



2014

*Annual*

R E P O R T

City of Galveston, Texas

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

It is my honor to present the 2014 Galveston Fire Department Annual



Report. Our mission is to provide the highest level of public safety services for the community. We will protect lives and property through Fire Prevention, Public Education, Firefighter Safety, Fire & Rescue Operations, Emergency Medical First Response and Disaster Management.

The GFD is divided into three division; Fire Prevention, Emergency Operations and Fire Administration. There are a total of 115 personnel in the fire department.

This report will provide you with an overview of the department. We will provide a snap-shot of each division's responsibilities and their accomplishments.

During 2014, GFD responded to over 7,000 calls for service. These calls include fires, rescues, medical emergencies, hazardous material spills and general public service requests. We also respond when requested to assist other fire departments within Galveston County. In turn, these departments provide us assistance when we need them.

You will read in the following comprehensive report how the men and women of the Galveston Fire Department take great pride each day to serve the citizens and visitors of Galveston Island. This is evident in the amount of training, fire prevention and community involvement that each and every member of your fire department has committed to during 2014.

In addition, our involvement in the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System, Texas Task Force 1, and several State Fire Service Organizations allows us to assist citizens across Texas when called upon to respond and represent Galveston. It is my honor and privilege to serve as your Fire Chief and lead such a great group of men and women each and every day.

# FIRE CHIEF'S MESSAGE



# SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS



Some of the major incidents we responded to during 2014 include a two-alarm fire early on the morning of February 26 at 2924 Avenue O. Fire extensively damaged a three story residence as a result of a gas appliance explosion. No injuries were reported.

Another 2-Alarm fire occurred on Saturday, May 31, 2014 at 909 Blume Street. The fire caused extensive damage to the residence. One firefighter was injured during this operation however his injuries were non-life threatening. It is important to note that during this fire, GFD also responded to twelve separate incidents within a three-hour period while 26 of our 30 on duty personnel were engaged in the fire on Blume. Several of our senior command staff personnel along with our mutual aid partners assisted with handling these incidents.



The most significant incident occurred in the early afternoon on June 20. A fire occurred in the early afternoon of June 20, at 4428 Avenue R. While this was a routine house fire it was significant in that it escalated to a two -alarm fire when the firefighters assigned to Engine 5 reported a “MAYDAY.”

A “MAYDAY” is an event that renders a firefighter or in this case a team of firefighters trapped or in need of immediate assistance inside of a structure.

All three Firefighters involved were safely and quickly rescued by Engine 1 who had been assigned as the Rapid Intervention crew (RIT). The RIT assignment is a standard practice at every structure fire. The purpose is to have a team of Firefighters prepared to effect a rescue of Firefighters in the event something occurs that would prevent them from evacuating on their own.

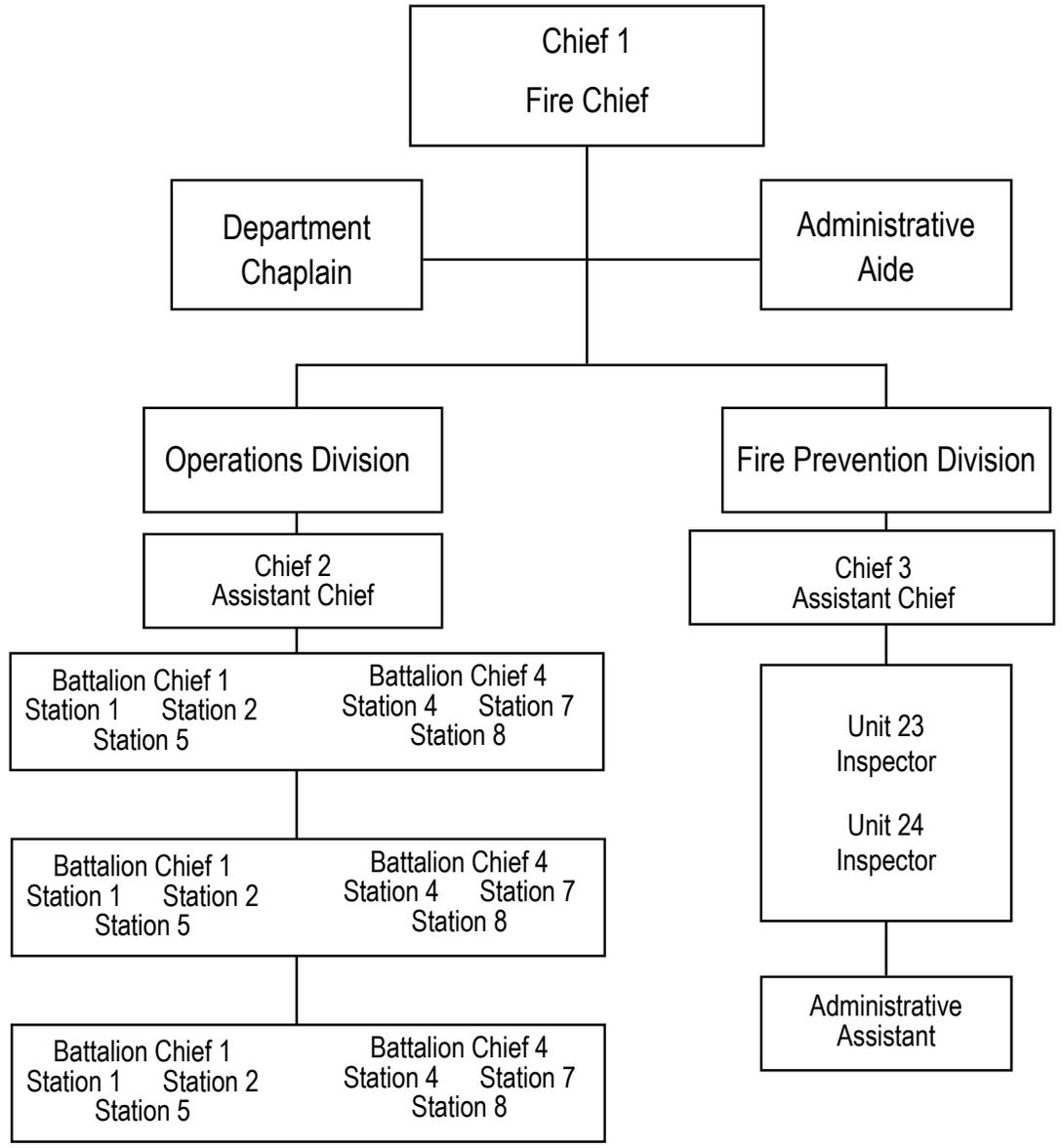
As a result of this fire and “MAYDAY,” the Galveston Fire Department organized an Operational review committee. This committee is comprised of Firefighters of each rank who are reviewing and recommending changes or improvements to our current operations. The goal is to prevent a similar situation which could result in Firefighter injuries or death in the line of duty.



# SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





The Fire Marshal's Office is managed by Assistant Fire Chief Gilbert Robinson. The Fire Marshal's Office (FMO) manages many critical functions of the department including fire and arson investigations, fire inspections, site inspections, new construction and renovations to buildings, plan review, complaints and public education. The FMO

also works with various department relating to special events, pre-development meetings, dangerous buildings and code enforcement. In 2014, The FMO conducted 26 public relations program that included nearly 5000 local citizens in attendance. October 2014, the GFD had their Open House and Poster Contest at the Danny Weber Fire Station #5.

**INSPECTIONS:**

Life Safety 1698  
Permits 598  
Request for CO 18

**INVESTIGATIONS:**

Fire Investigations 43  
Arrests 0

**OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

Plan Reviews 236  
Permit Fees \$77,765  
Public Relations Events 26  
Smoke Detector Installations 20  
Knox Box Installations 7

**FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**



# FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



The Senior Fire Buster Program was implemented in 1984.

The Fire Department has installed over 2000 smoke detectors to the City of Galveston residences. Free smoke detectors are available to senior citizens who lives in the city of Galveston.

Local public and private schools participate in the National Fire Preventon poster contest that was held in October.

The winners were recognized at the Fire Station 5 open house.

The winners receive prizes from local insurance sponsors and advance to district competition.



**The Fire Investigation Division is responsible for the investigation of structure fires, vehicle fires and suspicious fire with no logical origin and cause, outside vegetation and rubbish/trash fires.**

In 2014, the Fire Investigation Division conducted 43 fire investigations. There were 16 incendiary fires which are still pending investigations. Included in the above investigations were several significant fires.

In 2014, GFD had no fire fatalities. Firefighters made several rescues throughout the course of the year.

On 9/12/2014, GFD responded to a train derailment fire. This fire resulted in a one and half million dollar loss. The fire investigation was turned over to the BNSF Railroad Investigators.

Currently, the Fire Investigation Division has 2 full time Arson Investigators and 3 on shift Arson Investigators. They are responsible for the initiating investigations, conducting

follow-up investigations, and administrative tasks.

Our goal in to 2015, is to continuously improve training and networking with area Fire and Arson Investigators.

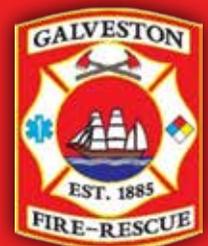
The Fire Prevention Division is responsible for conducting inspections, plan reviews, public education.

In 2014, the Fire Prevention Division conducted 1698 fire inspections which includes: public buildings, site inspections, fire protection deficiencies, fire drills. The fire inspectors work closely with code enforcement to track unsafe buildings and conduct joint inspections for permitted buildings.



In 2014, we purchased "Freddie the Fire Truck" to add to our public education program. This year, we educated 5000 kids about fire prevention and education. We conducted 26 fire prevention programs in our public and private schools and our big box stores.

**FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**



# OPERATIONAL DIVISIONS



The Operations Division is managed by Assistant Fire Chief Charles Olsen. The largest of our three divisions, it is staffed with 108 personnel. These personnel are responsible for all emergency responses. There are six fire stations across the island and each is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Firefighters work a 24-hour shift followed by 48 hours off regardless of holidays or weekends. We operate six engine companies, two ladder companies and two Battalion Chiefs each day with a minimum staffing requirement of thirty firefighters daily. We staff our engine companies with four



personnel including one Captain, one Driver and two Firefighters. Our Ladder companies are staffed with two personnel and our Battalion Chiefs are single person units, as they serve as incident managers when at an incident.

The City is divided into two Battalions, each managed by a Battalion Chief. Within each Battalion are three fire stations.



## Battalion 1 is East of 61st Street



Station 1 (2514 Sealy) Engine 1, Tower 1 and Battalion 1



Station 2 (428 Church) Engine 2 and Brush 2



Station 5 (5728 Ball)  
Engine 5, Brush 5, Squad 5 and Marine 5-Our rescue boat.

OPERATIONAL DIVISIONS



**OPERATIONAL DIVISIONS**



**Battalion 4 is West of 61st Street**



Station 4 (Scholes Airport) Engine 4, Ladder 4 and Battalion 4



Station 7 (3902 12 Mile Road) Engine 7 and Squad 7



Station 8 (21710 S. Shelby Drive) Engine 8 and Brush 8



Over 90% of our responses are managed by a single engine company with a four person crew with an average response time of 4 minutes 32 seconds. For structure fires and technical rescues, multiple units are dispatched to ensure an adequate number of personnel on scene to manage the incident as quickly and safely as possible.

All told, the personnel assigned to Operations do a remarkable job day in and day out. They manage to train, maintain the fleet and facilities, conduct pre-fire plan inspections and answer emergency calls with the utmost professionalism and courtesy.



# TRAINING



Training plays a major role in the daily life of a Galveston Firefighter. We must be prepared to respond to and mitigate a wide range of emergency situations. Some of the types of incidents that we will respond to every year include structure fires, medical emergencies, high angle rescues, rail car emergencies, hurricanes, water rescues, hazardous materials incidents, major accidents, pet rescues, along with a vast array of other types of emergencies throughout Galveston.

