

ANNUAL REPORT

PROSPECT HEIGHTS VOL. FIRE CO.

2024



EWING TOWNSHIP, NJ



PROSPECT HEIGHTS VOL. FIRE CO. #1 ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Prospect Heights Vol. Fire Co.
1660 Ninth Street
Ewing, NJ 08638
www.phvfc.org

OPENING STATEMENT

The Prospect Heights Vol. Fire Co. is the first fire company established in Ewing Township and celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2009. It has a rich tradition in its service to the residents and businesses of Ewing Township and surrounding municipalities. In recent years, the fire company has responded to an average of close to 900 fire calls per year and responds to mutual aid calls to each of the municipalities contiguous to Ewing Township and beyond. Ewing Township boasts of an ISO rating of 4 from which homeowner insurance premiums are based. This score of 4, from 1-10, is one of the higher ratings for a community with combination career/volunteer fire protection.

The Prospect Heights Vol. Fire Company, Station 31, serves Ewing Township along with the West Trenton Vol. Fire Company, Station 33. The former Pennington Road Vol. Fire Co. is now staffed by career firefighters and is known as Ewing Fire Division 30 or simply, Station 30. There are three career firefighters that serve in the Prospect Heights Fire Company Monday-Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. They maintain the equipment and apparatus and are first responders to emergency incidents during the day along with the volunteers.

The following statements reflect the mission of the Prospect Heights Vol. Fire Co. #1 of Ewing Township:

- Protect the lives and property of Ewing Township residents and businesses with the highest of quality;
- Stay current with changes in education, information, procedures, and technologies that will enable us to handle emergency situations most effectively;
- Foster a strong relationship between all Ewing fire companies, the community and our local government; and
- Serve our community with honor and the highest level of professionalism at all times.

FIRE RESPONSE

The Prospect Heights Fire Co. responded to 1,021 incidents in 2024. This is a record number for the fire company. We also saw our highest monthly total ever in September where the fire company responded to 117 calls. The statistics below highlight the breakdown of the 2024 incidents.

MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	78	7.64%
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheating - no fire	1	0.1%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	90	8.81%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	99	9.7%
Service Call	77	7.54%
Good Intent Call	255	24.98%
False Alarm & False Call	408	39.96%
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	1	0.1%
Special Incident Type	12	1.18%
TOTAL	1021	100%

MONTH	INCIDENTS
January	81
February	64
March	64
April	79
May	83
June	91
July	92
August	81
September	117
October	110
November	78
December	81

ZONE	NUMBER OF CALLS
12 - Hamilton	3
20 - Lawrence Twp.	13
22 - Lawrence Road Fire (Lawrence)	12
23 - Lawrenceville Fire (Lawrence)	2
30 - Ewing Fire Div. 30	136
31 - Prospect Heights Fire (Ewing)	807
33 - West Trenton Fire (Ewing)	37
34 - Trenton-Mercer Airport (Ewing)	1
44 - Princeton Junction Fire (West Windsor)	1
51 - Pennington Fire (Hopewell)	3
52 - Hopewell Fire (Hopewell)	1
53 - Union-Titusville Fire (Hopewell)	1
60 - Princeton Fire (Princeton)	1
70 - Trenton Fire (Trenton)	2
Burlington - Bordentown City	1
TOTAL:	1021

DAY OF THE WEEK	# INCIDENTS
Sunday	129
Monday	151
Tuesday	144
Wednesday	172
Thursday	126
Friday	164
Saturday	135
TOTAL	1021

STAFFING

In 2024, the Prospect Heights Vol. Fire Company had a membership of 97. Responding firefighters number 30 along with approximately 25 non-firefighting personnel on the “company-side” for a total of 55 personnel contributing to the firehouse in 2024. Note: the balance of members are life members that have moved away or have “retired,” honorary members, members serving in the military, and inactive members.

