
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSOULA RURAL FIRE DISTRICT



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Letter From the Chief

Citizens of the Missoula Rural Fire District, on behalf of the Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD), it is again my honor to present a year-end summary for 2025. Not unlike previous years, 2025 presented challenges and opportunities that the men and women of MRFD faced and conquered. The dedicated staff of MRFD continue to be the guidance of our successful organization.

2025 was recognized as a bit of an anomaly for MRFD. Our trend year after year has typically seen an increase in call volume. 2025 marked a 5% decline from 2024 with a total of 3,824 emergency calls answered. This decline can easily be attributed to the significant weather events of 2024, which had created an increase of over 100 calls in a single 24-hour period.

In 2025, the first ambulance in MRFD history was delivered and soon will be housed at Station 4 where a new bay is being constructed using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funding. MRFD was also fortunate enough to hire a full time Human Resources (HR) Director. Continued support from our community has allowed us to hire additional emergency response personnel through voted levies that lead to the point of a full time HR Director. At the end of 2025, we completed a rigorous site visit from a peer team representing the Commission of Fire Accreditation International that resulted in a recommendation for accredited status. We will appear before for the Commission in March 2026 and If approved, MRFD will be the first fire district in the state of Montana to reach the milestone of an accredited agency. This achievement will help build our future continuous improvement as the forethought in our decision-making process.

Externally, MRFD continues to build on existing relationships and explore new prospects as we continue to build out our automatic vehicle location (AVL) dispatching program that will ultimately lead to improved service delivery for the entire area. Barriers that have stood for decades continue to be challenged and broken down as we explore new opportunities to build a safer, more effective and more efficient service delivery.

In closing, and on behalf of all of the firefighters and staff of the Missoula Rural Fire District, it is our pleasure to serve and support the communities that have placed their ultimate trust in MRFD. We look forward to more great happenings in 2026.

Sincerely,

Paul Finlay

Paul Finlay

Fire Chief

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MRFD Historical Overview

In October 1963, MRFD opened the current Station #1 at 2521 South Avenue West. The cost of construction was \$39,000. This station was initially staffed with a paid firefighter whose role was to respond in the engine to the scene of a fire. Volunteers would then arrive on the scene in their personal vehicles to extinguish the blaze.



constructed the present-day Station #2 at 6550 US Highway 10 West in 1988.

In 1968, MRFD built and occupied a second fire station located on the Missoula County Airport grounds. This station provided aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) services to the airport and provided fire/rescue response to the surrounding residences and businesses. The arrangement lasted until 1977, when the Missoula County Airport Authority (MCAA) was formed. Rather than continue to contract with MRFD for ARFF services, the MCAA elected to create public safety officer positions to fill that need. As a result, MRFD moved off airport property and

In 1968, MRFD rented a building in the Rattlesnake Canyon for Station #3 on the corner of Lolo and Gilbert Streets. Staffing for that station was reduced in 1992 when most of the Rattlesnake area was annexed into the City of Missoula. In 1992, Missoula City and MRFD signed a joint contract to provide fire and emergency medical services (EMS) to the residents of the Rattlesnake. The building was rented and furnished by MRFD and was staffed on a 24-hour basis with a city firefighter. The agreement between the city and MRFD concerning fire protection in the Rattlesnake was terminated in December 1993. Resident and volunteer firefighters staffed the station until its closure on June 30, 1995. With most of the area annexed into the City of Missoula and the resultant decline of tax revenue, it was no longer cost-effective to keep the station open.

The Bonner/Milltown/Turah area joined the fire district in 1971, and Station #4 was opened in March. The building originally was an old combination store and gas station. Over the years, it was extensively remodeled to house 24-hour per day career and resident firefighters. When the community had a thriving lumber mill, it enjoyed a very active group of volunteer firefighters that augmented the paid staff. The old Station #4 has been sold and has been relocated approximately one mile west of its current location. The new Station #4 is located at 8511 Bonner Mill Road.

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The community of Lolo had a volunteer fire company dating back to the mid-1940s. Financial problems and lack of modern equipment encouraged the residents to petition into the MRFD in 1973. Station #5 was constructed at its present site near the Lolo Community Center that same year.

