

2020

Ridgewood Fire Department Annual Report



James Van Goor, Chief

Fire Headquarters
201 E Glen Avenue

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“Every community should have its own plan for fire protection, as each community has a set of conditions unique to itself, and a system of fire protection that works well for one community cannot be assumed to work equally as well for other communities. To be adequate, the fire protection system must respond to local conditions, especially to changing conditions and community needs” (Bland, 1973).

INTRODUCTION

Organized fire protection began in the Village of Ridgewood in 1897 with the formation of the Protection Hook and Ladder Co. #1. Much has happened since that time and the history of the fire department has gone from the Bucket Brigade to automated master streams.

Today's firefighters are called upon to do much more than put out fires. The Ridgewood Fire Department is skilled at handling a variety of emergency situations including motor vehicle accidents, hazardous spills, downed wires, confined space rescues, and medical emergencies to name a few. The department regularly handles a number of routine emergencies as well, such as pumping flooded basements for residents, responding to activations of carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, ring removals, residential lockouts, child lock-ins, and electrical emergencies. The department also has a Rescue Dive Team to handle ice and water rescues.

Monday thru Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., the fire department responds to all medical emergencies in conjunction with Ridgewood EMS, as well as providing a 2nd due ambulance. The department also responds as a first responder to all advanced life support calls 24/7. Having a fire engine and ambulance respond simultaneously ensures that medical assistance reaches the scene within 3-4 minutes.

The basic organizational structure of the department consists three components: an administrative, a fire and emergency response, and Fire Prevention. The administrative component is comprised of the Chief and an Administrative Assistant. The normal work schedule is 35 hours per week with the Chief Officer on call 24 hours per day.

The Fire Prevention component is comprised of a Fire Official, Fire Inspector, and an Administrative Secretary. The Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for inspections under the Uniform Construction Code and the Uniform Fire Code. All Fire Prevention activities and Public Fire Safety Education programs are scheduled through the Fire Prevention Bureau.

The fire and emergency response component is comprised of both professional and volunteer firefighters. The professional firefighters consist of three platoons of 13 and provide the primary response to fires and emergencies 24/7. Each platoon is comprised of (1) Captain, (2) Lieutenants, and (10) Firefighters. The platoon's shift schedule is based on a 56 hour per week work schedule. The volunteer personnel are a support group for the department and are called out whenever there are working fires, during the times of storms or for multiple responses.

Fire Department members are expected to perform all the duties associated with responding to fires and emergencies. Such duties include incident management, personnel accountability, establishing a water supply, hose deployment, forcible entry, search and rescue, ladder placement, ventilation, salvage and overhaul, and any other activities required to safely complete an operation.

To ensure the safety of personnel and the highest level of service to the community, a training schedule has been established to ensure that all components of fire suppression and emergency operations are covered in a comprehensive manner.

CHIEF'S MESSAGE

It is my pleasure to share the Ridgewood Fire Department 2020 Annual Report. It is a year that presented an unprecedented pandemic that none of us have seen in our lifetime. While the information in this Annual Report focuses on the Fire Department's programs, projects, and performance, it is the people we serve that are the core of our mission. I could not be prouder to serve the Village of Ridgewood and lead an incredible team of dedicated men and women. As I look back on the activities of this great group of firefighters, I am motivated by what is yet to come and the amazing village we serve.

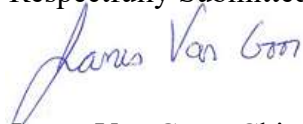
The COVID-19 pandemic affected normal day-to-day operations and consumed most of the year with planning. Unfortunately, there is not a playbook to reference to help guide our actions. The largest priority during this pandemic was to ensure the safety of our members and their families while maintaining the ability to operate the normal functions of the department. Several changes to our operations needed to be made. I am proud that the firefighters and fire administration were able to work together through the challenges. The pandemic brought together organizations and people that do not normally interact with the goal to get the pandemic under control. This is still a work in progress as we move into 2021, we all hope that this pandemic will soon be history.

We are extremely honored to provide the highest level of emergency response together with our fire inspection and prevention program. Fire Prevention staff were also engaged in supporting the COVID-19 response at various levels assuring the safety of the staff while working to support safe business openings and operations.

The Ridgewood Fire Department is a proactive organization staffed with 42 professional firefighters and six volunteer firefighters dedicated to the delivery of service to the citizens and visitors. The Ridgewood Fire Department, and the services we provide, will continue to adapt to effectively meet the challenges found within our community.

On behalf of all the Firefighters and Administrative Staff of the Ridgewood Fire Department, I would like to thank the Village Council and the residents of Ridgewood for their continued support. I also want to thank all the different departments in the village for their prompt and professional assistance given to this department. Without their support, we would not be able to carry out our mission. Please enjoy this report.

Respectfully Submitted,



James Van Goor, Chief

DEFINITION OF TERMS

CO - Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that is slightly less dense than air. It is toxic to humans when encountered in concentrations above 35 parts per million.

CPR - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is an emergency procedure that combines chest compressions with artificial ventilation to restore spontaneous blood circulation and breathing in a person who is in cardiac arrest.

Elevated Alarms:

During times of increased call volume, working fires, or when an incident occurs that commits all on-duty personnel, an elevated alarm may be transmitted by the tour commander or the Fire Chief. This is sent through the CAD system at Central Dispatch, with redundant back-ups at Fire Headquarters.

Platoon Recall - When requested, this will summon the volunteer firefighters and the platoon of career firefighters that went off-duty that morning

Department Recall – All off-duty firefighters are summoned to report for duty.

FAST Team - Firefighter assist and search team (FAST), also known as a rapid intervention team/crew (RIT/RIC), is a team of two or more firefighters dedicated solely to the search and rescue of other firefighters in distress.

Jaws of Life - Hydraulic rescue tools are used by emergency rescue personnel to assist vehicle extrication of crash victims, as well as other rescues from small spaces. These tools include cutters, spreaders, and rams.

Narcan - Naloxone is an opioid reversal medication. It is used to treat opioid drug overdoses. The most common is heroin.

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment refers to protective clothing, helmets, goggles, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection.

Response Time - The amount of time it takes to arrive, from units dispatched to the location of the emergency.

SCBA - Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus is a device worn by rescue workers, firefighters, and others to provide breathable air in an "Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health" atmosphere.

Stokes Basket - A stretcher designed to be used where there are obstacles to movement or other hazards.

T.I.C. - Thermal Imaging Camera is a type of thermographic camera used in firefighting. By rendering infrared radiation as visible light, such cameras allow firefighters to see areas of heat through smoke, darkness, or heat-permeable barriers.

Uniform Construction Code - A complete set of technical standards for construction with a uniform method of administration and enforcement.

Uniform Fire Code - Ensures that all areas of the State are protected by a uniform, minimum fire safety code so that the lives and property of the State's citizens are guarded against the hazards presented by fire.

MISSION/VISION STATEMENT

Mission Statement

The Ridgewood Fire Department protects the lives and property of all Village residents and visitors. The department is entrusted to the prevention and suppression of fire, emergency medical calls, disasters, public safety, education, and enforcement.

