



Office of the State Fire Marshal



72ND
ANNIVERSARY

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2025



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

JOHN W. RUDD
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

DOVER OFFICE
HEADQUARTERS

September 8, 2025

*The Honorable Matthew S. Meyer, Governor
State of Delaware
Office of the Governor
Tatnall Building
Dover, Delaware 19901*

Dear Governor Meyer,

I am pleased to forward to you the 72nd Annual Report from the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

The 72nd Annual Report reflects the accomplishments of the agency by our dedicated staff in fulfilling our agency's mission throughout the State of Delaware during FY 2025.

By conducting methodical fire investigations, performing occupancy inspections, various code enforcement activities, comprehensive plan reviews and inspections, fire protection system reviews and inspections, youth firesetter intervention programs, and performing various community outreach programs, our agency strives to provide the citizens of the State of Delaware and all who work or visit here a fire safe environment.

The staff of the Office of the State Fire Marshal worked with other state agencies, County and municipal governments, our partners in law enforcement, our first responders, the Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association, Delaware State Fire School, and the Delaware State Fire Commission to deliver effective and efficient services throughout the State of Delaware.

We appreciate the support that you and your staff provide for our agency, as well as the support of the General Assembly in providing the funding and the resources needed to accomplish our mission.

Respectfully submitted,

*John W. Rudd
State Fire Marshal*



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

JOHN W. RUDD
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

DOVER OFFICE
HEADQUARTERS

Welcome from the State Fire Marshal

The mission of our agency is to provide an environment which is safe from the devastating effects of fire and explosions, and our agency, in collaboration with our fire service, law enforcement, and homeland security partners, diligently works to prevent fires and explosions from occurring.

To accomplish our mission, the agency provides plan review and inspection services, fire code enforcement, fire and explosion investigation, and youth fire-setting intervention programs throughout the State of Delaware. Additionally, the agency licenses fire protection system vendors, fireworks shooters, and blasters. Licenses and permits for specific occupancies and processes are also issued to ensure the highest standards of life safety and fire protection are maintained throughout the State.

As you will see from this report, our agency is busy. Though we are one of the smaller agencies in the State, our responsibilities are immense. Our agency was fortunate to have added additional positions to our Technical Services Division this most recent budget cycle, and these positions will help with managing the increased workload we have seen in Kent and Sussex Counties. We are grateful to the members of the Joint Finance Committee, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of Human Resources for their assistance in obtaining these positions.

Whether helping someone obtain needed paperwork, bringing a sense of closure to victims of a fire, helping a young person that may have a fascination with fire, or putting Delawareans to work by expediting new construction reviews and inspections, our staff strives to set the bar high for public service.

On behalf of all our staff, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read through our agency's annual report. It is our honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

John W. Rudd
State Fire Marshal

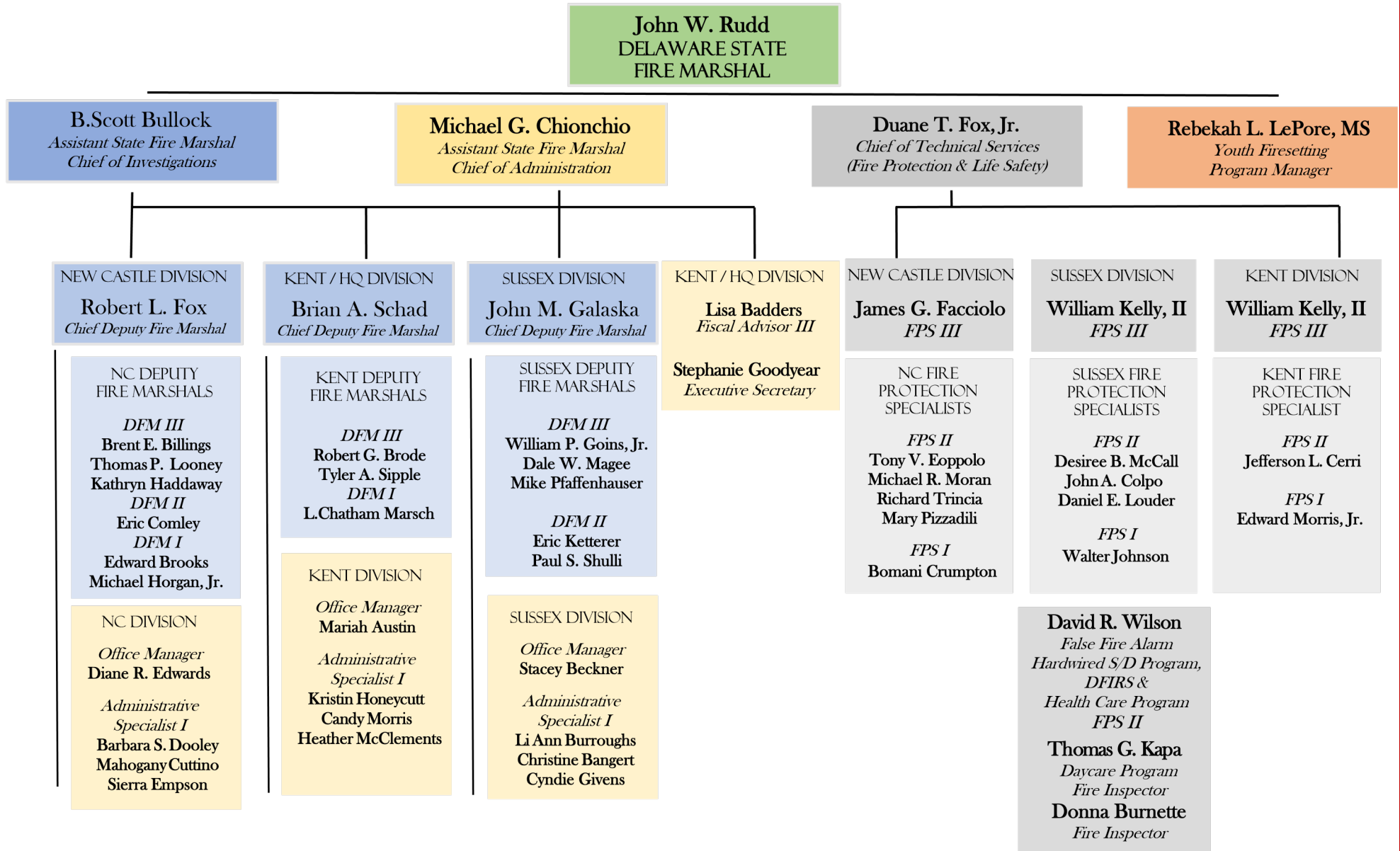
P.S. As autumn and wintertime are just around the corner, we encourage you to check your smoke detectors to make sure they are working properly and to prepare and practice fire escape plans. If you have fuel-fired appliances, we encourage you to install carbon monoxide detectors.

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OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Updated 06/30/2025 Doc # 75-01-25-06-03

NEW STAFF HIRES

Walter Johnson

Fire Protection Specialist I

Walter Johnson began his employment with our office on July 1, 2024, as a Fire Protection Specialist I, assigned to the Sussex County Division.

L. Chatham Marsch

Deputy Fire Marshal I

L. Chatham Marsch began his employment with our office on July 15, 2024, as a Deputy Fire Marshal I, assigned to the Kent County Division.

Sierra Empson

Administrative Specialist

Sierra Empson began her employment with our office on August 26, 2024, as an Administrative Specialist, assigned to the New Castle County Division.

Cyndie Givens

Administrative Specialist

Cyndie Givens began her employment with our office on September 9, 2024, as an Administrative Specialist, assigned to the Sussex County Division.

Edward Morris Jr.

Fire Protection Specialist I

Edward Morris, Jr. began his employment with our office on September 23, 2024, as a Fire Protection Specialist I, assigned to the Kent County Division.

Michael Horgan

Deputy Fire Marshal I

Michael Horgan began his employment with our office on October 7, 2024, as a Deputy Fire Marshal I, assigned to the New Castle County Division.

Bomani Crumpton

Fire Protection Specialist I

Bomani Crumpton began his employment with our office on April 21, 2025, as a Fire Protection Specialist I, assigned to the New Castle County Division.

Donna Burnette

Fire Inspector

Donna Burnette began her employment with our office on June 30, 2025, as a Fire Inspector, assigned to the New Castle County Division.

PROMOTIONS

Mariah Austin

Office Manager

Mariah Austin began her employment with our office on March 28, 2022, as an Administrative Specialist I. On July 15, 2024, Mariah was promoted to Office Manager, assigned to the Kent County Division.

K. Megan Haddaway

Deputy Fire Marshal III

K. Megan Haddaway began her employment with our office on June 22, 2020, as a Deputy Fire Marshal I. On August 1, 2024, Megan was promoted to Deputy Fire Marshal III, assigned to the New Castle County Division.

Mary Pizzadili

Fire Protection Specialist II

Mary Pizzadili began her employment with our office on January 16, 2024, as a Fire Protection Specialist I. On February 27, 2025, Mary was promoted to Fire Protection Specialist II, assigned to the New Castle Division.

Daniel Louder

Fire Protection Specialist II

Daniel Louder began his employment with our office on March 25, 2024, as Fire Protection Specialist I. On April 7, 2025, Dan was promoted to Fire Protection Specialist II, assigned to the Sussex County Division.

Eric Comley

Deputy Fire Marshal III

Eric Comley began his employment with our office on February 28, 2022, as Deputy Fire Marshal I. On May 19, 2025, Eric was promoted to Deputy Fire Marshal III, assigned to the New Castle County Division.

RETIREMENTS

Steven Callaway

Fire Protection Specialist II

Steven Callaway began his employment with our office on January 24, 2005, as a Fire Protection Specialist I assigned to the Sussex County Division. He retired on 02/01/2025.



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION



Highlights of our Employee Recognition Plan include the following:

- Four Awards for Employee Recognition:
 - ❖ *Administrative Employee of the Year*
 - ❖ *Investigations Employee of the Year*
 - ❖ *Technical Services Employee of the Year*
 - ❖ *Distinguished Service Award*
- An election in each division will be held annually in April. Once candidates are selected by peers, endorsement letters for those employees are submitted to FM Rudd for final selection.
- Final award recipients are notified by May 1st and presented with their award at the May Delaware State Fire Prevention Commission Meeting.
- Employee Family Picnic & Alumni Event will be held at Killen's Pond in Kent County annually for all current employees, their families, and former employees.
- Statewide Christmas Luncheon, for all current employees, to be held the first week of December each year.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION



Investigations Employee of the Year:

MICHAEL PFAFFENHAUSER

SUSSEX DIVISION



Fire Protection Employee of the Year:

TONY EOPPOLO

NEW CASTLE DIVISION



Distinguished Service Award:

DESIREE MCCALL

SUSSEX DIVISION



Administrative Employee of the Year:

CANDY MORRIS

KENT DIVISION

General Funds and Special Funds

General Funds (GF) are the primary operating funds for the agency. The State of Delaware designates the amounts received based on the previous year's expenses, inflation, and the Governors' operating budget. Monies awarded but not used in a Fiscal Year are returned to the State and next year's amount may be decreased accordingly.

