

La Crosse Fire Department





Our Mission

We promote safety, reduce risks, and respond to calls for fire suppression, emergency medical services, and all-hazards rescue. We earn the community's trust through preparedness, professionalism, and dedication to service.



Our Values

Respect reflects our belief that all persons have equal value and deserve our due attention.

Integrity leads us to honor our commitments and to do what is right.

Service drives us to put the needs of the community first.

Excellence encompasses our professionalism and dedication to continuous improvement of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

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RESPECT ♦ INTEGRITY ♦ SERVICE ♦ EXCELLENCE

Letter from Fire Chief Jeff Schott

To the Citizens of the Communities We Serve,

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to present the La Crosse Fire Department's Annual Report. This year has been marked by dedication, resilience, and continued commitment to protecting the lives and property of those we serve. Our department responded to over 8,000 calls for service, including a record number of fire incidents investigated. The increased demand for services creates a dynamic and high operational tempo that is supported by quality training by committed professionals.

We continued our progress in improving operational readiness, investing in apparatus upgrades, supporting firefighter wellness, and advancing community risk reduction efforts. The professionalism and compassion shown by our firefighters—on every call, every shift—demonstrate the high standard of service our community expects and deserves.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on enhancing service delivery, expanding prevention and education programs, and ensuring our personnel have the resources and support needed to perform their duties safely and effectively. Our mission remains clear: to serve with respect, integrity, and dedication to excellence.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the City of La Crosse leadership, our community partners, and most importantly, the men and women of the La Crosse Fire Department whose work makes our community safer every day.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.



Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Schott".

Jeff Schott, Fire Chief

2025 Personnel Changes

Promotions & Appointments		
Joshua DeFlorian	Lieutenant	March 28
Steven McCluskey	Lieutenant	March 28
Ben Leis	Engineer	January 3
Brian Fox	Engineer	January 4
New Hires		
Grace Babb	Firefighter	February 28
Jamison Cullen	Firefighter	February 28
Kurt Trunkel	Firefighter	February 28
McKay Wolsey	Firefighter	February 28
Cameron Zimmerman	Firefighter	February 28
Karter Benrud	Firefighter	September 29
Daniel Eichman	Firefighter	September 29
Adam George	Firefighter	September 29
Dustin Lindberg	Firefighter	September 29
Max Metcalf	Firefighter	September 29
Dayton Schmitt	Firefighter	September 29
Retirements		
Tim Knudsen	28+ years	March 21
Michael Larson	25+ years	April 24
Keith Fillinger	24+ years	November 2



...”I will seek to give only the highest example of honesty and integrity. I will never betray my badge or the public trust. I will always have the courage to hold myself and others accountable for our actions.”..



Assistant Fire Chief
Fire and Rescue Operations

Battalion Chiefs (A/B/C Shifts)
Fire and Rescue Operations

Captain – Fleet, Facilities, and
Logistics Officer

Assistant Mechanic (x3)

Station 1 - E1, Q1, R1
8 Per Shift = 1 Cpt, 1Lt, 2Eng, 4FF

Station 2 - Q2, R2
6 Per Shift = 1Cpt, 1Lt, 2Eng, 1FF

Station 3 - E3, R3
6 Per Shift = 1Cpt, 1Lt, 2Eng, 2FF

Station 4 – Q4, E4
7 Per Shift = 1Cpt, 1Lt, 2Eng, 3FF

Technology Assistant (x3)

Hazardous Materials
Team Coordinator
(25) Team Members

Technical Rescue/USAR
Team Coordinator
(18) Team Members

Water Rescue
Team Coordinator
(18) Team Members

Dual-Staffed Positions = NO FTE

Sworn Uniformed Staff

Civilian Staff

**Fire Chief
Emergency Management Director**

Administrative Specialist

**Division Chief of Training and
Professional Standards**

Captain – Suppression Training
Coordinator (x2)

Captain – EMS Coordinator

EMS Trainer (x3)

