lt in 2024.



Appointments				
FM. Janosek	FM. Bord	FM. Nelson	FM. Sargent	FM. Zidones
				
Matt was appointed May 20, 2024. He is from Middleburg Hts, where he graduated from Midpark High. Matt attended UH for his paramedic and Tri-C for his firefighter certifications. He worked for Donald Martens and part-time for Olmsted Falls Fire Department.	Tyler was appointed on May 20, 2024. He graduated high school at Kennedy Catholic in Pennsylvania and attended the University of Akron. He served in the US Reserves 2011-2017 and brings seven years of experience from the Akron Fire Department where he obtained his fire, paramedic and dive certifications.	Alex was appointed May 20, 2024. He was born in Warren and raised in Independence. He graduate from Independence High School in 2018 and attended Tri-C to obtain his FF and EMT-B certifications. Alex went to UH Parma for his paramedic schooling and brings experience from Macedonia Fire Department.	Josh was appointed July 15, 2024. He graduated in 2020 from Padua High School. He went to UH Parma for his paramedic and University of Akron for his firefighter certifications. He has worked for Physicians Ambulance for the last 3 years.	Joe was appointed December 16, 2024. He is from Aurora and graduated from Aurora HS in 2013. He received a degree from Kent State University in Turfgrass Management. He attended UH Parma for his paramedic and Tri- C for his firefighter certifications. Joe has been working at Newburgh Heights FD.

## Facilities Management

The main theme for Facilities in 2024 was Maintenance-Maintenance-Maintenance. The work required to keep our stations in good working order is a never-ending challenge that resulted in the expenditure of well over \$200,000. Items from concrete replacement to paint and carpeting to daily janitorial chores and maintenance is part of every day in our department. HVAC continues to be the largest source of issues and generates the most expense.

## Health, Wellness and Fitness Committee

SFES continues to support and enhance the health, safety, and overall well-being of department members through education, resources, and wellness initiatives. SFES embraces 4 key objectives:

- **Promote Physical Fitness**: Encourage regular exercise and physical health maintenance tailored to the demands of firefighting. This includes modern cardio and physical strength training equipment.
- **Support Mental Health**: Provide resources for stress management, peer support, and access to mental health professionals.
- **Prevent Injury and Illness**: Implement programs to reduce workplace injuries and promote healthy lifestyle habits.
- **Monitor Occupational Health Risks**: Address risks such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and PTSD.

Activities include annual health screenings, fitness testing, and access to Health and Wellness Coaches. In addition, the department provides two sets of turn out gear, washing machine extractors at each station and NFPA compliant SOPs.

## Safety Forces Chaplain

Father Joe Mamich followed his calling and remains the Secretary and Vicar for Clergy and Religious for the Diocese of Cleveland. However, his passion for the safety forces drives him to remain Strongsville's Safety Force Chaplain for the Police and Fire departments. He finds time to serve these Safety Forces and in 2024 he dedicated almost 60 hours in Strongsville; 28 hours with various SPD officers and 32 hours across the four SFD stations.



Rev. Joseph R. Mamich



Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services offers a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program. Under the leadership of Dale Hawk and Don Rohde, CERT educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as

fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. The Ohio Community Emergency Response Team recognized several members of our Strongsville CERT in the areas of Volunteerism and Leadership services.

Exceptional Volunteerism Award - Dale Hawk

Exceptional Leadership Award - Don Rohde

Volunteer Service Hours: Don Rohde (294 hours), Mike Mahoney (159 hours)

Strongsville congratulates these distinguished members for their exceptional leaderships and commitments to making Strongsville more prepared in emergency and disaster relief. Their services in all of the events throughout the year contribute significantly to the community's safety.

The dedicated members of CERT performed almost 900 hours of community service in 2024. The events included all 12 of our community events, in addition to serving on storm watch for severe weather alerts. CERT also participated in educating local school districts in "Stop the Bleed" training and also taught CPR and First Aid to new CERT recruits.



CERT actively participates at the following community events:

- 4th of July Fireworks
- A Day at the Chalet
- Harvest Festival
- Homecoming Fireworks
- Memorial Day Parade
- Rib Burn off Fireworks
- Rotary Duck Race
- Solar Eclipse City Coverage
- StrongFest
- SWGHC Health Fair-Stop the Bleed
- Winter Wonderland Lighting Ceremony and Fireworks.



# ASSISTANT CHIEF of OPERATIONS

## ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF AJ ALJABI



The Assistant Fire Chief of Operations is responsible for coordinating the daily operations of the department, training oversight, liaison with Southwest Emergency Dispatch (SWEDC), vehicle and equipment maintenance, and purchasing.

### ➤ Staffing

- 60 members on three shifts
- 3 FPO (Captain Fire Marshal and 2 Inspectors)
- 1 Lieutenant/Administrative Officer/Community Outreach Coordinator.

- 1 Captain Training Officer
- 3 Chief Officers

### ➤ New Apparatus

- Sutphen pumper \$995,300 received in 2024
- Two Lifeline squads \$800,362 ordered