GF covers:

- Salaries for Deputy Fire Marshals and positions designated as GF (total of 26.5 positions)
 - Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will cover salaries over the designated amount at fiscal year-end.
- Building expenses: Utilities, Security system
- Office supplies, Copiers, Mail service, Business cards
- Deputy Fire Marshal supplies and regular expenses
 - Vehicles, Laptops, Cellphones, Trainings, Desktop Phones, Professional Organization Memberships
- Department of Technology and Information (DTI) Terms of Service
- K9 expenses: food, regular veterinary services, yearly recertification expenses

Special Funds (SF) are allotted from the Revenue the agency generates for the State of Delaware. The amount received is based on the previous year's expenses, inflation, and requested increases showing specific documentation.

SF covers:

- Salaries for Technical Services Division staff, our Youth Firesetter Intervention Coordination Officer, and Administrative positions designated as SF (total of 28.5 positions). There is no contingency for expenses over the allotted monies. If the salaries are greater than allotted, monies must be transferred within SF to cover overages.
- Travel expenses for any trainings or conferences for all employees.
- Copiers for Technical Services Division, Telephones, Cellphones, Vehicles, SWCAP (reimbursing State for benefits for SF positions).
- Any expenses not covered by GF or when GF monies are depleted.
- All Firearms, Ammunition, Safety Gear, etc. for Deputy Fire Marshals.

FY-25 Financial Report (July 1, 2024 thru June 30, 2025)

General Funds

GF Appropriations	Available Funds	Encumbrances	Current Year Expenditures
Personnel (Salaries)	\$2,930,800.00	\$0.00	\$3,148,812.96 ****
Contractual	\$454,600.00	\$0.00	\$454,600.00
Energy	\$62,600.00	\$0.00	\$54,459.69
Supplies	\$23,400.00	\$113.28	23,249.68
General Fund Totals	\$3,471,400.00	\$113.28	\$3,681,122.33

****Avail Funds=DGL060 amt \$2,930,800.00 plus additional \$220,371.00 added by OMB to cover Salaries

Appropriated Special Funds (Revenue Holding Accounts)			
Category	Appropriation	Account	Revenue Received FY24
Amusement	70002	43601	\$1,630.00
Assembly Licensing	70003	43601	\$23,475.00
Inspections	70004	46152	\$251,970.00
Day Care	70007	8614	\$75,712.30
Explosives	70010	44006	\$150.00
Fireworks	70014	43603	\$3,225.00
In-House License	70015	43603	\$0.00
Licensing	70017	43603	\$14,900.00
Occup/Permits/License	70019	44006	\$2,475.00
Systems License	70026	43603	\$21,125.00
Misc. Revenue	70028	4000	\$33,000.00
Plan Review	70108	43604	\$3,975,106.21
ASF Sub Total			\$4,402,768.51
FY 24 Holding Accounts Carry Over			\$18,815,124.71
ASF Grand Total			\$23,217,893.22

ASF Appropriations	Available Funds	Encumbrances	Current Year Expenditures
Personnel (Salaries)	\$1,945,200.00	\$0.00	\$2,055,644.35 ****
Travel	\$34,000.00	\$0.00	\$11,961.36
Contractual	\$366,800.00	\$0.00	\$205,369.09
Supplies	\$81,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,983.70
Capital	\$196,200.00	\$0.00	\$56,059.64
Revenue Refund	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
ASF Spending Totals	\$2,624,700.00	\$0.00	\$2,355,018.14
ASF Spending Grand Total			\$2,355,018.14
FY25 Holding Account Carry Over			\$20,862,875.08

****Transferred \$130,000 from Appropriation 60060 Holding Account to cover Salary deficits

Restricted Non-Appropriated Special Funds

Appropriation	Available Funds	Revenue Rec'd	Encumbrance	Remaining Funds
Cigarette Certification (21002)	\$417,959.02	\$76,250.00	\$25,897.20	\$392,061.82
Detector Fund (20345)	\$4,626.24	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,626.24
NSF Totals	\$422,585.26	\$76,250.00	\$25,897.20	\$396,688.06

Cumulative Revenue generated for the State of Delaware ongoing from FY10 through end of FY25

\$21,259,563.14

Technical Services Plan Review



Technical Services Division staff review plans for compliance with the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations for various project types statewide.

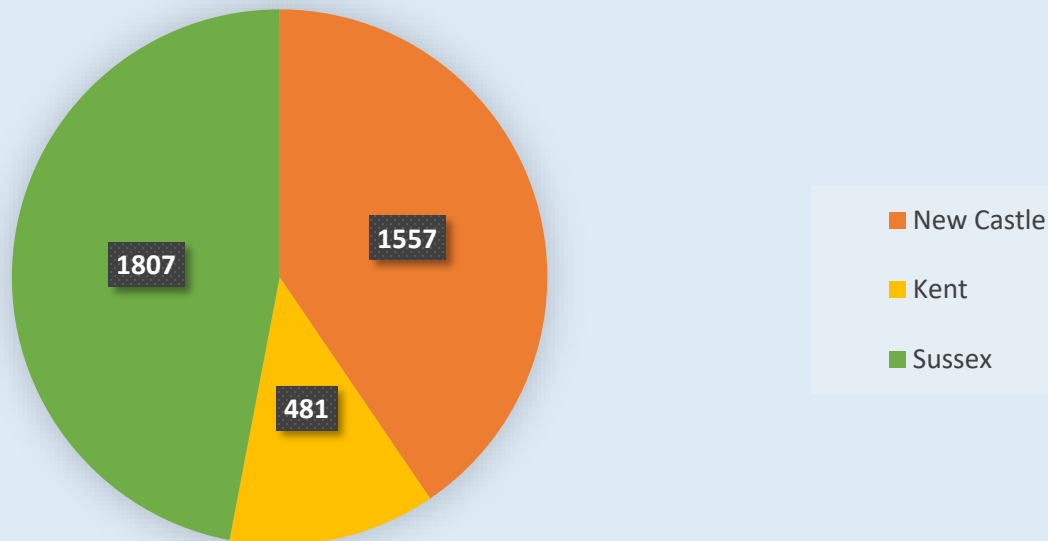
Site & Building Plans: Technical Services staff review Site and Building plans to ensure access for fire, emergency medical, and law enforcement personnel; they review any required fire lanes, fire hydrant locations, fire department connection locations, and in cases where no water for fire protection is available, building setbacks from property lines. Building plans are reviewed for construction type based on occupancy use, means of egress, protection of vertical openings, protection of processes, interior finishes, etc. Some examples of these reviews include:

- Residential subdivisions, including one- and two- family dwellings, duplexes, and townhomes.
- Multi-Residential sites, including apartment buildings, hotels, dormitories, lodging and rooming houses, and residential board and care facilities.
- Educational sites, including public and private schools and any athletic facilities.
- Health Care occupancies, including hospitals, nursing homes, and ambulatory health care facilities.
- Detention and Correctional sites.
- Commercial sites for business and retail use.
- Assembly sites, including Places of Worship, restaurants, and banquet facilities.
- Storage and Industrial sites, including mini-storage, warehouse, and distribution facilities, manufacturing facilities, poultry processing plants, and research and development laboratories.
- Bulk storage tank locations for flammable/combustible liquids and other hazardous materials.
- Sites proposing photovoltaic (solar) ground arrays and other “green” energy types of equipment.

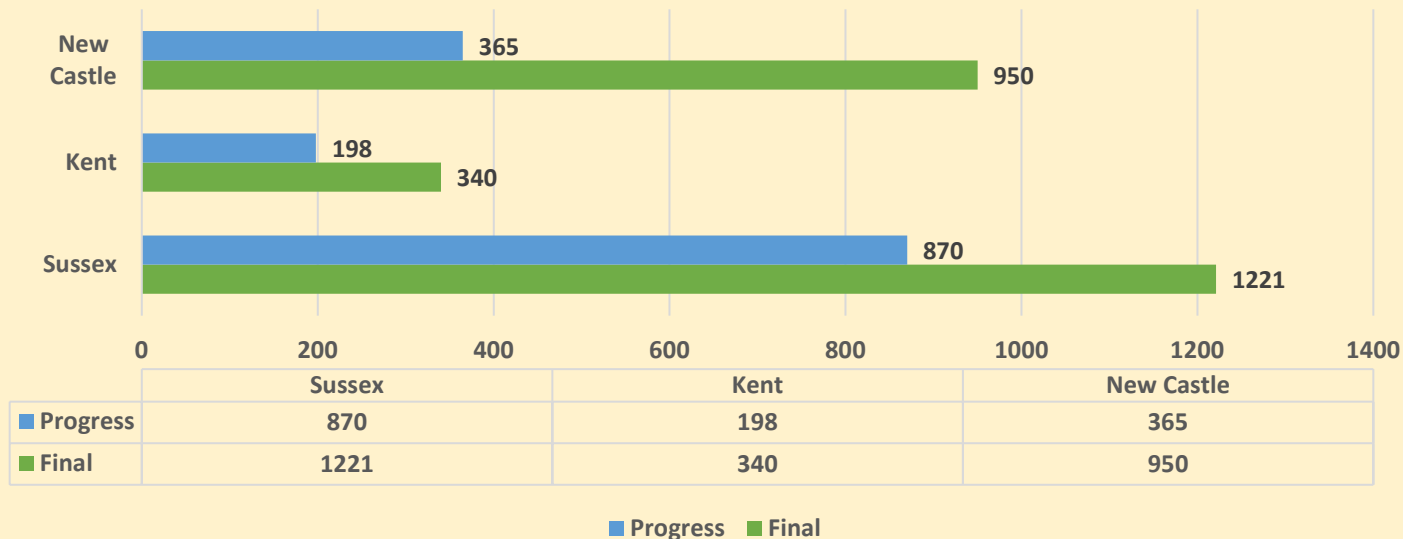
Fire Protection Systems: Technical Services staff review plan submissions for fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, hood and hood fire suppression systems, standpipe systems, clean agent systems, fixed fire suppression systems, fire pump installations, and smoke management systems.

Tank Reviews: Technical Services staff review plans for all above ground, underground, and mounded tanks for the storage of flammable and combustible liquids and any dispensing systems for these tanks. Propane tank installations, including retail propane tank exchange locations, are reviewed. Tanks storing bulk hazardous materials such as hydrogen are also reviewed.