Station #6 was built at 8455 Mullan Road in 1982. The station was positioned to provide emergency services to the El Mar Estates neighborhood, the Mullan Road

corridor, and the communities on the north end of Big Flat Road.

The early 1990s were a difficult time for the fire district. Financial troubles, coupled with the passage of a constitutional initiative that hampered the ability of local governments to raise taxes, caused the district to eliminate several full-time firefighter positions. The district's taxpayers passed a levy a few years later that enabled those positions to be restored.

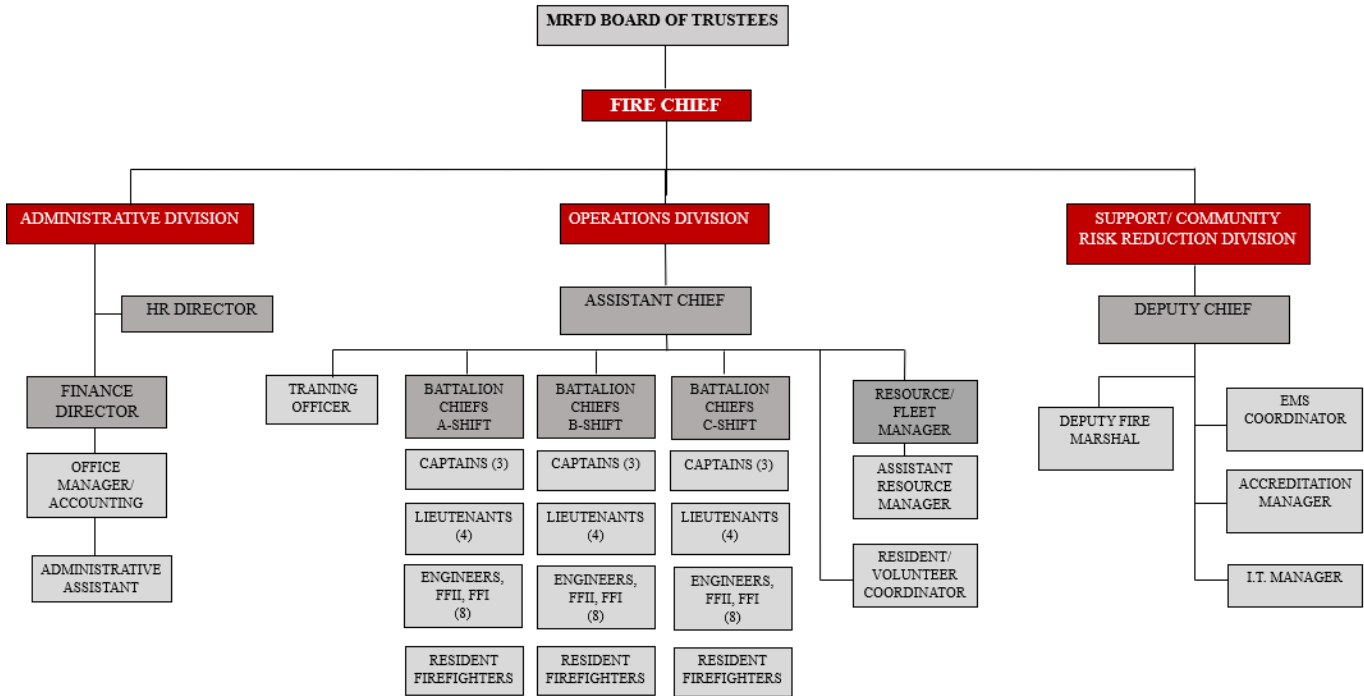


In 2014 and 2019, MRFD received the “Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response” (SAFER) grant. Voters of the district again supported permissive tax levies that will fund these positions after the grant funding expires.