Fire Officers 2024

Douglas Brower, Chief
 Thomas Leese, Deputy Chief
 James Hall Jr., Assistant Chief
 Richard Dziminski, Captain
 Nicholas Hall, Captain
 Matthew Abelowitz, Lieutenant
 Cameron Brower, Lieutenant
 Michael Abelowitz, Lieutenant
 James Hall Sr., Fire Police Captain

Company Officers 2024

Michael Narducci, President
 Anthony Messina, Vice President
 James Hall Sr., 2nd Vice President
 Christopher Gregg, Treasurer
 Richard Dziminski, Secretary
 John Bozek, Trustee
 Rob Ranke, Trustee
 James Hall Jr., Trustee
 William Erney III, Trustee
 Nicholas Hall, Trustee

The minimum requirements to be a fire officer as per NJ statute:

N.J.A.C. 5:73-1.6 states, that no person shall be promoted, assume or assigned (including elected) any fire service position, the duties of which include the management of emergency operations, unless that person has obtained, at a minimum, Incident Management Level 1 certification issued by the NJ Division of Fire Safety.

The Prospect Heights Vol. Fire Co. continues to exceed this requirement in 2024 as per the Prospect Heights Fire Co. Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG's):

Fire officers of the Prospect Heights Fire Co., elected and appointed, must have a minimum of Incident Management Level 1 (I200) It is recommended that Lieutenants and Captains obtain I300. The Assistant Chief position must have a minimum of Incident Management Level 2 (I300). It is recommended that the Assistant Chief obtain I400. The Chief and Deputy Chief must have a minimum of Incident Management Level 3 (I400).

In addition to the 8 fire officers, the fire company had 22 additional firefighter personnel meeting the requirements to gear up and respond to incidents for a total of 30 firefighters in 2024. This is a fluctuating number from year to year. For example, the fire company had two students from TCNJ who were active responders in recent years and in 2024, they graduated and left the area. At the same time, we had new applicants come into the membership and graduated from the Mercer County Dempster Fire Academy with Firefighter I certification. In 2024, we had 7 new firefighter applicants with 5 continuing and graduating fire school. We lost 5 firefighters to job commitments, job and family relocation, and retirement.

TRAINING

Responding firefighters are responsible for yearly mandatory trainings. All Prospect Heights Fire Company firefighters attended this training in 2024. Training was provided by Ewing Township's insurer, the Garden State Municipal Joint Insurance Fund. This is provided free of charge and all three Ewing fire entities benefited. Mandatory training consisted of these topics: bloodborne pathogens, HazCom, confined space, hazardous materials, and ICS,

The Prospect Heights Fire Co. conducted 20 regularly scheduled drills in 2024. Also, there were additional drills that were added so that the total drills for 2024 were 30. Examples from our 2024 drill schedule include:

Engine Ops (hose stretching, line deployment, force entry, etc.)	Ladder Ops (ventilation, placement, saws, etc.)
Search/Rescue Techniques	Aerial Ops (placement operation, basket)
Driver Training	Firefighter Safety and Survival (SCBA RIT Kit, FF packaging, etc.)
Calling the Mayday	District Business Familiarization (building construction, walk-thru's)
Fireground Communications and Mayday Ops	Combi-tool Operations/Rescue Ops
SCBA (quarterly refresher/familiarization)	Ropes and Knots
High-Rise/Standpipe Ops	Ewing Target Hazards
Fireground Scenarios	

The Prospect Heights Fire Co. as a whole unit utilized the Mercer County Dempster Fire Training Academy 4 times last year utilizing their burn props and high-rise tower. All firefighters should have at least one "burn" drill each year. In 2024, we exceeded that enabling firefighter training and practice on a multitude of fireground scenarios. The fire academy use was:

April 8, 2024	Class A Burn Building
Oct. 16, 2024	Class A Burn Building
Nov. 11, 2024	Forcible Entry
Nov, 19, 2024	Flammable Liquids Tanker

The Prospect Heights Fire Co. encourages extended firefighter training. A large number of firefighters seized the opportunity to take further firefighter education at various fire training

academies in New Jersey, including, but not limited to, the Mercer County Dempster Fire Training Academy. Examples of the courses Prospect Heights Fire Co. personnel attended in 2024 include:

Firefighter II	Suppressing Fires in Solar Powered Technology
Fire Instructor	Reading Smoke
Elevator Ops	Power Saws
Electrical and Gas Appliance Fires	School Bus MVAs
Hazardous Fueled Fires	Building Construction for the Fire Service
Motor Vehicle Extrication (multiple levels)	Hazardous Materials Awareness
Pump Operations	ICS 200 and 300

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENTS

There are several professional commitments in 2024 that should be noted due to their importance, contributions and time commitments.