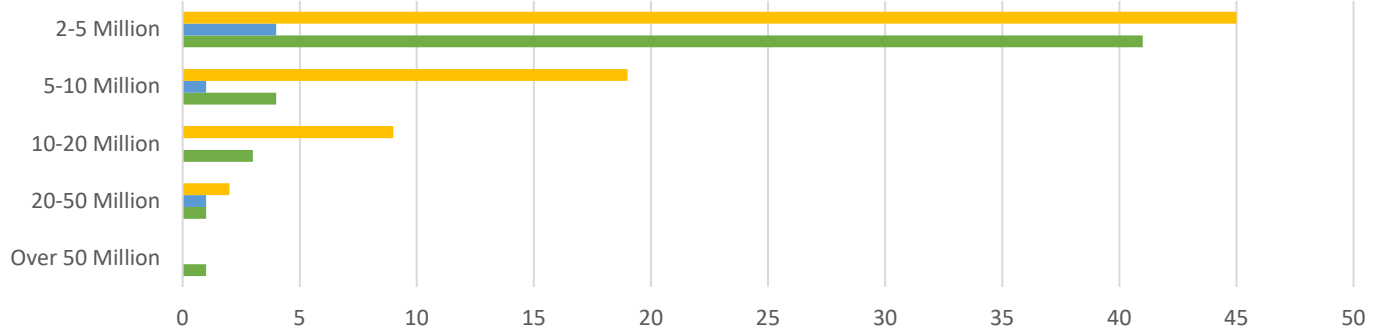
Technical Services Statewide Plan Review Total: 3,845



Technical Services Statewide Inspections Total: 3,944



Project Construction Costs

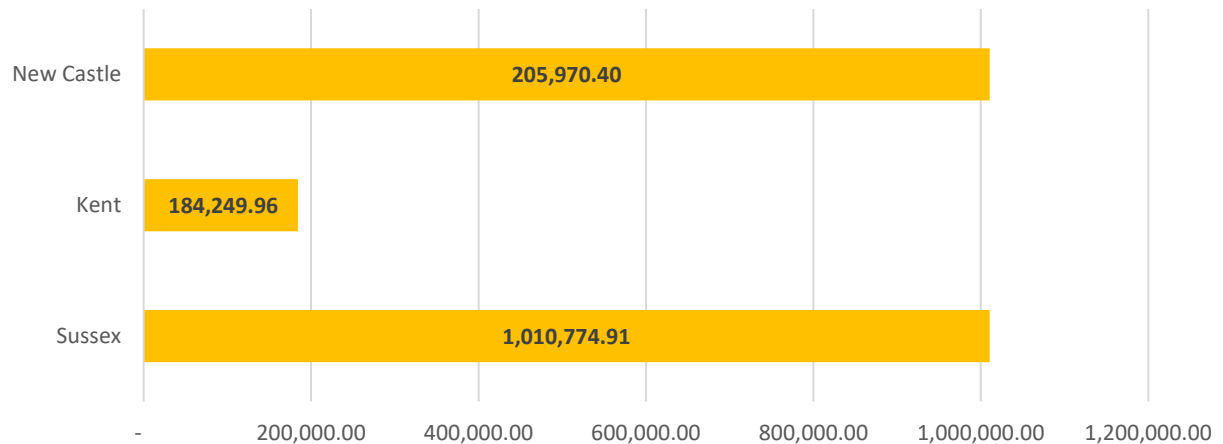


	Over 50 Million	20-50 Million	10-20 Million	5-10 Million	2-5 Million
New Castle	0	2	9	19	45
Kent	0	1	0	1	4
Sussex	1	1	3	4	41

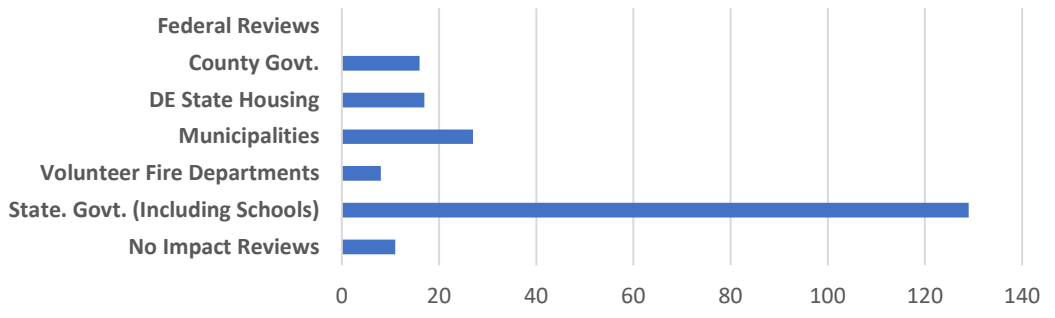
■ New Castle ■ Kent ■ Sussex

Exempt Plan Reviews

(\$1,400,995.27 in Revenue Not Collected)



Exempt Plan Reviews By Client





Technical Services Inspections

Technical Services Division staff conduct inspections to verify compliance with the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations for various project types and occupancies statewide.

Examples of some of these inspections include:

Site Inspections: Technical Services staff inspect sites to ensure that all required access for fire, emergency medical services, and law enforcement personnel complies with the site plan reviewed and approved by staff. All fire lanes, fire department connections, and fire hydrants are inspected to verify that they are installed and properly marked in compliance with the Delaware Fire Prevention Regulations

Construction Inspections: Technical Services staff inspect new buildings, additions, renovations, tenant fit-outs, and occupancy changes to ensure that what is approved on the plan submitted is what was constructed. Depending on the size of the project, several inspections may be performed, including progress inspections, also called rough-in or close-in inspections, which are performed while the building's "skeleton" is still exposed, and final inspections, which verify that the project complies with the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations and permits the owner to pursue a Certificate of Occupancy from the local building code official once Technical Services staff leave their approval sticker on-site.

Fire Protection System Inspections: Technical Services staff conduct final acceptance testing in accordance with nationally recognized codes and standards that are adopted by the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations for all fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, hood and hood fire suppression systems, standpipe systems, clean agent systems, fixed fire suppression systems, fire pump installations, and smoke management systems that have been submitted, reviewed, and approved for installation. Depending on the size and complexity of the system, several of these tests may be required. Construction projects will not receive a final inspection approval sticker unless all fire protection systems pass their acceptance testing.

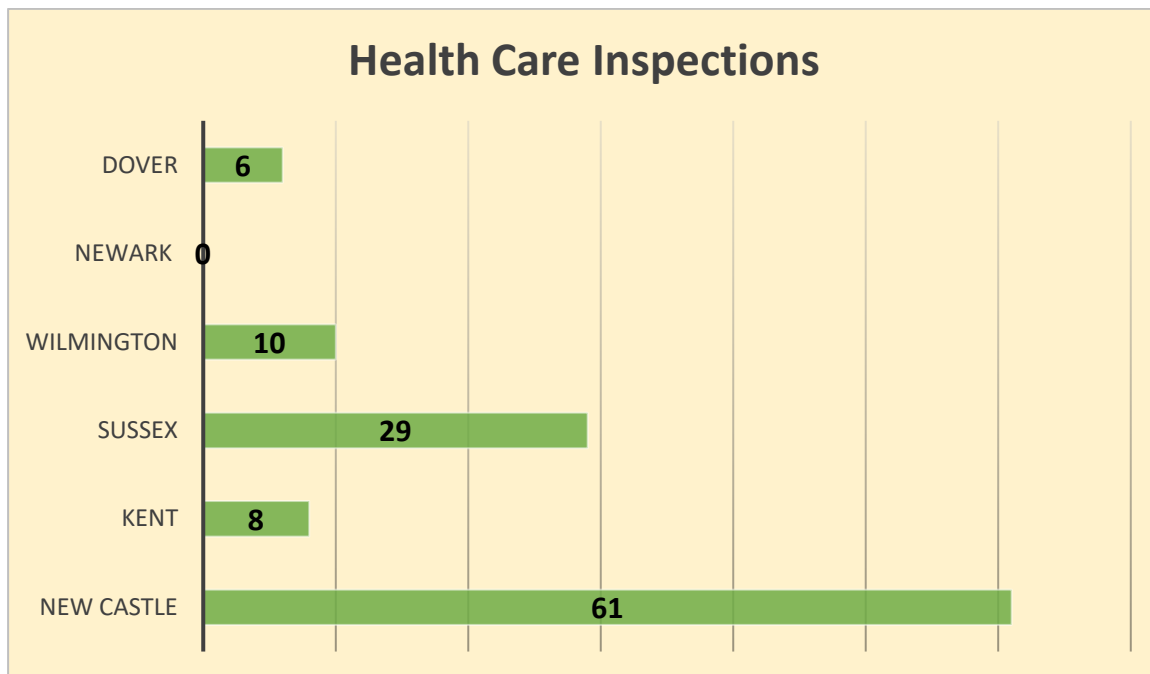
Tank Reviews Inspections: Technical Services staff inspect above ground, underground, and mounded tanks installed for the storage of flammable and combustible liquids and any dispensing devices for these tanks. Tanks storing bulk hazardous materials such as propane and hydrogen are also inspected. Tanks are not permitted to be placed in service until they pass their inspection.

Health Care Inspections

Our Health Care Inspector performs annual inspections and surveys for health care occupancies (including hospitals, nursing homes, and limited care facilities) to verify compliance with the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations.

The Health Care Inspector coordinates with the Department of Health and Social Services in support of their mission to improve the quality of life for Delaware's citizens by protecting vulnerable populations from fire and life safety hazards. These inspections are also a requirement for any health care facility to receive funds from the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Additionally, ambulatory surgery centers are inspected for compliance with the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations in order for the facility to receive an annual license from the Department of Health and Social Services' Office of Health Care Facilities Licensing and Certifications.