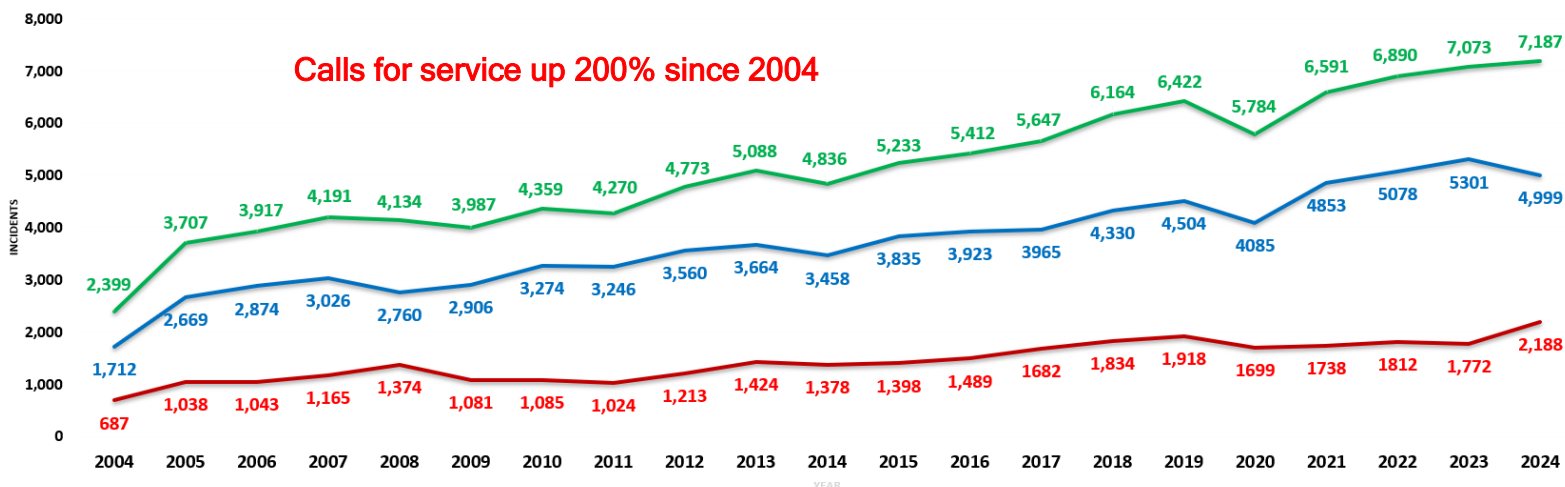
### ➤ Equipment

- Authorization to purchase radios \$665,000
- Turnout Gear purchase awarded to Lion Apparel for \$244,732 plus boots, helmets, hoods and gloves
- 2 Stryker cots and Powerloads for \$105,035
- Ladder 4 refurbished \$180,000
- Purchase of Fire Combat Ready attack hose \$5,000

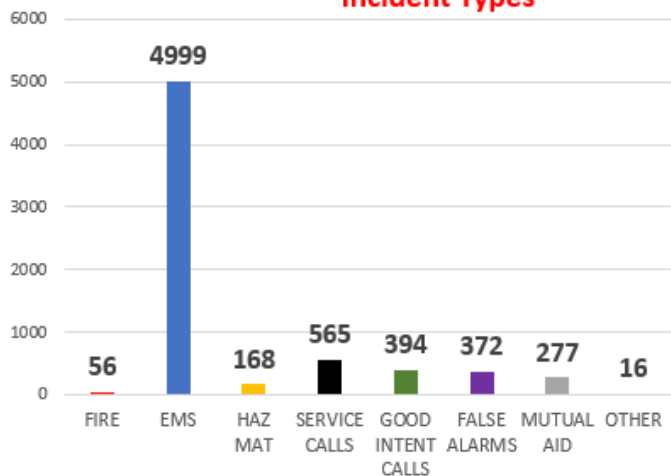
### 2024 Operational Summary

Total calls for service	7,187
EMS Calls	4,999
EMS Transports	4,011
Ambulance Billing Collections	\$1,517,582
Fire, Haz Condition, Service Calls	2,188
Total Fire Losses	\$796,735
Value of property saved	\$19,884,100
Fires with Property Loss	31
Fires with losses >\$10K	10 structures 4 vehicles
Mutual Aid Given	256
Mutual Aid Received	84

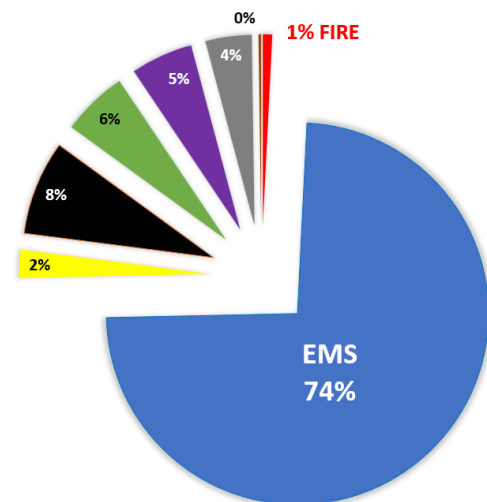
Calls for service up 200% since 2004



### Incident Types



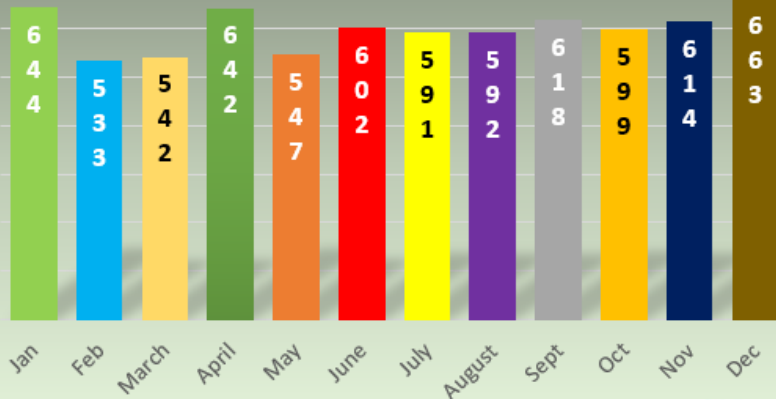
- FIRE
- EMS
- HAZ MAT
- SERVICE CALLS
- GOOD INTENT CALLS
- FALSE ALARMS
- MUTUAL AID
- OTHER



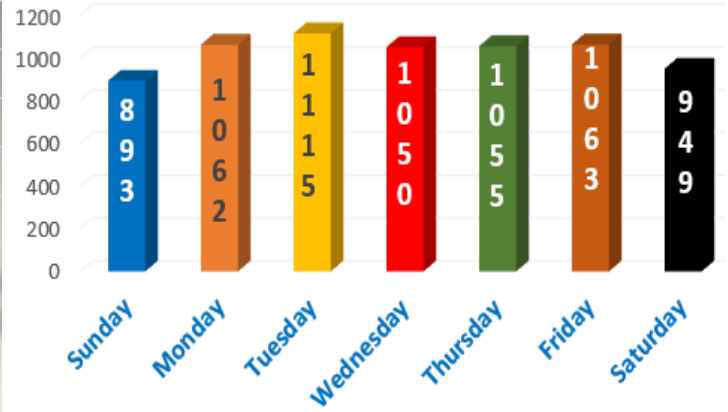
CALL DISTRIBUTION



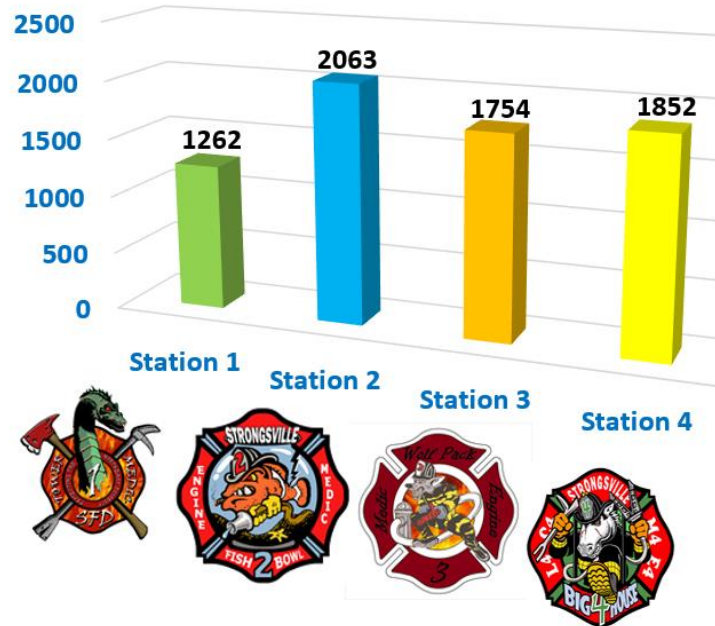
## 2024 Calls by Month



## 2024 CALLS BY DAYS OF THE WEEK



## Incidents by Station 2024



Marks Road Columbia Station



# SERT



Southwest Emergency Response Team (SERT) is comprised of fire service professionals from 20 Cuyahoga County, Ohio communities and organizations that combine their resources for specialized **Land Rescue**, **Water Rescue**, **Haz Mat**, and **Fire Investigations**.

