



Hot Flashes

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Published for the Residents of the Signal Hill Fire Protection District

2008 Emergency Responses Lowest in 15 Years

The Signal Hill Fire Department responded to 117 requests of emergency assistance in 2008. This is the lowest number of responses since 1993, when 101 calls were answered. By comparison, the Department has averaged 165.2 responses per year for the last twenty years.

What is the basis for such a significant reduction? Are Fire District residents being more fire conscious or is this an anomaly?

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Jennifer Anderson - 2008 Firefighter of the Year page # 3

Where Does My Fire Protection Come From?

You may have seen the movies *Backdraft* or *Ladder 49* or *The Towering Inferno*. Maybe you have watched an episode of *Rescue Me* or *Third Watch*. Perhaps some of you are old enough to remember the 1970's television series *Emergency* or even recall the black and white television show from the 1950's *Rescue 8*.

Most images on television, in the movies, or in books or magazines are those of career or paid firefighters. They work, eat and sleep at the fire station. The bells ring, they slide down the pole and off they go to the emergency.

Just like the fire triangle, quality fire protection consists of three interactive components.



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Emergency - Dial 9-1-1

Remain Calm. Give location, name and type of emergency clearly.



Always let the telecommunicator hang up first.

Non-Emergency.....277-3500
Administrative.....397-1995

Do You Have a Burning Question?

One of the most frequent questions that is fielded at the Fire Department is, “Can I burn my _____?”

As a reminder, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) regulations prohibit the burning of anything except landscape waste. This includes commercial waste, garbage (food scraps, food packaging, and diapers), construction/demolition debris, tires and materials containing asbestos.

IEPA does allow the burning of landscape waste. Landscape waste is defined as leaves, grass, tree limbs, shrubbery cuttings, and other materials accumulated as the result of the care of lawns, shrubbery, vines, and trees.

The landscape waste must have been generated on-site. Burning should only occur during daylight hours. While landscape waste burning is permitted, residents are cautioned that open burning of landscape waste is dangerous. Keep a charged garden hose handy. Never burn on windy days or leave fire unattended.

Composting, mulching or collection of landscape waste thus creates a much healthier environment and makes our neighborhoods a much safer place in which to reside.

NOTICE: Should the Fire Department respond to any incident involving the burning of prohibited waste, a report is subsequently filed with either the St. Clair County Sheriff’s Department, County Health Department and/or IEPA.



“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation’s compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another.” **Erma Bombeck**

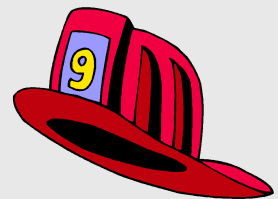
The Signal Hill Fire Department Welcomes Our Newest Members

Active Members: Lee Boswell, Brice Boswell & Nathan Wheeler

Associate Member: Lori Boswell

Your name goes here!

Improving the Quality of Life in Our Community 24/7—365 Days a Year



Firefighter of the Year

Firefighter Jennifer E. Anderson has been recognized as the 2008 Firefighter of the Year. Jennifer received this recognition because of her dedication and commitment to the Fire Department, her fellow firefighters, and her community.

Jennifer has earned a B.S. degree in Occupational Safety & Health and is the Safety and Telecommunications Manager at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Jennifer holds numerous fire-related certifications: Firefighter II & III, Technical Rescue Awareness, EMS Operations & Planning, Emergency Vehicle Driver Training Program, Rope Rescue Operations, Hazardous Materials First Responder, Hazardous Materials Technician A, Hazardous Materials Specialist, and National Incident Management System. She assists with the Fire Department's Training/Education, Health & Safety and Standard Operating Procedures committees.

In addition to her duties at Signal Hill, Jennifer also volunteers with St. Clair County Special Emergency Services Association, which provides hazardous materials and technical rescue services in southwestern Illinois.

Jennifer enjoys running and has completed several half-marathons.



Congratulations to Jennifer E. Anderson - 2008 Firefighter of the Year!

Four firefighters earned their Firefighter II, Fire Service Vehicle Operator, and Hazardous Materials & Technical Rescue Awareness Certifications from the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal in 2008. Congratulations to Firefighters Michelle Hudson, Darrell Papproth, Walter Sonnenberg, and Matt Strayhorn.

Firefighters Jennifer Anderson and Ben Conrath earned their Firefighter III certifications. In addition, Firefighter Anderson completed Rope Operations and Hazardous Materials Technician "A" courses through the National Fire Academy.