What started as an all-volunteer agency has transformed into one of the largest combination fire districts in Montana. MRFD currently employs 51 career firefighter/EMS providers. Additionally, the district maintains a force of 12 “resident” (intern) firefighters and one volunteer. MRFD is overseen by a chief staff consisting of one fire chief, an assistant fire chief, and a deputy fire chief. The Operations staff is supported by a full-time training officer, EMS coordinator, resource manager, assistant resource manager, resident-volunteer coordinator, and accreditation manager. The Community Risk Reduction Division consists of one deputy fire marshal. The organization is also supported by a finance director, HR director, office manager/accounting assistant, and an administrative assistant. Overseeing the entire operation is the fire chief, who reports directly to the elected Board of Trustees. The district continually strives to make improvements and is positioned to continue its mission well into the future.

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Organizational Chart



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Retirements, Promotions, & New Hires

New Hires

Cameron Ostman - Firefighter
Avi Goodin - Firefighter
Garrett Graves - Firefighter
Brad Davis – Accreditation Manager
Jason Prinzing – Human Resources Director



Promotions

Jason Dufner – EMS Coordinator
Robb Hollenbeck – Captain Tyler
Loterbauer – Lieutenant



Retirements

Jim Critchlow - 26.9 Years of Service Volunteer
Rob Ellis - 24.9 Years of Service Volunteer



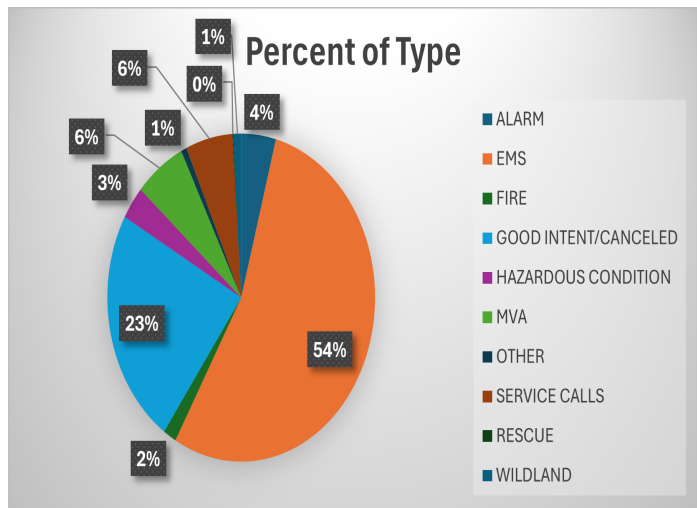
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Incident Response Data

In 2025 Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD) incident total was 3,824. The total number of incidents MRFD responded to in 2025 was an approximate decrease of 5% from 2024 (4,021). MRFD has seen a significant increase in call volume over the past five years. In 2020 MRFD responded to 2,616 making an approximate 46% increase in call volume from 2020 to 2025.

Below, you will find several graphs and tables that illustrate the incident(s) that MRFD responded to in 2025.

| Type | Count of Type |
|----------------------|---------------|
| ALARM | 160 |
| EMS | 2065 |
| FIRE | 61 |
| GOOD INTENT/CANCELED | 895 |
| HAZARDOUS CONDITION | 125 |
| MVA | 235 |
| OTHER | 26 |
| SERVICE CALLS | 217 |
| RESCUE | 4 |
| WILDLAND | 36 |
| Grand Total | 3824 |



As you can see above, a large portion of MRFD's responses and workload continue to be emergency medical services (EMS) related.

