



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

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WAKEFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT FOR AUGUST 2022

The Wakefield Fire Department responded to 369 emergency incidents during the month of August including 26 box alarms and 343 still alarms. The hot humid weather during the month of August created miserable and dangerous conditions for firefighting as the department responded to numerous incidents involving structure and outside fires. The department responded to eleven requests for mutual aid during August, six times to Saugus and once each to Chelsea, Lynnfield, Melrose, Malden and Reading. The department received mutual aid twenty-three times during the month of August, three times from Malden, twice each from Lynnfield, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Saugus, Stoneham and Woburn and once each from Burlington, Danvers, Lynn, Middleton, Wilmington and Winchester.

Firefighters from Engine 2 under Lieutenant John Mercurio covered a vacant Malden fire station during a multiple alarm fire in that city during the afternoon of August 3. Lt. Mercurio led another crew from Engine 2 that assisted the Melrose Fire Department at the scene of a working fire at 71 School Street during the early morning of August 6. A crew from Engine 2 under Lieutenant Erik Cole assisted the Saugus Fire Department at their structure fire at 251 Essex Street during the afternoon of August 8. A crew from Engine 1 under the direction of Lieutenant Cliff Silva assisted the Reading Fire Department at a three-alarm fire at 8 Sanborn Street during the afternoon of August 15. Deputy Chief Thomas Purcell also responded to this incident to assist the Incident Commander at the scene. Crews from Engines 1 and 2 assisted the Saugus Fire Department while they battled extensive brush fires inside Breakheart Reservation on August 16, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25. A crew from Engine 2 under the command of Lieutenant Michael Long covered a vacant Chelsea fire station during a 5-alarm fire in that city during the early morning of August 17. This same crew from Engine 2 under Lieutenant Long had previously assisted the Saugus Fire Department during the first night of the Breakheart brush fires earlier that same duty shift.

Firefighters under the command of Captain Brian Purcell responded to multiple calls for a house fire at 26 Eastern Avenue at 11:35 A.M. on August 5, 2022. Firefighters arrived within two minutes to find the home evacuated and heavy smoke and heat conditions on the second floor. Several attempts were made to advance hose lines into the second floor before zero visibility and heavy fire and heat conditions forced firefighters to withdraw from the residence. Captain Purcell ordered a second alarm at 11:50 A.M. due to the heavy fire conditions and the hot, humid weather, bringing engine companies from Reading, Stoneham and Melrose as well as a North Reading Ladder truck to the fire. Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Purcell assumed command of the incident and designated Captain Brian Purcell as the Operations Officer. A third alarm was requested at 12:06 P.M. followed by a fourth alarm at 12:56 P.M. to bring additional firefighters to the scene due to



the high ambient heat conditions and the need to rotate crews and rehabilitate them. This brought engine companies from Malden, Middleton, Saugus, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn as well as Ladder companies from Lynnfield and Malden to the fire scene. The fire extended inside concealed spaces in the second-floor knee walls before burning through a significant portion of the roof. The heavy fire conditions were extinguished by approximately 1:30 P.M. The entire second floor suffered heavy fire damage with the remainder of the home sustaining smoke and water damage. The residence was a total loss displacing a family of five until the residence can be rebuilt. Troopers from the State Fire Marshal's Office were requested to respond to the scene to assist local police and fire investigators determine the cause of the fire. Extensive investigation did determine the probable cause to be an undetermined electrical failure on the second-floor area where the occupants first reported seeing the fire. The exact appliance causing the fire could not be determined due to the extent of the damage in the suspected area of origin. One Wakefield Firefighter was treated for heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation and was transported to Lahey Burlington for follow-up care. He was released from the hospital later that day. A Danvers and Lynn engine company and a Burlington Tower Ladder covered Wakefield Fire Headquarters during the fire.

The department responded to a second structure fire requiring a multiple-alarm response during the morning of August 30 when the department received multiple calls for a house fire on Jackson Lane. Fire crews under the command of Captain John Walsh responded at 11:17 A.M. to find a single-family residence at 22 Jackson Lane with heavy smoke pouring from it and fire showing from the rear of the structure. Crews stretched several hose lines into and around the residence encountering high heat and heavy smoke conditions. Captain Walsh requested a second-alarm at 11:24 A.M. as the fire extended into the attic area of the home. Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Purcell responded to the scene and assumed command of the fire. Engine companies from Reading, Stoneham and Melrose responded to the fire as well as a North Reading ladder truck. A Lynnfield ladder truck and a Woburn Engine also responded to the scene as the hot humid temperatures required rapid crew change-outs and rehabilitation. A Saugus engine and a Malden Ladder covered Wakefield Fire Headquarters during the fire. A Wakefield Firefighter suffered from heat exhaustion during this fire and was transported to Lahey Burlington for follow-up medical care before being released later that day. Troopers from the State Fire Marshal's office were requested to the scene to assist local police and fire investigators in determining the cause of the fire. Investigators eventually determined that the probable cause for the fire was the accidental disposal of candles into a trash container that had not sufficiently cooled down. A family of four will be displaced from the home for an extended period until the home can be repaired.