**Division Chief of Community
Risk Management/
Fire Marshall**

Captain – Investigations,
Inspections, Prevention

Lieutenant – Investigations,
Inspections, Prevention

Community Risk
Reduction Specialist

Community Risk
Reduction LTE

Division of Operations

All-Hazards Fire, EMS, & Rescue

Assistant Fire Chief Blane Neher



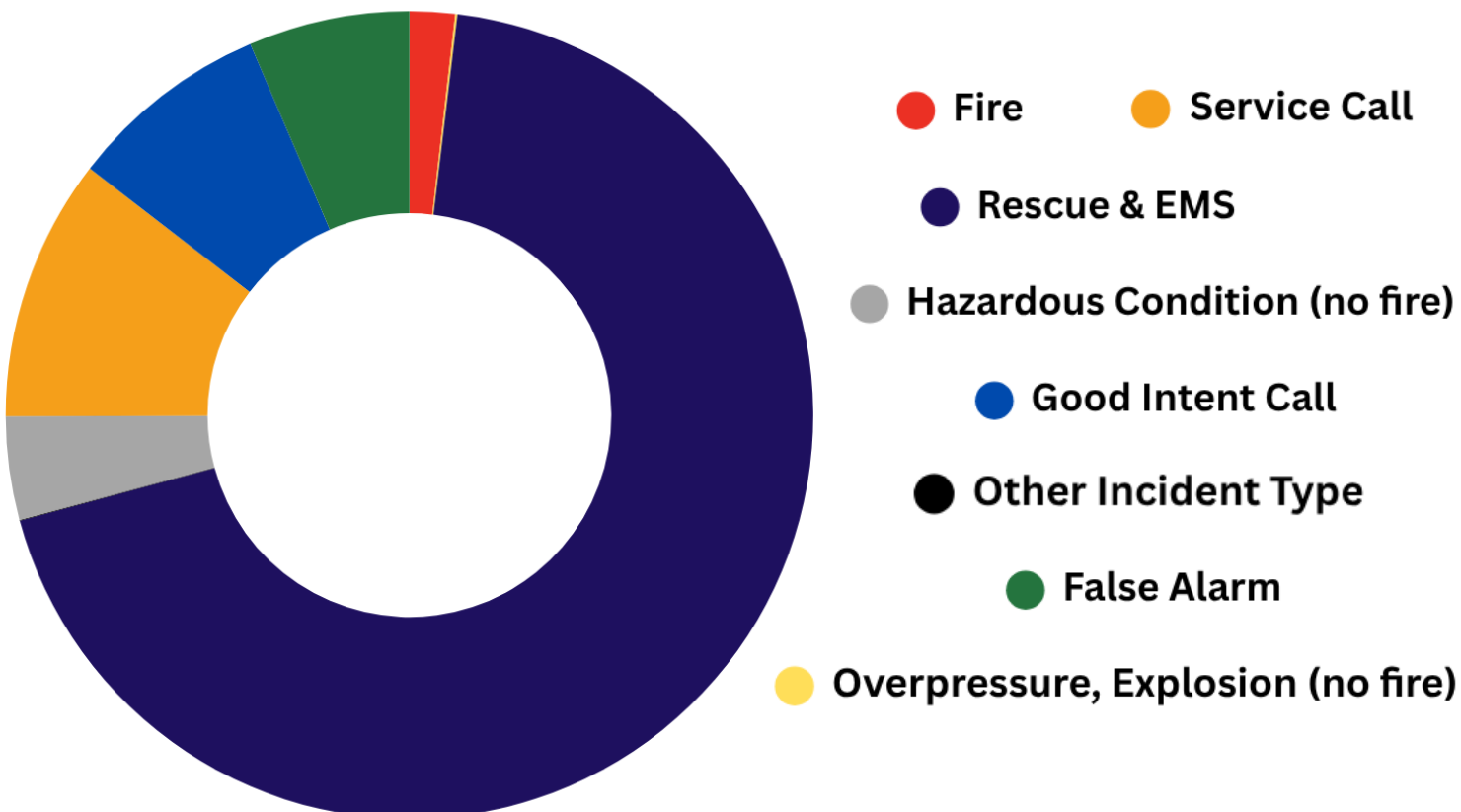
The La Crosse Fire Department’s Operations Division is responsible for managing all hazards within our community. While we respond to fires and EMS calls daily, our teams also prepare for less frequent but equally critical emergencies. The rivers and bluffs surrounding La Crosse are among our city’s greatest assets, yet they can also become the focal points of unique rescue incidents each year. Our USAR and Water Rescue teams remain mission-ready in all weather conditions, while our Hazardous Materials Team, a highly skilled, state-funded regional resource—stands ready to protect La Crosse citizens at a moment’s notice.