Vision Statement

The Ridgewood Fire Department will be a progressive, modern department that will maintain high levels of service ensuring responsible use of the resources and focus on the professional development and training of all personnel.

The Ridgewood Fire Department serves the community by performing the following essential services:

Fire Suppression – Building, Vehicle, Brush, Electrical, etc.
Water Calls / Floods / Broken pipes / Basement pump outs
Lock out / Lock-in (house & car)
Storm Emergencies / Wires down / Tree Limb Removal
First Responder / EMT
Confined Space Rescue
Dive Team / Swift Water Rescue
Hazardous Material Response
Vehicle Extrication
Auto-Accidents / Spill Cleanups / Battery Disconnects
Building Collapse/Entrapments
Electrical Emergencies
Chemical Spills / Leaks
Carbon Monoxide
Elevator Rescue
Utility Emergencies
Gas Leaks (Natural Gas or LPG)
Rope Rescue / High and Low Angle
Fire Prevention Services:
Building inspections
Code enforcement
Plan review
Public fire safety education



THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Mayor Susan Knudsen

Deputy Mayor Michael Sedon

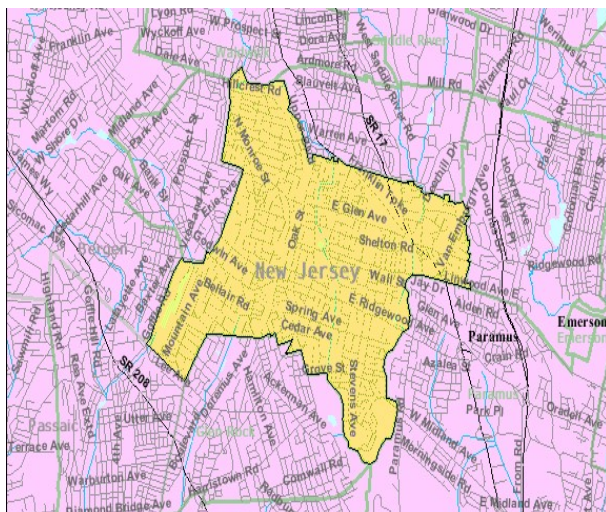
Councilwoman Pamela Perron

Councilwoman Lorraine Reynolds

Councilwoman Bernadette Walsh



To Ridgewood's Mayor and Council, I extend my thanks and gratitude along with that of all our personnel for your support and valued service. I know firsthand of the long hours and hard work you put in to make Ridgewood a great place to live and work. We also want to thank Mayor Ramon Hache and Councilman Jeff Voigt as you leave office. We know you will continue to support Ridgewood in other ways.



25,272 POPULATION

94.7 ROAD MILES

5.8 SQ. MILES LAND AREA

4,339 RESIDENTS PER SQ. MILE- DENSITY

8,743 HOUSING UNITS

8,456 HOUSEHOLDS

1,100 BUSINESSES

2 FIRE STATIONS

PUBLIC PROTECTION CLASSIFICATION

Insurance Service Organization (ISO) assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) from 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest and 10 being the lowest rating. By classifying communities' ability to suppress fires, Insurance Service Organization (ISO) helps the communities evaluate their public fire-protection services. The program provides an objective standard that helps fire departments in planning and budgeting for facilities, equipment, and training.

The Ridgewood Fire Department is proud to announce that in 2012 and again in 2018 we earned a Class 2 Public Protection Classification (PPC).

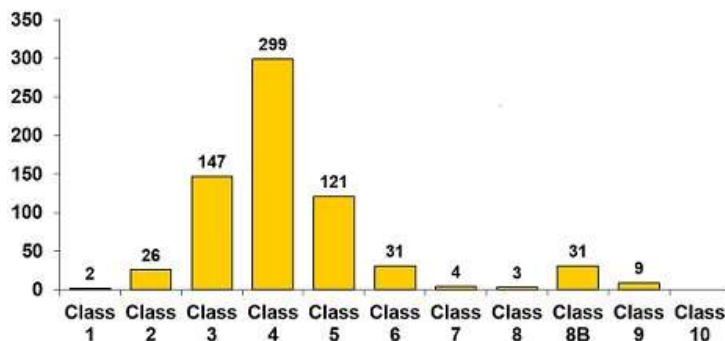
ISO collects information on municipal fire-protection in communities throughout the United States. Insurance companies to establish fair premiums on fire insurance for homeowners and commercial properties use the information. ISO evaluated 39,378 communities countrywide, only 1,772 are rated as Class 2 and 393 received a Class 1. Out of 673 communities in New Jersey, only 26 communities received a Class 2, and two communities received a Class 1 rating. This accomplishment has placed the Ridgewood Fire Department as one of the top 26 Fire Departments in New Jersey.

A community's investment in fire protection is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. Statistical data on insurance losses proves that there is a relationship between excellent fire protection and low fire losses. Not only does a lower classification reduce the insurance rate for homeowners and businesses, it also justifies the investment that the Village has put into fire protection. Having a Class 2 fire department should give the residents a feeling of security and a greater peace of mind.

Here are some general guidelines to help you understand the benefits of improved PPC ratings for residents and businesses:

- PPC may affect the underwriting and pricing for a variety of personal and commercial insurance coverages, including homeowners, mobile home, fine arts floaters, and commercial property (including business interruption).
- Assuming all other factors are equal, the price of property insurance in a community with a good PPC is lower than in a community with a poor PPC.

New Jersey



FIRE STATIONS: HISTORY AND LOCATION

Fire Headquarters

Fire Headquarters is located at 201 E. Glen Avenue. This facility has been operational since June 1, 1992. It serves as quarters for the officers and firefighters of Engine Company No. 35, Tower Ladder No. 36, Rescue Company No. 42, Ambulance 11 as well as the reserve apparatus. The building also houses the Administrative Offices and the Fire Prevention Bureau.

