

## **BENSENVILLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT # 2 CHIEF MICHAEL F. SPAIN**

*“THE FIRE SERVICE IS AMERICA’S FIRST RESPONDERS-THE NATION’S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE, NATURAL DISASTER, MEDICAL EMERGENCY, TERRORIST ATTACK OR OTHER EMERGENCY IS AMERICA’S FIRE SERVICE”*

*FEMA/FEMSA GOV.AFFAIRS COMMITTEE 2010*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Bensenville Fire Protection District # 2 is part of MABAS 20 and MABAS 12 fire service organization of 36 fire departments and districts of Du Page and Cook Counties. MABAS 20 is comprised of the following: Bellwood FD, Bensenville FPD, Berkeley FD, Broadview FD, Elmwood Park FD, Franklin Park FD, Hillside FD, Itasca FPD, Leyden FPD, Maywood FD, Melrose Park FD, Northlake FPD, Norwood Park FPD, River Grove FD, Rosemont FD, Schiller Park FD, Stone Park FD and Westchester FD. MABAS 12 is comprised of Addison FPD, Bloomingdale FPD, Carol Stream FPD, Elmhurst FD, Fermilab FD, Glenside FPD, Hanover Park FD, Itasca FPD, Lombard FD, Oakbrook Terrace FPD, Roselle FD, Villa Park FD, Warrenville FPD, West Chicago FPD, Wheaton FD, Winfield FPD, Wood Dale FPD, York Center FPD.

The Bensenville Fire Protection District #2 is one of 1,200 fire agencies in the state of Illinois. Of the 1,200 fire service agencies, 85% of fire protection in the state is provided by Fire Protection Districts.

In Illinois, we currently have the most advanced auto and mutual aid program established. MABAS 20 is part of 102 MABAS divisions in Illinois. Additionally, Illinois has partners in Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri and Michigan. The MABAS organization was able to provide assistance with 990 personal and numerous fire vehicles for 6 weeks in New Orleans, when Hurricane Katrina hit without compromising the fire and emergency medical response in our communities.

Bensenville FPD employs (One) 1 Fire Chief, (three) 3 Battalion Chiefs, (three) 3 Lieutenants, (thirteen) 13 career firefighters paramedics, (twelve) 12 contract firefighter paramedics and a Director of Administration and Finance and an Administrative Assistant. Additionally we have 3 appointed Fire District Trustees and 3 appointed Fire District Commissioners.

### **WHAT IS THE COST PER CALL?**

Bensenville FPD is by far the most economical of the Fire Protection Districts. The Bensenville FPD’s cost per call is \$946.00 The highest cost per call in Dupage County is \$3,932.00 per call.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FIRE DEPARTMENT AND A FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT?**

In General, a fire department is part of a city or county government, funded through the city or county's general fund budget, derived from sales, property, and other taxes. They are overseen by the same municipal council that over sees all city departments.

A fire district is a "special" district independent of any city or county government, funded by a portion of the property tax. Fire Protection Districts are special taxing agencies falling under the Illinois compiled statute of SPECIAL DISTRICTS (70 ILCS 705/) Fire Protection District Act.

Fire Districts are overseen by a Board of Trustees and the Fire Chief. They are not part of any municipal or county government.

In November of 2006, Bensenville Fire Department was transitioned into The Bensenville Fire Protection District as a result of a successful referendum that passed in the Village of Bensenville thanks to the residents of the Village.

Since the transition, the Bensenville FPD was awarded three federal grants in which extrication equipment was modernized, new gear, small tools and new breathing equipment were purchased. The grants also paid for the officers to be Blue Card Certified (Advanced Incident Command Operations), and NIMS (National Incident Management System) certified and firefighters are now certified in higher level firefighter training and specialty training. A state grant was also awarded to replace all of the lighting of both stations to decrease energy usage.