The teams cover 182 square miles and serves a population of 343,000 residents. Strongsville has 16 members serving on the SERT Teams.

SERT purchased a new 2023 SERT **HM2** vehicle. This vehicle was placed into service on February 20, 2024 and is housed at Independence Fire Department. HM 1 remains at Strongsville Station 4, which is the SERT Hazmat HQ.

## SERT Hazmat (HM)

SFD Station 4 continues to be SERT Hazmat's HQ. In 2024, HM responded to 13 callouts/team activations. In addition to the multiple monthly county-wide drills and table top exercises, HM participated and hosted several other training opportunities, which included but not limited to 29 Lithium Ion Battery classes, multiple Hazmat IQ classes, Propane Response Class and a Hazmat Officer/Hazmat Safety Officer class.

HM also implemented new Decon system complete with Modern Day Decon Class.

## SERT FIU

Responded to 78 investigations in 2024, with Strongsville FIU members involved with six of the investigations.

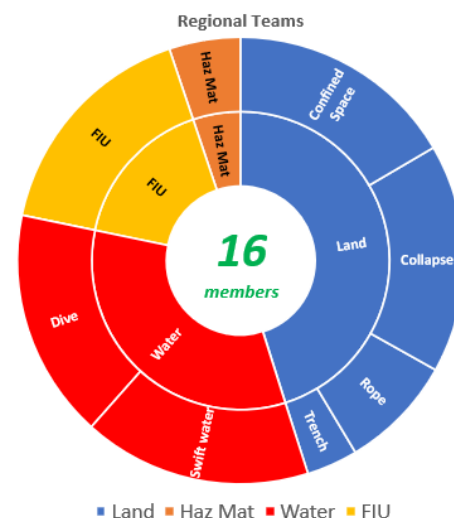
## SERT Technical Rescue (Tech Rescue)

Tech Rescue is broken down into two disciplines, Water-Based and Land-Based. Disciplines includes Trench Rescue, Confined Space, Wide Area Search, Structural Collapse and High Angle Rope Rescue. The Water discipline includes Dive Rescue and Swift Water Rescue. They have 58 members, 29 on Land and 29 on Water. Strongsville has three members on Tech Rescue.

SERT also formed a Drone Team. The team is getting organized and will be used as a resource to support other rescue teams. In 2024, the team purchased equipment and trained SERT members. SERT conducted monthly training exercises including joint training with other Regional technical rescue teams.

Tech Rescue responded to six calls for service in 2024.

2024 SERT Members	
Capt. Tom Sullivan- <b>Director</b>	HazMat
Capt. Andrew Green- <b>Deputy Director</b>	HazMat
Lt. Mark Biley	HazMat
Capt. Paul Filon	HazMat
Lt. Bob Pochatek	HazMat
FM. Kyle Paul	Haz Mat
Lt. Paul Noel	Haz Mat
FM. Brandon Sposit- <b>Deputy Director</b>	FIU
AC. AJ Aljabi	FIU
Capt. Andrew Green	FIU
Lt. David Boyle	FIU
FM. Matt Taylor	FIU
FM. Jamie Grimm	FIU
FM. Doug Kallin	Tech Rescue
FM. Josh Maslocha	Tech Rescue
Lt. Joe Agresta	Dive



## Participating SERT Communities

Berea	Brooklyn Heights	North Royalton	Seven Hills
Brecksville	Cuyahoga Heights	Olmsted Falls	Strongsville
Broadview Heights	Independence	Olmsted Township	Valley View
Brook Park	Middleburgh Heights	Parma	Metro Parks
Brooklyn	Newburgh Heights	Parma Heights	NE Ohio Regional Sewer District



# Maintenance at a Glance

## Hydrants

Hydrant flushing started in April 9, 2024 and was completed on August 29, 2024. SFD inspected and flushed 3,306 hydrants and found that 58 hydrants were marked out of service (OOS) for various reasons. The OOS hydrants were forwarded to the Service Department, which will coordinate with Cleveland Water Department to make repairs in 2025.

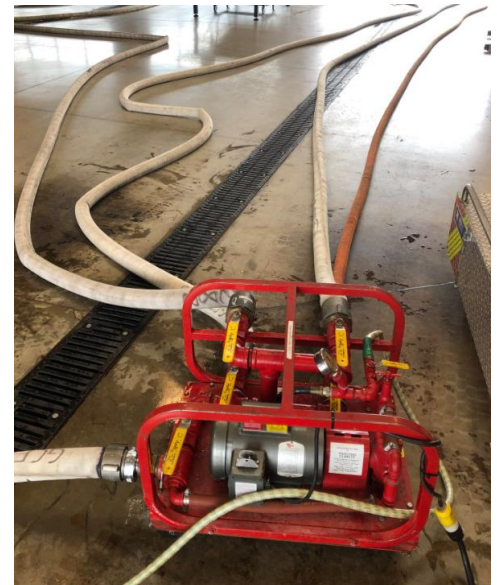


### 2024 Annual Preventative Maintenance (PM) Program

3306 Hydrants	SCBA Mask fit testing
Powerload, Cots, Stair Chairs PM	SCBA Cylinder Hydrostatic testing PM
Extrication tools	Bauer & MAKO fill station biannual PM
Portable Gas Meter PM	Aerial and Ground ladder PM
19,000 feet of hose testing	Apparatus Pump testing
Vehicle Fleet biannual PM	Small engine maintenance
Radio Maintenance PM	LP 15 Heart Monitor PM
SCBA Bench Testing PM	Lucas CPR Devices PM
Portable radio PM	

## Radios:

- Purchased portable radios and accessories from Motorola; APX Next XE for \$685,000 in service 2025.
- Repairs were made to the following radios with no cost per the service plan: 2 mobile radios, 4 portable radios, 1 base radio.
- Received 12 portable radio batteries at no cost, per service plan.
- Received 5 remote speaker mics, 6 antennas, and 12 plastic belt clips at no cost, per service plan
- Motorola also addressed or assisted with investigating possible dispatch audio issues, a MARCS issue, and GCRCN outage issues. All issues were resolved/addressed. Motorola loaned us one APX Next portable radio for training in November.