Our three shifts operate daily from four strategically located stations, staffed with firefighters trained on Engines, Quints (ladder-engine combinations), and Rescue units. These crews train continuously to respond to any emergency that may arise

In 2025, the La Crosse Fire Department responded to 8,110 incidents. Nearly seven out of ten calls were for emergency medical services (EMS). Fires made up less than 2% of total responses, while false alarms and service calls accounted for most of the remaining activity. The department recorded 20 firefighter injuries this year. Through ongoing health and wellness initiatives, we hope to reduce these numbers in the years ahead.

This past year, we added two new Pierce Engines—Engine 1 and Engine 3—to our fleet. These apparatuses feature enhanced safety systems, including airbags, cameras, and improved stability, ensuring La Crosse is equipped with dependable, response-ready vehicles.

2025 Total Incidents by Type



Division of Community Risk Management Division Chief Bee Xiong



The La Crosse Fire Department’s Division of Community Risk Management provides origin and cause investigations for the City of La Crosse and the Town of Medary for all fires resulting in more than \$500 in damage, those deemed suspicious in nature, fires with an unknown origin, incidents involving fire-related injury or death, or as otherwise determined necessary by the investigation unit.

In addition, the Department conducts life safety fire inspections and oversees the commissioning of new fire alarm and fire suppression systems in all public buildings and places of employment within the City of La Crosse and the Town of Medary.

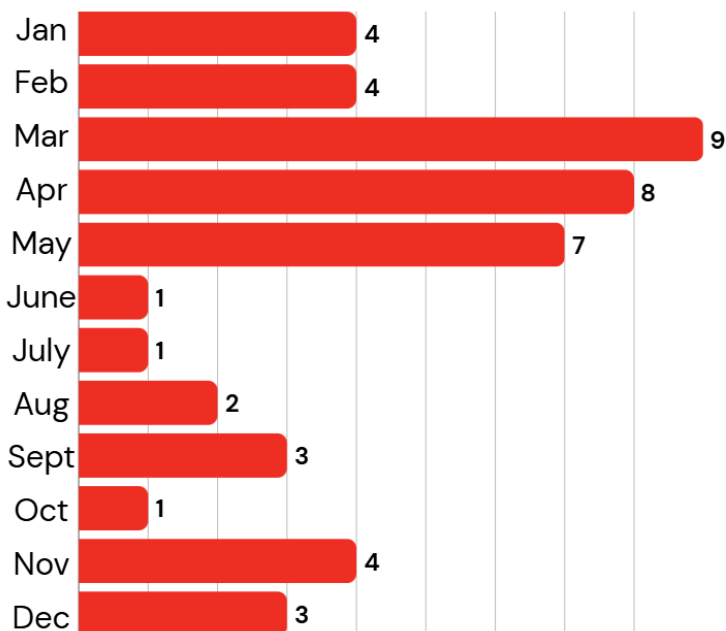
The Community Risk Management Division is staffed by three trained fire investigators, all of whom are certified in fire detection, prevention, and suppression inspections. The Division includes one Division Chief, two Lieutenants, and a Community Risk Educator. Lieutenant Josh DeFlorian was appointed to the role of Lieutenant of Community Risk Management following the retirement of Captain Tim Knudsen in March 2025.

The Department has one investigator who holds certification as a Fire Investigator through the Wisconsin Technical College System. Fire investigators work closely with investigators from the La Crosse Police Department on suspicious or incendiary fires.

