

BELMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023



David DeStefano, MPA
Chief of Department

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Chief's Message

January 2024



The Belmont Fire Department is honored to be “Partners for Life” with our community. We take the mission of service to residents, businesspeople, and visitors to the Town of Belmont as a duty, an honor, and a privilege. Our firefighters not only protect the fire and life safety of the community when called for service, we actively assess and work to reduce risks in the community.

Our community-based approach to assessing and reducing risk from fire and other life safety emergencies encompasses enhanced inspectional and pre-planning, combined with community interactions that center around education and awareness. We embrace the diversity of Belmont and work to lessen the impact of emergencies to populations disproportionately affected by fire and medical incidents. Our all-hazards service model strives to create a safer community that is more resilient when challenges occur.

Providing an adequate standard of coverage is the key to success when fire and medical emergencies occur. In the Town of Belmont, we are able to respond efficiently to mitigate fires while many are still in the incipient stage, and treat life-threatening medical emergencies with the best possible outcome. This lifesaving response is due to the strategic location of our fire and EMS assets. The availability of advanced life support care provided by our fire companies, transport by our own ambulance, and our cross-trained firefighter EMTs and paramedics means that whether there is a fire or medical emergency Belmont firefighters are at the scene promptly, ready to provide our award-winning level of service.

I am proud to lead a department of dedicated professionals who provide excellent service and embrace the challenges of prevention, education and service delivery in the 21st century. I also greatly appreciate the assistance of the Select Board, Town Administrator, and fellow department heads. The Town of Belmont is well served by its government as well as the many residents who participate in the numerous boards and committees that are actively engaged with the fire department, making our community a more fulfilling and safer place live and work.

Respectfully Submitted,



David DeStefano
Chief of Department

Organization

The Belmont Fire Department is organized around divisions that perform specific activities. All uniformed members of the department are either Firefighter /Paramedics or Firefighter/EMTs, meaning that everyone is capable of a functional assignment during incident response. Using fully trained dual role responders helps to boost the deployment model for the BFD during hours when members of the department may be assigned to administrative, training or inspectional functions and a major incident occurs or numerous smaller incidents are reported simultaneously.

Fire Department Roster

Administrative Division

Chief of Department

David DeStefano

Assistant Chief of Department

Andrew Tobio

Administrative Assistant

Jacqueline Mahoney

Fire Prevention Division

Fire Prevention Officer

Captain Robert Wollner

Part Time Administrative Secretary

Maureen Sevene

Training Division

Training Division/ Assistant Fire Prevention

Lieutenant Michael MacNeil

Operations Division

Shift Commanders

Captain David DeMarco Captain Wayne Haley Captain Scott Spuria Captain Richard Nohl

Lieutenants

David Alesse	Thomas Deneen	Michael Madruga*
Michael Dayton*	Ace Elefteriadis	John MacDonald
Brian Corsino	Andrew Goneau	Daniel Scannell
Jason Corsino	William Kaufman, Jr.	David Toomey

Firefighters

James Bing*	MaryCatherine Dunne*	Justin Perino*
Joseph Brock	Michael Goode*	Steven Reilly
Brian Campana	Christopher Hadge	Sean Ryan
Shaun Campana	William Hubbard	Daniel Tyler*
Jonathan Carabello*	Ryan Keane*	Nicholas Valentino*
Matthew Cherkerzian*	James Kelly*	Nicholas Volante
John Conaty*	Matthew McCabe	Ross Vona
Brandon Cunningham*	Ryan McIntosh	Adam Wesley*
Christopher Drinan	Dennis Maher	
Paul DeFarias*	Michael Nolan*	
Peter Donovan*	Brian O'Neill*	
Nathan Dubreuil*	Derek O'Rourke	

*Paramedic

2023 Promotions

FF John MacDonald to lieutenant

Retirements/Transfers/Resignations

Lt. J. McNeilly (hired by another department)

FF T. Vezeau (hired by another department) FF A. Thompson (hired by another department)

Apparatus Inventory

VEHICLE	VEHICLE	ASSIGNMENT	MILEAGE	HOURS	REPAIRS LAST 12 MONTHS
CAR 1	2022 FORD HYBRID SUV	Chief	7,762		
CAR 2	2017 FORD INTERCEPTOR	Assistant Chief	67,550		\$584.39
CAR 3	2021 CHEV. TAHOE	Shift Commander	8,207		\$112.26
CAR 4	2017 FORD INTERCEPTOR	Fire Prevention	80,593		\$346.38
CAR 5	2015 FORD F-150	Training Officer	20,036		\$465.74
CAR 6	2015 FORD EXPEDITION	Reserve	34,541		\$35.00
CAR 7	2013 FORD INTERCEPTOR	Reserve	79,736		\$230.00
SQUAD 1	2008 FORD F-550	Brush Unit/Plow	25,598		\$1,152.33
ENGINE 1	2014 E-ONE PUMPER	Headquarters	47,466		\$23,514.15
ENGINE 2	2021 E-ONEPUMPER	Station 2	10,716		\$2,900.14
ENGINE 3	2008 INT'L 7300 PUMPER	Station 2 (Reserve)	11,894		\$7,318.56
ENGINE 4	2005 E-ONE PUMPER	Headquarters (Reserve)	81,390		\$6,891.65
LADDER 1	2014 E-ONE LADDER	Station 2			\$41,786.67
LADDER 2	1999 E-ONE LADDER	Station 2 (Reserve)	70,660		\$8,799.98
RESCUE 1	2022 FORD/HORTON F550	Headquarters	2,900		\$445.15
RESCUE 2	2017 FORD/HORTON F550	Headquarters (Reserve)	74,631		\$6,237.10