Other improvements include a command structure which allowed for vacant officer positions to be filled, 80% of personnel are now paramedics, better service is being provided as a result of the engine responding with the ambulance doubling personnel on the scene to render aid and to safely transport the patient to the hospital. The District modernized the fleet and the stations instead of operating with leased and outdated equipment. Education advancements has resulted in 13 lives being saved from cardiac arrest or catastrophic trauma to date.

All of the changes that the district has undergone resulted in a significant increase of staff morale. The positive, new attitude of the staff changed the district's ability to make everything a success. Their willingness to adopt and participate in a strenuous physical fitness program enhanced our service to the community. They bought into career education/advancement programs; they took part in rigorous hands on training sessions; they willingly participated in the "return to work" hours; and they take great pride in the job they do and show it daily in their job performances. The Bensenville FPD became a district we all are very proud of.

## **WHY DO WE NEED THE FIRE SERVICE?**

A fire district is a key element of the basic infrastructure of any community. As a community grows and prospers, it seeks to attract businesses to that community. These businesses provide jobs and pay the largest share of the municipal tax base. A well-equipped and

properly trained professional fire district plays a vital role in attracting businesses to the community by keeping the cost of insurance low. Lower insurance rates equals more profit for businesses. It is more than money that underlies the need for a fire district. A fire district's first mission is life safety! That means protecting the citizens and guests of Bensenville by the best means possible. In light of this, the mission of the Bensenville Fire Protection District has changed over the past 20 years from only extinguishing fires to a wide range of disciplines: emergency medical services including advanced life support, hazardous material response, water and ice rescue, vehicle extrication, trench rescue, high angle and confined space rescue, aircraft rescue and firefighting, terrorism response and more. Lives are also saved through proactive measures: fire prevention programs in local schools and life safety programs throughout the community such as CPR certification classes and infant car seat installation checks.

### **WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE FIRE DISTRICT?**

Bensenville FPD continues to have our primary mission to provide our community with the highest trained and dedicated personal to insure your life safety is realized without you having to be concerned! That means protecting the citizens and guests of Bensenville by the best means possible.

### **WHAT IS THE NATIONAL STANDARD FOR FIRE DISTRICT RESPONSE?**

The National Fire Protection Association has hundreds of standards and unfunded mandates that are followed by communities nationwide. The standard that applies to fire district response to a structure fire is NFPA 1710. This standard states that for a single family dwelling fire the initial response should be 25 personnel within 8 minutes. The Bensenville Fire Protection District provides 10 personnel from 2 stations within 3 minutes 36 seconds, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Additionally we have auto aid agreements with Wooddale FPD, Elmhurst FD, Schiller Park FD, Northlake FPD, Leyden FPD, Franklin Park FD and Elk Grove Township FPD to name a few, for the emergency event, in order to meet and exceed this requirement. In the situation that the fire is commercial or industrial we will have more departments responding as warranted from the information we received via 911 and what we know from our pre-plans to be better able to meet the safety needs of the employees. In the situations where all of Bensenville FPD personnel are busy on other emergencies, we have surrounding fire departments/districts that will respond to our firehouse with vehicles and manpower to ensure that your safety is always maintained. Lastly, in 2010 the District responded to over 3,870 calls and in 2011 the District responded to 4,224 emergency response calls in the area covered by the fire district where the average response time was 3 minutes 36 seconds.

### **WHAT HOSPITAL CAN I BE TRANSPORTED TO?**

Bensenville Fire Protection District transports patients to the closest hospital in the cases of emergency. The hospitals that we respond to are the following: Elmhurst Memorial, Alexian Brothers Memorial Center, Loyola University Medical Center, Advocate Lutheran General Hospital and Gottlieb Memorial Hospital. In the situation that the above hospital is not the hospital of your choice, you will have to sign a medical release statement that you take

responsibility for not being transported to the closest hospital. Once the medical release statement is signed, we will transport you to any of the hospitals listed above. If the Hospital is not on the list above, then we would call a private ambulance provider to take you to the hospital of your desire.