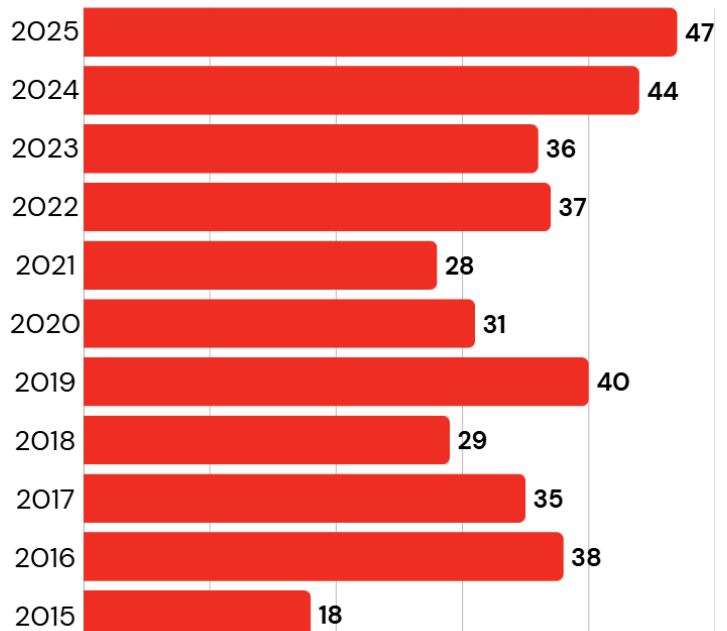
In 2025, there were ten incendiary fires, resulting in two arrests.

As of April 2025, the Community Risk Management Building Inspection Division was reassigned to the City’s Planning and Development Department and is no longer under the Fire Department.

2025 Investigated Fire Scenes By Month



**Total Investigated Fire Scenes
10-year Annual Comparison**



Division of Community Risk Management

Community Risk Educator

Molly McCormick



Community Risk Reduction (CRR) continues to shape how our department serves the community—expanding beyond traditional emergency response to a more proactive, prevention-focused model. Rather than waiting for emergencies to occur, CRR emphasizes identifying risks early and putting strategies in place to reduce their impact. By analyzing local trends and prioritizing the needs of our community, we deliver targeted education, outreach, and initiatives designed to prevent incidents before they happen. Through strong partnerships and a shared commitment to safety, we are working to reduce calls for service, improve outcomes, and build a more resilient community.

Across 2025 the department was able to increase outreach efforts and continue recurring annual events with partner agencies. With close to 80 events/activities attended the department saw a 23% increase from the previous year and continued six community-wide safety campaigns. Additionally, Fire Prevention Week includes visits to every K-5 classroom in the City of La Crosse with continued improvements to curriculum based on nationally recognized programming and inquiry-based learning models. We’ve also increased the use of social media as a tool for Community Risk Reduction; community members are encouraged to check out our Facebook and Instagram pages weekly.