General Statistics

The Belmont Fire Department Responded to 4053 incidents in 2023

Historical Data

2022- **3869** 2021- **3280**

2020-**2678** 2019- **3007**

A sample of fires and incidents for 2023 are as follows

STRUCTURE FIRES	53	HAZARDOUS ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT	59
ALL HANDS	2	SMOKE SCARE	23
WORKING FIRE	2	GOOD INTENT CALLS	377
SECOND ALARM	1	DISPATCHED AND CANCELLED ENROUTE	156
SECOND ALARM PLUS	1	SYSTEM MALFUNCTION	340
COOKING FIRES	31	UNINENTIONAL ALARMS	218
OUTSIDE FIRES	6	MALICIOUS FALSE ALARMS	18
REFUSE FIRES	5	WATER CALL	62
VEHICLE FIRES	6	MUTUAL AID GIVEN	294
TRAIN FIRE	1	MUTUAL AID RECEIVED	112
CARBON MONOXIDE ACTIVATION	55	ASSIST POLICE OR OTHER AGENCY	15
CARBON MONOXIDE INCIDENT	7	PUBLIC SERVICE	278
SPILL, LEAK, NO IGNITION	22		
NATURAL GAS/LPG LEAK	60	TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE IN ALL CATERORIES	4053



Fire Prevention Division

The Fire Prevention Division is located on the second floor of the FF Roland A Weatherbee Fire Headquarters at 299 Trapelo Road. Captain Robert K. Wollner has served as the department's Fire Prevention Officer since 2022.

In October, Lt. Michael MacNeil assumed the Assistant Fire Prevention Officer responsibilities, in addition to his primary assignment as the Department's Training Officer.

Ms. Maureen Sevene, was hired as the part time the administrative assistant to the Fire Prevention Division in February 2022. Ms. Sevene brings several years of administrative experience to Fire Prevention from the private sector.



The Fire Prevention Division delivers a well-structured inspection program of commercial occupancies, residential properties, schools, institutions, municipal buildings, and other places of assembly. These buildings are inspected with the intention of removing hazards and correcting unsafe conditions. In addition, the Fire Prevention Division works to ensure compliance with Massachusetts General Law, the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, and By-Laws of the Town of Belmont that are under the authority of the Belmont Fire Department. The Fire Prevention Division works to provide fire and life safety protection to the public by confirming code compliance and enforcing fire prevention laws and codes. Working towards this goal, the Division provides plan consultations with architects, contractors, lessees, business owners, property owners, and legal representatives in an effort to review all life safety systems. This review includes the inspection and testing of any installation, alteration, modification, or repair to any fire alarm, sprinkler system, or other suppression system. General questions and specific concerns from residents regarding fire and life safety are addressed successfully through various mediums.

In calendar year 2023, the Fire Prevention Division continued to track the processing times for permitting and plan reviews. The intent of this data collection was to help provide our customers with the best possible service, and identify any problem areas. This data was generated from the

issuance of 724 permits and 88 plan reviews. The processing time for both permits and plan reviews averaged less than one day.

PROCESSING TIMES FOR PERMITS

AVERAGE	0.10 DAYS
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PROCESSING TIMES FOR A PLAN REVIEW

AVERAGE	0.10 DAYS
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Projects throughout the community require a substantial time commitment from the Fire Prevention Division to ensure that all fire codes and regulations are being followed. The most common construction projects comprise renovations or construction of residential dwellings and commercial buildings, but there are other major construction projects under the supervision of the Fire Prevention Division.

Some notable new projects undertaken by the Fire Prevention Division in 2023 include:

1. Working with the Town’s Facilities Department and alarm contractors at the Winn Brook Elementary School to install a modern fire protection system which replaced and significantly upgraded an outdated/antiquated system. This new system at the Winn Brook, went on line in the summer of 2023.
2. The Belmont High School/Middle School construction project was completed with the Middle School side of the building wrapping up construction in time for the start of the 2023-2024 academic year. Fire Prevention oversaw the installation and testing of fire alarm, sprinkler and life safety systems within the building.
3. Fire Prevention is working with stakeholders on the proposed residential complex that is planned to be built on the McLean Zone III property off of Olmsted Drive. This project, the Residences at Bel Mont, plans to build multiple town houses and apartment buildings on the property.