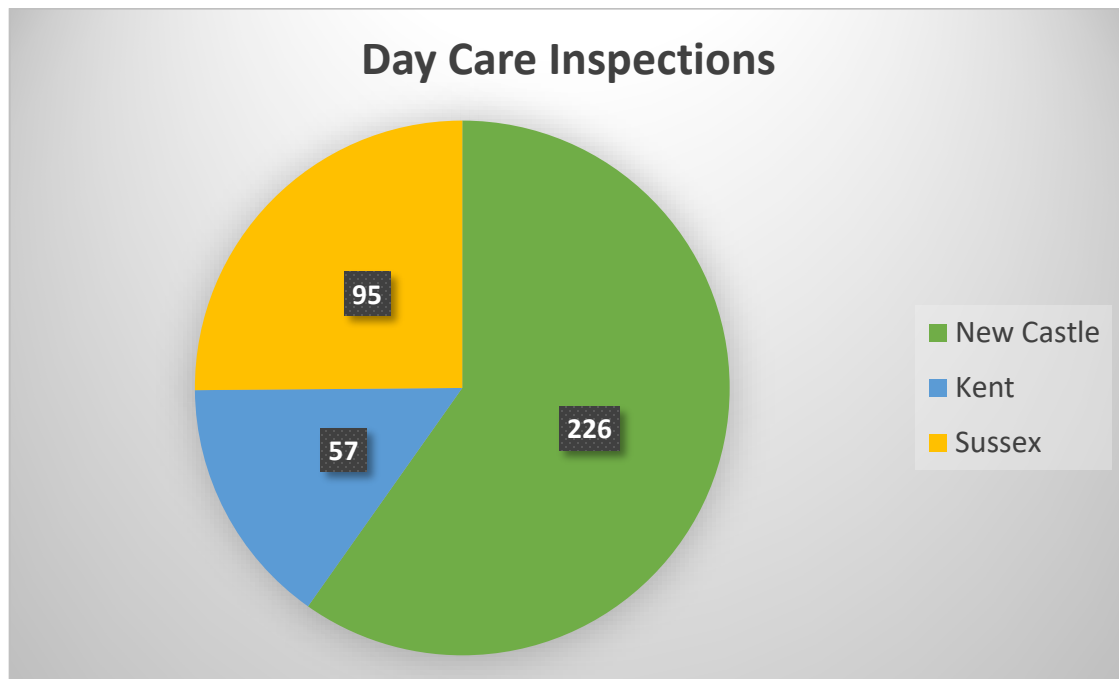
Day Care Inspections

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) conducts fire safety inspections of day care occupancies at the request of the Office of Child Care Licensing. The State Fire Prevention Commission has adopted the National Fire Protection Association's NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, for all occupancies. This code contains specific requirements regarding day care center occupancies.

It is important to know that a day care occupancy is subject to compliance with the "NEW DAY CARE OCCUPANCIES" chapter of NFPA 101, Life Safety Code. Although some code sections may be similar, the enforced edition of the Life Safety Code is based on the DELAWARE STATE FIRE PREVENTION REGULATIONS that were in effect at the time the day care occupancy plan was submitted and approved.

THE OSFM INSPECTION PROCESS

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) conducts day care occupancy inspections at the request of the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL). OCCL requires day care occupancies that were subject to a plan review to receive an OSFM inspection before being permitted to open. Once inspected by the OSFM, day care occupancies are reinspected by the OSFM at the request of OCCL for licensing renewal purposes. The OSFM also responds to fire code complaints received involving day care occupancies.



Additional Tasks

<i>DNREC's Tank Management Section</i>	Represent the Agency on their Advisory Committee.
<i>Office of Child Care Licensing (DSCYF)</i>	Provides technical consultation and advice as needed.
<i>City of Wilmington Fire Marshal's Office</i>	Assist with plan reviews; continued availability in an advisory role as requested.
<i>City of Newark Fire Marshal's Office</i>	Continued availability in an advisory role as requested.
<i>Office of Healthcare Licensing and Certification</i>	Provides technical consultation and advice as needed.
<i>National Fire Protection Association</i>	Agency provides two Alternate Members to various NFPA Technical Committees. Attended Fire Marshal Forum in Quincy, Massachusetts
<i>County & Municipal Technical Advisory Committees</i>	Participates in the advisory process in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties, and several Cities and Towns as requested.
<i>Lower Delaware & Maryland Building Code Officials Association</i>	Represents the Agency; attends regularly scheduled meetings to discuss code enforcement issues in Kent County and Sussex County.
<i>Delaware Building Officials Association</i>	Represents the Agency; attends regularly scheduled meetings to discuss local code enforcement issues in New Castle County.
<i>Delaware Residential Fire Sprinkler Coalition</i>	Staff members attend and participate in scheduled meetings. Participate in "live-burn" demonstrations as needed.
<i>University of Delaware Department of Environmental Health and Safety</i>	Assist in the fire safety training of the University's Resident Assistants.
<i>Preliminary Land Use Service (PLUS) Office of State Planning Coordination</i>	The Office of the State Fire Marshal continues its support of the PLUS program administered through the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC). In FY-25, a representative of the State Fire Marshal has attended and participated in the monthly meetings remotely along with developers of proposed projects and representative of other State agencies.
<i>National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM)</i>	Attended fall meeting with the United States Fire Administration at the National Emergency Training Center, Emmitsburg, Maryland, to review the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) platform and discuss national and statewide implementation.
<i>American Fire Alarm Association (AFAA)</i>	Attend regional meetings and provide input as an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)
<i>American Society of Certified Engineering Technicians (ASCET)</i>	Attend regional meetings and provide input as an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)

Fire Protection Company Licensing & Quality Assurance

The Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations require all companies that design, install, and maintain fire protection systems to be licensed annually by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

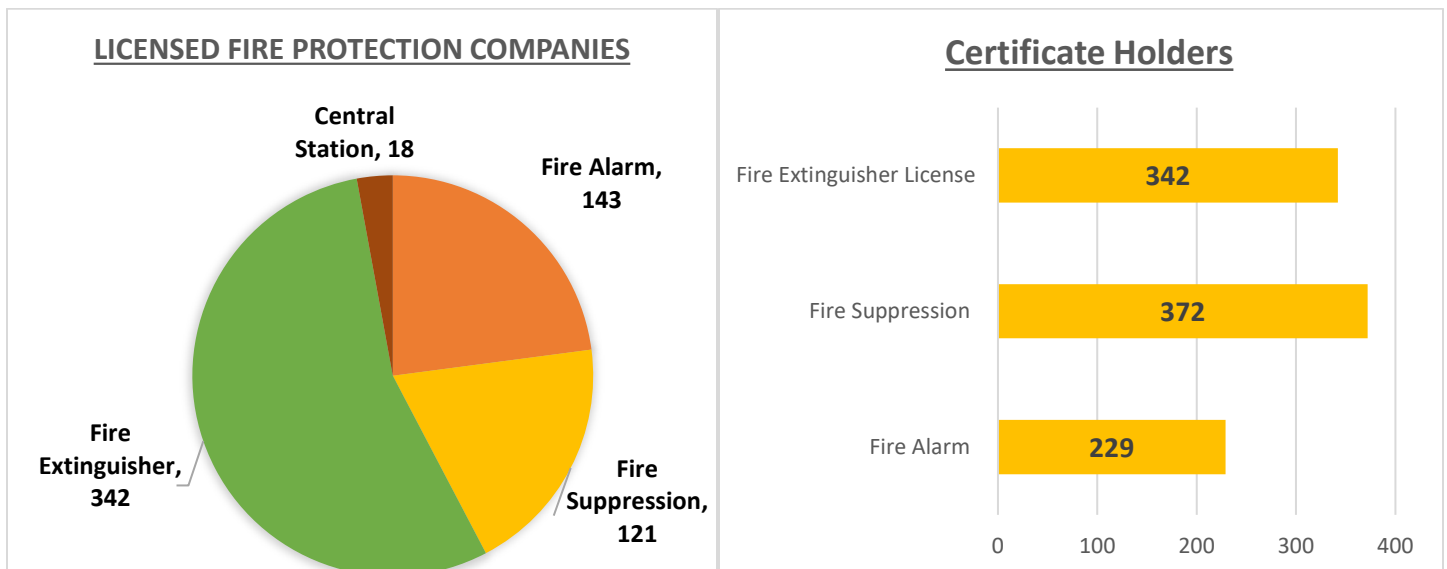
In Fiscal Year 2025, there were **624** Licenses issued to companies providing services to owners of Fire Alarm Signaling systems and/or Fire Suppression Systems. Employed by those companies are Certificate Holders, which the Office of the State Fire Marshal recognizes as the licensed company's party of responsible charge. Additionally, there are **943** persons employed by the licensed Fire Suppression companies that possess the Certificate necessary to conduct the inspection and testing of water-based fire protection systems.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal's dedicated Administrative Staff handles the processing of all licensing paperwork, fees, Certificates of Inspection, and Major Deficiency Reports, in addition to fielding inquiries from licensed contractors and those wishing to obtain a license to design, install, and maintain fire protection systems.

Major Deficiency Reports are sent to the Divisional Office in the County in which the deficiency originated for investigation by Technical Services Division Staff or Deputy Fire Marshals to verify a fire protection system does indeed have a deficiency and corrective action is explained to the owner or the owner's representative.

If the corrective action can be performed while staff is on site, this will be noted in the file and the deficiency will be cleared. If corrective action cannot be performed while staff is on site, then a Notice of Violation (NOV) is written with the deficiency noted and what corrective action must be taken to address the deficiency. If the deficiency is to such a degree that it will take time and funding to address, then a Plan of Corrective Action is provided to the Office of the State Fire Marshal for review and approval.

There are currently over **23,519** fire protection systems in service across the State of Delaware, including fire alarm signaling systems, fire suppression systems, standpipe systems, fire pumps, special hazard systems, and commercial cooking hood suppression systems.



The End of an Era

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) is sunsetting the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) on January 1, 2026, and the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI) has been tasked with developing a replacement incident reporting system. That team started almost two years ago and is busily implementing the new reporting system: the **National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS)**. This new system is a cloud-based database that will bring fire incident reporting into the 21st century. Dynamic real time reporting will provide each fire department with the necessary data at their fingertips. <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfirs/neris/>

NERIS will allow up to three incident types to be selected for any fire, rescue, hazmat, or EMS call. For instance, a motor vehicle accident (MVA) where one of the vehicles is also reported on fire can be detailed in the fire incident report. In the old NFIRS system the user would have to pick MVA or vehicle fire, thus giving an incomplete report. The complexity of NERIS is going to allow fire departments to input valuable and correct information. The fire department will then be able to compile data for a presentation directly from the database. This is a change as the NFIRS program data would have to be requested from the State Fire Marshal's Office. NERIS will also allow EMS runs to be added to the fire incident reporting and will give a true overview of just how busy a department is during a given period. The EMS incident data does not gather personal information about the patient and does not replace the State reporting system. It simply details the type of EMS response and the outcome, like patient transported or patient refusal.

How can the fire department use the data reported to NERIS? The fire department will be able to pull their own data from the system and will be able to focus on a particular venue, neighborhood, or area of the fire district. This information can be used to develop a community risk reduction report to better dispatch fire prevention resources or public service announcements to a given area, as well as fire prevention outreach programs that directly allow information to be disseminated that is pertinent for the area. Fire and EMS can use the data to show just how many times they respond daily, weekly, or monthly to a facility, so that mitigation discussions can perhaps allow the fire service to better serve their community.