Community Risk Education Notable 2025 Events

UWL Staff Stop the Bleed Training	Stop the Bleed
Viterbo Stop the Bleed Training	Stop the Bleed
Children's Museum	CPR/AED/first aid
WTC safety Team training	CPR/AED/first aid
Mt. La Crosse Ski Patrol Stop the bleed	First Aid/STB
Station 2 Tour-Homeschool	Fire Safety
UWL - Violence and Injury Prevention Tour	Stop the bleed/cpr/narcan
Coulee Children's Learning Center	Steps to safety
Future Fairs Logan HS/Central	recruitment/cpr/fire extinguisher
Homeschool Tour of Station 2	Fire Safety
Station 1- Hamilton 5th grade	Hazmat/EMS/Emergency Planning
Station 2 Tour- State Road Kindergarten	Fire Safety
Station 4- Northside Elementary tours	Fire Safety
Station 4 tour-Head Start Family Night	Fire Safety
Station 1- Hamilton 1st grade tour	Fire Safety
Station 2- UWL Preschool Tour	Fire Safety
Station 1- Girl Scouts Tour & First Aid	Fire and EMS
Station 2- St. Johns Pre-K (Nodine) Tour	Fire Safety
Hamilton BGC Cub Scouts- Wild Fire Safety	outdoor burning/fire prevention
Junior Achievement at WTC	recruitment/cpr/fire extinguisher
Slide into Safety- Safe Kids	Fire Safety
Aquinas Senior Safety Chat	Fire Safety Responsibility
Junior Achievement at WTC	recruitment/cpr/fire extinguisher
Southern Bluffs Family Night	Fire Safety/CPR/AED
Rotary Lights CPR and AED Event	CPR and AED Training
The good fight CPR and AED Event	CPR and AED Training
Sea Cadets	Water, Tech Res, EMS, MAZE
Adventure Explorers Program (Central High school)	Water, Tech Res, EMS, MAZE
Loggers CPR Night	CPR and AED Training
Steam CPR Night	CPR and AED Training
Gundersen Childcare Station 2 Tour	Fire Safety
Emerson Summer School Tour	Fire Safety
Medary Days	Fire Safety
Trinity Lutheran Block Party	Fire Safety/CPR/AED
NAVRR Fire safety for older adults	Fall Prevention
YWCA Childcare Staff Training	Steps to safety
Viterbo RA Training	Steps to safety
Eagle Fest UWL	Fire Safety/CPR/AED/Narcan



LCFD worked in collaboration with several other local agencies for targeted campaigns, examples include:

- Sound the Alarm-
Smoke Alarm & CO Detector Installs
- Mugs for Rugs
- Hydro Helpers
- Keep the Wreath Green
- Overdose Awareness
- Falls Prevention & Mitigation in older adults





Division of Training & Professional Standards

Division Chief Aaron Bolstad



As we reflect on the past year, the Department of Training and Professional Standards continued to play a critical role in preparing La Crosse Fire Department personnel to meet the increasing demands of modern emergency response. Through comprehensive training, expanded specialty operations readiness, and strong regional partnerships, the Division remained focused on ensuring our firefighters and paramedics are equipped to serve the community safely, effectively, and professionally.

During 2025, the Division coordinated more than 26,000 hours of training and education while ensuring all personnel maintained required state and national certifications. Two six-week Fire Academies were conducted, resulting in the successful onboarding of 11 new personnel, and an Engineer Academy was implemented to strengthen operational competency and prepare members for expanded responsibilities within the organization. Promotional manuals for Engineer and Lieutenant were also updated to provide clearer developmental pathways and support future leadership growth.

The Division continued to emphasize firefighter health, wellness, and safety. Annual physical examinations were completed for all department personnel, supporting proactive cancer screening and early identification of health concerns. Additional safety enhancements were made to burn rooms and training grounds, and the Department's Safety Team and Research and Development Team continued evaluating operational practices, emerging technologies, and training improvements to enhance firefighter performance and reduce risk.

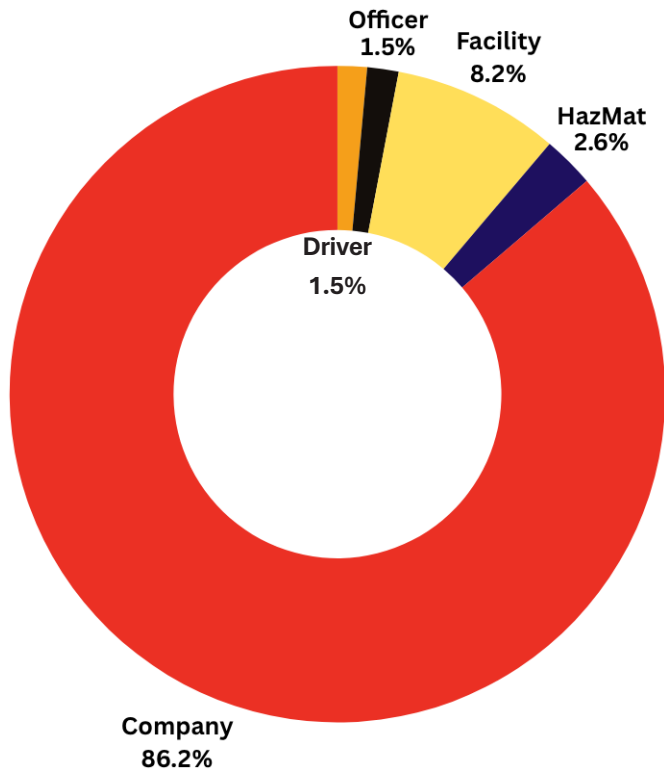
Regional collaboration remained a cornerstone of the Division's success. Joint training initiatives with Holmen, Onalaska, and Shelby Fire Departments, along with Tri-State Ambulance, improved interoperability and strengthened our collective ability to respond to large-scale and complex incidents. Personnel maintained operational proficiency across a broad range of disciplines, including fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, technical rescue, boat operations, ice rescue, swiftwater rescue, and flood response.