4. Fire Prevention is working with the building committee, general contractor and architect on the construction of the new skating rink on Concord Avenue which is to be built on the site of the previous rink, once the existing rink is demolished.
5. The Fire Prevention Division has also been working with stakeholders on the plan design of the proposed public library that is slated to be built on the site of the existing library at 336 Concord Avenue once the existing library is demolished.
6. The owners of Cityside Subaru located at 790 Pleasant Street have begun construction of a new facility on the land that abuts the current dealership. Fire Prevention has been working with them on the plan design and fire protection systems for the new building.
7. Fire Prevention and the Chief Officers have been working with the Town IT Department and an outside vendor to create an on-line platform where Fire Prevention permits can be applied and paid for remotely. We are hopeful that the platform will be ready to go live in the first quarter of 2024.

During calendar year 2023 the Fire Prevention Division issued 28 Orders of Notice. These orders were issued in response to documented fire code violations that were deemed significant enough



to warrant immediate action to be taken by the property owner and/or tenants to remedy unsafe situations that may pose a threat to the safety of occupants. Often times these violations are not done

maliciously, but rather by a lack of understanding of the requirements of the state fire code. The Fire Prevention Bureau works with those affected to help mitigate those issues as soon as possible.

There were 179 code enforcement activities that the Fire Prevention Division was involved in helping to remedy.

In calendar year 2023, the Fire Prevention fulfilled 33 public records requests that involved records that are maintained by the Division.

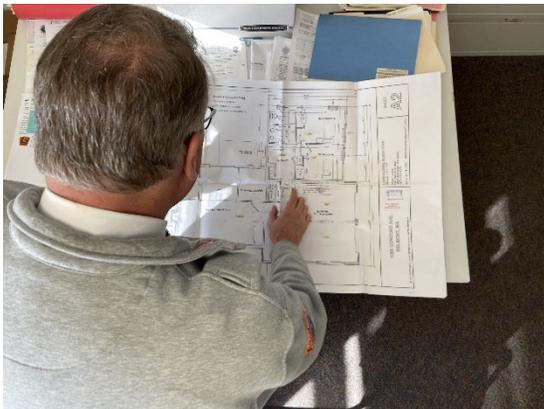
In 2023, the Fire Prevention Division began its second year of overseeing an expanded and more robust inspection program for businesses and organizations who seek the renewal of Liquor Licenses, Business Licenses or Common Victualler Licenses. The license renewal process for these businesses include a safety



inspection of the occupancy seeking licenses, and requires the business owner to provide supporting documentation for fire alarm system maintenance and testing, sprinkler system maintenance and testing, along with cleaning inspection and testing reports for restaurants with hood and/or Ansul systems. This program has added a significant time and manpower burden on the Fire Prevention Bureau by adding over 70 inspections annually, but with that having been said, it has already proven its worth by identifying several safety violations, that have since been mitigated, and are now keeping both the public and the business' employees safer.

Beginning in January 2023, the Fire Prevention Division expanded our risk reduction program to include inspections of all Town owned buildings, with the exception of the structures under control of the Belmont Housing Authority.

Continuing education on current and changing fire prevention laws and codes is always a top priority for the Fire Prevention Bureau. The fire officers assigned to Fire Prevention are also members of the Fire Prevention Association of Massachusetts (FPAM). These members attend monthly meetings and seminars presented by FPAM and the Department of Fire Services.



The Fire Prevention Division works in conjunction with the Department of Fire Services to obtain the latest information for compliance with and enforcement of Chapter 148 of the Massachusetts General Laws, 527 CMR 1.00 (Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code - based on the 2021 edition of NFPA 1), and fire protection sections of the Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMR.

Working together to promote life safety and property protection, citizens of the Town are encouraged to contact the Fire Prevention Division with any concerns that pertain to fire protection and fire safety. As part of public education, the Fire Prevention Division works with public schools, private schools, and various other children’s groups to schedule visits at both of the Belmont Fire Department stations. The Fire Prevention Division hopes to continue to address the needs of the community, responding to identified risks, as staffing allows, while maintaining the best possible customer service.

2023 PROPERTY LOSS vs. PROPTERTY SAVED

VALUE OF PROPERTY INVOLVED IN FIRE INCIDENTS	\$ 63,732,700
TOTAL PROPERTY LOSS	\$ 798,760
TOTAL PROPERTY SAVED	\$ 62,993,940
VALUE OF PASSENGER VEHICLES INVOLVED IN FIRE INCIDENTS	\$ 60,500
TOTAL VEHICLE LOSS	\$ 33,800
TOTAL VEHICLE SAVED	\$ 26,700

2023 PERMITS

724 PERMITS WERE ISSUED IN THE CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED BELOW:

26F/26F ½ - HOME SALES	242
ABOVE GROUND STORAGE TANK INSTALL	48
ABOVE GROUND STORAGE TANK REMOVAL	72
UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK INSTALL	0
UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK REMOVAL	1
INSTALL OIL BURNER	17
BUILDING PLAN REVIEW	88
ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM	3
MODIFICATION OF AN ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM	0

FIRE WORKS	1
FLAMMABLE/COMBUSTABLE STORAGE	36
HOT WORKS	20
IMPAIR FIRE ALARM SYSTEM	8
IMPAIR FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM	12
INSTALL FIRE ALARM SYSTEM	68
INSTALL FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM	4
MODIFY FIRE ALARM SYSTEM	17
MODIFY FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM	16
REPAIR FIRE ALARM SYSTEM	4
REPAIR FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM	3
STORE PROPANE	10
TENTAGE	10
TRANSFER TANKS	11

The Fire Prevention Division collected \$57,310 in permit fees for calendar year 2023.