As of mid-August, Delaware fire and EMS companies are 100% on board with NERIS and just about half of those have verified their initial fire company demographic information. Fire districts are being verified and dashboards built by the FSRI team. Reporting can be done by direct report to the NERIS database, or a third party records management system (RMS) can be used to export the data. The State of Delaware's E-911 Board has chosen to provide Emergency Networking (EN) as a free records management system (RMS) for all Delaware fire companies. Several fire companies already use other RMS services and will be able to keep those programs if they so choose.

Delaware fire companies will be able to begin reporting on September 1, 2025. Incidents can only be reported in DFIRS or NERIS, and the FSRI team has asked for a clean break point at the beginning of the month. The State Fire Marshal's Office is asking fire companies to start reporting no later than December 1, 2025. By doing so, the data for 2025 will still be retrievable. The State Fire Marshal's Office is currently gathering raw data back to 2000 and will be distributing that data to each fire department in early 2026.

Should anyone have questions about the implementation of the NERIS data collection project, please contact Chief of Technical Services Duane T. Fox, Jr. at the Office of the State Fire Marshal's Headquarters Division.



Accelerant Detection Canine Unit



The Office of the State Fire Marshal Accelerant Detection K9 Team has served the state since 1990. The K9 Unit examines fire scenes throughout the state for the presence of accelerants or ignitable liquids, such as gasoline or lighter fluid, that may be used to start or spread a fire. In 1997, the agency received a grant from State Farm Insurance Company for an Accelerant Detection K9. This same grant was received and utilized for the current K9. The grant provides the K9 and initial training, lodging, and expenses for certification.

The Accelerant Detection K9 Unit has been staffed since May 2022 by K9 PJ, a Yellow Labrador Retriever, and handler Deputy Fire Marshal III Michael Pfaffenhauser. The Team of K9 PJ and handler Deputy Pfaffenhauser are required to recertify each year. The team successfully completed their most recent recertification in July 2025 at Freeport, Maine.

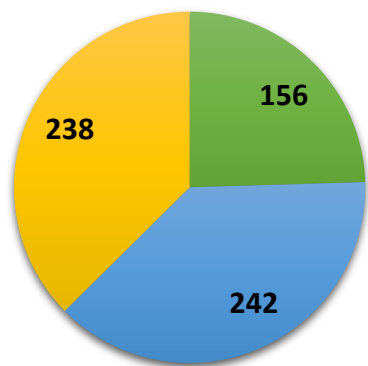
The K9 Team is a food reward team K9, which refers to how the K9 is trained. The K9 is required to make a positive alert coming to a final response on an accelerant to be rewarded with a handful of food. To keep up with food intake, the K9 and trainer follow intensive daily training processes delivered at different times and for random durations involving actual fire scenes, training scenarios, and training aids. This process is repeated until the K9 receives its daily allotment of food, which varies from day to day, and is regulated by the handler. The K9 is a “companion dog” who lives and travels with its' Deputy Fire Marshal handler. A strong team bond is formed between handler and K9 through the intensive training regimen; however, PJ is a faithful friend and companion to all at the State Fire Marshal's Office.

This past year, K9 PJ and Deputy Pfaffenhauser trained over 1,000 separate times. This training represents thousands of trips for K9 PJ to Deputy Pfaffenhauser's hand for food after a positive final response alert. K9 PJ responded to 68 fire scenes this fiscal year and was utilized in his operational capacity 19 times. These operational K9 examinations included major loss fire scenes, personal injury fire scenes, as well as fatal fire scenes. The K9 Team can provide regional assistance to other agencies when needed and this fiscal year assistance was given to the Wilmington Fire Department as well as the City of Dover Fire Marshal's Office.



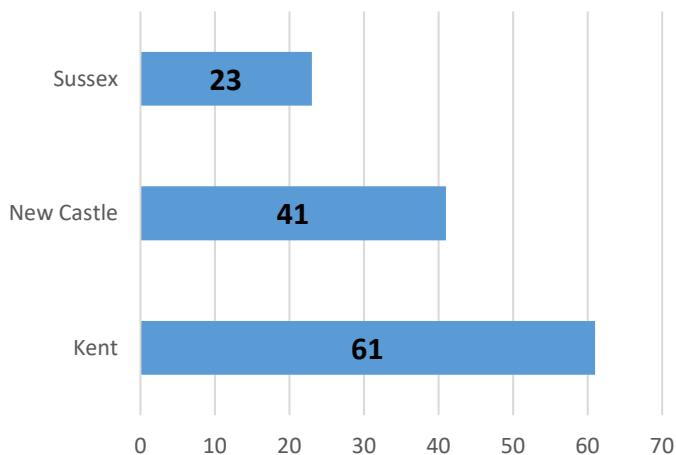
Investigations and Code Enforcement

Fire & Explosion Investigations

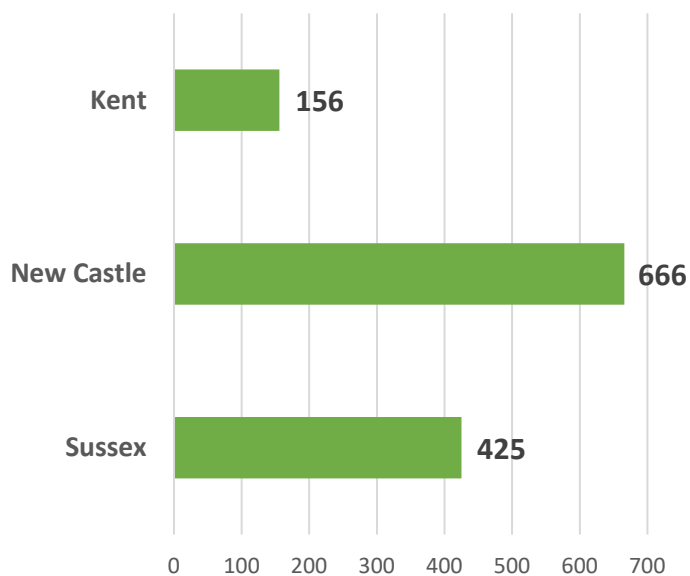


■ Kent ■ New Castle ■ Sussex

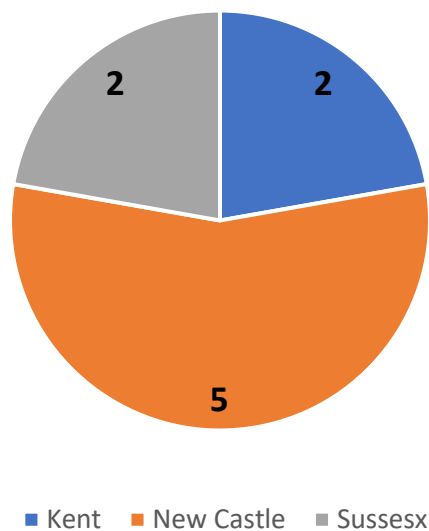
Fire Code & Related Safety Complaints



Inspections



Fire Deaths



■ Kent ■ New Castle ■ Sussex

Accreditations & Renovations

Law Enforcement Accreditation Project

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is seeking a law enforcement accreditation through the Delaware Police Accreditation Commission (DPAC). The project, started in FY 24, is progressing towards the final inspection of the State Fire Marshal's policies and procedures, plus an on-site inspection of the three facilities. This multi-year project will comply with the House Bill 206 requirements due in 2028. <https://post.delaware.gov/dpac/>

The Delaware Police Accreditation Commission (DPAC) is responsible for providing policy level direction and drafting and implementing state level police accreditation standards for matters related to accreditation.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal employs 19 sworn police officers certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST). Officers must complete an accredited police academy and maintain the POST certification throughout their career on an annual basis. Annual mandatory training includes firearms training and qualifications, CPR, First Aid, AED certification, at least 16 hours of continuing education, and additional training mandated by POST. <https://post.delaware.gov/>

Computer Upgrade Project

The Office of the State Fire Marshal has upgraded all desktop computers in all three offices to provide an updated and state-of-the-art platform for every employee. The Dell Precision 3460 machines were programmed and installed by the Department of Technology and Information (DTI). The funds were obtained through the Fiscal Year 24 funding cycle and installed in August 2025. Funding = \$80,000

Facilities Renovations

Headquarters (Dover Office):

HVAC replaced with new heat pumps.

Exterior windows and doors replaced.

Water infiltration study completed.

Sussex Division (Georgetown Office):

New evidence management building construction started.

New Castle Division (New Castle Office):

New generator installed and operational.

HVAC system upgraded.

Police Accountability Committee

The State of Delaware's Police Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST) requires that all police departments in the State of Delaware establish Police Accountability Committees (PAC) to comply with House Bill 206 from the 152nd General Assembly.

Deputy State Fire Marshals are sworn law enforcement officers and therefore our agency must comply with House Bill 206. <https://post.delaware.gov/>

The Office of the State Fire Marshal has entered a joint PAC with the Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (DATE) and Capitol Police.

A list of PAC members can be found here:

<https://post.delaware.gov/pac/index.shtml?dc=pacCom>

Our first PAC meeting was held on July 14, 2025, at DATE Headquarters in Dover. Our next PAC meeting is scheduled for October 2025 and will be held at the Office of the State Fire Marshal's Headquarters.





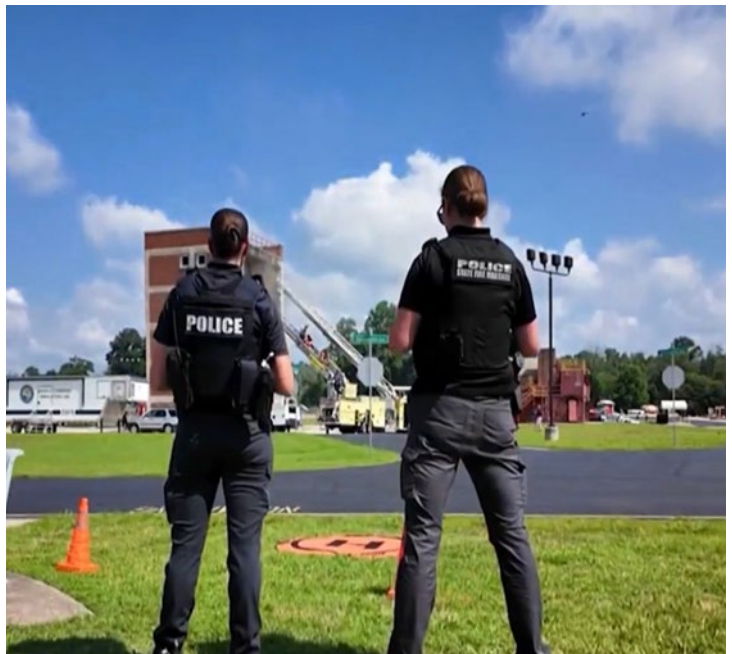
Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV/Drone)

In December of 2024 the agency received delivery of an Autel EVO II Duel 640T V 3 drone. The drone was named AirArson 1. Since then, AirArson 1 has been utilized at 6 fire investigations to document fire scenes.