The Division also demonstrated strong financial stewardship by utilizing city operational and capital funding to support certification programs, training consumables, equipment replacement, and improvements to training facilities. In addition, more than \$200,000 in Assistance to Firefighters Grant funding was successfully managed to support equipment acquisition and program development. All training and credentialing efforts remained aligned with nationally recognized standards established by NFPA, OSHA, ISO, IFSAC, Pro Board, and the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Division will continue expanding the Department's Paramedic Program, implement the Officer Development Academy, advance all-hazards training capabilities, and support construction of a new Search and Rescue Training Facility and SCBA Confidence Maze. These initiatives will further strengthen operational readiness, enhance firefighter safety, and ensure our personnel are prepared to meet the evolving challenges of emergency service.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the dedicated members of the Training Division, our regional partners, and all personnel of the La Crosse Fire Department whose commitment to professional development and operational excellence helps keep our community safe every day.

ISO Training Hours by Category



2025

Training Statistics

Training Metric	2025 Total
Total Annual Training Hours	26,000+
New Personnel Trained	11
Fire Academies Conducted	2
Personnel Trained Across Agencies	Approx. 140
Assistance to Firefighters Grant Funding Managed	\$200,000+
Engineer Academies Conducted	1
Department Physicals Completed	100%



Division of Operations

Emergency Medical Services

Captain/EMS Coordinator Jim Hillcoat

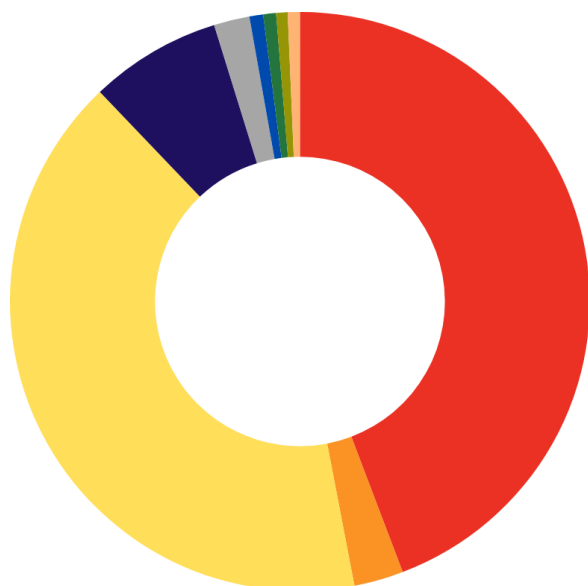


The LCFD provides pre-hospital emergency medical services up to the Paramedic level with the goal of providing the highest quality pre-hospital emergency medical care. Positive outcomes are achieved through adequate staffing, effective training, having up-to-date medical equipment, and public education. The agency collaborates with Emplify Health by Gundersen for Medical Control and oversight of EMS delivery in the community. The department is currently engaged in a private/public ambulance partnership with Emplify Health and Tri-State Ambulance (TSA). The successful pilot of an ambulance staffed by Firefighter/Paramedics out of Fire Station #1 over the past three years has led to planning for the implementation of a 24/7 ambulance operated by LCFD Firefighter/Paramedics and EMTs in 2026.