363 COMPANY LEVEL INSPECTIONS WERE COMPLETED IN THE CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED:

FIRE EXIT DRILLS – 142

- PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, NURSERY SCHOOLS, PRESCHOOLS, AND CHILD CARE

QUARTERLY INSPECTIONS – 76

- MCLEAN HOSPITAL, NURSING HOME, LODGING HOUSES, AND GROUP HOMES

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS – 91

- PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, NURSERY SCHOOLS, AND PRESCHOOLS

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY INSPECTIONS – 54

MORE THAN 711 ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS IN THE AREAS LISTED

- ALCOHOL LICENSE INSPECTIONS
- ABOVE GROUND AND UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK REMOVAL
- GENERAL PERMIT INSPECTIONS
- OIL BURNER AND OIL TANK INSTALLATIONS
- TANK TRUCK
- “RED TAG” SERVICE NOTICE
- BLASTING
- SMOKE DETECTOR AND CARBON MONOXIDE INSPECTIONS
- BUILDING PERMIT PLAN REVIEW
- PROPANE USE AND STORAGE
- CUTTING AND WELDING
- FLAMMABLE AND COMBUSTIBLE STORAGE
- BELMONT BUSINESS LICENCES
- COMMON VICTUALLER LICENCES

Respectfully Submitted,

Captain Robert K. Wollner, MPA
Fire Prevention Officer



Members of the Fire Investigation Unit receive training on auto fire investigation techniques

Division of Training

The Belmont Fire Department (BFD) Division of Training (DOT) is staffed by a single



Lieutenant who is responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing training department-wide. The position also assists with staff support and fire prevention. Members of the department are faced with dynamic challenges each shift. Beyond fire suppression, members must be proficient in

rescue operations, extrication, hazardous material response and emergency medical services. In order to meet these challenges, members continuously train to be proficient in their skills.

Fire suppression is a complex and labor-intensive practice. New hires receive preliminary training during their first weeks on the department and are ultimately sent to the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy for a period of twelve weeks to become proficient in suppression duties. This is valuable training and by the time the recruits return to the department they are certified as Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials Operations Level First Responders. All of our hires are also practicing emergency medical technicians or paramedics.

The modern fire service is tasked with responding to all manner of hazards. Our members routinely respond to structure and vehicle fires, car accidents, medical emergencies, hazardous material leaks / spills, carbon monoxide alarms and many other challenging situations. In order to maintain



proficiencies, the DOT issues trainings on a monthly basis. Most of our training is conducted by

company officers and shift commanders in order to develop cohesive and efficient strategies and tactics. These trainings range from dynamic practical evolutions to learning about new pieces of equipment.

Maintaining proficiency and expanding knowledge to include new material, practices and techniques is a constant challenge. The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) continuously update their training requirements. The steady growth of the Town of Belmont presents numerous challenges for operations and training alike. New building designs, modern construction methods and increasing density combine to present unique challenges to our firefighters. The DOT takes advantage of numerous training resources to provide up-to-date theories of practice and tactical information.



The majority of training at the BFD is conducted as part of our members normal workday along with occupancy inspections, fire drills and emergency response. In addition, the DOT expands on basic operations to include many high-risk, low-frequency events such as water and ice rescue, confined space, firefighter survivability and rescue (RIT), auto-extrication and other specialized operations. These topics are presented as part of monthly, in-house training throughout the year. Training also covers newly issued equipment and novel techniques and strategies.

The BFD welcomed five new members to our ranks in 2023. Four have completed their in-house training and are currently operating on shifts. One member will be attending the

Massachusetts Fire Academy in February. In addition, the department is hiring three more members in early 2024.

The DOT will continue to prepare our members for the challenges they face each shift. Training is a vital component in the modern fire service. Fire suppression is a complex and challenging discipline that requires continuous training. The modern fire service continues to evolve to incorporate more emergency response capabilities. The DOT strives to keep our members apprised of new methods, tactics and strategies in all of our response fields and will continue to do so in 2024.

In 2023 our firefighters participated in a total of 437 training sessions. This includes individual, company level, shift level, and department-wide activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Lt. Michael MacNeil