### **HOW HOT CAN A FIRE IN MY HOUSE GET?**

Today's average temperature found in a single room (10 X 12) and contents fire is 1,200 to 1,500 degrees F at the ceiling and at least 400 to 700 degrees F at 24" from the floor. As a point of interest, our body temperature is 98.6 F. Also, a first-degree skin burn can occur when the skin reaches a temperature as low as 118 degrees F. Information from NIST report. A person in a fire without the proper fire protection gear and breathing equipment cannot live more than 2 minutes exposed to an environment of a temperature of at least 300 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **HOW MANY FIREFIGHTERS ARE HURT OR KILLED YEARLY?**

In 2011, 81 firefighters died in the line of duty and an estimated 81,070 are injured annually in the United States. This represents an almost seven percent decrease from the 87 fatalities reported for 2010.

Heart attacks were responsible for the deaths of 48 firefighters (59%) in 2011, nearly the same proportion of firefighter deaths from heart attack or stroke (60%) in 2010. Ten on-duty firefighters died in association with wildland fires, the lowest number of annual firefighter deaths associated with wildland fires since 1996. Fifty-four percent of all firefighter fatalities occurred while performing emergency duties. Only three firefighters were killed in vehicle collisions.

### **WHAT IS ISO AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT MY INSURANCE RATES?**

Whether we like it or not, paying for insurance is a fact of life. Homeowner and business insurance companies use many factors when determining the cost of your premiums. One major factor is the level of fire protection. Most insurance carriers use what is known as ISO to determine the quality of fire protection available and therefore establish insurance rates.

ISO stands for Insurance Service Organization. This is a group of trained, professional evaluators that assess almost every fire dept/district in the U.S. ISO uses a consistent set of guidelines to evaluate a fire department or district. ISO bases a fire departments or districts rating on many factors including the number of personnel on duty, training level of personnel, the amount of water the fire district can get to a fire, the amount and quality of equipment used (such as fire engines and hand tools), and fire district dispatching (evaluates the dispatch centers ability to handle 911 calls). The purpose of ISO is to give insurance companies a uniform system on which to base their insurance premiums.

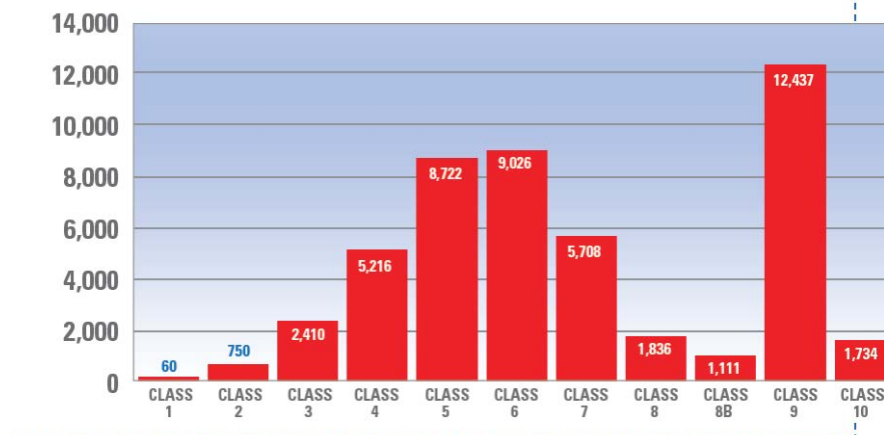
For an insurance company knowing the capabilities of a fire district is important. The better the fire district, the better protected a building is from fire damage and loss. The higher the

level of protection, the less likely an insurance company will have to reimburse a claim for fire damage. The fewer number of claims, the lower the cost for the insurance provider. Of course fire protection can work the opposite way. A sub-par fire department or district will have the potential to experience more fire losses. More fire losses means more insurance claims filed. In order to make costs meet, the insurance companies raise the premiums you pay. ISO gives a ranking of 1 to 10, with 1 being the best and 10 being no protection at all.