- There are over 227 fire hydrants in Ewing Township under the operation of Trenton Water Works. This number of hydrants doesn't include private hydrants which do not belong to Trenton Water Works. Prospect Heights Fire Co. Chief Douglas Brower, along with West Trenton Fire Chief Michael Anderson, are liaisons with Trenton Water Works for the maintenance of the hydrants in Ewing Township. This work in 2024 has provided prompt attention to problems that Trenton Water Works needs to address promptly when it comes to working fire hydrants. Together, both chiefs immediately reported and marked hydrants that were out-of-service and when they were put back into service. This is reflected for all of Ewing Township in the on-board CAD systems available to firefighter responders in our apparatus as well as on individual smartphones. There were also "meet-ups" in the field with Trenton Water Works officials to address hydrant, broken water mains, planned water main upgrades and related issues.
- Speaking of the on-board CAD system, Ewing Township has the service lamResponding which is multifaceted. Prospect Heights Fire Co. was the first one in Mercer County to implement this valuable technology tool. It provides real-time dispatch information and directional mapping, hazards and hydrant markers, preplans, volunteer firefighters responding to incidents and more. All markers, including hydrants, preplans, solar panels, hazardous and target structures, special notes, geofencing, and more are correlated and maintained in 2024 by Chiefs Brower and Anderson for the entire Township. Especially important to note are the preplans that both volunteer and career firefighters assist in obtaining along with the Ewing Township Fire Marshals Office. This is a task that is continually in a mode of updating so that the most pertinent and updated information is available, on the fireground and off, for the Ewing Township firefighting staff, volunteer and career.
- After many issues with Mercer County Central Communications over the last few years, Chief Brower and Chief Anderson were asked to serve on the Mercer County Response Committee. This committee falls under the authority of the Mercer County Deputy Business Administrator Ana Montero and Mercer County OEM Director Richard Kraemer. The committee is in its final stages of 1) redoing the county incident typing, 2) reviewing and adjusting apparatus typing, 3) reviewing and updating apparatus response plans. Consistency and effectiveness across Mercer County is important and the role of Mercer County Central Communications is integral to that. In Ewing Township, Chief Brower, Chief Anderson and Ewing Fire Director Marc Strauss and his staff worked together to review and modify response plans in Ewing Township

just prior to the formation and work of this committee. The Ewing Township box alarm planning is now being used as a model for part of this committee's work on the county level.

- The Prospect Heights Fire Chiefs, Chief Brower, Deputy Tom Leese and Assistant Jim Hall Jr. attended regularly the following 2024 meetings:
 - Tri-Township Fire Chief's Association (Ewing, Lawrence, Hopewell, Princeton)
 - Mercer County Active Fire Chief's Association
- An important part of fire preplanning is being a part of the construction process. Retired Ewing Township Fire Inspector and current Deputy Chief Tom Leese did plan reviews for new construction in the Prospect Heights Fire Co. initial response district in 2024. This is important to review the included suppression systems, review locations of hydrants and/or the addition of hydrants, reviewing topography of the construction area, providing for proper driveways and access for apparatus and more!
- The fire officers and members of the fire company strive to have an open-door policy. Our constituents are important and we regularly entertain visitors, young and old, into the fire house and 2024 was no different. This also included fire prevention activities year-round both in station or at schools and businesses. The career firefighters have been a big assistance with this as well.

APPARATUS

The Prospect Heights Fire Co. has the following response equipment:

Squrt 31	2017 Smeal LTC 55" Articulated Device, 2000 gpm
Engine 31	2004 American LaFrance 2000 gpm
Tower 31	2008 American LaFrance 100' Tower Ladder 2000 gpm
SS 31	2014 Sutphen Special Services Unit
Utility 31	2015 Ford F-250
Marine 31	2021 12' One Boat Inflatable Water Rescue Unit
Chief 31	2020 Chevy Tahoe Command Unit
Deputy 31	2014 Chevy Tahoe Command Unit

Mileage of the three main pieces of apparatus, Squrt 31, Engine 31 and Tower 31 has increased 3 times in 2024 over the mileage in 2018-2020. This is due to 1) increased call activity including EMS calls when Ewing EMS is delayed, 2) career staff daytime training, 3) career staff use for fire code inspections.