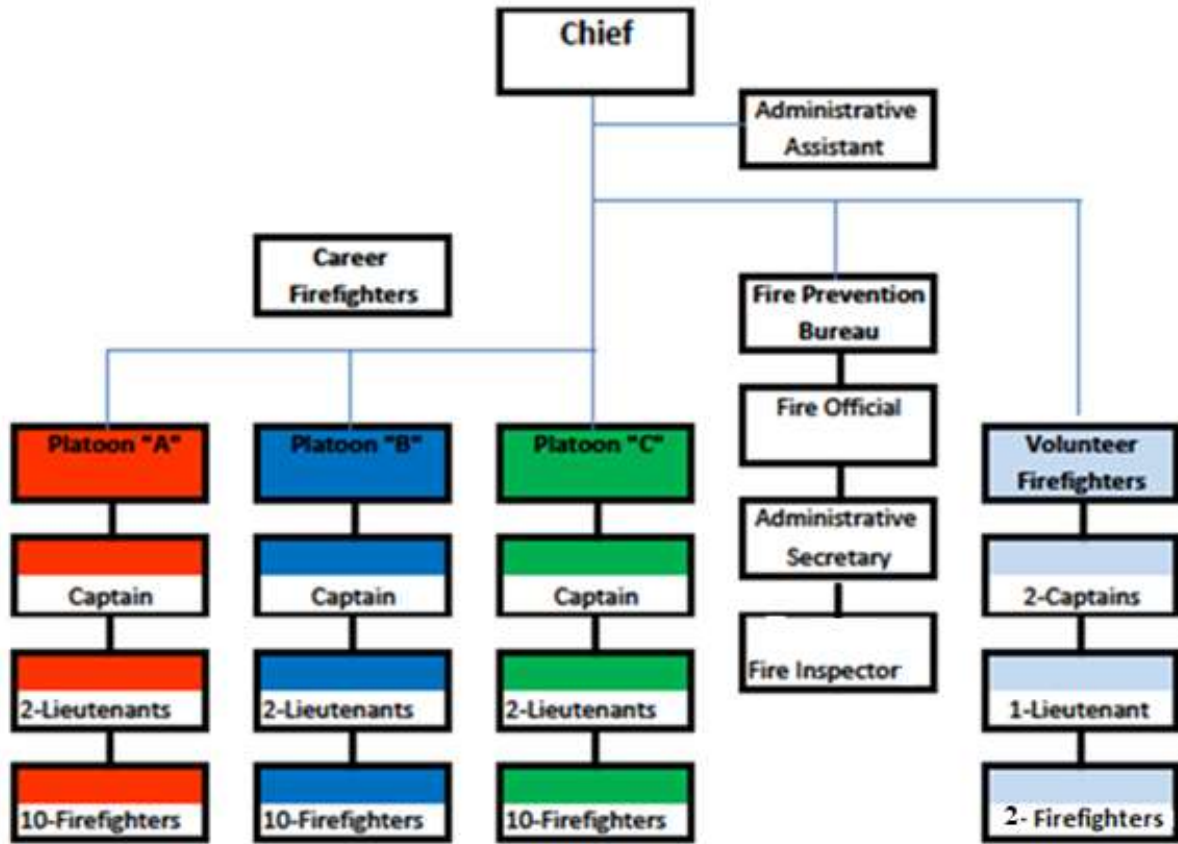


Engine Company 31

In response to residents' concerns after serious fires in the mid 1940's, and to better serve the West side of town, Engine Company No. 31 was established in 1947. Located at 311 West Glen Avenue, the structure is a renovated barn, which houses an apparatus room, offices, and living quarters for firefighters. A crew of three firefighters are on duty 24 hours a day. This fire station has served the Village for over 70 years.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



CAREER PERSONNEL

Administration:

Chief James Van Goor
Administrative Assistant Patti Walsh

Captains

Captain Brendan Corcoran
Captain John Judge
Captain Scott Schmidt

Lieutenants

Lt. Joseph Ferraro
Lt. Michael Kakolewski
Lt. Jason Kane
Lt. Justin O'Connor
Lt. Matt Ramge
Lt. Jordan Zales

Fire Prevention

Lt./Fire Official John Young
Lt./Fire Inspector Vincent Krug
Administrative Assistant Dolores Tomei

Appointments

Probationary FF Chad Miller

Senior Firefighter Engineers

FF. Matthew Bombace
FF. Paul Brennan
FF. Scott Cornell
FF. Michael Ferraro
FF. Jason Jacoby
FF. Michael McLaughlin
FF. Matthew Musicant
FF. Thomas Shortway
FF. Daniel Steen

Firefighters

FF. Mark Barone
FF. Thomas Benintende
FF. Tim Bombace
FF. Greg Corcoran
FF. Anthony Dinice
FF. Chris Eidschun
FF. Trevor Fetkowitz
FF. Kurt Harba
FF. James Kakolewski
FF. Brian Kelly
FF. Dave Kelly
FF. Dane Knudsen
FF. Dan Kostro
FF. Oscar Martinez
FF. Christopher Mead
FF. Brian Peacock
FF. Michael Rohrman
FF. Ryan Romero
FF. Shelby Taylor
FF. Hank Van Wageningen
FF. Chris Wolfstirn

STRUCTURE FIRE – APRIL 5, 2020

On April 5, 2020 at 9:15 PM, a 9-1-1 call was received by Northwest Bergen Central Dispatch reporting smoke coming from the building at 19 North Broad Street. Responding units were advised that heavy smoke was visible on the village traffic camera. When the incident commander arrived on scene, the building was being evacuated. There was a heavy smoke condition on all floors and smoke pushing from the gable vent at the top of the building. Initial reports from Ridgewood Police officers were confirming a trapped occupant in a 3rd floor apartment as well as reports of an elderly couple trapped on the 2nd floor. The stairs to the 2nd floor were already involved in fire, and heavy fire conditions were reported from the rear of the building with exposure concerns.

Firefighters immediately began efforts to attack the fire as well as rescue the trapped occupants. Firefighters made entry into a blacked-out, smoke and heat filled apartment via the window. An unconscious victim was located and rescued from the 3rd floor, using the tower ladder bucket. Searches of the 2nd floor were completed with no victims located; it was later determined that the reports were inaccurate, and the 2nd floor was unoccupied. With conditions deteriorating rapidly, and reports that the interior floor collapsed, the orders were given to evacuate the fire building and operate in a defensive posture. With assistance from our mutual-aid departments, the fire was held to the building of origin, despite being attached to buildings on both sides, and a wooden exposure within a few feet to the rear. Due to the structural damage from roof and multiple floor collapses, command requested an excavator to the scene for demolition of the building. Fire units operated on scene for over 16 hours, until 1:30 PM the following day. The fire eventually reached a 4th Alarm, bringing numerous departments both to the scene and to Fire Headquarters to respond to incidents in the Village. Thankfully, only two firefighters sustained minor injuries and the victim that was rescued from the 3rd floor was treated and released from the hospital.

A thorough investigation was conducted by the Ridgewood Fire Prevention Bureau with assistance from the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office Arson Squad. The cause of the fire was deemed to be accidental in nature.



Ridgewood firefighters rescue an unconscious victim from the 3rd floor of 19 North Broad Street.



To the Ridgewood Fire
 Department
 You Are My Heroes!
 Thank You for Saving My
 Life on April 5th 2020 when
 my apartment was on fire.
 And Thank You to All the
 other Fire Departments
 that were there when I
 needed help.

Sincerely,
 S L
 S. Broad St.
 Ridgewood, N.J.
 07450



AWARDS

Life Saving Award

On April 5, 2020, a fire was reported at 19 North Broad Street at 9:15 PM. Upon arrival of the incident commander, patrol confirmed a trapped occupant on the 3rd floor. With no time to spare, the crew of Tower Ladder 36 deployed the aerial device to the window. Firefighter McLaughlin entered the building and quickly located an unconscious victim. With conditions rapidly deteriorating throughout the building, the victim was removed to the bucket and lowered to the street. Because of the swift actions of the crew, the victim survived with no permanent injuries. For these actions, the Ridgewood Fire Department presented the Life Saving Award to Firefighter Michael McLaughlin, Firefighter Timothy Bombace, and Firefighter Michael Rohrman.