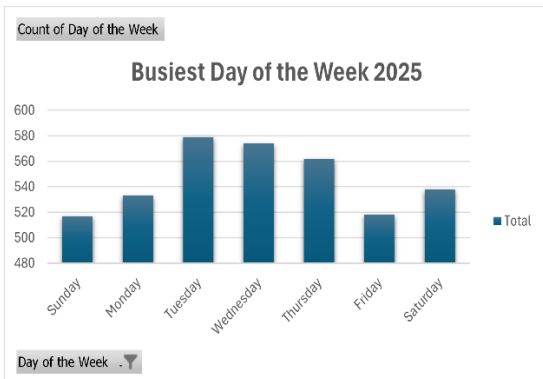
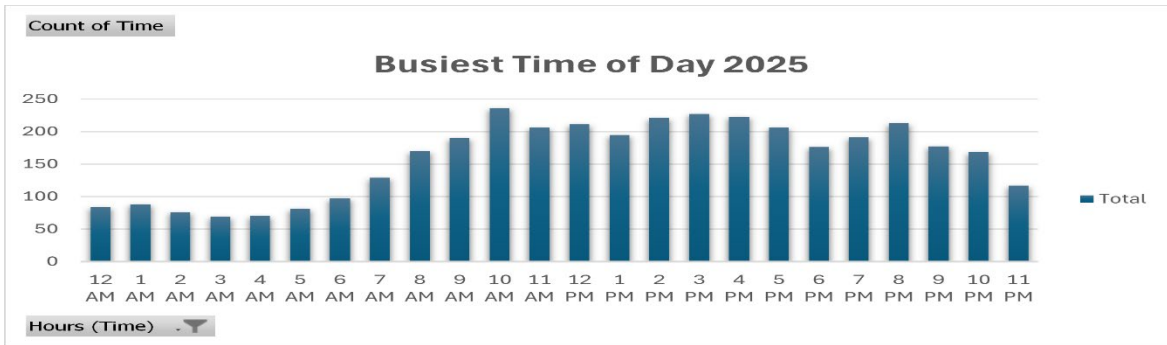


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Below is a table showing MRFD’s response performance from 2025. It is split into two categories of response: fire and emergency medical services (EMS). Fire and EMS standards are outlined in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 and differentiate between Fire response and EMS response. All times in the table below are calculated and shown at the 90th percentile as defined by NFPA 1710.

| | Alarm Processing Time | Turnout Time | Travel Time | Total Response | Time Committed |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| MRFD-EMS Response | 3:02 | 1:52 | 7:40 | 11:39 | 0:39:05 |
| MRFD-Fire Response | 3:27 | 2:14 | 19:00 | 22:23 | 3:13:06 |

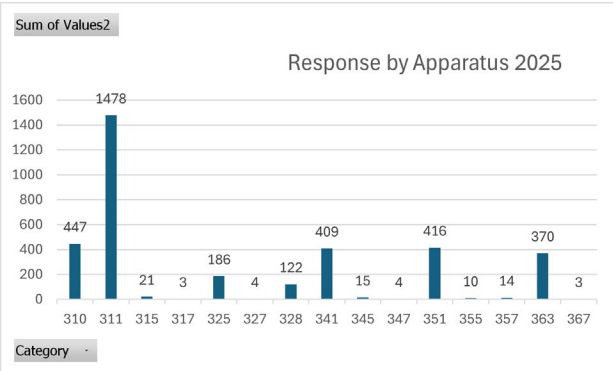
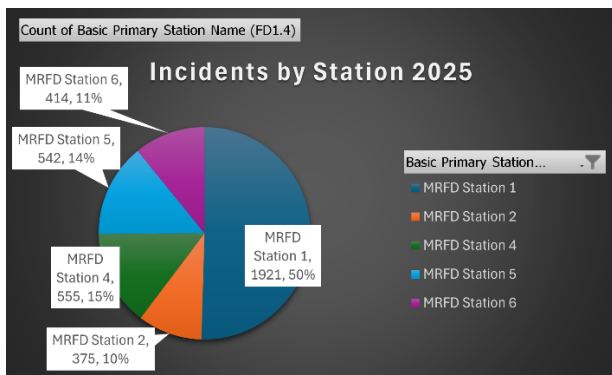
Below you will see graphs illustrating the busiest times for MRFD. The busiest time of day tends to be from late morning until late evening. This aligns with the time of day when people are the most active. The busiest month of 2025 was July, and the busiest day of the week was Tuesday.