Training Officer



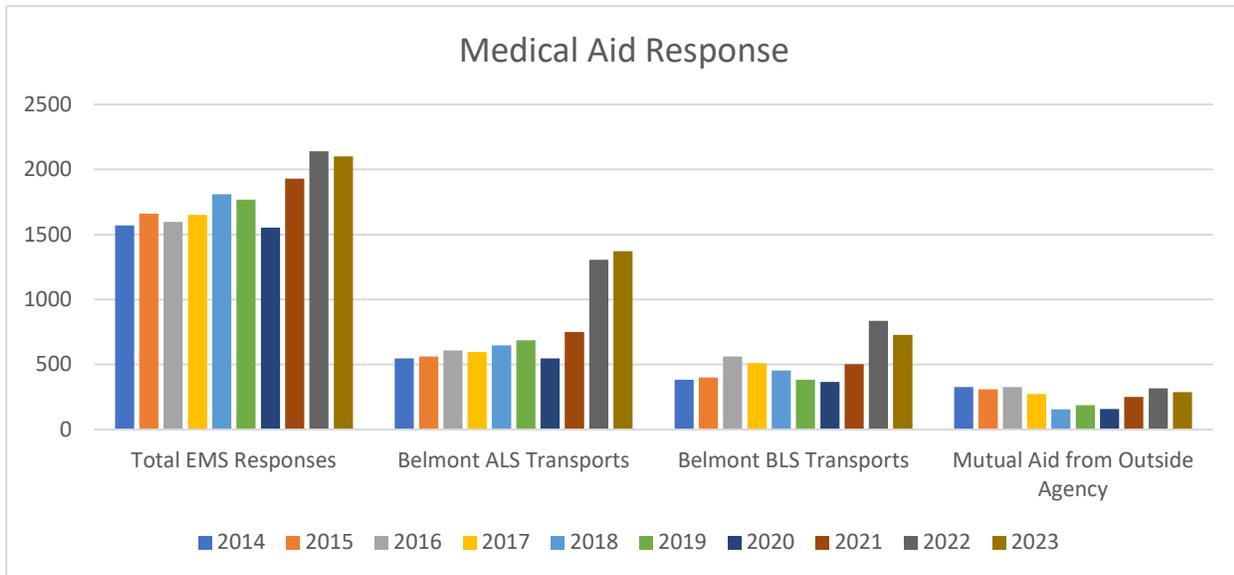
Emergency Medical Services Division

It is our pleasure to present the 2023 Annual Report of the Belmont Fire Department’s



Emergency Medical Services Division. The EMTs and Paramedics who staff our fire apparatus are a remarkable team of dedicated professionals who are trained to the highest level available to provide superior care to the members of the public and the Town of Belmont. Every member of the department is truly committed to serving our

community. This commitment is evident through the conduct and professionalism that they demonstrate every time that they provide service. During calendar year 2023, the department responded to 2,101 calls for emergency medical services. The Belmont Fire Department utilized Advanced Life Support (ALS - Paramedic Level) care to 1,373 patients while the remaining patients, 728 received care at the Basic Life Support (BLS) level.



A total of 1,693 patients were transported to the hospital. Of the 2,101 medical calls, our Rescue (Ambulance) responded to 1,524 and transported 1,361 sick and injured individuals to the hospital. Outside EMS agencies transported 318 patients.

It is important to note that Belmont fire companies have the capability to provide first response care at both the ALS (advanced life support) and the BLS (basic life support) levels when the Rescue unit is not available. These first response Fire Companies are able to evaluate patients, provide care, and perform lifesaving interventions while awaiting the arrival of an outside transporting agency. These interventions could be as simple as providing pain management or administering a medication to begin the treatment process; or as complicated as interpreting a 12-lead electrocardiogram and mobilizing the cardiac catheterization team, obtaining intraosseous access, or intubating and securing a patient with an unstable airway. In addition, a demographic that is not shown in the graph above is the patients that require minor treatment on scene and make the decision to refuse to be transported to the hospital.

It is not possible to include every aspect of the Belmont Fire EMS program in this report, but the goal is providing a snapshot of the structure, capabilities, value, function, and contributions the program makes. With the continued support of the Select Board, Town Administrator, and citizens of the Town of Belmont, we look forward to continuing to provide award-winning and superior pre-hospital care.



The Fire Department provides both Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) transporting service responses for the community of Belmont. By having this level of service on our first response units it means that patients are able to receive faster access to basic level care from EMTs and advanced care from Paramedics. This advanced care includes advance airway control, (endotracheal intubation and king laryngeal tube), intravenous access (IV), intraosseous access (IO), cardiac monitoring (interpretation and treatment/defibrillation), and medication administration. Our highly trained Paramedics with our Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and our medical control doctors work together to provide the highest level of pre hospital care and transport to area hospitals.

The Belmont Fire Department continues to be a leader and innovator in out-of-hospital care. All of our in-service companies operate at the ALS level when staffed with a paramedic, and are always equipped to at least the at the BLS level. This includes: Defibrillator, Oxygen, Basic First-Aid supplies, Epi-Pens, Albuterol, Aspirin, Narcan, Glucose, Glucometers, Pulse Oximetry as well as the Lucas2 CPR devices, Basic airway management and CPAP. The Rescue (transporting ambulance) operates at the ALS level and carries: Cardiac Monitor, a large compliment of medications (including cardiac medications, respiratory medications, and pain management), CPAP (an advanced airway care procedure), capnography monitoring, and video laryngoscopy, 24 hours a day / 7 days a week / 365 days a year. In addition to Rescue 1 always being staffed at the ALS level, during 2023, Engine 1 and Engine 2 were virtually always staffed at the ALS level, while Ladder 1 operated at the Paramedic (ALS) level when staffing allows, meaning advanced level care is more readily available to the community.