Unit Citation

On April 5, 2020, a fire was reported at 19 North Broad Street at 9:15 PM. Central Dispatch confirmed visible smoke from the traffic cameras, and PD units confirmed a trapped occupant on the 3rd floor. The building was being evacuated upon arrival of fire department units, as well as reports of up to three trapped occupants. Firefighters were faced with heavy smoke and fire conditions throughout the building, and exposure problems on both sides and to the rear. A trapped resident was rescued from the 3rd floor via the tower ladder. At the same time, firefighters had to gain access to and search a 2nd floor apartment with fire below, on the stairs leading to it, and inside through a hole in the floor. There was also a heavy volume of fire in the rear of the building to contend with. Due to the extraordinary efforts of these firefighters, an unconscious victim was rescued, and the fire was held to the building of origin. The Ridgewood Fire Department awarded a Unit Citation to the following personnel:

Captain John Judge	Lieutenant Jason Kane
FF Paul Brennan	FF Michael McLaughlin
FF Matthew Musicant	FF Christopher Wolfstirn
FF Kurt Harba	FF Brian Kelly
FF Timothy Bombace	FF Oscar Martinez
FF Michael Rohrman	FF Thomas Benintende

Hometown Hero



Congressman Josh Gottheimer honored Firefighter Jason Jacoby with the “Hometown Hero” award in December. This award was presented virtually and included several New Jersey residents recognized for community service and efforts to help others during the pandemic.

PATRIOTIC EMPLOYER AWARD

On January 29, 2020, the Ridgewood Fire Department and Chief Van Goor received the Patriotic Employer Award from the Department of Defense, in recognition of many years of support for military reservists and contributing to the national security of the United States. This presentation came from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and authorized by the Secretary of Defense. The Ridgewood Fire Department has a proud history of members serving in our military as active reserves. Many of them have been deployed overseas, as well as domestically for natural disaster response. This is made possible by the continued outstanding support of our Village Mayor and Council.



Pictured from left to right – Firefighter Eidschun, United States Coast Guard Reserve, Chief Van Goor, Tom Yotka of the Ridgewood Building Department, who was a retired Chief Petty Officer, and Alvin Star of the ESGR.

Ridgewood Firefighters Currently Serving as Reservists

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Oscar Martinez, New Jersey Army National Guard

1st Lieutenant Christopher Mead, United States Army Reserve

Yeoman First Class Christopher Eidschun, United States Coast Guard Reserve

Staff Sergeant Timothy Bombace, New Jersey Army National Guard

Sergeant Shelby Taylor, United States Marine Corps Reserve

VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL

Volunteer Fire Officers

Administrative Capt. Richard Scalione
Capt. Chris Raimondi
Lt. Robert Peacock

Volunteer Firefighters

FF. David Azzopardi
FF. Jeffrey Creegan
FF. Dennis Johnson
FF. Anthony Monton



TRAINING

To always be ready and to provide superior service, firefighters must be highly trained. The men and women of the Ridgewood Fire Department train rigorously every day to prepare them for the unexpected. This training ensures that every incident is handled by an extremely capable and professional crew of firefighters.

Annually, the Ridgewood Department documents over 40,000 hours of training. This training begins their first year at the Bergen County Fire Academy. The classes they attend include Firefighter I & II, Emergency Medical Technician, Hazardous Materials Operations, Confined Space Operations, Apparatus and Pump Operations, and Driver Training.

To keep the Firefighters as prepared as possible, a yearly training schedule is created. This schedule guarantees that the firefighters keep up to date on new training and technologies. The firefighters are required to progress with the changing times as well as keep their time-honored skills sharp.

Our yearly training schedule includes:

Active Shooter Response	Confined Space Operations	Decontamination
Blood borne Pathogens	Personal Protective Equipment	Building Construction
Personnel Accountability	Structural Firefighting	Officer Development
CPR Re-certification	Building Collapse & Safety	Right to Know
Trench Rescue	EMT Continuing Education	Pre-Fire Planning
Vehicle Firefighting	Engine Company Operations	Ropes & Knots
Driver Training	Rescue Tools	Wildland Firefighting
Vehicle Extrication	Sprinklers & Standpipes	Forcible Entry
Search & Rescue	Portable Fire Extinguishers	Ground Ladders
Aerial Ladder Operations	F.A.S.T. Operations & Equipment	Master Streams
Radio Communications	Advancing Hand Lines	Information Technology
Ventilation	Report Writing	Air Tools & Rescue Air Bags
Pump Operation	Elevator Rescue	Tools & Equipment
Confined Space Rescue	Equipment Maintenance	Fire Behavior
Operation of Gas Meters	Salvage & Overhaul	Thermal Imaging Camera
Fire Cause & Origin	Water Rescue	SCBA Confidence Training
Natural Gas Emergencies	Incident Command System	

"In the heat of the battle you don't remember very much. You don't think very fast. You act by instinct, which is really training. So, you've got to be trained for battle so that you will react exactly the way you did in training". - Admiral Arleigh Burke, USN

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020 SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

COVID-19 responses

The Covid-19 Pandemic has resulted in numerous EMS responses for potential and confirmed cases. Guidance from the NJ Department of Health, as well as the CDC dictated an increased level of PPE use, as well as decontamination procedures. The Ridgewood Fire Department instituted several policies to limit exposure to personnel, as well as civilians. A policy was also developed to facilitate daily decontamination of department apparatus and facilities.

Mutual Aid Response to Glen Rock

Car 38 and Engine 35 responded to a call for Mutual Aid assistance to Glen Rock for a reported house fire. Engine 35 proceeded to stretch the second hose line into the structure for backup and to protect the first hose team. 35 and 38 remained on scene after initial operations to assist where needed until released by command.

Rt. 17 Rollover 3 Car Motor Vehicle Accident

A multiple-vehicle accident was reported during morning rush hour. Upon arrival, Car 38 found an overturned vehicle, a second vehicle into a utility pole and a third vehicle off the roadway. Fire department EMT's assessed multiple patients for treatment and transportation to area hospitals. Minor hazardous materials spills were mitigated, and the vehicles were removed from the highway.

Carbon Monoxide Incident

Engine 31 and Car 38 responded to a home for a CO condition. Upon investigation, readings at the entryway exceeded safe levels and SCBA units were donned. Higher readings in the basement were found and a malfunctioning direct vent boiler was determined to be the source. The unit was shut down, PSE&G was notified, and the home was ventilated.

Car into Building

Units responded to a motor vehicle accident with a report of a vehicle into the building. Fire department personnel treated the accident victim, assessed the building for structural damage and mitigated a minor spill.