Department personnel responded to 5,510 EMS related calls in 2025 from all four fire stations accounting for 68% of the agency's total call volume. Significant calls include 45 cardiac arrests and 75 opioid overdose incidents in 2025. The ambulance staffed by LCFD through the pilot program treated or transported 577 patients. In addition to emergency response, personnel also perform pre-planning and EMS standbys for major events such as the La Crosse Marathon, Oktoberfest, WIAA State Track Meet, and numerous other large gathering community events.

The EMS Division partners with the Community Risk Management Bureau to deliver public preparedness training to the community. Public outreach education includes CPR/AED training, Stop the Bleed training, and general First Aid along with Opioid overdose awareness. The EMS Coordinator, along with three EMS Assistants, delivered 2,882 hours of EMS training to LCFD personnel in 2025. EMS Training is conducted once per month for each platoon shift. Additionally, three members of the department started Paramedic training at Western Technical College and will finish their training in the Fall of 2026.

Historically, funding for the LCFD EMS program came from being a line item within the department's operating budget and from capital equipment funds. Thanks to legislation passed for the EMS Funding Assistance Program (FAP) from the State of Wisconsin DHS, LCFD became eligible for annual FAP funding for our EMS program. More than \$165,000 was awarded to LCFD to fund the EMS operation. These funds may be used for training, equipment, supplies, vehicles, and IT components of an EMS service. This is major boost to LCFD's ability to provide the best EMS service possible while easing the financial burden placed on the department.



Most Common EMS Incident Types for 2025

- Medical assist, assist EMS Crew
- All other EMS response types ● EMS call, BLS, Other
- EMS call, ALS, Other
- Rescue, Lifeline Activation, No EMS Needed
- EMS Call, TSA requested lift assist
- Motor vehicle accident with no injuries
- EMS Call, Code, No Shock-Advised
- EMS Call, Possible Overdose



Division of Operations

Hazardous Materials Team

Lieutenant Adam Foley



The La Crosse Regional Hazardous Materials Team (Hazmat), with 23 members, specializes in dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive incidents. Established by Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) in 2000, the team provides hazardous materials response across nine counties in West Central Wisconsin. It covers 90 miles of the Mississippi River, 287 miles of railroad tracks, and 121 miles of interstate highway. The team also acts as a Radiological Field Team for the Wisconsin Department of Health, preparing for radiological emergencies. The State of Wisconsin provides 100% of the funding for both Radiological and Hazmat Teams. The funding includes worker's compensation and reimbursement for costs incurred during a response when there is no responsible party.

The team worked closely with City Brewing's Industrial Hazardous Materials staff and partnered with Dairyland Power to strengthen radiological response capabilities.

The La Crosse Regional Hazardous Materials Team also reinforced its longstanding partnership with the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and continued collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security's Radiation Protection Section, further enhancing both chemical and radiological response efforts.



2025 had ten calls for Hazardous related responses.

Higher profiled incidents included:

- Investigated place where illegal drugs were being made.
- Responded to three different corrosive gas leaks.
- Analyzed a dangerous gas release from a damaged lithium battery in a school.
- Resolved the health and environmental hazards of an industrial chemicals mixture that became unsafe.
- Responded to an explosion involving a gas cylinder and another situation where an explosion was probable.



Division of Operations

Urban Search & Rescue

Captain Cory Westpfahl



The La Crosse Fire Department's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team is made up of 18 members who are trained to respond to emergencies involving structural collapse, confined spaces, rope rescue, trench rescue, tower rescue, swiftwater, and major extrication or disentanglement. Nine of the members are also a part of Wisconsin Task Force 1, a state asset. The mission of the USAR team is to prepare for and respond to technical rescue emergencies both within the city and regionally in surrounding communities if called upon. The USAR Team also supports other special events on the bluff and throughout the community that may require specialized rescue like bike and trail races as well as for various large community events such as Riverfest and Oktoberfest. The USAR team, in coordination with the Fire Department's Community Risk Education Team, also provided some real-life experience in rope rescue to the Naval Cadet Program as part of community outreach.