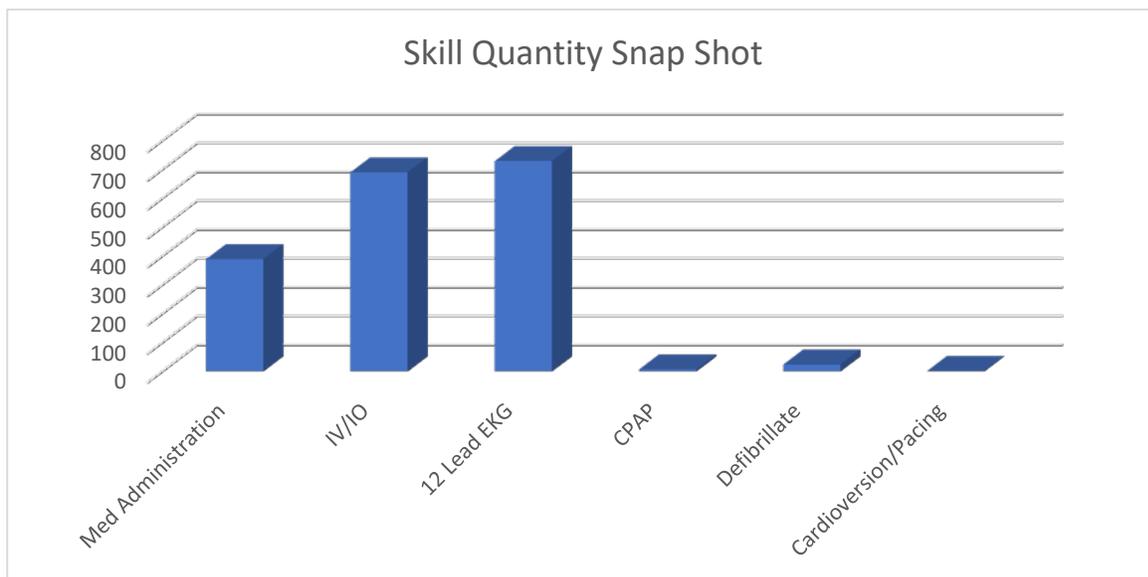
All of our EMTs and Paramedics are licensed through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services and also hold certifications in Basic Life Support (BLS). These EMTs are required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education every two years. The Paramedics are also required to maintain a certification in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) as well as Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), and Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course (TCCC). In addition to these certifications, they must attend a minimum of 60 hours of continuing education every two years. In 2023, all EMTs and Paramedics received training to provide medical care and transport to working police dogs, this training was conducted with the help of local veterinarians as well as the Belmont Police Department. All members of the Belmont Fire Department also received training for an ASHER

event (Active Shooter/Hostile Environment Response). This training was foundational for future training and response to an ever-increasing threat throughout the country.

The Belmont Fire Department consistently exceeds the minimum training standards - such as providing quarterly HALO – High Acuity, Low Occurrence Training to our staff, utilizing our in-house simulation lab. This training includes, intubation, transcutaneous pacing, cardioversion, needle decompression, and surgical cricothyrotomy. In the event of the most critical and life-threatening emergency, a cardiac arrest, all the members of the Belmont Fire Department use the latest



approach and equipment (the LUCAS CPR Compression Device). This is coupled with quarterly training on “pit crew” CPR, which has been proven to be successful if delivered by highly trained practitioners. Emergency Medical Service providers also have access to our Handtevy mobile app. This application is formatted to assist all of our EMTs and Paramedics in delivering care to the pediatric population with age and weight-based interventions quickly available for reference.



Medical Directors, Dr. Gary Setnik and Dr. William Porcaro, of Mount Auburn Hospital, are proactive in their direction of the best pre-hospital care possible. They use the latest science and technology to oversee all EMS activity in conjunction with the EMS Coordinator. They

also provide morbidity and mortality rounds for all EMS members to attend monthly. One hundred percent of the medical emergency calls that the Belmont Fire Department responds to are reviewed for quality assurance. This assists members in being able to provide the best possible care, as well as review the most critical incidents that have occurred and where, if any, improvements can be made.

The Belmont Fire Department will continue to train our EMTs and Paramedics to the highest level of care with the support of the community. This will allow us to remain on the cutting edge of prehospital emergency medical care and increase the availability of Advanced Life Support as additional Paramedics join the ranks of the Belmont Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lieutenant Michael F. Dayton

Paramedic, EMS Coordinator



Firefighter/Paramedics display the newly delivered Rescue 1 to attendees at the Beech St. Center

Community Liaison / Public Educator

It is a sincere pleasure to present the 2023 Community Liaison Report of the Belmont Fire Department. Chief David DeStefano created this position in January of 2023 to better serve the community. As a community liaison, my job is to specifically target community risk and reduce it whenever or wherever possible. The best way to understand our risks is to conduct an assessment which is a process to find our biggest risks and to come up with a plan to reduce those risks effect the most vulnerable populations. By this assessment, we have concluded that the three most vulnerable populations in Belmont are: our seniors (people who are 65+), they make up approximately 17.3% of Belmont’s population; children under the age of 18 (24.7%) of which 6.3% are under the age of five; and those of whom live below the poverty line (5.38%).