AirArson1 allows a bird eye view of the fire scene so that Investigators can observe fire patterns that are not visible from the ground. The drone can access areas that are too dangerous or unstable for investigators to reach.

Several training flights have been conducted to include a full day of training with Women Drone Responders.

In total, AirArson 1 has recorded 19 flights and over 2 hours of flight time.



FY 2025 Fire Death Report

Date of Fire: 07/01/2024
Time of Alarm: 1920 Hours
Victim: Female, 8 months
Location: A Street, Wilmington
Fire Department: Wilmington Fire Departments
Type of Incident: Vehicle Fire
Origin: Interior
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Waiting on Medical Examiner
Smoke Detectors: N/A
Fire Suppression: N/A
Year Built: N/A

Date of Fire: 10/16/2024
Time of Alarm: 0320 Hours
Victim: Male, 66 y/o
Location: Crystal Rd, Hartly
Fire Department: Hartly Fire Company
Type of Incident: Detached Garage with Porch
Origin: Porch
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation & Thermal Burns
Smoke Detectors: No
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: Unknown

Date of Fire: 11/05/2024
Time of Alarm: 0225 hours
Victim: Male, 64 y/o
Location: Erickson Ave, Hockessin
Fire Department: Hockessin Fire Company
Type of Incident: Residential Structure Fire
Origin: Living Room
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation & Thermal Burns
Smoke Detectors: No
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: Unknown

Date of Fire: 12/07/2024
Time of Alarm: 0747 hours
Victim: Female, 63 y/o
Location: Westwoods Rd, Millsboro
Fire Department: Gumboro Fire Company
Type of Incident: Residential Structure Fire
Origin: Front Porch
Cause: Improperly Discarded Smoking Material
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation & Thermal Burns
Smoke Detectors: Yes
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: Unknown

FY 2025 Fire Death Report

Date of Fire: 12/11/2024
Time of Alarm: 1920 Hours
Victim: Female, 74 y/o
Location: Crepe Myrtle Dr., Millsboro
Fire Department: Indian River Fire Company
Type of Incident: Townhouse Fire
Origin: Under Investigation
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation & Thermal Burns
Smoke Detectors: No
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: Unknown

Date of Fire: 01/07/2025
Time of Alarm: 1747 Hours
Victim: Female, 15 y/o
Location: Wynsome Blvd., Wyoming
Fire Department: Camden-Wyoming Fire Company
Type of Incident: Residential Townhouse Fire
Origin: Garage
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation
Smoke Detectors: Yes
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: 2016

Date of Fire: 01/16/2025
Time of Alarm: 1238 hours
Victim: Female, 64 y/o
Location: Broadleaf Dr., Newark
Fire Department: Christiana Fire Department
Type of Incident: Single Family Dwelling Fire
Origin: Living Room
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation & Thermal Burns
Smoke Detectors: Yes
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: 1970's

Date of Fire: 02/19/2025
Time of Alarm: 0910 hours
Victim: Female, 61 y/o
Location: Denham Ave., Wilmington
Fire Department: Claymont Fire Department
Type of Incident: Middle Row Residential Townhome Fire
Origin: Outside Rear Porch
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation & Thermal Burns
Smoke Detectors: No
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: 1940's

FY 2025 Fire Death Report

Date of Fire: 03/07/2025
Time of Alarm: 1320 hours
Victim: Female, 57 y/o
Location: Ridgeland Rd., Wilmington
Fire Department: Brandywine Hundred Fire Co. No. 1
Type of Incident: Single Family Dwelling Fire
Origin: Living Room
Cause: Under Investigation
Cause of Death: Smoke Inhalation
Smoke Detectors: No
Fire Suppression: No
Year Built: Not Available

Total FY 2025 Fire Deaths

9

Smoke Detectors	
With Smoke Detectors:	3
Without Smoke Detectors:	5
N/A	1
Fire Suppression Systems	
With Fire Suppression:	0
Without Fire Suppression:	8
N/A	1



Youth Firesetting Prevention & Intervention Program

Rebekah L. LePore, MS

Senior Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Coordinator

The Youth Firesetting Prevention & Intervention Program (YFPIP) was initiated in 1981. In those 43 years, **6,181 youths** have been interviewed, and a 3% recidivism rate has been consistently maintained. Youths are referred to the program through a variety of agencies including Child Mental Health, Division of Family Services, Youth Rehabilitative Services, Schools, and Fire Departments. Most of those referrals originated from either parents/guardians or through State or local Fire Marshal's Offices.

The YFPIP also represents the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) with public relations at community events.

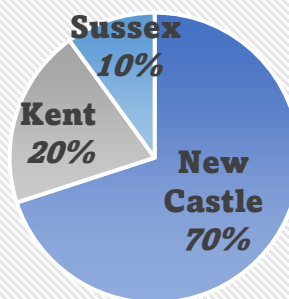
This year, the program participated in **27 events** throughout the State of Delaware. If you would like for us to attend or present at your event, please complete the [Display Presentation Request Form](#) available on our website at least two weeks prior to the event. <https://statefiremarshal.delaware.gov/special-programs/public-relations/>

Youths between the ages of 3-18, may be referred to the YFPIP by calling our toll free number at **1-800-432-8500** or by utilizing the [Referral Form](#) which can be accessed on our website <https://statefiremarshal.delaware.gov/special-programs/juvenile-firesetter-intervention-program/>

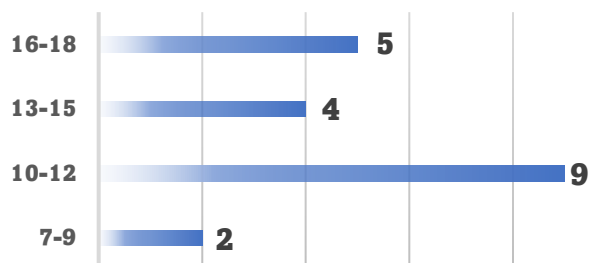
EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

- ❖ *Consequences of Misusing Fire*
- ❖ *Hurting Themselves & Others*
- ❖ *A High Price to Pay (Legal/Financial/Careers)*
- ❖ *Media Influence*
- ❖ *Media Portrayal of Fire vs. Reality*
- ❖ *Good/Poor Choices*
- ❖ *Peer Pressure*
- ❖ *Burns & Burn Treatment*

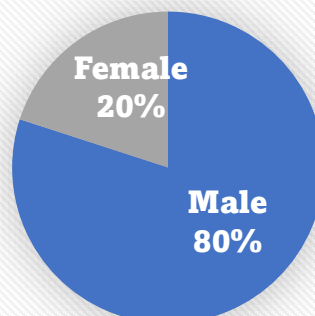
Clients By County



CLIENTS BY AGE GROUP



Clients By Gender



False Fire Alarms

Effective January 1, 2004, an amendment to the Delaware Code (Title 16 §6637) introduced an initiative intended to reduce the frequency of false fire alarms in the State of Delaware. It is intended to deter excessive number of fire alarms that have been determined to be a result of poor detector maintenance or lack of required fire alarm servicing.

In FY25 there were over **222 False Fire Alarms** reported.

	New Castle	Kent	Sussex	Statewide
Total Alarm Activations (# of Warnings Issued)	51	96	75	222
Fines Issued:	0	0	0	0
Amount Collected	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

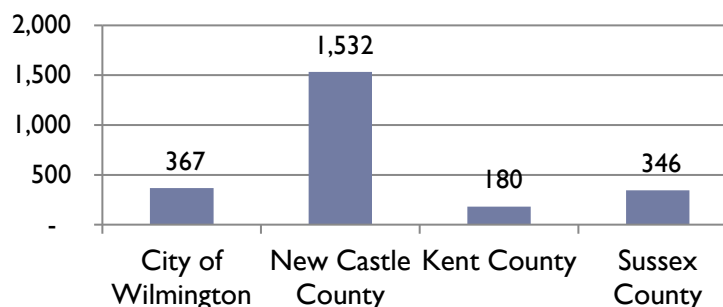
OPERATION “SAFETY” – HARDWIRED SMOKE DETECTORS

The State Fire Marshal acknowledges that Smoke Detectors save lives.

The objective of Operation “Safety” is to ensure the installation of hardwired smoke detectors in every private residence in the State of Delaware by assisting citizens in homes where handicapped children, handicapped adults, infirm residents and residents 62 years of age and older reside.

To date, the program has been responsible for the installation of 2,425 detectors in 906 homes.

HWSD Program Totals to Date



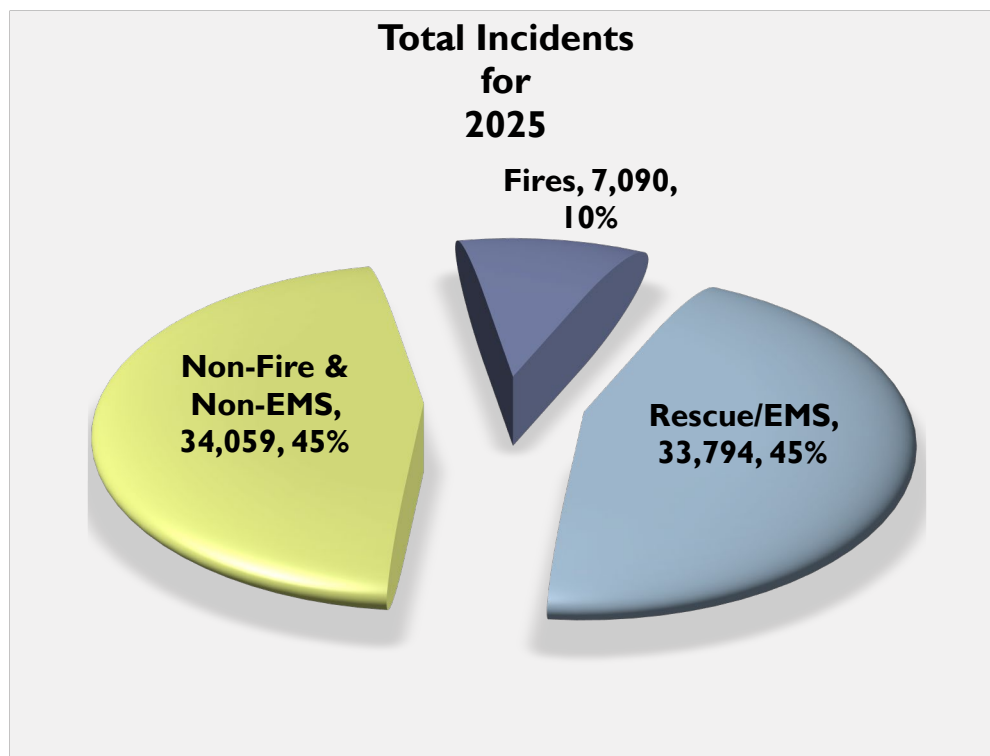
Delaware Fire Incident Reporting System (DFIRS)