The severe drought conditions existing throughout large sections of Massachusetts this summer finally took its toll on Breakheart Reservation as a large brush fire broke out near the Saugus entrance on the evening of August 16. Wakefield assisted the Saugus Fire Department at what eventually developed into a 2-alarm brush fire involving the response of many neighboring communities that night. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation assumed responsibility for what ended up being five separate brush fires inside Breakheart. A state-wide mobilization of various brush fire task forces was then put into place as part of the state's fire mobilization plan. These task forces consisted of communities that had small brush fire trucks with water tanks and water tankers that responded to Saugus on a rotating basis from dozens of communities throughout Massachusetts. This substantial mutual aid did not prove to be sufficient

and additional municipal departments using structural fire apparatus were sent to Breakheart Reservation including Wakefield starting on Sunday August 21. The Massachusetts National Guard was activated and utilized Blackhawk helicopters equipped with aerial water buckets capable of holding 660 gallons of water each drop. The Blackhawk made 29 separate drops on Sunday and an additional 74 drops on Wednesday August 24. Wakefield firefighters assisted the Saugus Fire Department on from August 21 through August 25 either assisting with helicopter operations at Walsh Field or with operating thousands of feet of fire hose into Breakheart Reservation along a stretch of Farm Street/Main Street near the Saugus DPW facility and solar panel fields. Both departments worked closely together to protect millions of dollars-worth of this solar equipment, which was the most significant property threatened by the brush fires. A total of five separate brush fires burned through Breakheart Reservation burning a total of 79 acres or more than 10% of the total area of the park. The brush fires burned into the ground destroying the shallow roots systems of many of the park's trees, rendering them very unstable and susceptible to collapse. The department was proud to be a part of such a unified effort to combat these fires, the largest that I have ever seen in the reservation. The cause of the fires is under investigation by the Massachusetts State Police and are considered to be suspicious in origin. Recent heavy rains have helped to extinguish hundreds of hot spots that have burned into the ground as much as 18 inches deep.

Wakefield Firefighter John Carano graduated from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Recruit Training Class 303 on August 5, ironically the same day and start-time as the 4-alarm fire at 26 Eastern Avenue. He was assigned to Group 4 under Captain Paul Pronco. Recruit Firefighter Benjamin Tomsyck was sworn in as a Wakefield Firefighter on August 3 and immediately began his 10-week training program with Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Recruit Training Class 305 on August 4 with an anticipated graduation date of October 21, 2022.

All groups attended medical classes as part of their Emergency Medical Technician certificates. Department members continued their annual in-service business inspections of commercial properties. Training by several groups was also conducted during August at Crystal Lake at the Wakefield DPW water department pumping station. The training involved various pumping evolutions including drafting water from Crystal Lake. The groups also trained on the proper use of and handling of ground ladders during August. A crew from ladder 1 visited the Kindercare facility at 607 North Avenue on August 2 where they assisted the children wash their fire truck. Chief Sullivan gave a safety talk to the residents of the Harts Hill Heights assisted Living facility at 50 Harts Hill Road on August 4. The Wakefield Cooperative bank generously donated ice cream to first responders at the Public Safety Building via an ice cream truck on August 10.

INCIDENT RESPONSE REPORT FOR AUGUST 2022

<u>BOX ALARMS</u>	26
<u>STILL ALARMS</u>	343
<u>TOTAL ALARMS</u>	369

EMERGENCY MEDICAL / MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT RESPONSES	250
ALARM MALFUNCTIONS / ACCIDENTAL ALARMS	46
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE / SERVICE CALLS	21
INVESTIGATIONS / SMOKE GAS ODORS	15
ELECTRICAL EMERGENCIES	2
APPLIANCE FIRES / EMERGENCIES	0
MUTUAL AID RESPONSES	11
STRUCTURAL FIRES	2
HEATING SYSTEM EMERGENCIES	0
WATER EMERGENCIES	4
BRUSH / GRASS FIRES	5
MOTOR VEHICLE FIRES	0
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS	1
FALSE ALARMS	1
CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR INVESTIGATIONS	6
RESCUE RESPONSES	5
RUBBISH FIRES	0

FIRE PREVENTION REPORT AUGUST 2022

SMOKE DETECTOR CERTIFICATE INSPECTIONS	55
OIL BURNER PERMITS ISSUED	12
OIL STORAGE PERMITTED (GALLONS)	2770
PROPANE GAS PERMITS ISSUED	7
SPRINKLER SYSTEM INSPECTION / SERVICE PERMITS ISSUED	4
FIRE ALARM SYSTEM INSPECTION / SERVICE PERMITS ISSUED	12
NEW FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM PERMITS ISSUED	11
TANK REMOVAL PERMITS	10
BLASTING & FIREWORKS PERMITS ISSUED	0
CUTTING & WELDING PERMITS ISSUED	2
FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS STORAGE PERMITS ISSUED	3
FIRE ALARM ACCEPTANCE TESTS	16
FIRE INSPECTIONS RELATED TO STATE/LOCAL LICENSING	10
COMPLIANCE INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED BY FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER	32
FIRE PREVENTION COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS	2
SETS OF CONSTRUCTION PLANS REVIEWED	10
CONSTRUCTION SITE INSPECTIONS	6
BURNING PERMITS	0