Electrical Emergency

Engine 31 & Car 38 responded to a reported utility emergency. A commercial moving van struck overhead power lines, compromising the house services of multiple homes. PSE&G was notified to respond due to power surges in the affected residences. Fire department personnel checked each home to evacuate the residents and secure power at the breaker panels. Thermal imaging cameras were used to confirm no hidden electrical fires were caused by the accident.

Outside Mulch/Grass Fire

Units responded for a report of smoke in the area. Upon arrival, numerous spot fires were located on the property surrounding a residence, threatening the home. The fires were extinguished, and extensive overhaul of the yard was completed. The resident advised that they had improperly disposed of ashes from their fireplace earlier in the day.

Structure Fire

Units responded for a report of smoke coming from a business in the downtown area. Upon arrival, found advanced fire conditions and a trapped occupant. A department recall was transmitted, as well as mutual aid from numerous surrounding departments. The fire reached four alarms before being declared under control. Due to the extensive damage to the building, it was razed under the guidance of the fire department.

Mutual Aid Response to Ho-Ho-Kus

Engine 35 & Car 38 responded to Ho-Ho-Kus for a building fire. Upon arrival, Engine 35 personnel were assigned to assist with search and fire attack.

Dumpster Fire

Engine 35 & Car 38 responded to the rear of a business on East Ridgewood Avenue for a dumpster fire. The fire was extinguished, and due to the proximity to the structure, the building was checked for any extension.

Mutual Aid Response to Midland Park

Engine 31 & Car 38 responded to Midland Park for a residential structure fire. Engine 31 personnel were assigned to search, ventilation, and overhaul duties.

Vehicle Lockout with Two Children Inside

A resident called directly to Fire Headquarters to report two children locked inside a vehicle. Firefighters were able to gain entry to the vehicle using specialized tools. No injuries were reported, and no damage was done to the vehicle while gaining access.

Hazardous condition: Falling Shingles

A call was received at Fire Headquarters requesting assistance for a hazardous condition. Upon arrival, Car 38 reported pieces of a slate roof falling onto the sidewalk below. Tower Ladder 36 was used to access the roof to inspect the affected area and remove the loose sections of slate that were in danger of falling.

Carbon Monoxide Incident

Responded to a residential CO alarm activation. Hazardous levels of carbon monoxide were found in the basement. The cause was determined to be a malfunctioning boiler. A properly installed CO alarm alerted the residents, and they immediately evacuated the house.

Garage/Structure Fire

A resident of Heights Road reported smoke and flames coming from a neighboring garage. Fire units arrived to find a large, detached garage with fire. Due to rapid response time, the fire was contained to the first floor of the garage, with smoke and heat damage to the attic.

Car Fire

Units responded to an auto body shop for a reported vehicle fire, in close proximity to a building. Upon arrival, Car 38 found a well-involved car fire in the parking lot, with no threat to the structure. The fire was extinguished, and the vehicle was removed.

Dryer Fire

Units responded for a reported dryer fire. Upon arrival, a smoke condition was found in the basement. Thermal imaging cameras were used to check for fire extension. Power was secured and the appliance was removed from the house.

Natural Gas Leak

Units responded for a reported natural gas line struck by a contractor. Upon arrival, a contractor reported striking the house service line with an excavating machine. PSE&G was notified to respond immediately. The area was secured for safety until the leak was shut down.

Garbage Truck Fire

Units responded to a report of a Village garbage truck on fire. Upon arrival, fire was in the compactor area of the truck. The operator offloaded the contents to limit damage to the vehicle. The fire was extinguished, and investigation revealed improper disposal of power equipment as the cause.

Elevator Rescue

Units responded for a stuck occupied elevator between floors in a commercial building. Upon arrival, firefighters used specialized equipment to gain access to the elevator car and confirm the status of the occupant. The occupant was removed safely, and the elevator taken out of service for repairs.

Carbon Monoxide Incident

Units responded to an apartment complex for a report of a carbon monoxide alarm activation. Investigation revealed a malfunctioning stove. PSE&G was notified, and the building was ventilated.

Emergency Lock-In

Units responded for a report of a small child locked inside a bedroom. Upon arrival, firefighters were able to calm the child and gain access to the bedroom using forcible entry tools. No damage was sustained, and the child was uninjured.

Outside Fire

Units responded to a report of a fire outside of a residence. Upon arrival, approximately 300 square feet of lawn was found to be on fire. The fire was extinguished, and the affected area was thoroughly overhauled.

Dryer Fire

Units responded for a reported dryer fire. Upon arrival, a smoke condition was found in the basement. Thermal imaging cameras were used to check for fire extension. Power was secured and the appliance was removed from the house.

Carbon Monoxide Incident

Received a call from a west side business reporting a carbon monoxide alarm activation, as well as an odor of gas in the building. Upon arrival, hazardous levels of carbon monoxide were found throughout the building. Firefighters used specialized gas detectors to determine that a defective component on the rooftop heating unit was the cause.

Garbage Truck Fire

Received a call for a vehicle fire involving a Village garbage truck. Upon arrival, Car 38 found a working fire in the compactor area of the truck. The fire was quickly extinguished, limiting the damage. Overhaul was completed, and a lithium battery was found to be the cause of the fire.

Hazardous Materials Incident

Received a call for a street sweeper truck that ruptured a hydraulic line, causing a large spill. Units arrived on scene and applied over 300lbs of absorbent material, and deployed containment booms and pads to the storm drains in the area. The NJ DEP was notified of the incident.

Mutual-Aid Response to Glen Rock

Engine 35 & Car 38 responded to Glen Rock for a report of a commercial building fire. Upon arrival, a fire in an underground electrical vault was found. Upon investigation, a fire was located in the boiler room of an adjacent building. Firefighters quickly extinguished the fire and secured the utilities. The building was ventilated and turned back over to the owner.

Structure Fire

Received a call for a fire alarm activation at a west side residence. Upon arrival, Car 38 reported a fire in the kitchen that was visible from the back window. Firefighters gained entry to the home and extinguished a fire that was rapidly spreading to the cabinetry. The home was not occupied at the time of the fire except for a dog that was located during a search and removed to safety. Rapid response by the fire department limited the damage to the countertop and some cabinets.

Electrical Vault Fire

Received a call for a fire at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Ridgewood Avenue. Upon arrival, Car 38 found a heavy smoke condition pushing from an underground electrical vault. A safe area was established by fire department and Ridgewood PD personnel. PSE&G responded immediately and secured power to the vault.