During calendar year 2023, members of the Belmont Fire Department and our stakeholders were uniquely positioned to make a positive impact in our community and to target our at-risk populations. In doing so, the department has implimented programs such as Student Awareness of Fire Education and the Senior SAFE Program; cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR); automated external defibrillation (AED), first aid classes; home safety assessments; Hot Topics (T.V. and YouTube show) ; and the EMS Bike Unit.

The Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) Program. Since the adoption of the program



in 1996, thousands of children have been instructed in life safety lessons in grades pre-k – 4th grade. As a direct reflection of this training Belmont can proudly boast of its successes and tell of its **five (5) children** who were recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Fire Services, as Young Heroes for their bravery during a fire or medical related emergency.

The Senior SAFE Program – Trained firefighters work with the Council on Aging and the Belmont Health Department to target the health and welfare of seniors in the community. Members of the SAFE team place smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in the homes of seniors and speak with them and offer materials on home safety, carbon monoxide awareness, slip and fall prevention, cooking safety, seasonal safety, electrical safety, smoke alarms, and other safety concerns.

Home Safety Assessments – At the request of a Senior citizen or any Town resident, a trained representative from the fire department along with a social worker from the Council on Aging

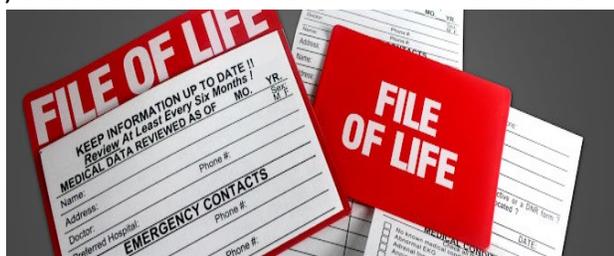


conduct a home safety survey. In 2023, approximately **16 home safety visits** were conducted. While at their home, the firefighter looks for home safety hazards, brings them to the attention of the

homeowner, and offers advice and solutions to combat the hazard(s).

During the assessment, when necessary, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms, Knox Boxes (access door key), are installed in the homes of Seniors. In 2023, approximately **25 smoke and carbon monoxide alarms have been installed in homes**. House numbers are checked for visibility and File of Life Forms (medical forms) are also offered to Seniors. These forms are

instrumental in obtaining medical information and speak for the person when they cannot speak for themselves during a medical emergency. The social worker from



the Council on Aging offers programs such as meals on wheels, home and social care, as well as medical alert systems that automatically call for help when needed. The program also works with the Belmont Fire Prevention office and with Joint Public Safety Communications (9-1-1 center) to facilitate information gathering. This information enables successful outcomes during emergency responses.

CPR/AED/First Aid – Members of the fire department who are American Heart Association instructors provided classes in cardio pulmonary resuscitation, automated external defibrillation, and first aid to **53** citizens in Belmont. Seconds count in the chain of survival and many citizens have been trained to offer assistance in the event of an emergency. Positive outcomes have been directly associated by immediate recognition, notification of an emergency (calling 9-1-1),



and citizen CPR/AED intervention. This coupled with the arrival of fire department emergency medical services and advanced medical care.

Hot Topics – Chief David DeStefano and Captain David DeMarco co-host a popular educational show filmed by the Belmont Media Center <https://www.belmontmedia.org/hot-topics>. Since the show started in 2022, there have been **seven (7) shows** that that aired on You Tube and Channel 28: Home Escape Planning; AED's and CPR; Cooking Safety; Senior Safety; Ceiling fan fires; Summer Safety; and Winter Safety.

Bike Unit – State funds were used to train and certify 10 members of the fire department in public safety skills. These funds were also used to purchase three bicycles that have been outfitted with EMS supplies. This Special Operations unit was formed for the purpose of commuting in close proximity with the public during large events. In 2023, the unit was deployed approximately **five (5) times**. Firefighters ride in pairs during these events and offer the highest quality of basic and paramedic level care. Firefighters have been trained to circumnavigate safely through crowds in order to provide a response, that is more rapid than that of the larger fire apparatus. This enables them to stabilize a patient and provide immediate EMS care prior to the arrival of the ambulance.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) – Five AED’s have been placed in the following parks around Town for use by citizens in the event of a cardiac arrest : Pequotette, Grove Street, Payson, Winn Brook, Town Field. **Each month** a member of the fire department performs a routine check of the AED’s. Each AED is secured in an all weather cabinet. If a citizen witnesses a person in cardiac arrest he or she can go to the cabinet, call 9-1-1 and speak with the dispatcher who will provide a code to access the AED while simultaneously dispatching the fire department to the scene. The Town has contracted with Life Support Systems Company and twice-a-year a certified technician performs a function and diagnostic check of the AED’s.



Community Engagements – In 2023 firefighters conducted **93** community engagements. These events are used to interact with the Belmont community and explain the missions of the fire department, introduce our firefighters to residents, and residents to our firefighters. They may be neighborhood block parties, touch-a-truck events, summer camp visits, informational displays at the farmer’s market or other educational venues.