This year, the Bensenville Fire Protection District underwent a re-evaluation of the Department's Insurance Service Office (ISO) fire rating. The purpose of the re-evaluation is to rate the effectiveness of fire agencies to respond to and suppress fires. The fire insurance premiums of residential and commercial properties are based on the rating determined by ISO. The District's rating improved from a Class 4 to a Class 2 (on a 10 point scale as shown in the graph below with a rating of 1 being the best). As a result of the improved rating, the Bensenville Fire Protection District is among the top 2% of the fire departments and fire protection district in the United States. For more information please visit [www.isomitigation.com](http://www.isomitigation.com). Please check with your insurance agencies to see if there is a cost savings as a result of the improved rating.

### DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC PROTECTION CLASSIFICATION NUMBERS

The 2014 published countrywide distribution of communities by the Public Protection Classification number is as follows:



### **WHY DO FIREFIGHTERS WORK A 24 HOUR SHIFT?**

The bottom line -firefighters working a 24 hour shift saves the public money. This proven fact is the most efficient way to staff the fire district, which is why it is common nationwide. No schedule for career firefighters is more predominant. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) exempts firefighters from certain overtime rules. These exemptions allow firefighters to work their usual 24 hour shift at straight time wages. Other professions receive overtime wages during their normal 24 hour work period. 24 hour shifts provide the most personnel on duty with the fewest number of actual employees, saving personnel costs on health care and retirement. The average firefighter works 2,912 hours annually. This compares to the normal hours someone works in one year is 2,080. This means a firefighter works 832 hours more annually.

### **HOW DOES THE FIRE DISTRICT GET ALL OF THEIR NEW EQUIPMENT?**

Much of the capital equipment our fire district has purchased comes from the district's general fund. Some of the apparatus and equipment has come from grants awarded to the Bensenville Fire Protection District by the Federal Government; The Bensenville Fire Protection District has a variety of equipment to respond to many types of emergencies. This equipment includes engines (pumpers), aerials (ladder truckers), rescue truck, hazardous material truck, water rescue boats, protective clothing (turnouts) for firefighters, and a multitude of fire and rescue equipment. These grants have greatly enhanced our capabilities at minimal cost to residents of the Village. For example, the ladder truck purchase could cost up to 1.4 million, an engine up to \$700,000 an ambulance at \$275,000 and so on. The addressed costs do not include the equipment we carry. This cost is only for the vehicles. The Bensenville Fire Protection District has applied and received FEMA grants, we have received \$ 646,000.00 from United States District of Homeland Security through the State of Illinois

### **WHY DOES A FIRE TRUCK COME WHEN I CALLED FOR AN AMBULANCE?**

The Bensenville Fire Protection District tries to provide the best possible service to the citizens and visitors of Bensenville. Two of Bensenville's primary response vehicles are equipped with and staffed with personnel to provide Advanced Life Support services. Almost always, you will see an engine respond to a medical emergency along with an ambulance. There are two main reasons for this. Numerous times the ambulance can be delayed or unavailable because of other emergency calls they are responding to. The Bensenville Fire Protection District Fire district personnel respond in a fire engine or rescue truck on the average within 3 minutes and 36 seconds. The patient can be stabilized until an ambulance becomes available. The second scenario involves more critical patients who may be having a heart attack, difficulty breathing, or a severe traumatic injury. In these cases 2 personnel on an ambulance are not enough.

National standards recommend 4 personnel respond to provide care for people having heart attacks. The Fire District is staying proactive and trying to meet these National standards. We respond in fire apparatus so that if a fire or other emergency occurs while we are at a medical emergency, we do not have to return to the fire station to pick up equipment. This helps us respond to any incident as quickly as possible.

Lastly, it has been proven that if you have 4 personnel rather than 2 personnel to lift a patient into the ambulance, back injuries are reduced to "Zero" from 50 to 80%. This reduces our medical and potential pension issues. Since Bensenville Fire Protection District has started to send at least 4 personnel, we have had "ZERO" back injuries and we reduced our on scene by about 25%. Meaning the patient is delivered to the hospital in a more timely manner.