## SCBA and Breathing Air Systems

In 2024, Station 3 received new air packs and SCBA bottles for their apparatus. These new air packs incorporate the Universal Emergency Breathing Safety System (UEBSS). We had to retro fit all RIT paks on our apparatus to be able to support the new UEBSS Rectus style fitting on the buddy breather. Currently, all our RIT paks use the Scott specific Hansen style fitting and the UEBSS fittings allow our Scott paks to buddy breath with other manufactures air paks such as the MSA SCBA's.







In an emergent situation, all RIT packs and air packs have been labeled with color-coded reflective tape to help firefighters quickly identify the proper fittings. All future SCBA pack purchases will be purchased with the industry standard UEBSS.

New bucket breathing air hoses have been purchased and placed in service on Ladder 1 and Ladder 5. The UEBSS connection is on "back order" from the manufacturer, due to arrive in sometime in 2025. Forty one of our ninety-eight - 30-minute breathing air cylinders were hydro tested in 2024 and placed back into service.

All 46 Scott Air paks and all 5 RIT paks were bench tested in 2024. Six 30-minute air cylinders were removed from service due to end of life and disposed of in 2024.

Fit Tester purchase agreement involving seven cities for the purchase of a new QuantiFit2 Respirator Fit Testing System negative pressure SCBA mask fit tester. This is a required annual fit testing for all of our members.

Cost was \$15,565, with each city paying \$2,223.57. All necessary testing components were purchased as well as a five-year maintenance plan. The old fit tester was returned for a monetary credit (\$1500) toward the new machine. The new machine is more user friendly and efficient.



Beam collapse rescue at the former Office Max



## 2024 HIGH PROFILE INCIDENTS

**3.3.2024**

11094 Pearl Rd.

Elm Haven

Cause- Undetermined

Loss- \$60,000



**3.22.2024**

17211 Gold Rush

Cause- Undetermined

Loss- \$35,000

**5.14.2024**

8401 Bernice Dr.

Cause- Undetermined

Loss- \$100,000



**7.4.2024**

13970 Woodhawk Dr.

Cause- Accidental, stove burner being left on with a plastic cutting board on top

Loss- \$210,000



8.22.2024

20725 Parkwood Ln

Cause- Accidental

Loss- \$90,000



Elm Haven





# EMS SERVICES/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## ADMINISTRATIVE LT. BRIAN TOMCANY

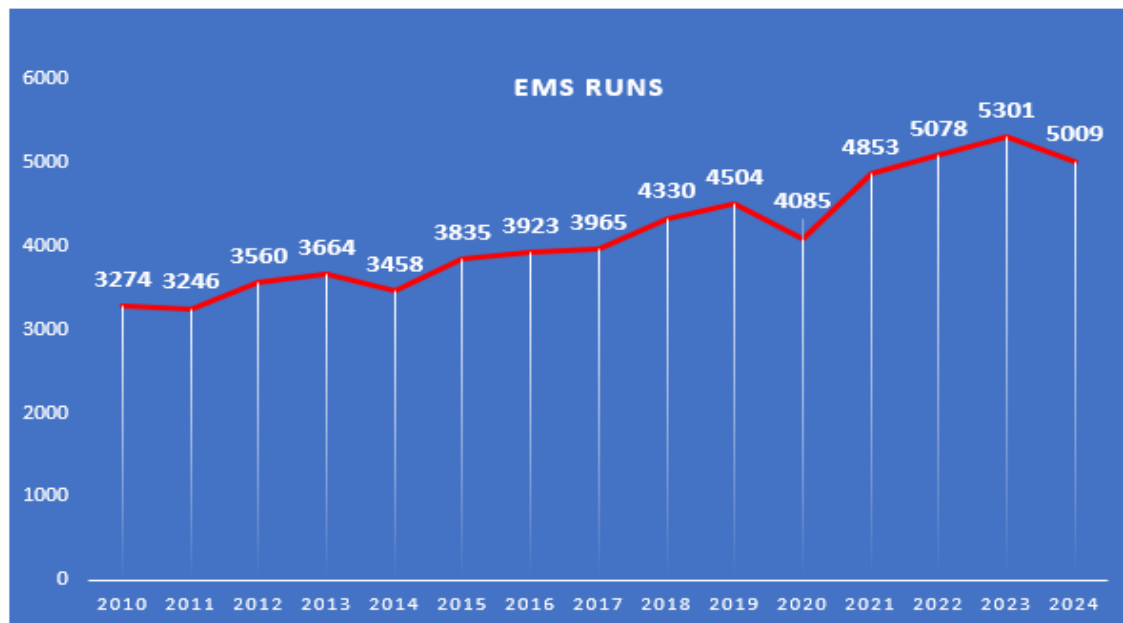


Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services (SFES) remains committed to delivering high-quality Fire, EMS, HazMat, and Technical Rescue services. Our team of 68 highly trained professionals—including 67 paramedics—continues to demonstrate the department’s vision of providing the finest fire and emergency response services in the region. Together, our personnel are responsible for executing nearly 400 pages of advanced life support protocols and dozens of medications.



In 2024, SFES was proud to receive the [American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline Gold Status Heart Attack Honor Roll](#) for the tenth year, recognizing our sustained excellence in cardiac care.

Despite these achievements, SFES faces mounting challenges related to increasing EMS demand—driven primarily by the community’s rapidly expanding senior population. Since 2010, our total EMS call volume has increased 53%, and 23% since 2020.

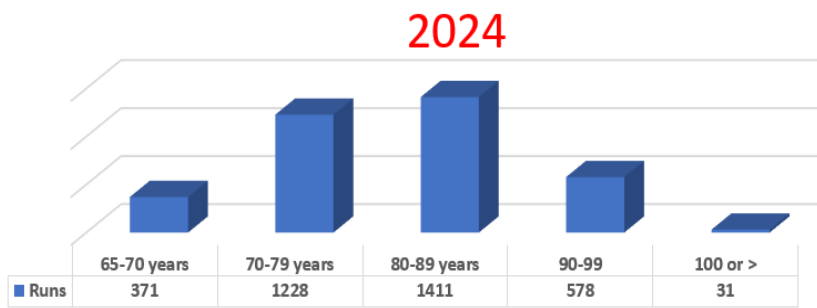


Since 2008, Strongsville became an attractive location for senior housing facilities—including Independent Living (IL), Assisted Living (AL), Memory Care (MC), Rehabilitation (RH), and Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF). We have had an increase of 66% in EMS patients 65-and-older since 2010. Almost 40% of these calls are from the 13 senior residential facilities. The most common emergencies among this demographic are falls, followed by medical conditions, and cardiac events.