2014 was a busy year when it came to training in the Galveston Fire Department. We had 30,939 total training hours for the year, which is a record amount for our firefighters. This means that each of our 108 firefighters received over 281 hours of training throughout the year. We look forward to surpassing that in 2015.

In 2014, the Galveston Fire Department teamed up with the Port of Houston to do some joint training, as well as develop a plan for future mutual aid agreements, should the need arise on the Port. In this training, we had 12 firefighters receive

their Texas Commission of Fire Protection (TCFP) Certification in Marine Firefighting. We also had two of our Battalion Chiefs trained and certified as Hazardous Material Technicians, along with three Firefighters receiving their Commission Certified Drivers / Operators certification.

We have also participated in a pilot officer exchange program with neighboring departments, including Bryan, College Station, Taylor and Nacogdoches. This program allows officers from different departments to work alongside their peers to see how other departments operate in emergency situations, as well as day to day activities. The goal is to bring back fresh ideas to improve operations in their own department. This program turned out to be extremely beneficial to our department. We are looking forward to expanding this program to include additional departments throughout the state in 2015. The Galveston Fire Department also started using the Digital Combustion Program. This new training program, purchased in

2014 with FEMA funds, allows us to simulate live fire training without leaving the classroom. We take pictures of structures around the community and load them into the program. This program allows us to add smoke, fire, and rescue situations to the structure. We project this image on a large screen. The Firefighter then runs through the scenario as if it were an actual scene. The program allows us to either resolve the situation or make it worse, depending on the decisions that are being made by the firefighter who is training. The Digital Combustion Program has been a great asset to our training division.

The Galveston Fire Department has three shifts, with each shift split into two divisions, having approximately 18 firefighters in operation per division. The two Battalion Chiefs on each shift manage three stations a

For example, on A-Shift, we have BC-1A, who manages Stations 1,2, and 5. And there is also BC-4A on A-Shift, who manages Stations 4, 7, and 8. Listed below is a breakdown of the amount of hours spent training within each Battalion Chief's division in the Galveston Fire Department.

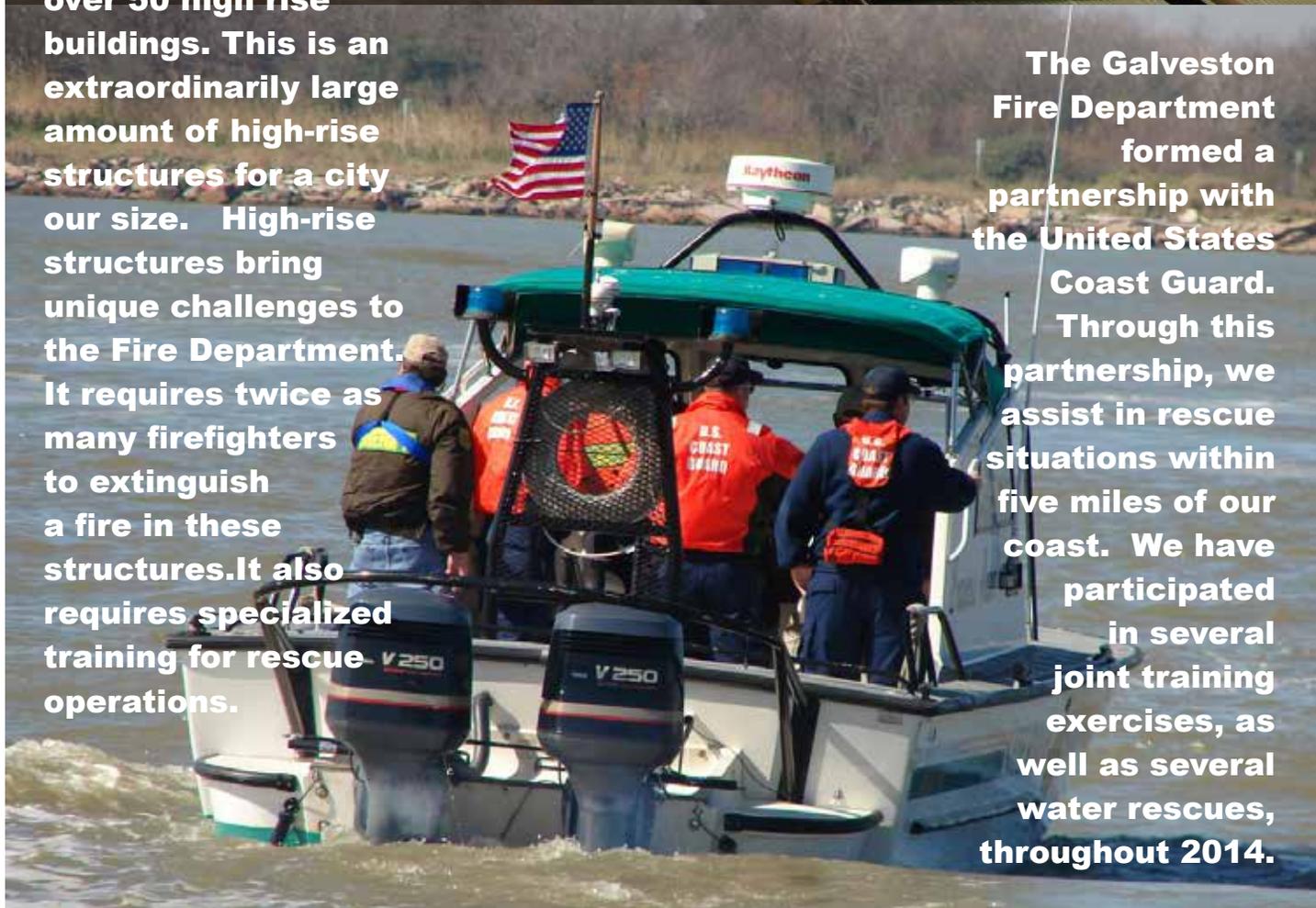
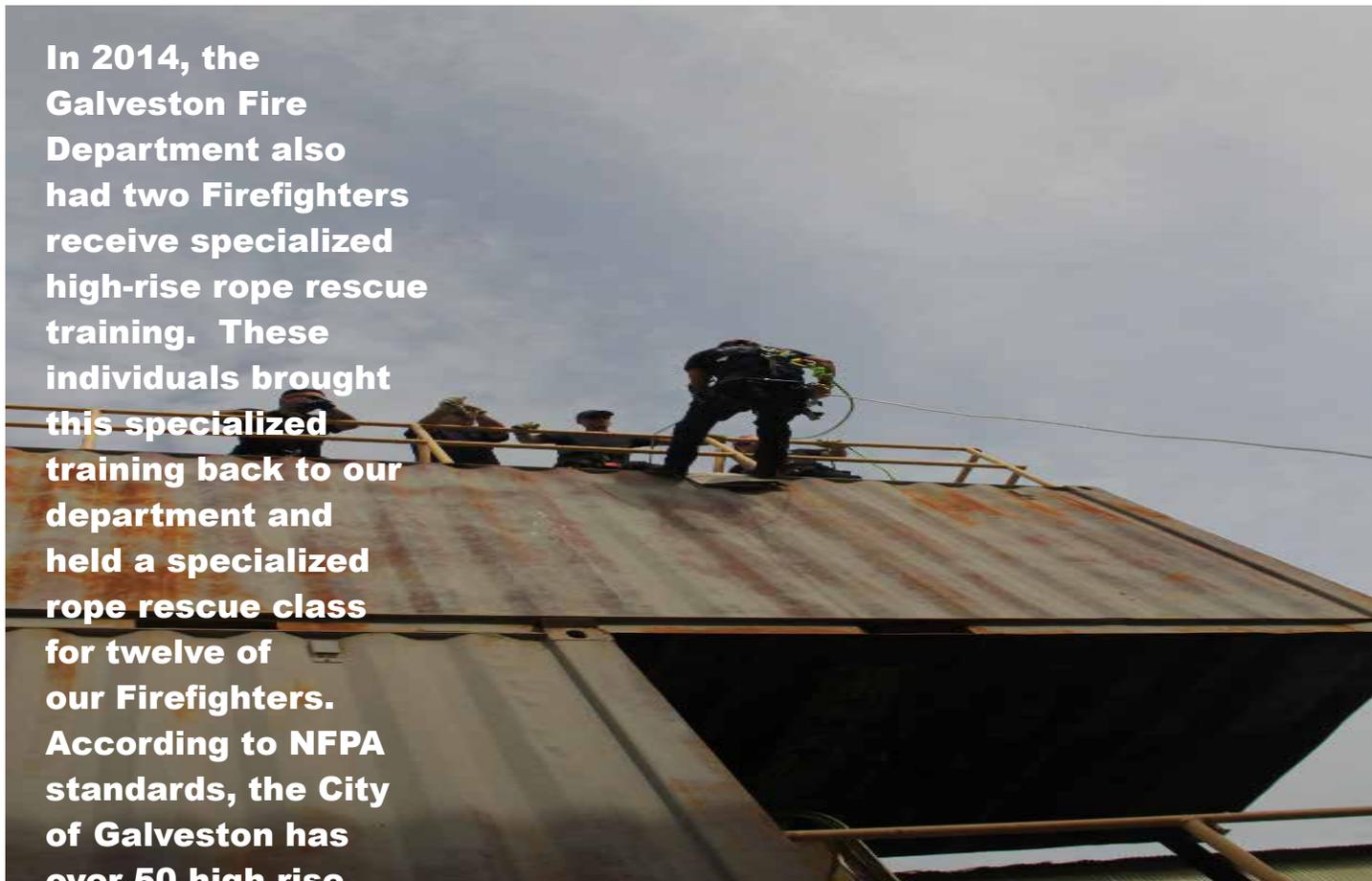