USAR Team members train regularly on duty and meet monthly for more focused training which involves rescue skill development and scenarios. There were over 1,200 hours of USAR training in 2025. This encompassed the USAR core team drills, WI-TF1 training as well as cross training non-team members on the department.

In 2025, the USAR team responded to seven incidents. Five of the incidents occurred on the bluffs. Of those five, four involved injured bikers, hikers and a fall. Rope rescue equipment was used to safely get these patients off the bluff. The other bluff call utilized wide area search techniques and mapping to safely locate a lost hiker. One of the calls for service was to help our neighboring department in Stoddard. Personnel and specialized stabilization and lifting equipment was sent to help mitigate a hazardous situation the resulted from a large tree that had fallen. The final incident occurred in the city where rope rescue equipment was used to help remove a person from a building.

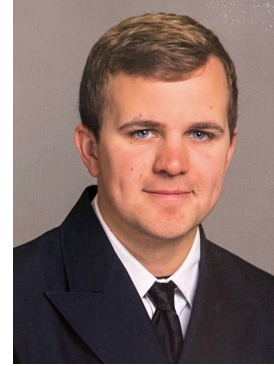
Moving forward to 2026, the strategic goals set forth by the USAR team demonstrate a clear commitment to enhancing the team's overall effectiveness and operational readiness. By focusing on increasing efficiency and response times, the team aims to deliver quicker, more effective assistance during critical emergencies, ultimately saving more lives and reducing damage. The goal to eliminate heavy apparatuses underscores the department's dedication to streamlining operations and adopting more agile, versatile equipment. This shift will enable the USAR team to navigate challenging environments with greater ease and flexibility, ensuring that they can reach and rescue victims more swiftly and safely.



Division of Operations

Water/Ice/Dive Rescue

Lieutenant Jay Lindahl



The mission of the Water Rescue Team is to provide the community with rescue and recovery capabilities across all water environments. Our team remains committed to delivering highly professional, safe, and efficient service in alignment with the La Crosse Fire Department's dedication to preparedness, professionalism, and community trust. The Water Rescue Team consists of 18 highly trained members who dedicate specialized training time to water rescue disciplines, maintaining proficiency in ice rescue, underwater camera operations, boat operations, swiftwater rescue, sonar operations, and water-based emergency management services.

2025 marked the first full year of service for Boat 1, which was placed into operation in late 2024. The vessel quickly proved to be an essential asset, contributing directly to five victim rescues throughout the year. Its improved layout and upgraded systems played a significant role in the success of these operations and enhanced the team's overall response capabilities. Training efforts during 2025 focused heavily on nighttime navigation of local waterways, identifying hazards unique to low-light operations, and improving the use of onboard electronics to reduce victim location times. More efficient use of these systems has significantly improved both response speed and recovery accuracy, particularly during drowning investigations. Monthly team training continues to play a critical role in operational readiness, allowing members to refine technical skills, evaluate tactics, and maintain peak preparedness before incidents occur.

The Water Rescue Team responded to 21 incidents in 2025, including several significant deployments. A major factor contributing to the increased call volume was unusually high river levels during June and July, when water levels remained near nine feet, just below the ten-foot "no wake" threshold. These conditions allowed high-speed recreational boaters to access flooded areas that are typically inaccessible, creating a more hazardous operating environment and increasing overall risk throughout the region. The lessons learned during these incidents will continue to guide future training priorities and operational planning during high-water conditions.



Currently Active

BRETT KENNER

KARTER BENRUD

ANDREW SERVAIS

ADAM CLEMENTS

MCKAY WOLSEY



FOR YOUR SERVICE

BRADLEY ALEXANDER

MICHAEL LARSON

RICHARD BRUNONI

RICHARD PLACEK

MARK HANSON

JEFFREY SCHOTT

TYLER HOERRES

SHANE TRUSSONI

JOSH KOIS

CORY WESTPFAHL

Veterans



NATIONAL **FIRE** PREVENTION WEEK





CHARGE *into Fire Safety™*



*Serving the La Crosse Region with
Quality Services Since 1896*



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