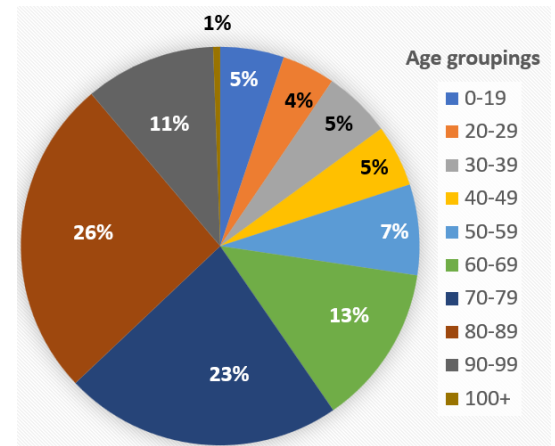


Looking ahead, the trend is expected to continue. National projections indicate that the 65-and-older population will grow by 14.2%—from 62.7 million in 2025 to 71.6 million by 2030—making it the fastest-growing age group in the United States. This shift presents significant operational challenges, placing increased physical, emotional, and logistical demands on our personnel. As SFES continues to meet these demands with professionalism and resilience, the department remains focused on strategic planning, resource management, and ensuring that staffing and support systems evolve to meet the needs of an aging community.

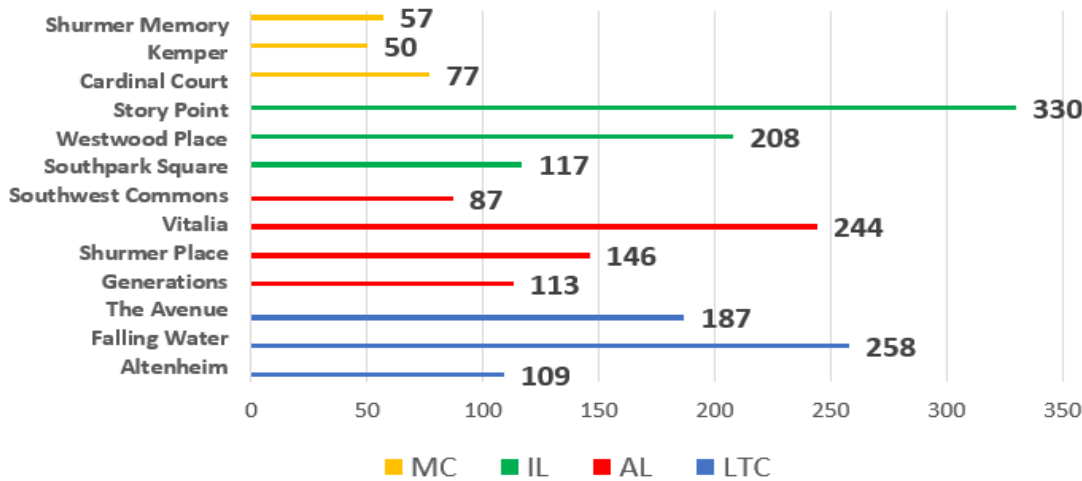




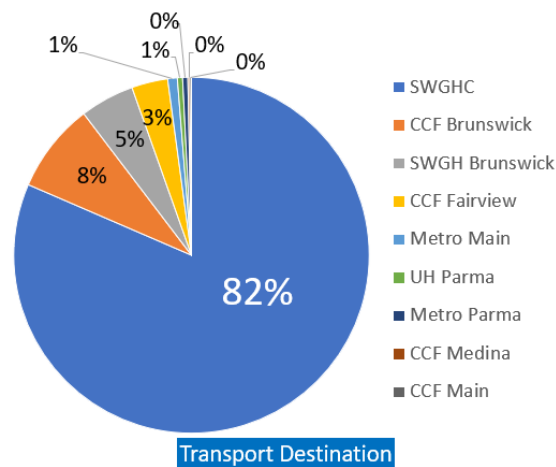
**2024 Senior Residential Facilities  
Fire Department Responses**



**Senior Residential Facilities**



As healthcare continues to evolve, trending statistics show less emergent calls and more non-emergency calls. This data supports a more active community outreach effort which focuses on non-emergency, non-traditional fire department responses and interventions by establishing more partnerships with local resources.



SFES transports primarily to the main campus of Southwest General Health Center (SWGHC) and SWGH Brunswick ED, which together account for 87% of our transports. Under certain circumstances, SFES also transports to Cleveland Clinic Main Campus, CCF Brunswick ED, CCF Fairview, CCF Medina; University Hospitals Main Campus and UH Parma Medical Center; and MetroHealth Medical Center Main Campus, Brecksville and Parma Campuses.

SWGHC serves as our Medical Control. Dr. Katie Imhoff serves as our EMS Medical Director and Lisa Kingsley is our EMS Clinical Manager. Dr. Imhoff and Lisa serve on the Cuyahoga County EMS Protocol Committee to ensure quality pre-hospital care is provided to our community. They provide a variety of continuing education opportunities including, but not limited to, quarterly continuing education, conferences, and Fire Rescue 1 online training. In 2024, SFES collected \$1,517,598 from EMS reimbursements. Monies collected are deposited into the Emergency Vehicle Fund, which is dedicated to purchasing new police and fire emergency vehicles.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

## PATIENT FOLLOW UP AND REFERRALS

In an effort to take a more proactive approach to address the significant increase in non-emergent EMS calls, SFES created its own Community Outreach Program to include structured patient follow-ups. Over the past four years, follow-up visits have increased by almost 500%, addressing a growing number of non-emergent calls and resident concerns.

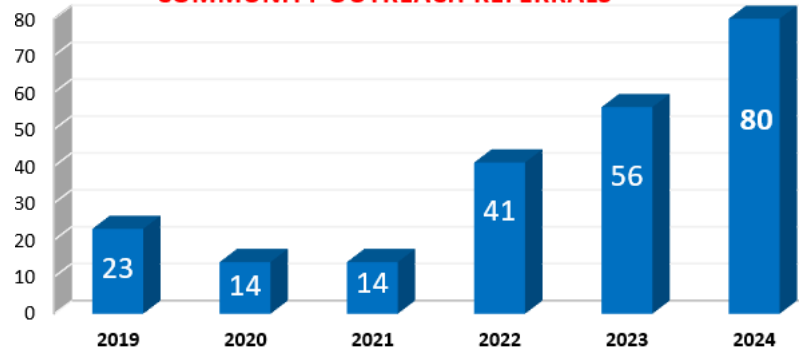
Referrals originate primarily from SFES personnel but also come from the Senior Recreation Center, Police Department, hospitals, and concerned neighbors or family members. These referrals often involve residents facing unsafe living conditions, medical or mental health issues, addiction, neglect, or social isolation—many of whom are frequent users of 911 services.