# TRAINING



**In 2014, the Galveston Fire Department also had two Firefighters receive specialized high-rise rope rescue training. These individuals brought this specialized training back to our department and held a specialized rope rescue class for twelve of our Firefighters. According to NFPA standards, the City of Galveston has over 50 high rise**

**buildings. This is an extraordinarily large amount of high-rise structures for a city our size. High-rise structures bring unique challenges to the Fire Department. It requires twice as many firefighters to extinguish a fire in these structures. It also requires specialized training for rescue operations.**



**The Galveston Fire Department formed a partnership with the United States Coast Guard. Through this partnership, we assist in rescue situations within five miles of our coast. We have participated in several joint training exercises, as well as several water rescues, throughout 2014.**



In 2014, as part of our commitment to the GMR program. The Galveston Fire Department, along with Galveston Beach Patrol, the Galveston Police Department, and the Galveston County Sheriff's Department, participated in a mass casual training exercise in Offatts Bayou. It is important to be prepared to work and communicate alongside other agencies should a large scale incident occur.

**TRAINING**



# TRAINING



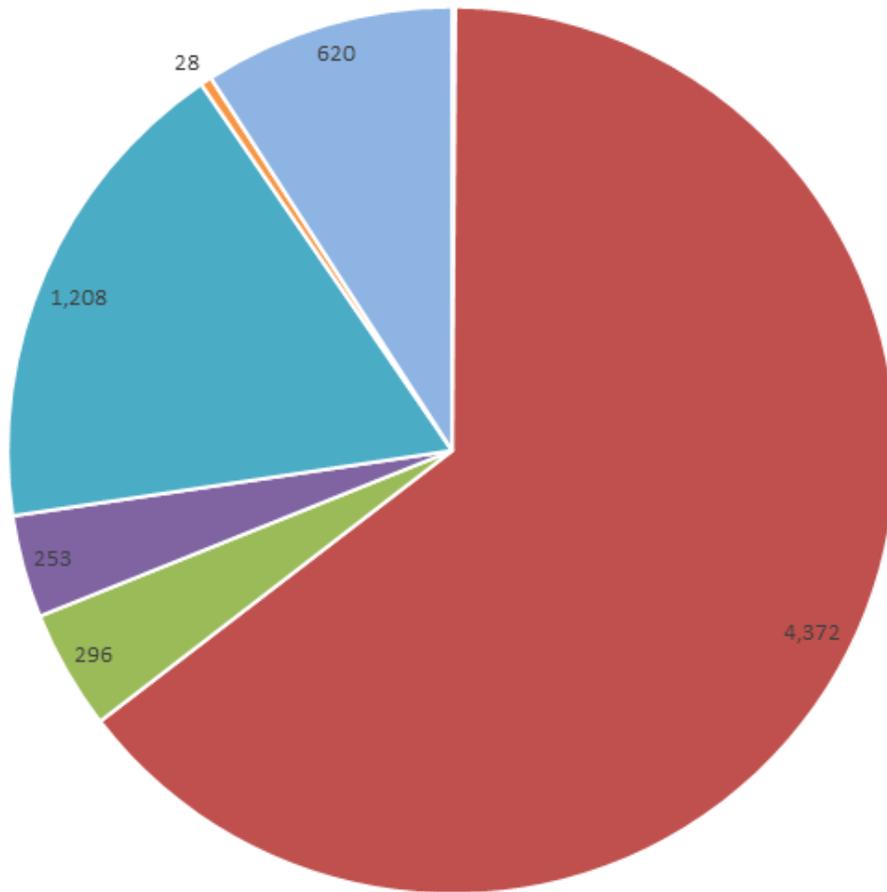
<b>A-Shift:</b>	<b>BC-1A: 6,873 hours</b>	<b>BC-4A: 4,723 hours</b>
<b>B-Shift:</b>	<b>BC-1B: 5,421 hours</b>	<b>BC-4B: 3,534 hours</b>
<b>C-Shift:</b>	<b>BC-1C: 6,319 hours</b>	<b>BC-4C: 4,069 hours</b>

Listed below is a breakdown of some of the Continuing Education hours, as well as specialized training, that the Firefighters received in 2014.

- Forcible Entry ..... 272 hours
- Fire Officer Development ..... 203 hours
- District Familiarization & Emergency driving ..... 4,412 Hours
- Professional Development ..... 707 Hours
- Apparatus Check..... 517 Hours
- Fire Apparatus & Equipment ..... 7,515 Hours
- Self Contained Breathing Apparatus ..... 332 Hours
- Building Construction ..... 385 Hours



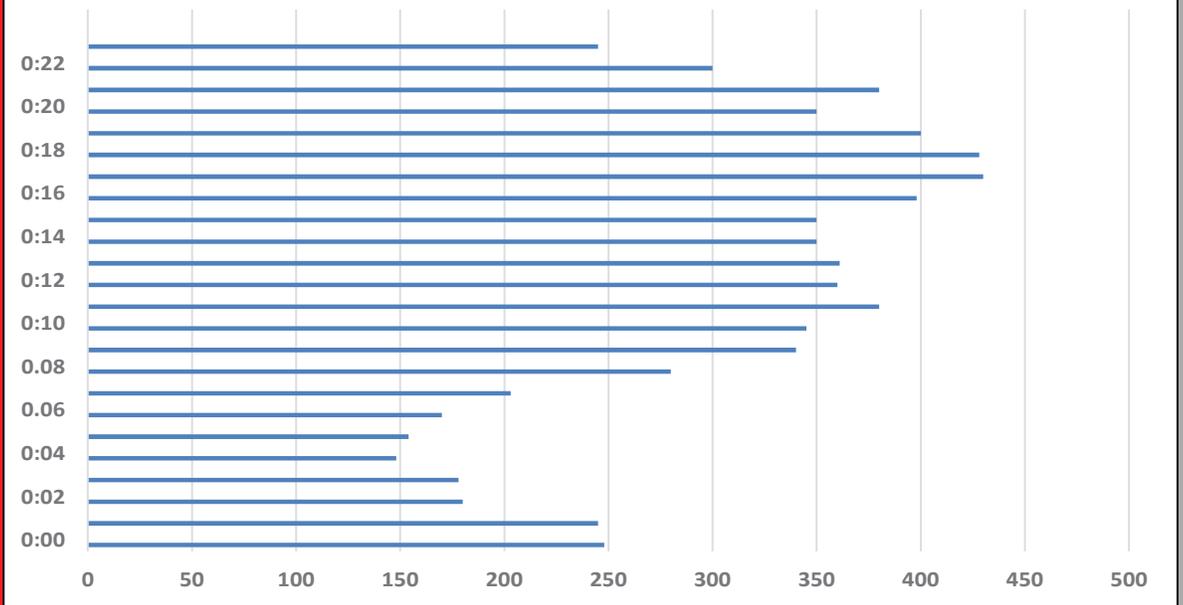
## Galveston Fire Department Summary By Incidents



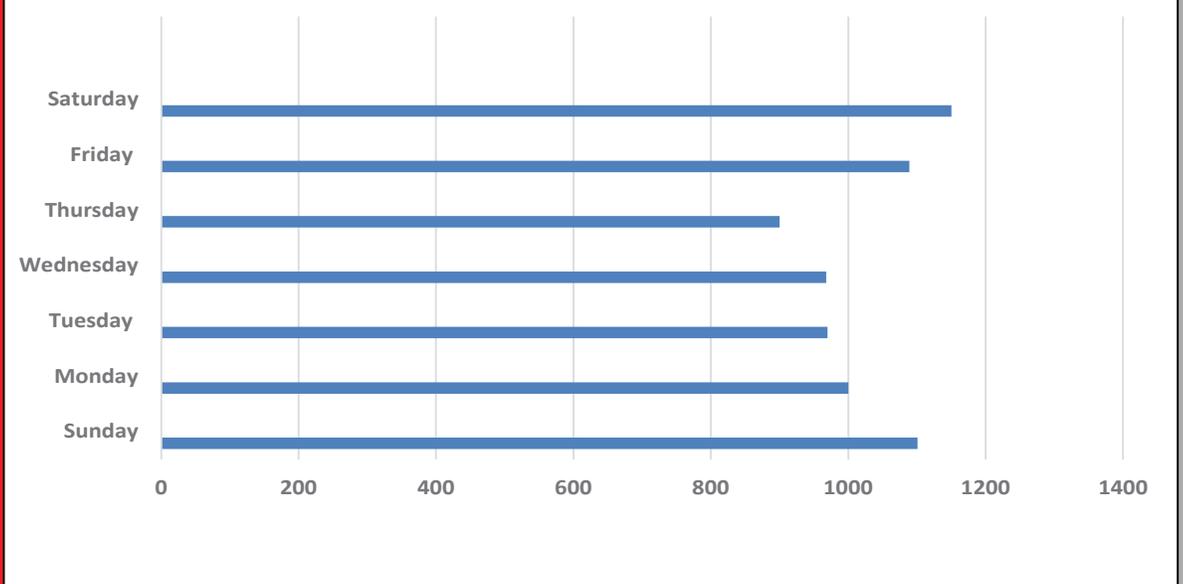
- Fires
- Hazzardous Condition Calls
- Good Intent
- False Alarms
- Rescue Calls
- Service Calls
- Special Incidents