All firefighters completed an 8-hour classroom course in Emergency Vehicle Operations followed by a driver's skill course.



On March 14th, members were recognized for their service at the Fire Department's Annual Appreciation Dinner. ***Thanks! Your commitment and service are very much appreciated!***



Volunteer Firefighter Mark Bagby
Volunteer Firefighter Michelle Hudson
Volunteer Firefighter Sean Hudson
Volunteer Firefighter Joshua Jacobs
Volunteer Firefighter Walter Sonnenberg
Volunteer Firefighter Matthew Strayhorn
Associate Lisa Sanford

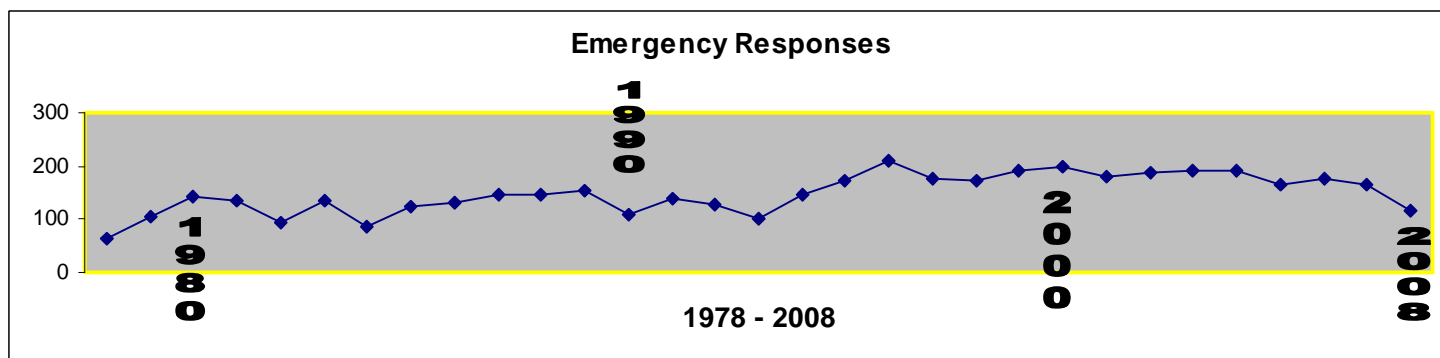
10 Year -- Associate Pat Keefe

15 Year -- Dr. Chris Dugan
David Guymon

2008 Emergency Responses Lowest in 15 Years

The Signal Hill Fire Department is committed to the ultimate goal of *not having to respond* to fires or other emergencies. One of the means that is used to reduce or eliminate the frequency of fires and other emergency responses is to gain a better understanding of the cause and effect of incidents through the collection and analysis of data. Once a causal trend is identified, public awareness and education is utilized to inform our community partners (you) about the actions you can take to help decrease or eliminate fire.

One of the problematic issues associated with determining causal trends is that no empirical data exists on the number of fires that have not occurred — because of citizens heeding fire prevention tips or emergency preparedness. In addition, there are a variety of “extraneous” factors that enter into the emergency response call volume equation. Climate, economics, demographics and other dynamics all impact the incidences of fire and call volume.



The graph illustrates Signal Hill call volume for the last 31 years. The range is from a low of 64 runs in 1978 to a high of 211 runs in 1996. Are there trends that can be identified from this data?

It is widely accepted within the fire service community that when citizens take note of “pre-incident” information, lives can be saved and property damage reduced. Over the next several months, the Fire Department will attempt to correlate the run data for the cause & effect. If trends are identified that can reduce call volume, they will be highlighted in future issues of *Hot Flashes*, along with prevention strategies.

Thanks for helping to make 2008 a very safe year!



November 5th - The rear porch was being used as an outside smoking area. The home's occupant had been smoking in a plastic lawn chair and discarded a cigarette in a small bucket next to the chair. Unfortunately, the cigarette butt was not fully extinguished.

Because it was a windy day, the butt ignited dry leaves that had accumulated at the base of the chair. The leaves ignited the plastic lawn chair and the fire traveled upward and to the overhang of the home. The fire was quickly extinguished.

Always make sure that cigarettes and cigars are fully extinguished before discarding.

Where Does My Fire Protection Come From?

As the saying goes, “Don’t believe everything you see in the movies or on television.” The reality is, across the United States, nearly 75% of the estimated 30,000 fire departments are staffed by dedicated and committed citizens serving as volunteer firefighters. Volunteer firefighters are community-minded citizens, just like you, who set aside a few hours per week to train and respond to emergency calls. They serve to protect others and to improve the quality of life in their community.

