

TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

FIRE DEPARTMENT

WAKEFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT FOR JANUARY 2023

The Wakefield Fire Department responded to 352 emergency incidents during the month of January 2023, including 19 Box alarms and 333 still alarms. The Department responded to three requests for mutual aid during January to the towns of Lynnfield, Reading and Stoneham. The Department received mutual aid eleven times during the month from the communities of Lynnfield, Reading, Woburn, Melrose, Saugus, Stoneham, and Middleton Fire Department(s).

On January 20th the Stoneham Fire Department requested mutual aid as all their companies were tied up at emergencies. Wakefield Engine 2 responded with a crew consisting of Lieutenant J.T. Mercurio, Nolan Curran and Sam Carr direct to a call for medical aid at 13 Broadway in Stoneham and returned upon completion of service. On January 21st Wakefield Engine 1, consisting of a crew of Acting Lieutenant Chris Sullivan, Rusty Ricker, and Kevin Wesley, covered Lynnfield South station during a working fire at 6 Todd Lane in that community. Later in the day Wakefield Engine 1, with the same crew, responded to the Town of Reading to cover fire headquarters on their working building fire. The fire was contained in short order and crews returned to Wakefield.

On January 4th, 2023 Group 2, under the command of Captain Brian Purcell, responded to a serious motor vehicle accident at Avon and North Avenue. Wakefield Engine 1 and Ladder 1 assisted in emergency operations. (1) occupant was treated at the scene and transported to the hospital. Unfortunately, the seventy-eight-year-old female, transported to the hospital, later succumbed to her injuries sustained in the accident.

On January 6th, Group 4, under the command of Captain Paul Pronco, responded to multiple reports of a vehicle fire on route 128 – I95. Companies arrive to find a vehicle fully involved in fire in the breakdown lane. Companies quickly extinguished the one car fire. Reading Fire department also responded to the incident.

During the afternoon hours of Sunday January 15th, Captain Paul Pronco and Group 4's Engine 1 Ladder 1 and Car 3 responded to the intersection of Cedar Street and Prospect Street after a report from the Wakefield Police of a serious motor vehicle accident with an unresponsive occupant entrapped. On arrival, companies found a 2 car MVA with the operator of (1) vehicle conscious and alert but entrapped within the vehicle. Ladder 1 crews worked quickly, using the jaws of life to remove the vehicle door(s), to free the lone female occupant with companies administering initial first aid upon her successful extrication. A Lynnfield ALS unit responded mutual aid, assisted, and transported the injured individual to Lahey Hospital.

Chief of Department Michael J. Sullivan is utilizing Family Leave for a period beginning on January 17th at 1700 hrs. In his absence the following have been promoted via HRD-Civil Service on a temporary basis until Chief Sullivan returns to full duty. Deputy Chief Thomas M. Purcell has been promoted to Provisional Chief and will oversee the Fire Department. Captain Brian Purcell has been appointed Acting Deputy Chief and moved from Shift Command to the fire department administrative office(s), Lieutenant Sean Curran was appointed Acting Captain-Shift Commander of Group 2, and Firefighter Gerald Sancinito



has been appointed Acting Lieutenant on Group 4. The Department had one additional member utilize FMLA prompting the Department to promote Firefighter Jonathan Murphy to Acting Lieutenant of Group 1. The temporary promotion & appointment(s) have all been made in order to preserve the continuity of operations as well as maintain the appropriate level of command staff within the Wakefield Fire Department's incident command structure.

A significant event occurred on the evening of January 19th, at approximately 2247 hours, Car 3, Engine 1, and Ladder 1, under the command of Captain John Walsh, responded to a report from the Massachusetts State Police of a "motor vehicle into the guardrail" in the area of Exit 59 north-bound on Interstate 95 – Route 128. On arrival Captain Walsh reported (1) motor vehicle had skid on the ice, off the highway and was hung up on the guardrail. The lone occupant had self-extricated and refused medical treatment. Crews immediately identified the vehicle as a Tesla – Model S electric vehicle. The Engine 1 crew of Lieutenant Erik Cole, FF Rusty Ricker and FF Kevin Wesley quickly deployed an 1 ¾ hose line as a precaution while the Ladder 1 crew consisting of Lieutenant Gary Hill, FF Chris Sullivan and FF Darren Stead, stabilized the vehicle and utilized metal cutting saws to remove a portion of the guardrail in order for the vehicle to be safely removed from the highway. The guardrail had pierced the vehicles battery compartment, located within the undercarriage of the vehicle, but was stable at this point. Once the guardrail was cut away, during the vehicle removal operation by a privately contracted tow company, the battery compartment burst into flames and "thermal runaway" of the lithium-ion batteries initiated.

Shift Commander Walsh notified dispatch to "transmit the box" and fill out the full 1st alarm assignment sending Wakefield Engine 2 direct to the accident scene with Acting Lieutenant Jon Murphy, FF Joe Nee, and FF Sam Carr on-board. Due to department training and recent reports of similar electric vehicle fires across the country, Shift Commander Walsh was aware that extinguishment of an EV lithium ion battery involved in fire could potentially take thousands of gallons of water and hours to extinguish. No hydrants are readily accessible on I-95 so mutual aid companies were summoned to set up and initiate a water shuttling operation in order to obtain a continuous water supply to Wakefield Engine 1 for fire extinguishment. A Lynnfield engine company arrived in short order along with Lynnfield Fire Chief Glenn Davis, providing valuable assistance to operating companies. Wakefield Engine 1 and Ladder 1 crews stretched (3) handlines flowing heavy water in an attempt to extinguish the fire. Once fire appeared to be extinguished and all hand lines were shut down, the fire would inevitably re-ignite, reaching temperatures upwards of 2000 degrees far exceeding that of a normal vehicle fire, exuding numerous toxic fumes. All crews operating at the scene wore full personal protective gear including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