EMERGENCY RESPONSES - 2020

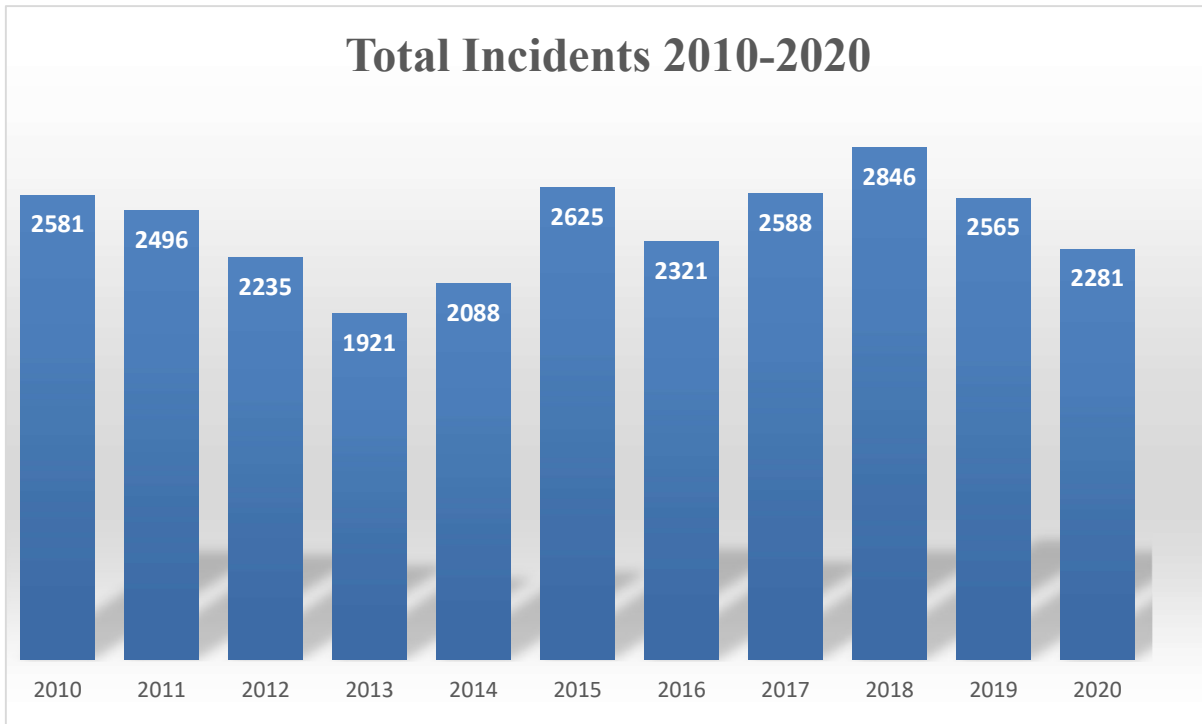
Call Type	2020
Structure Fires	30
Vehicle Fires	6
Trees, Brush, Grass Fires	14
Refuse Fires	4
Outside Fires	2
Total	56
Overpressure, Rupture, Explosion	2020
Steam, Air & Gas Ruptures	1
Total	1
Rescue & Emergency Medical Services	2020
EMT Calls	899
Search, Rescue & Extrication	77
Total	976
Hazardous Conditions	2020
Combustible Spills & Leaks	76
Chemical Hazards/Carbon Monoxide	27
Electrical Equipment/Wiring	262
Vehicle Accidents/Structure Collapse	33
Total	398
Service Calls	2020
Person in Distress	41
Water Problem	34
Smoke Investigation/Removal	96
Other Assistance Call	117
Total	288
Good Intent Calls	2020
Good Intent Call	97
Smoke Scare/Investigation	16
Hazardous Materials Investigation	2
Total	115

Alarm Activations	2020
Malicious Alarm	4
Malfunction of Alarm	168
General Activation	253
Total	425

Severe Weather/Natural Disaster	2020
Wind Storm, Lightning Strikes	21
Total	21

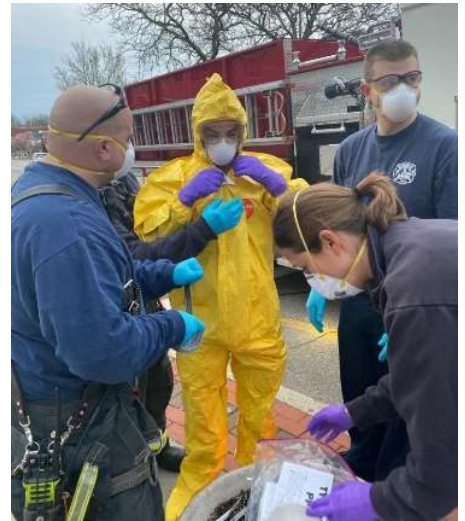
Special Incident Type	2020
Special Incident	0
Total	0

Total Incidents	2020
	2286



During the height of the pandemic in 2020, specifically from March to September, the department saw a reduction in fire-related call volume.

DEPARTMENT PHOTOS



EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE

For many years, Ridgewood had ample volunteer personnel for ambulance staffing. However, the Village is not immune to the problem of volunteer staffing during daytime hours. In 1986, Ridgewood addressed this problem by allocating Fire Department resources to make sure that Village residents are provided with the best emergency medical service available. Monday through Saturday, from 6:00 am until 7:00 pm, the Fire Department responds in conjunction with Ridgewood EMS to all emergency medical calls, with additional responses to all advanced life support calls 24/7. In addition, Ambulance 11 is stationed at Fire Headquarters to respond to additional calls throughout the day and night.

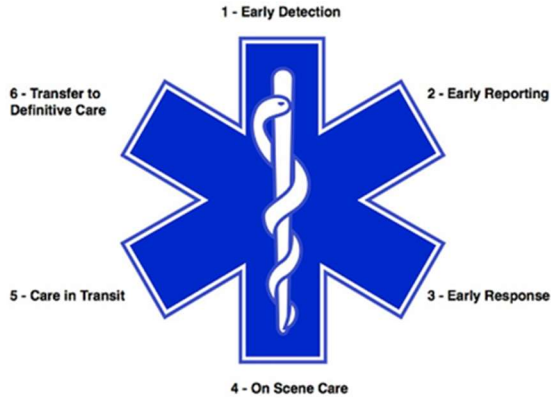
When an emergency medical call is received, Fire Department EMT's are given the location and the nature of the emergency. Based upon the location, the nearest engine company is dispatched from either Fire Headquarters or the West Glen Avenue Firehouse. At least three Fire Department EMT's are always on duty at each station. The Ridgewood per diem EMT responds with the ambulance that is located at Fire Headquarters. Both engine companies carry three firefighter/EMT's and provide basic life support. Engine Company #35 and Engine Company #31 are fully equipped with medical equipment, automatic external defibrillators, and medication to treat diabetic emergencies or overdoses.

The system ensures two EMT's arrive on the scene quickly, and additional manpower is available to handle the emergency. While two EMT's are required to staff the ambulance, many calls require additional help with lifting, securing equipment, and providing other assistance. One of the biggest advantages of having additional personnel is the support available to move and carry the patient, especially when stairs are involved. An example would be a patient requiring Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). CPR requires at least two responders to work on the patient, leaving no one available to move the patient and/or drive the ambulance.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT)

Parts of the EMS Symbol - "The Star of Life"
At center, The Rod of Asclepius - ancient Greek symbol of healing



There are twenty-eight Firefighters, seven Lieutenants, two Captains, and the Chief that have completed the extensive Emergency Medical Technician training course and have become certified. In addition, one Captain is a trained Paramedic.