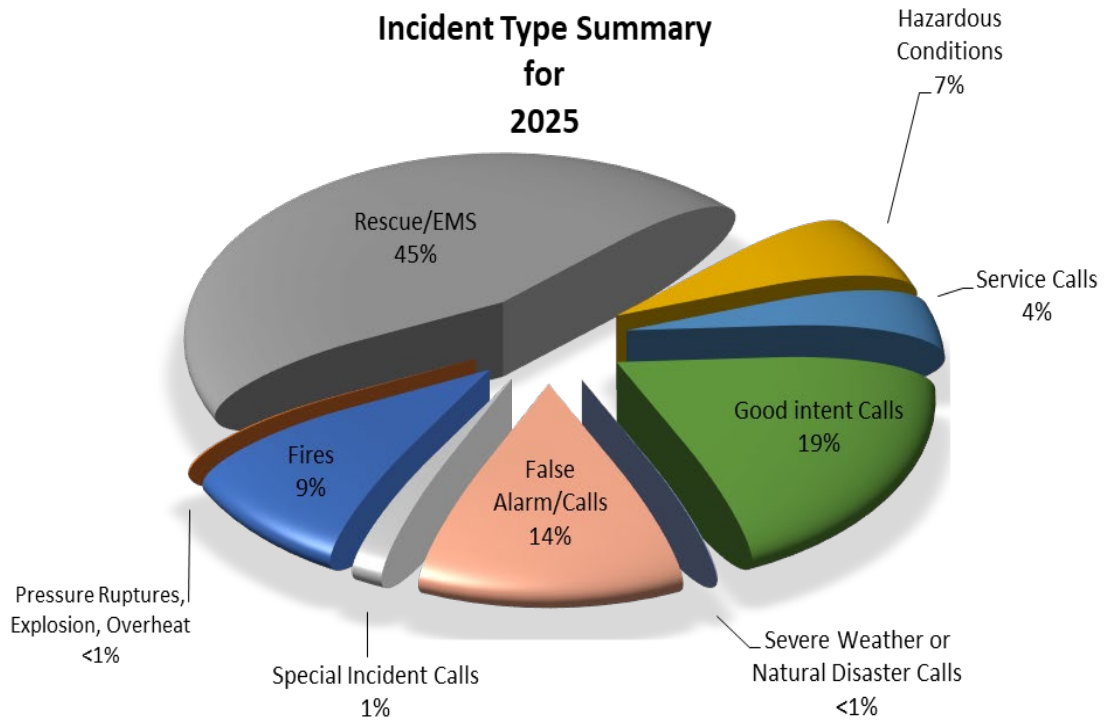
Keeping Delaware Safe – Fighting Fire with Facts

DFIRS is Delaware's segment of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), a reporting system that captures the full range of incident activity. It constitutes the world's largest national collection of fire incident information. The Office of the State Fire Marshal oversees the consolidation and technical review of the collected data from all 61 Delaware fire departments.

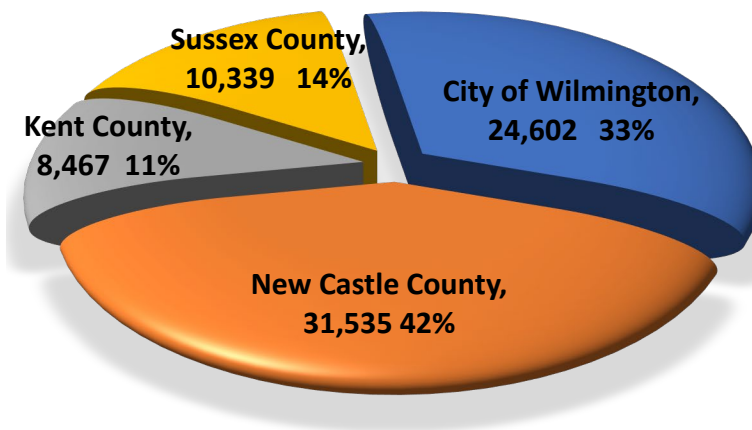
In 2024, **74,943** incidents were reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal. There were 13,052 incidents in which a fire department provided assistance (mutual or automatic aid given) to another jurisdiction.

The makeup of the types of incidents that fire departments reported in 2025 showed an increase by 4 percent from the previous year. The following charts provide an overview of the current characteristics in Delaware:



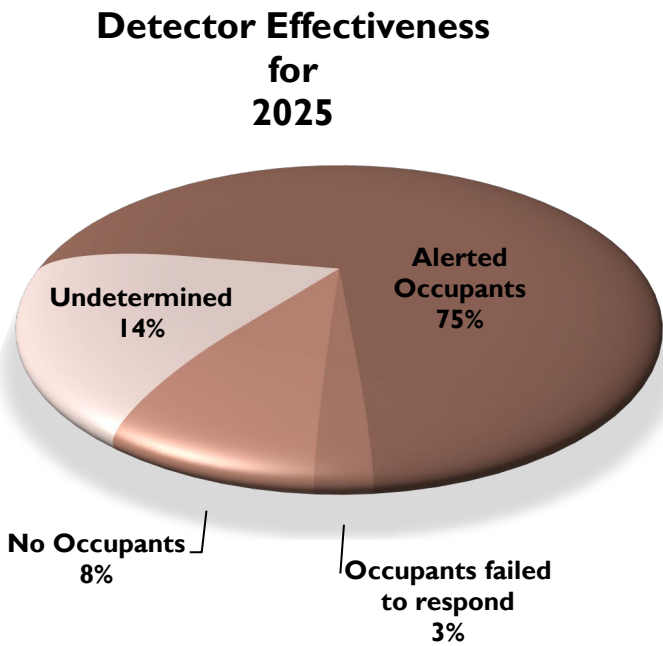
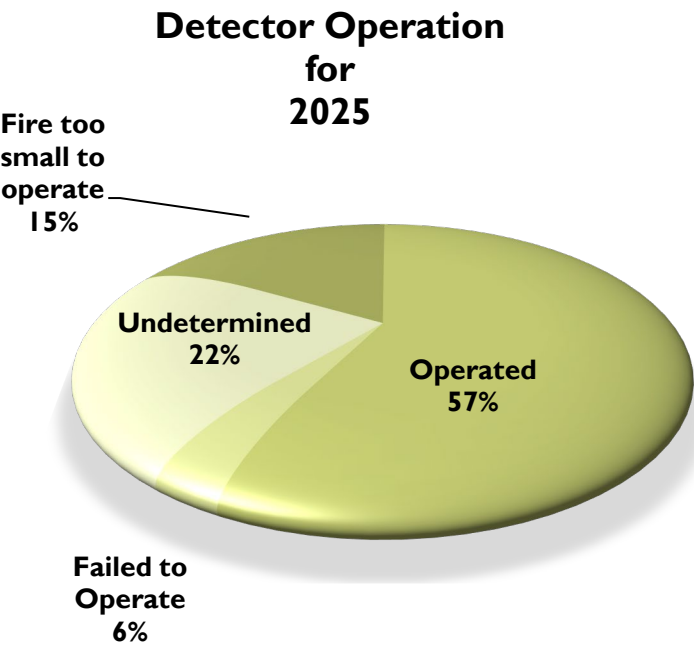


Incidents by County and City of Wilmington for 2025

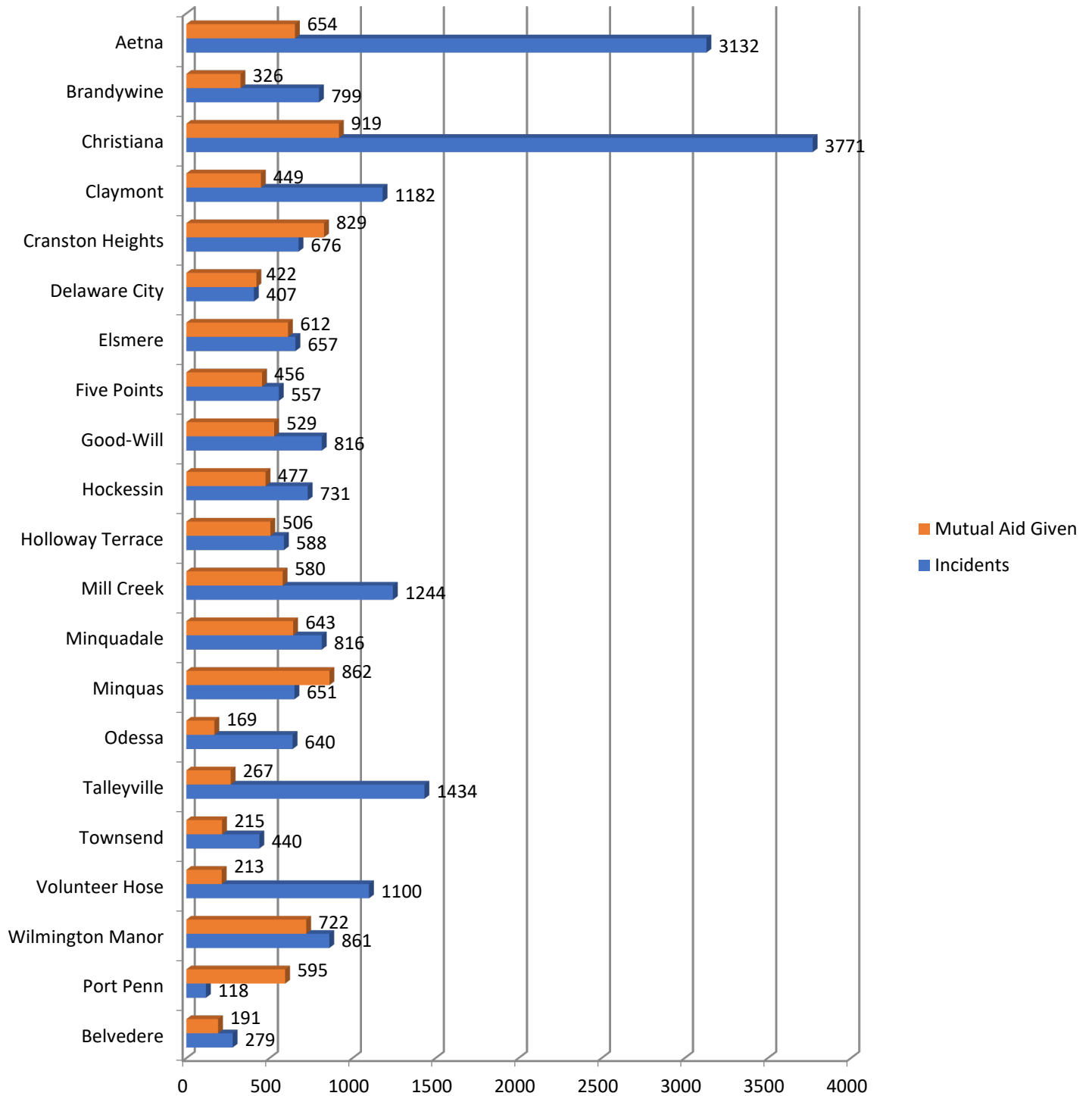


Based on NFIRS data only.