Provisional Chief Thomas Purcell arrived on scene and assumed command of the overall incident with Captain Walsh assuming operations. Communities from Reading, Stoneham, Lynnfield, and Melrose responded to the vehicle fire, via mutual aid, providing needed engine companies for the water shuttling operation as well as man-power at the scene. A Middleton tanker greatly assisted the water supply effort, carrying 2500 gallons of water on-board, and a Saugus Engine company provided coverage at the Wakefield fire headquarters. Lynnfield crews, assisted by Wakefield Car 6, were eventually able to lay 1500' feet of 4" inch supply line to provide continuous water supply from a hydrant on Vernon Street toward the Lynnfield line. This strategy allowed companies to initiate operation of a "blitz attack gun", pouring copious amounts of water directly on the impinged battery compartment in addition to the other (3) handlines operating on the fire. Two and a half hours and some 20,000 gallons of water later the fire was extinguished with readings on multiple thermal imaging cameras showing temperature reduction down to 40 degrees Fahrenheit within the lithium ion battery compartment.

A tier 1 hazardous material response was requested by Chief Purcell from the Massachusetts State Haz-Mat Unit and the Environmental Protection Agency was contacted. Department of Transportation and Mass Highway were on scene providing support as operations were conducted in a heavy snow squall with 3-5" of snow accumulating during the height of the incident. Massachusetts State Police had the highway shut down and traffic limited to one lane. The State Haz-Mat unit arrived on scene assisting with loading and removal of damaged hazardous lithium ion batteries and overseeing the vehicle removal. Wilmington fire was notified, as a precaution, that the vehicle was removed and would be stored in a tow yard within their town border.

Lithium-ion batteries have been reported to reignite as long as 24 hours after initial extinguishment. Mutual aid companies were released, and Wakefield companies cleared the scene. The incident garnered national attention with multiple requests for information on the strategy and tactics the department employed during mitigation of the emergency. Fire departments across the country are just now learning how best to deal with the hazards associated in fighting EV's fires involving lithium-ion batteries and the safest, most effective, methods in dealing with electric vehicle emergencies. The department reports that no injuries were sustained during mitigation of the incident.

During the afternoon hours of January 22nd State Police reported a roll-over, on Interstate 95 northbound, to Wakefield fire department dispatch. Companies responded, under the direction of Captain Paul Pronco, with Car 3, Engine 1 and Ladder 1 responding to the area of exit 60 north-bound. On arrival 5 vehicles were found to be involved. A commercial box truck had rolled over and landed on the hood of another passenger vehicle. Massachusetts State Police shut the entire North-bound side of 1-95 – Route 128 down as Wakefield firefighters conducted emergency operations. (3) ALS units were summoned to the scene including mutual aid response from a Woburn Fire ALS unit. The Engine 1 crew stretched an 1 ¾ hand line as a pre-caution while Ladder 1 worked to evaluate patients with responding ambulance crews. Three individual(s) were provided medical attention and transported to area hospitals. The incident took over an hour until companies could return to service and for the highway to be re-opened.

On January 27th at approximately 0907 hours, the department was notified by the Wakefield Police Department of "shots fired" in the area of 12 Crescent Hill – less than a block from fire department headquarters. Shift Commander Captain John Walsh elevated fire companies to high alert status, staging on the ramp at fire headquarters, awaiting orders from Wakefield Police. According to Wakefield Police Chief Steven Skory, after discharging multiple gun shots into a parked car in the Crescent Hill area, a male suspect then immediately fled the scene via motor vehicle and was apprehended and taken into custody on North Avenue by his department. Fire companies were able to stand down. The incident and possible motive remain under investigation according to the Wakefield Police Department.

All department members completed online "Conflict of Interest" training required by the Town and by the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission. Members also continued the ongoing, required Emergency Medical Technician training during the month of January. All groups also reviewed department standard operating guidelines regarding "Ice & Water Rescue".



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

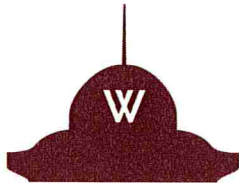
FIRE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENT RESPONSE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2023

<u>BOX ALARMS</u>	19
<u>STILL ALARMS</u>	333
TOTAL ALARMS	352

EMERGENCY MEDICAL / MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT RESPONSES	29
ALARM MALFUNCTIONS / ACCIDENTAL ALARMS	16
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE / SERVICE CALLS	15
INVESTIGATIONS / SMOKE GAS ODORS	13
ELECTRICAL EMERGENCIES	1
APPLIANCE FIRES / EMERGENCIES	1
MUTUAL AID RESPONSES	3
STRUCTURAL FIRES	0
HEATING SYSTEM EMERGENCIES	1
WATER EMERGENCIES	1
BRUSH / GRASS FIRES	0
MOTOR VEHICLE FIRES	3
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS	1
FALSE ALARMS	0
CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR INVESTIGATIONS	6
RESCUE RESPONSES	1
RUBBISH FIRES	0





January 2023 Permitting Recap

- Smoke/Co = 16
- Oil Burner = 4
- Tank Install = 9
- Tank Removal = 12
- Flammable Liquid = 1
- Propane = 0
- Fire System Repair = 21
- System Installation = 1
- Blasting = 0
- Transfer Tank = 0
- Cutting = Welding = 0
- Oxy Acetylene = 0
- Burning Permit = 0
- FD Plan Review = 7