Each referral triggers a follow up which often includes a home visit and safety assessment, during which SFES personnel work to understand the resident's unique challenges and connect them with appropriate resources. This collaborative effort re-engages families and the patients' healthcare provider. We also involve case management, physical therapy, occupational therapy and home health nursing. In addition, Fire

Prevention and Adult and Child Protective Services may be consulted. Outcomes include assisting residents with placement into safer living environments, arranging home health accommodations, home safety equipment, and connecting them to support programs such as Meals on Wheels and Senior Wheels.

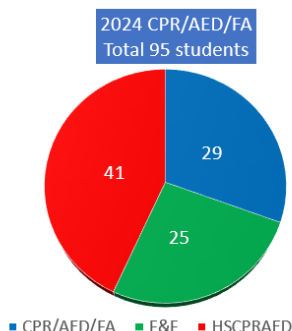
In 2024, 80 referrals resulted in 240 service calls—many requiring significant time and personalized follow-through. These efforts demonstrate SFES's evolving role as a committed partner in addressing safer, healthier community for our senior population.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH REFERRALS



## CPR

Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services offers a variety of life saving classes to the public. We offer American Heart Association Heart Saver CPR/AED, Heart Saver First Aid, and Heart Saver Friends and Family CPR to the public. Seven certified instructors provide training to residents, groups, city employees and businesses. Each class is about four hours and takes place at Fire Station 4. In 2024, a total of 95 students became empowered to perform the lifesaving interventions of CPR/AED and First Aid. You can [visit our website](#) to register and pay online.





# SAFE HAVEN

Strongsville Fire and Emergency Services partnered up with the [National Safe Haven Alliance](#) to



provide a safe alternative that prevents infant abandonment while providing holistic care and guidance for both parents and babies. This program helps parents who may have hidden a pregnancy and feel they are unable to care for a newborn infant. Parents can surrender their newborn at a hospital, police and fire departments. This law protects parents from being charged with any crime for abandonment, as long as the baby does not show signs of abuse or neglect. It also protects the parent's privacy because they may remain totally anonymous.

According to the National Safe Haven Alliance, there have been over 4,995 surrenders since 1999. All Ohio fire stations are SAFE HAVEN drop off sites.

No information is required. Any information provided voluntarily will be kept completely confidential and will help Department of Family Services keep the infant safe and healthy.

The following information is important but again, it is your choice whether you wish to provide it:

- The date and time of the birth of your infant
- Any health problems of the infant, you or the father of the infant.
- Does either parent have an Indian tribal affiliation? If yes, what tribe? (If your baby has a tribal affiliation, the Indian Child Welfare Act will apply).
- Any other information about your infant's medical, social and family history

Safe Haven Hotline at 1-888-510-BABY (2229)

## QUICK RESPONSE TEAM

In 2017, the fire department, police department and certified substance abuse counselors from Ohio Guidestone created the Quick Response Team (QRT). The team meets twice a week to meet with those that are struggling with all types of addiction. When someone overdoses within our city, they will receive a visit from QRT within 72 hours to provide access to treatment and ongoing support for both the resident and their family.



In 2024, there were a total of 6 overdoses with 3 fatalities. Four were Strongsville residents. The team performed 315 follow-up visits with all individuals who had overdosed. Eight individuals received treatment for their addiction.



# Fire Academy for Kids (FAFK)



The Fire Academy for Kids Program was created by FM Matt Schenek in 2016. Recognizing that a knowledge gap existed between what the children of our community believe firefighters do on the job and the reality of a normal day at the firehouse truly is, Matt designed an unforgettable and unique Fire Academy for Kids.

During the FAFK, cadets arrive at the station and begin the day by taking an Oath of Office administered by Mayor Perciak. Throughout the morning, they learn about turnout gear, safety equipment, and fire apparatus. Next, the group is divided into two groups. One group attends a dispatcher

presentation learning hands-only CPR and

bleeding control while the other group does fire extinguisher training - then they swap.

At noon, the cadets enjoy a pizza lunch donated by Marco's Pizza and then they're back to work with a victim search evolution using a thermal imager, a disoriented firefighter self-rescue hose evolution, forcible entry into door, fire pump operations, fire engine ride, rope rescue evolution, and roof ventilation exercise.

In 2024, FM Schenek added the Tower evolution, allowing the recruits to safely go up in the bucket of Ladder 5. After the Tower evolution, the recruits are off to the firefighter Combat Challenge. This is a

timed obstacle course that simulates many functions required to be a firefighter. Following the completion of these evolutions, the recruits are recognized at the Fire Academy for Kids graduation ceremony, where each child is presented with a certificate and are served frozen treats donated by Kona Ice.

Firemedic Schenek coordinates the entire program including registration, advertising, recruiting volunteers, and soliciting donations from local clubs and businesses including generous financial donations from LOWES.

These donations have allowed the purchase of lighter, safer Halligans and axes made from a dense composite material for the forcible entry evolutions with our door props. Strongsville Firemedics volunteer their time to be instructors. Matt is touched by the support of his fellow firefighters, "Guys bring their own kids through the Fire Academy for Kids and in a couple years - they're eager to return as volunteers!"





# **FIRE PREVENTION OFFICE (FPO)**

## **CAPTAIN ANDREW GREEN FIRE MARSHAL**



The mission of the Fire Prevention Office (FPO) is to implement strategies to educate the community through a number of initiatives that include, but not limited to:

- Safety Awareness Seminars
- Fire Safety Inspections in the Workplace
- Fire Safety Inspections in the Home
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- [First Aid and CPR classes](#)

Educating the community about proper safety practices lead to identifying and eliminating all types of hazardous conditions that pose a threat to life, property and the environment.

The Fire Prevention Office is staffed with a Fire Marshal and two assistant Fire Marshals and complete a wide variety of inspections. These include, but are not limited to, all new construction projects starting with initial plan review and ending with the acceptance and testing of all life safety systems, the inspection and code enforcement of commercial and industrial facilities, educational



occupancies, healthcare facilities and specialized home inspections related to adoption, foster care, and daycare. Life safety education and public relations activities continue to be a priority for FPO. In 2024, education programs reached approximately 2,200 children and adults through numerous means. Some of the programs included Safety Town, Fire Prevention Week,

“Stop the Bleed” training for school staff, fire extinguisher training for local businesses and CPR and first aid training for the community. Public relations activities included all community events, fire station tours, Touch-A-Truck events, and business and health fair expositions. We also brought back our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade fire safety trailer program. This program targets 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in Strongsville during Fire Prevention Week in October. This year FPO visited six schools in Strongsville,



educating about 400 students. FPO also manages the commercial Knox Box program which facilitates emergency crews entering businesses after hours in a fast and efficient manner, and without causing damage that would otherwise happen when having to “force” or break down a door to gain entry.