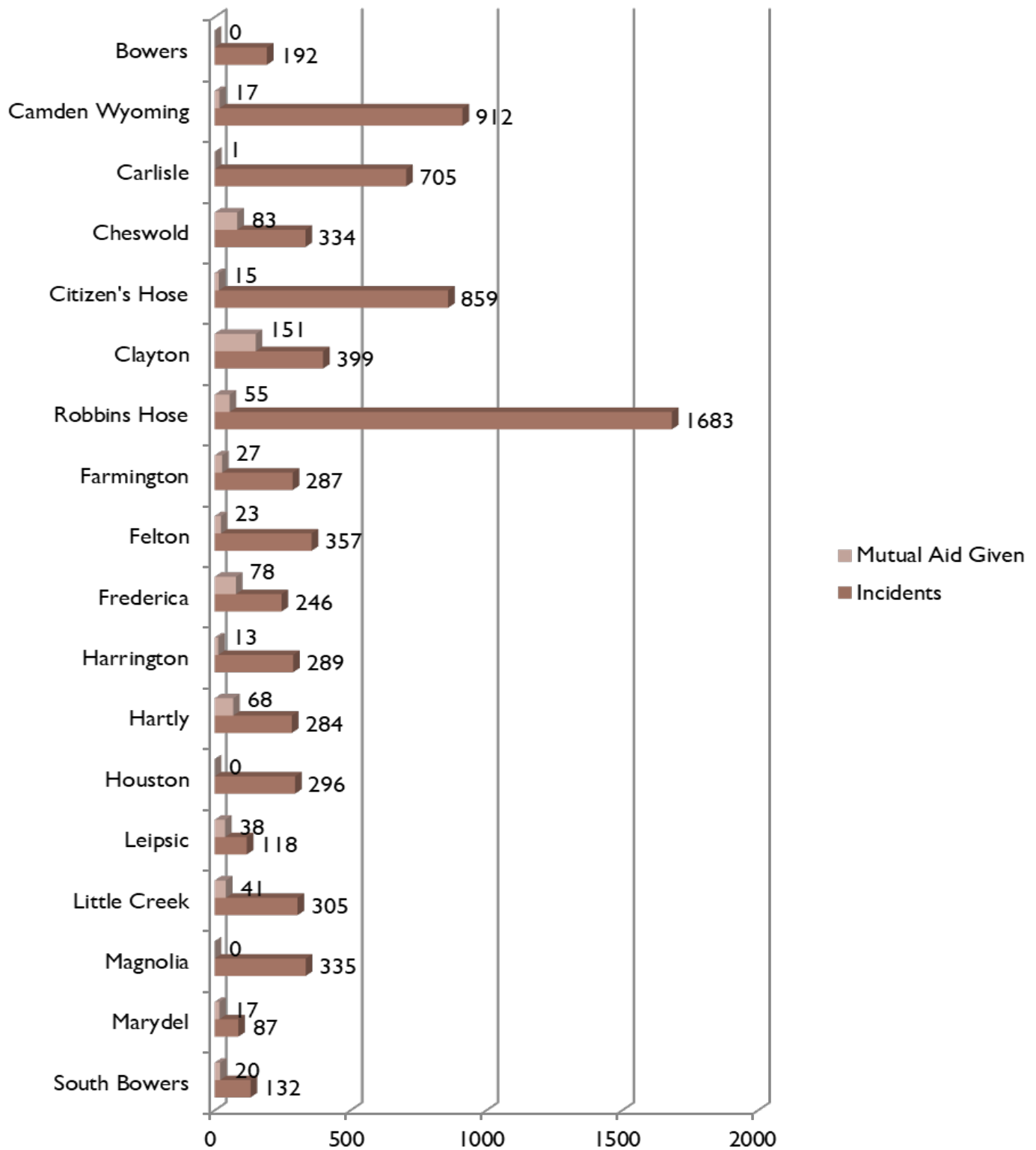
The data in these tables identify the operating principle of detectors present in the area of origin or in near proximity to the area of origin:



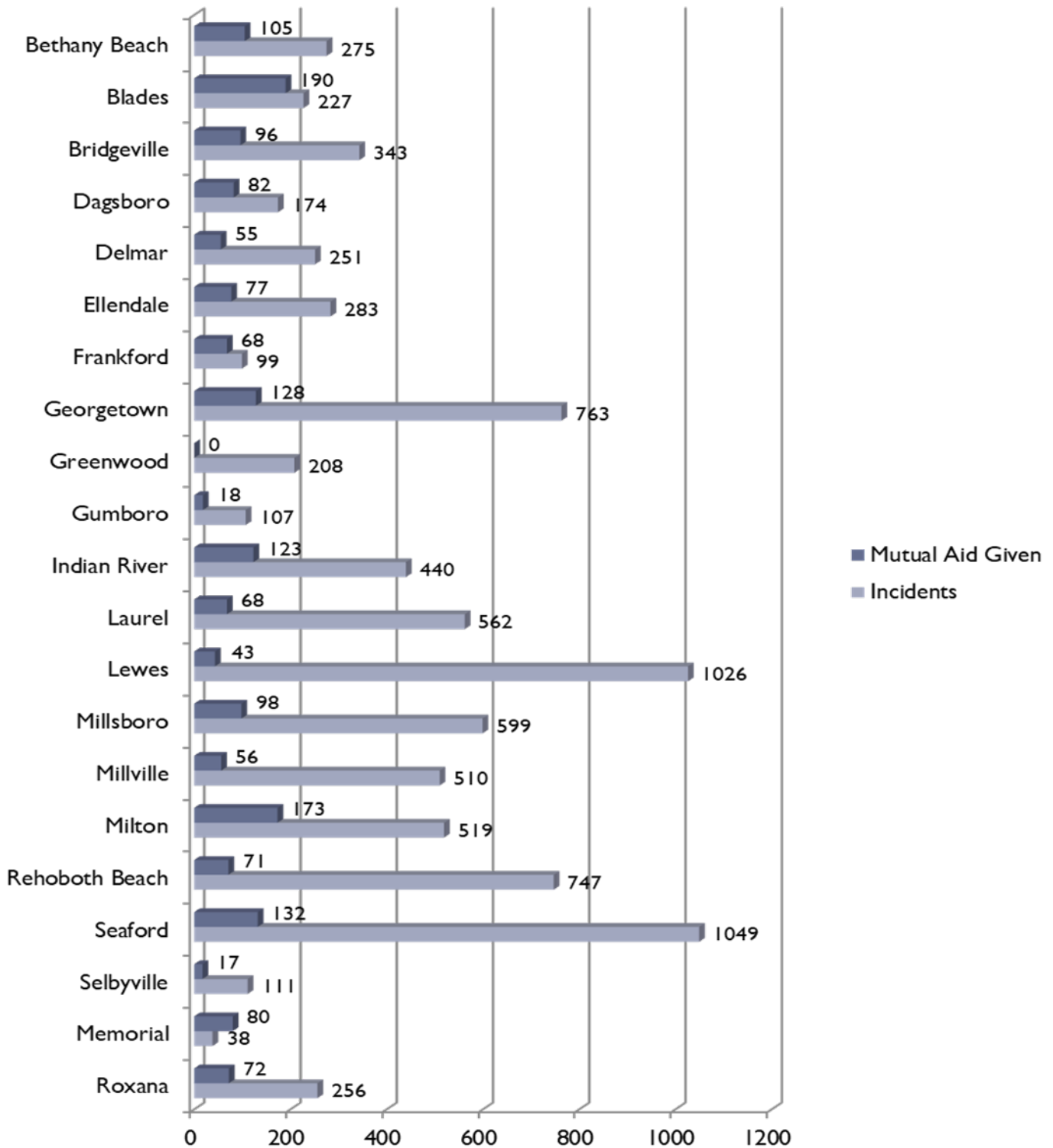
**New Castle County Incidents
(excluding City of Wilmington)
For 2025**

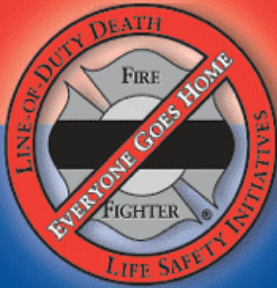


Kent County Incidents for 2025



Sussex County Incidents for 2025





NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION'S EVERYONE GOES HOME® PROGRAM

16 FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVES

1. Define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.
2. Enhance the personal and organizational accountability for health and safety throughout the fire service.
3. Focus greater attention on the integration of risk management with incident management at all levels, including strategic, tactical, and planning responsibilities.
4. All firefighters must be empowered to stop unsafe practices.
5. Develop and implement national standards for training, qualifications, and certification (including regular recertification) that are equally applicable to all firefighters based on the duties they are expected to perform.
6. Develop and implement national medical and physical fitness standards that are equally applicable to all firefighters, based on the duties they are expected to perform.
7. Create a national research agenda and data collection system that relates to the initiatives.
8. Utilize available technology wherever it can produce higher levels of health and safety.
9. Thoroughly investigate all firefighter fatalities, injuries, and near misses.
10. Grant programs should support the implementation of safe practices and/or mandate safe practices as an eligibility requirement.
11. National standards for emergency response policies and procedures should be developed and championed.
12. National protocols for response to violent incidents should be developed and championed.
13. Firefighters and their families must have access to counseling and psychological support.
14. Public education must receive more resources and be championed as a critical fire and life safety program.
15. Advocacy must be strengthened for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers.
16. Safety must be a primary consideration in the design of apparatus and equipment.



The Everyone Goes Home® program is made possible through the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation with funding provided by the Department of Homeland Security, Assistance to Firefighters Grant and the generosity of Fireman's Fund Insurance Company.



LEARN MORE: www.everyonegoeshome.com

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL



Headquarters Division

1537 Chestnut Grove Rd
Dover, DE 19904

New Castle Division

2307 MacArthur Rd
New Castle, DE 19720



Sussex Division

22705 Park Avenue
Georgetown, DE 19947



statefiremarshal.delaware.gov

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