Maintenance and repair costs to the front-line apparatus (E31, SQ31 and T31) exceeded \$164,000 in 2024. Approximately 90% of this is repair. This continues the past 3 year trend and concerns us. Leading the repair costs is Engine 31 with \$89,000 in maintenance and repairs for 2024 and \$220,000 since 2021. It is Engine 31 that will be replaced when the new truck that was ordered back in 2022 is delivered. Repairs have just skyrocketed while we await completion and delivery of a new Pierce engine. We are told that delivery should be the end of 2025 or early 2026. Times sure have changed since the days when we could order and get delivery of a new truck in 12-14 months! We look forward to discussions on further apparatus replacement plans, not only for Station 31 but for the rest of the Ewing Township as well.



SQURT 31



TOWER 31



ENGINE 31



SPECIAL SERVICES 31



COMMAND VEHICLES



MARINE 31

FINANCIALS/FUNDRAISING

The Prospect Heights Vol. Fire Co. receives its funding through an annual fund drive, through fundraising efforts such as BINGO, golf outing, dinners and other fundraisers and it receives support from the Township of Ewing. There is no direct fire tax levied on Ewing residents. The fire company is a registered 501 (c)(3) organization of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Prospect Heights Fire Co. operates financially with a shared services agreement between the fire company and the Township of Ewing. In the agreement for 2024, Ewing Township provided \$150,000 to the fire company for storage of the apparatus and equipment and the housing of the career firefighters between normally scheduled hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Also, Ewing Township provided \$65,000 to the fire company for fire company operating expenses. This funding of \$215,000 has been consistent since 2021, up \$20,000 from the period of 2013-2020 when funding by the township was \$195,000. Capital items were a part of the 2024 budget and amounted to \$67,085 which included PPE, Combi Rescue Tool, SCBA facepieces, 1.75" and 5" hose and pagers.

The fire company is not fully funded by Ewing Township. Various fundraising activities helped to supplement the funding received from the township. In 2024, the fire company held the following fundraising activities:

BINGO
Flea Market
Christmas Toy Delivery

Golf Outing
50/50 Raffles
Annual Fund Drive Solicitation

Wreath Sale
Cheesecake Sale
Jersey Mikes

It should be noted that all three fire entities in Ewing Township continued in 2024 to save monies with shared training activities and testing. Fire pump testing, ladder testing, aerial equipment testing and hose testing must be conducted every year. Prospect Heights Fire Co., Ewing Fire Division 30 and West Trenton Fire Co. work together each year to maximize savings while obtaining the best possible job performance from the vendor.

2025 GOALS/FUTURE PLANS

We are anticipating the delivery of a new fire truck to the Prospect Heights Fire Co., a new Pierce pumper. Delivery has been pushed back a few times since the order was placed. Hopefully it won't be pushed back further and we'll get delivery in December. As previously noted, this will replace the currently in-service pumper, Engine 31. There is a lot of planning and implementation to take the current Engine 31 out-of-service and put in-service the new Engine 31. It is exciting to have the opportunity to do this, but it surely doesn't happen overnight. It takes a lot of time and effort!

We are awaiting the final delivery of fire hose out of the 2024 budget at this time. This was part of a three-year plan to update our fire hose that we use for handlines...for direct fire attack. After much research, we went with the Mercedes Kraken EXO hose. This will be put in place in April 2025 and the complete outfitting will be later this year with the final hose order delivery. It is hoped that this can expand township wide. This provides our Prospect Heights firefighters:

- hose that is lighter than standard hoses which helps with maneuverability;
- hose that is kink-resistant, even at low pressures;
- hose that is durable with double-jacketed construction;
- hose that has lower friction loss enabling higher GPM at lower pump pressures

As mentioned previously, the Mercer County Response Plan Committee's final directives will be approved shortly and implemented sometime soon in 2025. With the work that we already did proactively on our box alarms in Ewing Township, we can now move into the full implementation and utilization of consistent and accurate dispatching. Mercer County Central is already moving in the right direction with supervision, training and the quantity and quality of dispatchers. This should enable much better functionality on the incident response and fireground. We need this, we look forward to this and it is nice to know that Ewing was a major player in its development.