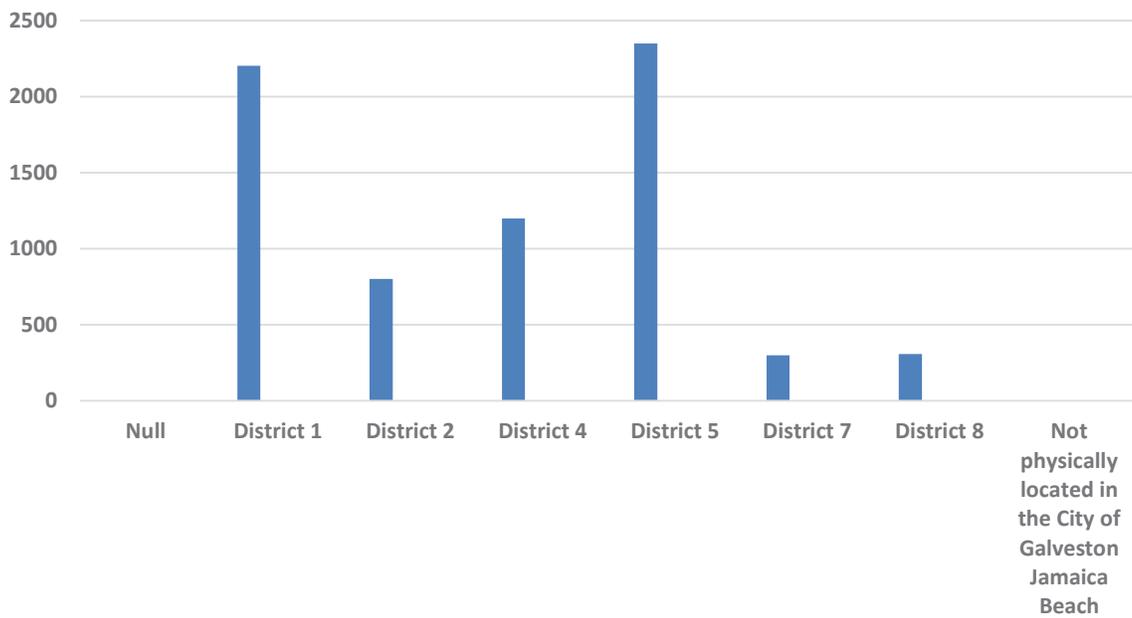
### Total Incidents by Hour of the Day



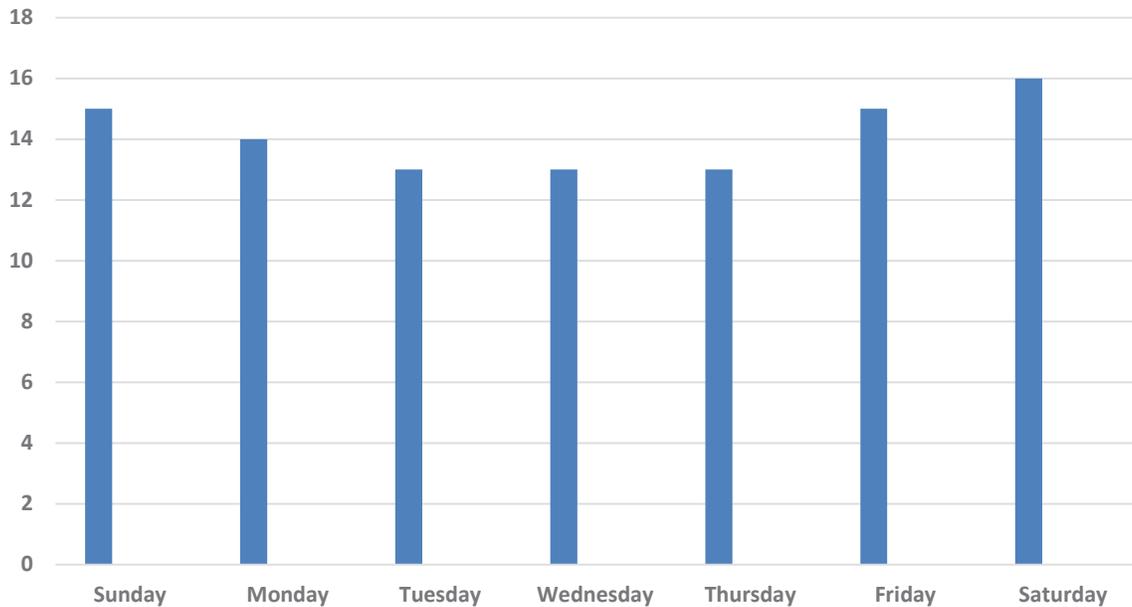
### All Incidents by Day of the Week



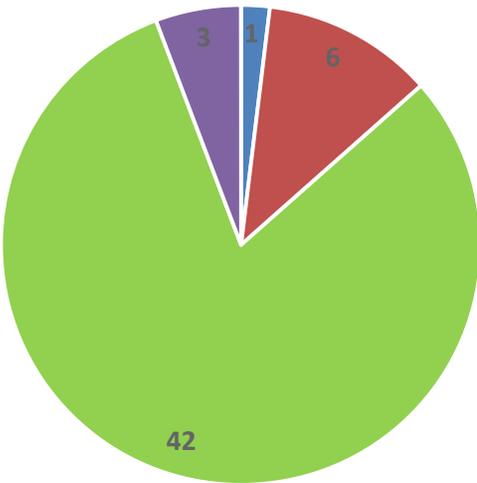
### Incidents by Districts



### Incident Responses by Day of the Week

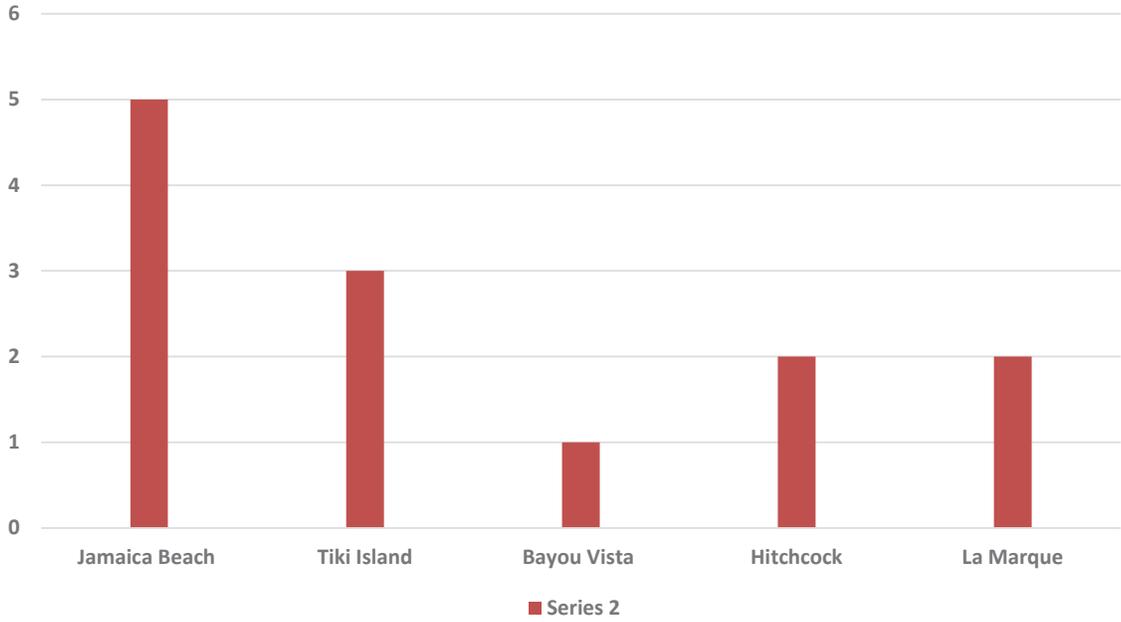


### Special Operations Responses

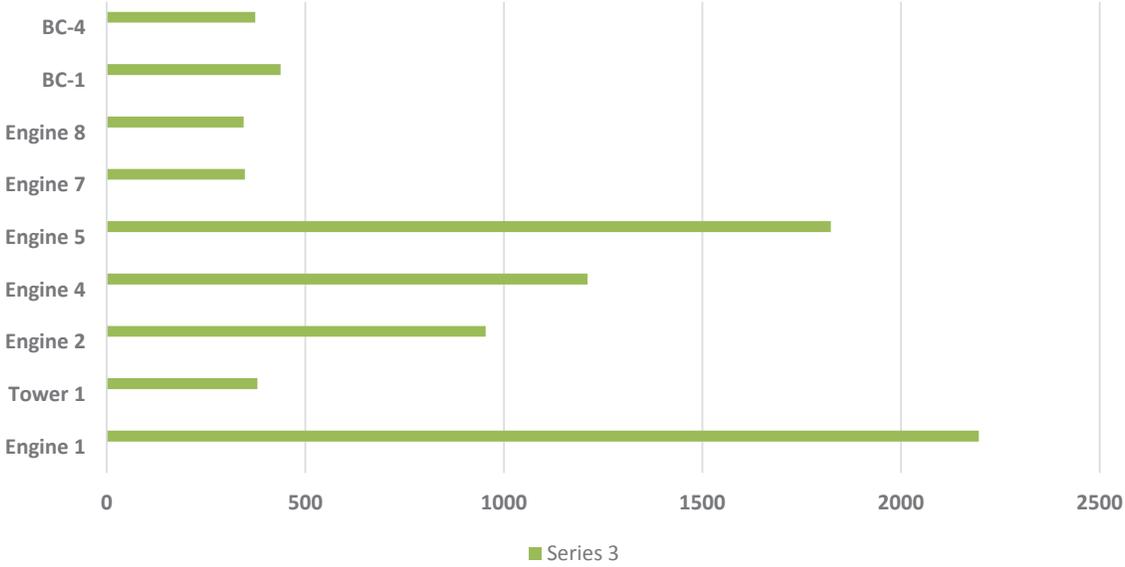


■ Brush 2 ■ Brush 5 ■ Brush 8 ■ Marine 5

### Mutual Aide Calls



### Apparatus Responses



# IMPROVEMENTS



Several improvements were realized during 2014. Many have been addressed in previous pages but we wanted to report and explain all of our improvements which have aided us in providing a better service to our residents.

## **I-PADS**

In February we were able to purchase 13 I-Pads for use in our daily operations. At the time, the Fire Inspectors were already using I-Pads for commercial business inspections. This change had resulted in improved our overall time required per inspection. The inspectors are able to input the information and clear the inspection while on site.



By placing I-PADS on every fire apparatus, personnel now have access to critical information including maps, pre-fire plans and hazardous material information while responding to an incident.

Another capability these I-PADS offer us are through an APP known as Active 911. With each I-PAD equipped with this app, we now have an alternate means of alarm in the event of a radio system failure or other unforeseen circumstances. These I-PADS also give firefighters the ability to obtain information and complete reports using our Firehouse reporting system while in the field, similar to what the Inspectors have been doing for a few years.