Residential risk-reducing activities include residential lock box installation and management for residents, smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector installation, and general home fire safety assessments, which make homes a safer place to live.







The FPO is involved with other community risk reduction activities including the management of a computer business database, updating business information into the computer aided dispatch system, drawing and updating all preplans and making them accessible to responding fire personnel during an emergency, and cataloging all extremely hazardous facilities.

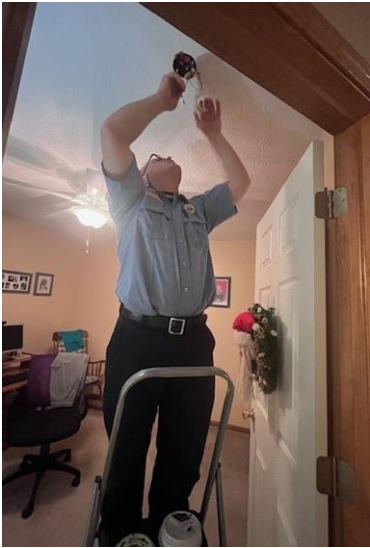
In 2025, Fire Prevention, along with the entire Strongsville Fire Department, is moving to a new software and data management system called First Due. Implementing new technology should help to improve the efficiency of inspections. This system will allow Fire Prevention to update our inspection forms and provide

easy access to email completed inspection forms to our businesses and residents. The goal is to improve communication and compliance.

The Fire Prevention Office remains committed to enhancing fire safety within our community. We strive to educate residents, enforce fire codes, and collaborate with partners to create a safer environment for all.

2024 Fire Prevention Office activities:

• Tests/ inspections	2,063
• New construction/acceptance tests	127
• Commercial/Multifamily preplans drawn/updated in CAD	251
• Commercial alarms and follow ups-	160
• Residential services	170
• Life Safety education contacts	2,160





# **TRAINING DIVISION**

## **CAPTAIN TOM SULLIVAN- TRAINING DIVISON**



As an all-hazards emergency response agency, continuous training is essential in order to carry out our Department's mission safely and effectively. Members must stay proficient in



a wide range of skills in areas such as emergency medical services, fire suppression and victim rescue, hazardous materials response, vehicle extrication, and technical rescue. Many of these are perishable skills that must be continuously honed in order to stay at the top of our game. These skills also require high levels of both physical and mental readiness to complete. Our training program aims to keep members at the top of their game in all aspects necessary to accomplish our mission.

In 2024, members completed 9,842.26 hours of training. This included 2,056 hours of EMS training, over 6,384 hours of fire/rescue related training, 803 hours of hazardous materials training, and over 598 hours of drivers training.



Throughout the year, the Training Division conducted multiple week-long trainings for our new recruits, as well as multiple hands-on trainings for all line personnel at acquired structures and at our training facility. I would like to recognize our fire instructors that put in extra time and effort toward making these trainings successful. Those instructors include FF Pat Barrett, Lt. Matt Ditlevson, Capt. Andy Green, FF Steven Haines, FF Josh Maslocha, Lt. Paul Noel, FF Kyle Paul, Lt. Bob Pochatek, and Lt. Andy Smeader.

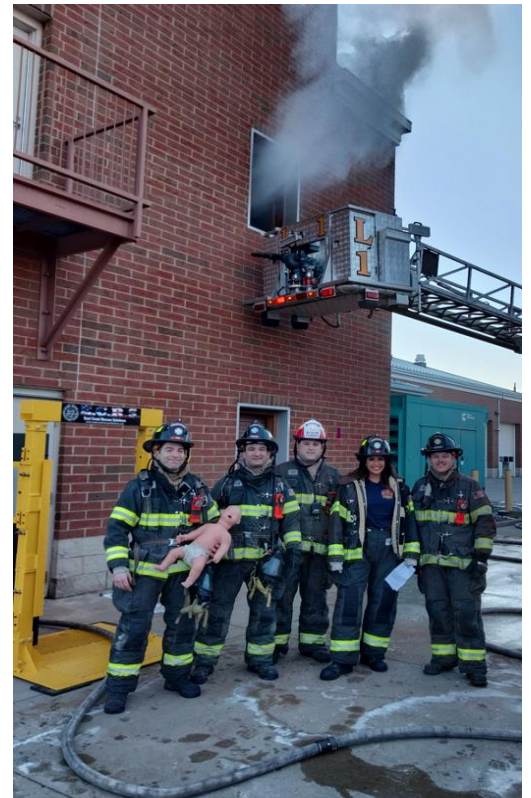
## **2024 Training Highlights**

In January, members completed training at an acquired residential structure on Royalton Road. Fire fighters completed vent-enter-isolate-search (VEIS) training, victim rescues, and forcible entry scenarios. This training was wrapped up with multi-company structure fire response scenarios with Olmsted Falls FD.

In February and March, members honed their forcible entry skills using our new forcible entry door prop. SFD was also featured on Fox 8 News in the Morning, demonstrating our training facility at Station 4.



In April, new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) upgrades required members to train on various SCBA connections that allow firefighters to obtain breathing air during emergencies.







In May, ground ladders were the theme and members practiced several different ways to raise and carry our ladders. In addition to ladder training, members also participated in a hands-on airway lab at Station 4.

In June and July, we focused on single company evolutions including deployment of 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  and 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch handlines. We also practiced single company master stream evolutions.



September and October brought drivers training and another single company evolution involving laying a supply line and putting fire streams into service.

In December, we once again had an acquired residential structure where we practiced firefighter and victim rescue/removal techniques, as well as vertical ventilation techniques. Olmsted Falls Fire Department also joined us for some suppression evolutions at this structure. Once Strongsville Fire was complete using the house, Strongsville Police were able to utilize the structure for training before Strongsville Service Department demolished the home.



Lt. Smeader, FF Dave Haffner Jr. FF Alain Vue Lt. Matt Fabec FF Jason March, FF Mike Macejko



# Initial Assignments from Command



- SFD Ladder 4 was the first due fire apparatus at 1731 hrs.
- Initial orders were to forward lay supply line into parking lot from hydrant on Pearl Rd.
- Command advised L4 that the fire was in the furthest in end units







LEARN IT! DRILL IT! LIVE IT!