Child Safety Seat Inspections/Installations

The Belmont Fire Department has a certified child safety seat technician that will assist with proper installation of children’s car safety seats. This activity is in keeping with our mission of community risk reduction. Our firefighter/technician is currently assigned to the Operations Division, and is available during his work shift by appointment. During 2023 **47** child safety seats were installed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Capt. David DeMarco
Community Liaison / Public Educator

Partners for Life in the Community



Grant Projects

The Belmont Fire Department was recently awarded funds for a grant application that was filed in 2023. The grant award for \$19,000.00 for safety equipment will be used to purchase each Belmont firefighter a pair of leather firefighting boots. These boots were placed on a high priority list by the Executive Office of Public Safety & Security. The newer design and construction afford a true fit for the wearer. Walking, climbing ladders, working on roofs, and overall traction is greatly improved over older versions of rubber boots previously issued by the department. The result will be improved safety, comfort, and reduced fatigue.



New Equipment/Initiatives



The Belmont Fire Department continually assesses emerging risks in the community and works to obtain the appropriate equipment, training, and polices to mitigate any potential incidents. Recent developments involving fires and crashes involving electric vehicles have led the fire department to be among the first in the nation to employ an “EV plug” for use in preventing an electric vehicle from shifting into a drive gear after a crash. This device causes the vehicle system to believe that it is being charged and disables it from shifting into drive.

The Belmont Fire Department has also purchased a fire blanket designed to help smother and contain the thermal runaway that may take place when electric vehicle or other lithium-ion batteries are damaged or exposed to a high heat source. Not only will the blanket help to contain a fire to the point of origin, it will also assist in preventing re-ignition after the original fire is extinguished.

With the ever-increasing use of photovoltaic (PV) panels, the Belmont Fire Department was among the first to obtain a product that has been in use in Europe, but is new the United States. “PV Stop” is a polymer that blocks out a light source from providing power to a PV panel. When firefighters need to operate around these panels there is always the danger of contacting a panel that is retaining power due to sunlight or other lighting in the area. This product is sprayed on the PV panel and forms a coating which may later be removed without permanent damage to the panel.



A Look-Back to 2022 Goals

- Community Education
The fire department has delivered Stop the Bleed Training in cooperation with Belmont Schools Nursing staff. In addition, firefighter/instructors will present public training that includes CPR/Stop the Bleed/Narcan administration in conjunction with funding provided by the Opioid settlement fund established by Town Meeting.
- Risk assessment & Reduction
The Fire Prevention Division and Operations Division have begun a more robust schedule of inspection activities in order to reduce the potential for emergencies and lessen the impact of those that may occur. The fire department continues to offer child car safety seat inspections. We are looking to the possibility of increasing the number of child safety seat technicians in order to improve of service delivery. We have begun a program of home safety surveys in partnership with the Council on Aging. We would like to increase the number of safety surveys by offering this service to all Belmont residents. We have made substantial progress installing smoke/CO alarms in the homes of residents in need.
- Service Metrics
We have begun to track additional fire prevention activities, including orders of notice, code enforcement activities, and records requests made specifically for fire prevention issues. We continue to strive to initiate an online portal for permit applications.
- Workplace Diversity
Our firefighters have engaged potential applicants for the fire department before they take an entrance exam. Meeting one-on-one to discuss the aspects of a career in the fire service. In 2023 we were able to add significantly to the diversity of the fire department. We continue to engage internal and external stakeholders to garner more interest in a fire service career among a diverse group of candidates.
- Training
The fire department trained using newly acquired equipment and policies adopted to address several emerging risks, including lithium-ion battery fires, photovoltaic panel incidents and response to incidents involving electric vehicles.
- Leveraging Regional Resources
We are networking with other members of Metrofire in order to increase our training, EMS, and fire prevention resources. Sub-committees for these important specialties have been formed and are collaborating on training and resource availability.

Summary & Goals



The Belmont Fire Department, with the support of our community, will continue to provide an exceptional standard of coverage for mitigating all types of fire and life safety emergencies. Our dedicated firefighter EMTs and paramedics are committed to reducing hazards in Belmont through comprehensive public education and inspectional programs. We are proud to be community-focused and prepared to use our skills and equipment to respond your calls for service.

- Present a FEMA sponsored program called, “Before help Arrives” to strengthen the resilience of the community when small or large emergencies occur.
- Work toward a robust “Community EMS” out of hospital care system. This care model requires a community investment that will improve the quality of life for many at-risk populations. It will also reduce usage of emergency medical services and hospital emergency facilities by providing care before the level of acuity requires hospitalization.
- Maintain our standard of coverage and provide incident response times within nationally accepted standards for fire and EMS incidents.
- Provide opportunities for the public to engage fire department leadership to better understand the missions of the modern fire service and the level of service provided by the BFD.
- Continue to invest in training our firefighters in current best practices, while providing opportunities for enhancement of leadership skills for the future of the department.
- Continue to support and embrace diversity in the community and within the BFD.