### **WHY DO MANY FIRE VEHICLES RESPOND TO A CAR ACCIDENT?**

The Bensenville Fire Protection District uses a nationally recognized and accredited dispatching system. This system determines what type of a response from the fire district is necessary based on information given to us by the person who calls 911. This system errs on the side of caution, ensuring that every resource that is needed responds to the emergency in a timely fashion. Often times, things are not as "simple" as they look. To ensure each member of the public receives the best possible care, we always anticipate the worst case scenario and hope for the best. Each fire vehicle has a specific purpose and carries specialized equipment. For a motor vehicle accident you will see an ambulance (perhaps two if multiple injuries are reported), a rescue truck which carries the "jaws of life" extrication tools and other special rescue equipment, a fire engine for manpower and in case the car catches fire, and a Battalion Chief and a Lieutenant to supervise the scene. This may appear to be a lot, but each is necessary to provide the consistent, professional service you expect and deserve. When it is a life and death scenario, and seconds count, you want all of the equipment immediately available.

In addition, we need to be able to block traffic so the accident victims and the firefighters are not hit by traffic driving by the scene.

### **WHY DO I SEE FIREFIGHTERS AT STORES WHEN THEY ARE WORKING?**

Firefighters work a 24 hour shift and must remain in the fire station or in a fire district vehicle available for emergency response at all times. Therefore, all of the firefighter's meals are eaten in the station. Firefighters are permitted to go to the store during the day to purchase items needed for these meals.

Many other times Bensenville Fire Protection District vehicles are at local businesses on official business such as doing pre-plans for the building, performing training or education, or even answering questions. There are many public services performed by your fire district on a daily basis. Finally, firefighters also routinely shop for needed fire district supplies and equipment in the Village of Bensenville when possible.

Take advantage of the fire district, stop by to interact with the firefighters to ask questions and get a tour of the fire vehicles and see what they are able to do at the scene of an emergency. Just don't be offended if they have to rush off in the case of an emergency. Simply leave and come back another time.

### **HOW DO THE FIREFIGHTERS SPEND THEIR DAYS? ARE THEY JUST SITTING AROUND WAITING FOR EMERGENCIES?**

Remember, the BFPD responds to far more than fires. The fire district responds to medical emergencies, they go on hazardous materials responses and all types of rescues. They even assist city residents and businesses to stop property loss after a ruptured pipe or water leak.

In addition to responding to over 4,200 calls per year, the fire district keeps busy with many other activities. When not responding to emergencies you may find us testing hose, testing our fire engine pumps, taking training classes (over 12,500 cumulative hours in 2011), cleaning the fire stations, maintenance and repairing of the buildings, washing the fire vehicles or out conducting fire prevention activities in the 6 elementary and one high school we protect. This in addition to developing pre-plans for emergency response in our industrial and business community.

### **HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A FIREFIGHTER?**

The Bensenville Fire Protection District has a rigorous testing process that includes the following requirements: The applicant must:

Must be between the age of 21 years and less than 35 years of age at time of hire unless previous firefighter experience (last 2 years) meeting statutory exceptions of 70 ILCS 705-16.06 or military at age 35 then less than 40 years of age.

Possess a valid Illinois driver's license.

Possess a Firefighter II (basic) certification from the State of Illinois.

Possess a Paramedic license from the State of Illinois.

Pass a candidate physical agility test.

Pass a written test.

Pass an oral interview



Then be placed of a list to be contacted when a position comes open

**Once offered a position the applicant must:**

1. Pass a medical exam under NFPA Standards
2. Pass a psychological exam.
3. Go through a complete background check.
4. In addition, once the applicant is hired they must pass a demanding twelve month probationary process.

THANK YOU FOR THE TIME TO LET THE FIRE DISTRICT PRESENT ANSWERS TO SOME OF THE MORE COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS. SHOULD YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT ME AT MY DIRECT OFFICE PHONE NUMBER: 630.594.1184.

**REMEMBER BE SAFE OUT THERE!**

Michael F. Spain, Fire Chief, Bensenville Fire Protection District