Chief James Van Goor
Lieutenant John Young

Platoon A

Captain Schmidt
Lieutenant Kakolewski
Lieutenant Ramge

Firefighter M. Bombace
Firefighter Cornell
Firefighter Taylor
Firefighter Romero
Firefighter Kostro
Firefighter Corcoran
Firefighter Fetkowitz
Firefighter Barone
Firefighter Steen

Platoon B

Captain Judge
Lieutenant Ferraro
Lieutenant Kane

Firefighter Brennan
Firefighter Wolfstirn
Firefighter Harba
Firefighter Taylor
Firefighter Kelly
Firefighter Martinez
Firefighter Rohrman
Firefighter T. Bombace
Firefighter Musicant
Firefighter Knudsen

Platoon C

Captain Corcoran
Lieutenant Zales
Lieutenant O'Connor

Firefighter Jacoby
Firefighter D. Kelly
Firefighter J. Kakolewski
Firefighter Shortway
Firefighter Dinice
Firefighter Peacock
Firefighter Mead
Firefighter Eidschun
Firefighter Ferraro
Firefighter VanWageningen

SWIFT WATER / RESCUE DIVE TEAM

The Ridgewood Fire Department proudly staffs a special swift water rescue team during and after extreme rainfall events. Specially trained fire fighters equipped with wet suits, personal flotation devices, helmets, and specially designed water rescue devices staff these teams. The Department's Swift Water Rescue personnel have the ability to create land-based water rescue system, as well as to perform water-based contact rescues in order to save victims trapped in the many natural and man-made waterways in the Village of Ridgewood.

The Ridgewood Fire Department Dive Team has 16 Certified Scuba Divers and sufficient equipment to facilitate a water rescue when needed. Whenever the lifeguards at Graydon Pool receive a call of someone missing or a possible drowning, the fire department is summoned. The Dive Team conducts combined drills with Graydon Pool Lifeguard Staff and Ridgewood Emergency Services. While the Dive Team is dispatched primarily to Graydon Pool, there are several large ponds located in Ridgewood where the Dive Team may be needed.

The Professional Association of Diving Instructors certifies the following personnel:

Captain Brendan Corcoran	SFFE Matthew Musicant
Captain John Judge	SFFE Matthew Bombace
Lieutenant Joseph Ferraro	Firefighter Greg Corcoran
Lieutenant Michael Kakolewski	Firefighter Kurt Harba
Lieutenant Justin O'Connor	Firefighter Jim Kakolewski
Lieutenant / Fire Official John Young	Firefighter Brian Kelly
Lieutenant Matthew Ramge	Firefighter Dane Knudsen
SFFE Michael McLaughlin	Firefighter Chris Wolfstirn



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

It is part of our Mission Statement to provide fire prevention and public safety education to the residents and businesses. The best way to accomplish that goal is to be out in the community. We can get the message out to reduce fires and other emergencies in a wide variety of ways. As firefighters and a department, we pride ourselves on being able to help spread that message. There are many events throughout the year.

Firehouse Tours

Camps

Fire Station Open House

Junior Police Academy

Downtown for the Holidays

Michael Feeney's Best Day Ever

We have requests for fire house tours throughout the year. Requested tours come from day cares, schools, Boy and Girl Scout troops and families wanting to know more about the Ridgewood Fire Department. Firefighters discuss general fire safety basics including checking smoke alarms, changing smoke alarm batteries, and creating an escape plan. The children's favorite part is sitting in the trucks and learning about the tools. The firefighters are always willing to give their time for these important opportunities to spread the word about fire prevention and safety



FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU



Lieutenant/Fire Official John Young is Director of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Lieutenant Young joined the Fire Department in December of 2002 as a Firefighter and was assigned to the Fire Prevention Bureau in July of 2005.

The Bureau conducts annual fire code inspections at every commercial building, looking for any hazards or code violations that could endanger the occupants of the building. The Bureau also does tent, fireworks, inflatable, and life safety inspections for special events throughout the community.

There are 36 Fire Inspection Districts in the Village that include Valley Hospital and nursing homes, all Village-owned buildings, public and private schools, day care centers, multi-family dwellings, and all commercial buildings. In 2020, there were 168 inspections of life hazard uses, and 1,002 inspections of non-life hazard use occupancies conducted. A total of 705 occupancies were re-inspected. The inspections are also conducted by the on-duty shifts and double as a building familiarization drills for all firefighters.

Under the N.J. Uniform Fire Code 5:71-3.3, the local Fire Official is required to “investigate, or cause to be investigated, every reported fire or explosion occurring within the jurisdiction that involves the loss of life or serious injury or causes destruction or damage to property.” Lt./Fire Inspector John Young and Lt./Inspector Vincent Krug are trained in fire cause and origin investigation. They are both members of the Bergen County Arson Task Force.

The Fire Prevention Bureau is incredibly involved in Public Fire Safety Education. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, we were unable to perform the many visitations and public education programs that have been such a part of our history. As we emerge from these trying times, the Fire Prevention Bureau looks forward optimistically to the days when these programs will resume.

FIRE PREVENTION INSPECTIONS
(COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS & DWELLINGS)

General Business	991
Gas Station and Auto Repair Shops	18
Restaurants	63
Retail Food Stores	3
Lumber Yards	1
Multi Family Buildings	52
Institutional Buildings	20
Public and/or Private Schools	26
Church and/or Sunday School Buildings	27
Municipal-Owned Buildings	25
Life Hazard Use – Annual	115
Life Hazard Use – Quarterly	24
Fire Prevention NE/INL	85
Smoke Detector Certification Inspections	835

UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE
(HEAT PRODUCING APPLIANCE INSPECTIONS)

Fireplace/Chimneys	9
Furnace Installation – Gas	34
Furnace Installation	0
Other Gas Appliances	70
Oil Tank Installations	4
Fuel Tank	2
Fuel Pump Installations	0
Abandonment of Underground Tanks	0
Removal of Underground Tanks	170
Removal of Interior/Above Ground Fuel Oil Tanks	25
Chimney Liner Installation	42
Other	8

UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE
(CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY INSPECTIONS)

Fire Sub-Code Permits Issued	441
U.C.C. NE/INL	20
C.C.O. Permits Issued	18
C.C.O. Inspections of Commercial Occupancies	27
Progress Inspections	10
Fire Sub-Code Related	212
Blueprints Checked	91
Review of Site Plan Locations	20
Smoke Detector - Placement/Installations	169

NOTICES ISSUED FOR VIOLATIONS

Fire Sub-Code	120
Fire Prevention Bureau Violations	1,155
Re-Inspections to Assure Correction	669
Summons Issued	10
Letters Sent	110
Municipal Court Appearances	1
Construction Board of Appeals Appearances	0
Fire Prevention Permits Issued	16
Fire Prevention Permit Inspections	20
Fire Prevention Penalties Issued	42