## **Firehouse Reporting System**

This computer based reporting system was initially implemented in 1998. It has been used for all incident, training and inspection reporting as well as personnel information. In 2014, we began using several additional features which have enabled us to minimize paper usage and storage. We can track all staffing schedules and changes, fire hydrant information, equipment inventory, tracking of all daily activities and pre-fire planning.

## **Operations Manual**

GFD is governed by several State statutes, City ordinances, policies, Standard Operating Procedures and a Collective Bargaining agreement. In an effort to streamline the process of learning and reviewing these documents, we created a GFD Operations

Manual that contains all of the documents needed to know our job. Each Fire station and Department Division has one of these Operations Manuals and they can be easily located for review by all personnel at any time.

One of the goals of Fire Administration is to update all GFD Policies and SOP's annually or as needed.

### New Trucks



In 2014, GFD took delivery of two 2014 Spartan fire pumpers. These trucks carry 800 gallons of water and has a pump capable of pumping 1500gpm. These trucks were placed in service in July as Engine 1 & Engine 5. Since 2007, GFD has been a participant in the Texas Intrastate Fire

Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS) program. Unfortunately, we were the first to use the system in 2008 as a result of Hurricane Ike but since then, we have responded to major incidents across the State of Texas including the 2011 wild fires in Bastrop & Magnolia. In August of 2013, we accepted a Type III (Brush Truck) through the same grant program that brought us a Type VI. This gives us two Brush trucks that can

be used for fires here on the Island and when requested, a deployed across the state with GFD personnel staffing them.

IMPROVEMENTS



# LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIPS



## Operations Committee

In August of 2013, we created a committee of ten firefighters to review our current policies & procedures. The goal is to ensure we not only have appropriate procedures that will ensure safe practices but also that we have up to date practical and accurate policies that allow our personnel to accomplish their duties effectively.



The Galveston Fire Department is the oldest career fire department in Texas having been created in 1843 as a volunteer fire company. In 1885, Galveston became the first paid fire department in Texas. We have had 32 fire chiefs, 12 were volunteers in the 1800's while the last 20 have been career Fire Chiefs. All have had the responsibility to lead us to where we are today but none could not have done any of it without the dedication and commitment of the Fire Officers and Firefighters serving our City. In 1948, Galveston voters approved Civil Service rules for Firefighters and Police officers. In 1983, the voters approved a referendum to allow for Collective Bargaining between the City

and the Unions representing the Firefighters and Police Officers.

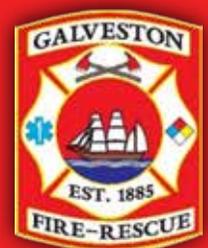
As a result of the public trust, Galveston Firefighters have played a key role in the overall service delivery and working conditions as they apply today. Just as in any family, there have been disputes and differences of opinions over the years but there has been great progress made and we continue to work together to make our fire department the best in the State.

Every month, members of Local 571 meet with members of Fire Administration to discuss anything/everything affecting the department. This open and honest relationship has proven beneficial in many areas. While Fire Administration sets policy & procedure, the members of the Local have to carry out these requirements on a daily basis. We have many smart, talented and dedicated people so it makes good sense to encourage them to participate in the decision making and management of the department.



The Executive Board for Local 571 is elected by the membership. Together, these individuals give a great deal of their personal time to ensure that the membership is represented respectfully day in and day out.

**LABOR/MANAGEMENT  
RELATIONSHIPS**



On August 1, we held our second annual ceremony at Moody Garden's Hotel. The event is intended to allow family and friends of the firefighters to come together and celebrate the retirement, appointment of new Firefighters, promotions, acts of heroism, service to the department and exceptional service the community in various ways.

### Retirements

35 Years



Battalion Chief Carl Glaze

36 Years



Captain Ed Schlitzberger

28 Years



Driver William Sowell

27 Years



Firefighter Mike Davison





### Promotion to Battalion Chief

Mel Rourke      Gary Staudt  
Tim Johnson      Chris Harrison  
Andy Bowen



GFD Pipes and Drum Corp

### Promotion to Captain

Daniel Martinez  
Paul Santucci  
James Williams

### Promotion to Driver

Kevin Johnson  
Mark Morgan Jr.



# AWARDS CEREMONY



## New Firefighters

Will Thompson

Cole Vallatini

John Luza

Justin Hooter

Patrick Watson

Robert Hooper

Tim Bergeron

Ryan Dunkerley

## Special Recognition



Battalion Chief Tom Winn  
recognized for his service as Interim Assistant Chief



Administrative Aid Trish Anderson  
recognized for her dedicated service to the department every day.



Chaplain Kelley Vaughan received his badge for his service as GFD Chaplain.



Galveston Fire Department Honor Guard



# AWARDS CEREMONY



### Service to Community

Captain Steve Feldman

Captain Jim Williams

Inspector Herman Hilton

### Multiple Commendations

Assistant Chief Charles Olsen

Fire Marshal Gilbert Robinson

Captain Joe Lloreda

Driver Brad Magness

Captain Paul Santucci

Driver James Short

Driver Dan Guidry

Driver Jay Jacob

Firefighter Nathan Vaughan

Firefighter Jonathan Cook

Firefighter Kevin Wright

Driver J.R. Urbina

### Service to Department

Battalion Chief Tom Winn

Battalion Chief Gary Staudt

Battalion Chief Andy Bowen

Battalion Chief Tim Johnson

Battalion Chief Chris Harrison

Battalion Chief Mel Rourke Jr.

Captain Mike Varela Jr.

Captain Paul Chide

Captain Richie Pearson

Captain Daniel Martinez

Driver Travis Hill

Driver Brian Lee

Firefighter Jimmy Wisner

Firefighter Andy Jefferies



## **2015 Goals**

**Adopt the 2012 International Fire Code**

**Achieve an improved ISO PPC Rating**

**Initiate a Company Pre-Fire Plan / Inspection Program**

**Increase staffing for Fire Marshal's Office and Fire Administration**

**Increase the level of professional development for our personnel.**







**Galveston Fire Department  
2517 Ball Street  
Galveston, Texas 77550**