Think of this just like the fire triangle: fuel + heat + oxygen = **FIRE**. If you take one element out of the equation, the **FIRE** goes out.

Quality fire protection also has three essential ingredients to its equation. Those three components are Fire Protection District + Fire Department + Community = Fire Protection. However, remove one element from the Fire Protection Triangle and the **FIRE** will grow **BIGGER**. Neighbors could lose their property or home, someone could get burned, or someone you know could lose their life.

Let’s look at the responsibilities of each leg of our Fire Protection Triangle.

The **Signal Hill Fire Protection District** is a unit of local government. Its governing body consists of three citizens serving as District trustees. The District employs a career administrator/fire chief along with legal counsel and a certified public accountant serving as the treasurer. This body oversees the tax dollars that are collected for fire protection services.

The **Signal Hill Fire Department** is the human resource and operations component of the fire protection triangle. The Fire Department, under contract, owns and operates the fire apparatus, the firehouse and grounds, and supervises and manages the volunteer firefighters and associate members. The Fire Department is responsible for answering emergency calls, firefighter education and training, and maintaining apparatus and equipment.

The **Community** is the base of the Fire Protection Triangle and the most important element. There are two things that the **Community** has a responsibility for:

- The first thing is being proactive with fire safety by:

Practicing proven fire prevention measures and developing fire safety habits.

Installing and maintaining smoke detectors & carbon monoxide alarms.

Having your fire alarm system checked and serviced annually.

Maintaining your home and property in a fire safe manner.

Remembering that Fire Prevention is more cost effective than Fire Suppression.

- The second thing, and by far the *greatest responsibility* for the **Community** is to *volunteer*. Yes, that’s right, *volunteer!*

Ask yourself, “What am I doing that is more important than learning how to save lives and property?” or “Could I live with the fact that my neighbor’s house was damaged, or they were injured or killed and all I could do was just watch?” or “Isn’t it too bad that someone didn’t teach that little child about *stop, drop and roll?*”

Help keep our community’s Fire Protection Triangle strong by volunteering at the Signal Hill Fire Department. We offer many benefits besides the gratification you will receive from helping others.

No matter how big and powerful government gets, and the many services it provides, it can never take the place of volunteers. --Ronald Reagan



December 17th - Firefighters were faced with two challenges - extinguishing the fire and the deplorable living conditions shown in the photos. The fire was caused by the occupant's careless use of smoking materials which ignited a couch and spread to other contents. No operable smoke detector found.

Unfortunately, firefighters are seeing more people hoarding and living in appalling conditions. Such accumulations make it almost impossible to search for victims and add to the fuel loading of the structure.

Deplorable living conditions like this are very dangerous to both occupants and firefighters.



Aluminum Wiring Causes Fire

December 12th - An improper connection of aluminum and copper wiring was the cause of this kitchen fire. Fortunately, a working smoke detector alerted the occupant who called 9-1-1. (Note - this is not the first fire incident within the Fire Protection District that has been attributed to aluminum wiring.)

Popular within many homes from the mid-60's through the mid-70's, aluminum wiring is estimated to have been installed in some 2 million plus homes across the United States.

According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, the likelihood of having a connection reach a fire hazard condition in a house wired with aluminum is 40 - 50 times that of a house that is wired with copper wire. There is a genuine increased fire risk with such a home and homeowners should make modifications to the house wiring system.

Since some homes in the Fire District were constructed during this time period, it is strongly recommended that you have your home inspected by a licensed electrician if you have any doubts about the presence of aluminum wiring.

For more information, go to www.CPSC.gov and enter - *aluminum wire safety*.

This job is hot.

**Think you can
stand the heat?**

Join the Signal Hill Fire Department

Signal Hill

Fire Department

329 Hazel Avenue
Belleville, Illinois 62223

NONPROFIT ORG.
CARRIER ROUTE
PRESORT

PAID

Belleville, Illinois
PERMIT NO. 880



To Report a Fire Dial 9-1-1

This edition of Hot Flashes was
edited and prepared for mailing by
Mary N. and Patricia G.

Have you
developed and practiced
your family's Emergency
Preparedness Plan?

www.ready.gov
www.redcrossstl.org

Signal Hill Firefighters Ribs & Raffle Day



Sunday - June 28th

11:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Watch your mailbox in mid - June for
ordering information