## Pig Lab

Strongsville hosted a series of advanced Pig Lab training sessions focused on detailed anatomical and procedural education. The curriculum included comprehensive analysis of the upper and lower airway structures, emphasizing the trachea, cricothyroid membrane, and pulmonary system. Participants engaged in hands-on practice with advanced airway management techniques, including intubation and surgical airway access.

The dissection component provided an in-depth exploration of cardiovascular anatomy and physiology. Attendees reviewed major cardiovascular structures and discussed traumatic pathophysiological mechanisms underlying various cardiopulmonary injuries. The training also incorporated advanced clinical strategies for managing complex cardiopulmonary trauma scenarios.



## Advance Trauma Skills







On February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Fox 8 hosted another episode of [Cooking with Fire](#) as Kristi Capel visited Strongsville Station #4. Kristi experienced a rare look inside the station's comprehensive Fire Training Tower, the County's Hazmat Truck, our 9/11 Memorial, firefighter skills and learned how to make the Alain Vue's exclusive Pineapple Bowls. You can find the recipe by following the link for the [Pineapple Bowls](#).



Chef Alain Vue



Capt. Tom Sullivan



FF Sean Fox, FF Doug Kallin, Capt. Tom Sullivan, Fox 8 Reporter Kristi Capel, and FF Josh Maslocha



Asst. FM Jamie Grimm







# Community Involvement





# Southpark Mall Tour the Trucks Event 2024





## Grants and Donations

July 2024- Ohio Department of Public Safety Priority One EMS- Received-\$3,137.40

December 2024-Ohio BWC FEEEG (Firefighter Exposure to Environment Elements Grant) for FF personal protective gear-gloves and particulate blocking hoods-\$15,000

American Rescue Plan Act as a result of Coronavirus to reimburse the city for wages of FF/Paramedics hired during the Coronavirus Emergency Declaration. - \$260,999

## City Events

Strongsville Fire takes a lead role in all Community Events with pre-incident planning of the events, coordination of resources and overall safety for fireworks events. These events include, but not limited to the July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks, Homecoming, Rib Burn-off, Winter Wonderland, Duck Race, and StrongFest.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> Attacks

The Strongsville Police and Fire Departments recalled the terrorist attacks of 2001 with a ceremony at Fire Station 4 on Sept. 11. Fire Chief Jack Draves and Police Chief Tom O'Deens both spoke about the deaths of 2,977 people that day, including 343 firefighters and 73 law enforcement officers. Fr. Joe Mamich of St. Joseph Church, who serves as chaplain for the safety forces, offered a prayer.

Lt. Brian Tomcany presided over the tolling of the bell, the method used years ago to announce and mark the death of a firefighter in the line of duty.



## Special Olympic Apparatus Pull

SFES trained with the Strongsville Special Olympic to prepare the group for the Special Olympics Cleveland Plane Pull on September 28, 2024.





## WE CARE

In December, SFD partnered with **We Care Ministry** to sponsor a Coat Drive Donation for the children of West Virginia.

## STRONGSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, SFES stopped by Strongsville High to visit with a group of outstanding students with some special needs.

## HEROES AND HELPERS

Strongsville Fire and Police joined forces and hosted Strongsville's inaugural Heroes and Helpers event, in collaboration with Target. Eleven children started the morning being picked up by Strongsville's Safety Forces where Target provided breakfast and a \$200 gift card for each child. Each child shopped with a First Responder. Target's generous support brightened the holidays for 11 children and created great memories for everyone involved.



# Leadership and Service Awards

## 2024 Firefighter of the Year Award



Since 2009, The Knights of Columbus St. Francis of Assisi Council 10792 has been recognizing a member of our department for outstanding service. This year's award went to Lieutenant John Douglas who was nominated by Captain Paul Filon. John joined the Strongsville Fire Department in 2000 and was promoted to Lieutenant on December 7, 2015.



## 2024 Leadership Award – Lt. Matt Ditlevson

On March 4, 2024, Lt. Ditlevson was the on-duty Shift Commander. Lt. Ditlevson is being recognized for managing a multi-unit residential, high life hazard occupancy with limited access and exposure concerns. Lt. Ditlevson managed eight fire crews from Strongsville and surrounding mutual aid cities at the Elm Haven Motel Fire. After ensuring all residents were safely evacuated from their rooms, he called for a trench cut on the roof to get ahead of the advancing fire in the attic space. The quick decision to perform the trench cut most likely saved 80% of the structure. There were no injuries. All residents were displaced and received assistance from the American Red Cross.

## 2024 Company Citation Award

Company Citation - Lt. John Douglas, Firemedic Grant Loeding, Firemedic Jason March  
On January 11, 2024 Strongsville Medic 2 was dispatched for a woman in active labor. Lt. Douglas, FM Loeding, and FM March arrived on scene 4 minutes after being dispatched to find a 34-year-old female in active labor. This was her second pregnancy. Within one minute of the crew's arrival, emergency childbirth was completed on scene. Mom and baby were transferred to the ambulance and received post-delivery care. They were transported to SWGHC without any further incident.



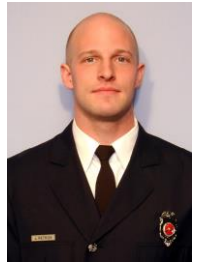
Chief Draves celebrating SFES members Leadership and Service Awards.





## 2024 Community Service Award

Firemedic Jack Petrick was hired by SFES on July 19, 2002 and retired after 16 years of service on February 22, 2018.



Ret. FM Jack Petrick



On January 27, 2024 Jack Petrick was travelling on Interstate 71 when he witnessed a motor vehicle accident. At great risk to himself, he exited his personal vehicle and crossed the median to render aid. Jack was able to remove the driver of the vehicle as it was beginning to ignite, and he began to render emergency care to the driver and the passenger prior to the arrival of SFD, SPD, and OSP units. As units started to arrive on scene, Jack continued to assist Strongsville Medic 2 crew until their patient was moved to the back of the ambulance.

## 2024 American Heart Association Mission: Lifeline EMS GOLD



Mission: Lifeline EMS recognition is a program designed to showcase Emergency Medical Service organizations across the nation for excellent STEMI care. Prehospital personnel are the first providers of care to patients suffering from cardiac emergencies. The role of EMS in the system-of-care for these patients is crucial and often sets the course for the patient's outcome. The Mission: Lifeline EMS recognition program launched in 2014 and continues to celebrate the achievement of the pre-hospital providers and their



collaboration with each other and destination hospitals specific to STEMI patient care. SFES is a part of an elite group of prehospital providers recognized by the American Heart Association for our commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of care, by ensuring that every STEMI patient receives treatment according to nationally accepted evidence-based guideline recommendations and standards.

**Mission: Lifeline® EMS Gold- Target: Heart Attack Honor Roll**