FIRE PREVENTION ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

S/D Certification Fees (Ordinance #3288)	\$54,000
Inspection Fees Local	\$84,733.00
Fire Prevention Permit Fees	\$647.00
Fire Prevention Penalties	\$3105.00
Life Hazard Use Inspection Fees (State)	\$27,452.43
Fire Sub-Code Fees (Building Department)	\$53,023.00
Fire Alarm Registration Fees	\$43,624.11
C.C.O. Fees	\$0.00

**JOINT INSPECTIONS WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS,
CONTRACTORS, OWNERS, TENANTS, AND OTHER AGENCIES:**

With Building Department	32
With Other Village Departments	0
With Fire Department or Signal Bureau Personnel	5
With Board of Education Personnel	0
With Valley Hospital Personnel	0

**NOTIFICATION TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND
AGENCIES OF CODE VIOLATIONS:**

To Building Department	7
To Other Village Departments	1

**CONFERENCES WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS,
CONTRACTORS, OWNERS, TENANTS AND OTHER AGENCIES:**

With Building Department	193
With Other Village Departments	0
With Fire Department or Signal Bureau Personnel	0

COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED:

Hazardous Condition	26
Blocking Exit Ways	2
Improper Trash Storage and/or Collection	0
Re-Inspections to Assure Corrections	26

MISCELLANEOUS:

Fire Safety Education/Training Program	0
Prep. And Maintenance of Reports/Inspection Schedules	230
Respond to Fire Incidents	8
Investigate Fire Incidents	5
Meetings and Schools Attended	0
Check for Safety at Public Affairs	8
OPRA Requests Completed	102



ADOPT-A-HYDRANT PROGRAM

In 2013, The Ridgewood Fire Department began a program called “Adopt-A-Hydrant.” The purpose of this program is to encourage Village residents to keep the fire hydrants in their neighborhood clear of snow and debris.

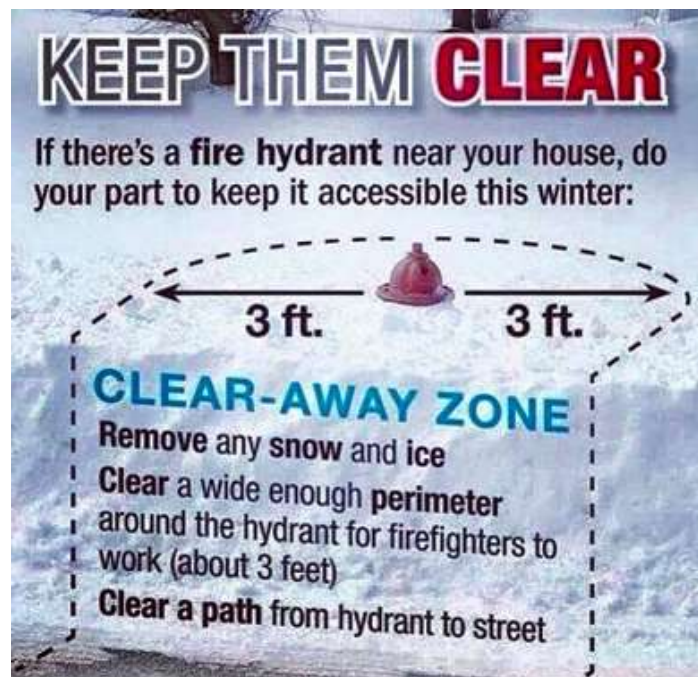
Fire hydrants are an especially important device. It is the Fire Department’s only continuous water source and is necessary to help them save lives and protect property.

When a fire is reported, the Fire Department looks at a map to find the closest hydrant to the fire before responding. When they get there, they must be able to find the hydrant very quickly and every second counts. When things block their view, (i.e. cars, trucks, dumpsters, construction equipment, garbage cans, etc.), it could take minutes to find them and once found, may not be able to be used if blocked.

In winter months, snow covered hydrants are a very serious problem. During high snowfall winters, the fire hydrants could be covered by as much as 4’ of snow. This would make them impossible to find. Even a moderate snow can completely cover them, as they are located on the curb line where snowplows pile up the snow. When the hydrant is needed in an emergency, if not cleared and easily located, it could make the difference between life and death.

After a snowstorm, the on-duty firefighters spend many days shoveling out hydrants throughout the Village.

Although we have had quite a few adoptions, we are still looking for residents and civic groups to adopt a hydrant in their neighborhood.



APPARATUS

Unit #	Year/Make	
Car 30	2018 Chevy Tahoe	Chief of Department
Car 40	2017 Chevy Tahoe	Fire Prevention Bureau
Car 41	2010 Ford Escape	Fire Prevention Bureau
Car 38	2018 Chevy Tahoe	Tour Commander
Car 39	2015 Chevy Tahoe	Tour Commander (Reserve/Recall)
Car 43	2014 Ford F-250	Utility Truck
Engine 31	2020 Pierce Saber	1500 GPM Pumper
Engine 35	2017 Pierce Saber	1500 GPM Pumper
Tower Ladder 36	2012 Pierce Arrow XT	95' Platform
Rescue 42	2019 Ferrara Cinder	Rescue Truck
Engine 37	2013 Pierce Saber	1500 GPM Pumper (Reserve/Recall)
Engine 33	2003 Pierce Saber	1250 GPM Pumper (Reserve/Recall)
Ambulance 11	2003 International	PL Custom Ambulance



LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

Thank
You
Ridgewood
FIRE
FIGHTERS

From
K A
West Ridgewood Ave
12/21/2020 Kitchen candle fire

FIREHOUSE MEMBERS,
Thank you first for 4 min.
ARRIVAL, for finding & saving our
dog hilly & for not using water
to extinguish the fire. You
saved our home and a great deal
more work. Bless you All for
being there. Happy 2021
Enjoy this dinner

12/23/20
Dear Ridgewood
Fire Department:
Thank you for
coming to my home tonight.
I don't call often but when
I have - you're right there
I can't tell you how APPRECIATED
you all are. Special thank you to
Matthew. He knew exactly what
to do. here's a small token
of my big thanks. Maybe
forward a firehouse mail.
stay well, safe
& healthy.

To the entire Ridgewood
Fire Dept.

Wishing you a holiday
trimmed in happiness.

All of you - you're
the best.

Warmly,
S B
Ridgewood

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2020 Ridgewood Fire Department Annual Report is made possible through the help and support from the following people:

Format & Layout

Chief James Van Goor
SFFE Matthew Musicant
Patti Walsh, Administrative Assistant

Fire Prevention Bureau

Sr. Fire Prevention Officer/Fire Official John Young
Dolores Tomei, Bureau Administrative Secretary

Printing

Patti Walsh, Administrative Assistant

Fire Narratives

Captain Judge
Captain Schmidt
Captain Corcoran

Pictures

Patti Walsh, Administrative Assistant
SFFE Matthew Musicant
Boyd Loving, Village Resident
Deputy Chief Peter Danzo, Hackensack FD
Firefighter Michael Martinelli, Hackensack FD

Technical Support

Ms. Chenay Baxter-Clark, Stryker Public Relations