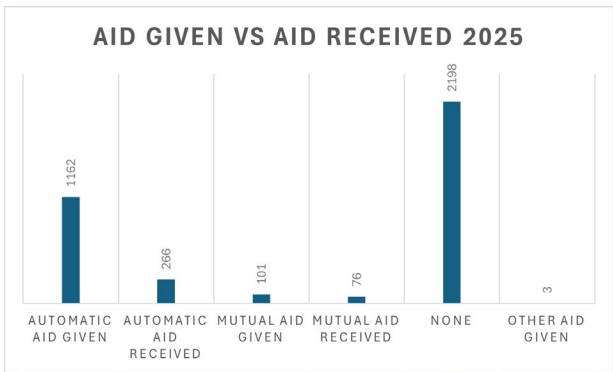
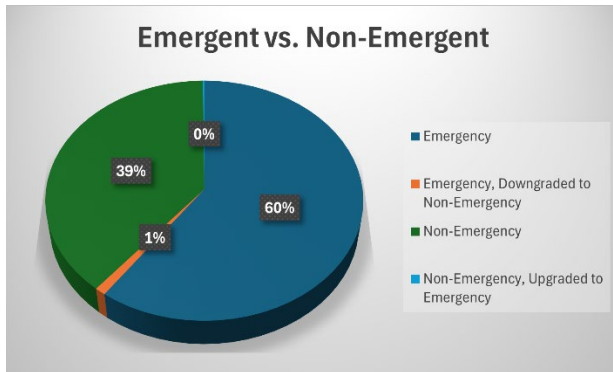
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| | 12 AM | 1 AM | 2 AM | 3 AM | 4 AM | 5 AM | 6 AM | 7 AM | 8 AM | 9 AM | 10 AM | 11 AM | 12 PM | 1 PM | 2 PM | 3 PM | 4 PM | 5 PM | 6 PM | 7 PM | 8 PM | 9 PM | 10 PM | 11 PM |
|------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Sunday | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Monday | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tuesday | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wednesday | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Thursday | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Friday | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Saturday | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Below you will find two graphs showing that Station 1 and Engine 311 continue to be the busiest station and apparatus in the District.



This Chart shows that 60% of MRFD's responses were emergent in nature while approximately 40% were non-emergent or low acuity.



In 2025 MRFD received either automatic or mutual aid on 342 incidents. MRFD provided either automatic or mutual aid to 1,266 incidents.

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Operations/Suppression

The Missoula Rural Fire District celebrated another successful year. Despite a decline in call volume, our members remained engaged in training, wildland assignments, business inspections, pre-plans, and other tasks. In 2025, MRFD received a new Freightliner water tender with a 2,000-gallon capacity, now stationed at Station 4 in Bonner. Additionally, three new firefighters joined us last summer, and all are currently working at our headquarters, Station 1.

Suppression Personnel:

- (48) Career firefighters are divided among three shifts
- (3) Battalion Chiefs
- (9) Captains
- (12) Lieutenants
- (24) Firefighters/Engineers
- (15) Resident Firefighters
- (1) Training Officer
- (1) Resident/Volunteer Coordinator (1) Resource Manager
- (1) Assistant Resource Manager (1) EMS Coordinator
- (1) Deputy Fire Marshal

MRFD Apparatus/ Vehicles:

- (3) Type 1 Structure Engines
- (1) Reserve Type 1 Structure Engine (1) Type 3 Structure/Wildland Engine (4) Type 5 Wildland Engines
- (3) Type 5/6 Reserve Wildland Engines
- (1) 78' Quint (Ladder/Engine Combo)
- (5) Water Tenders
- (1) Battalion Chief Response Vehicle
- (1) Light Rescue (Pickup with Trailer)
- (2) Rescue UTVs
- (10) Staff Vehicles
- (1) Chipper



MRFD continues to staff five fire stations strategically located throughout the Fire District. The following is a breakdown of staffing for each station during a 24-hour period. 40-hour staff work M-Th/T-F and used as additional staffing if needed. Resident Firefighters staff MRFD stations 2, 4, 5, and 6 in the evenings from 7 pm-7 am.

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Station 1: (Target Range)

(3) Career firefighters
(1) Battalion Chief (1)
EMS Coordinator (1)
Deputy Fire Marshal



Station 5: (Lolo)

(2) Career firefighters (1)
Resident firefighter (1)
Accreditation Manager



Station 2: (Wye)

(2) Career firefighters
(1) Resident firefighter
(2) Resource Management Division



Station 6: (Mullan Road)

(2) Career firefighters
(1) Resident firefighters
(1) Resident/Volunteer
Coordinator



Station 4 (Bonner)

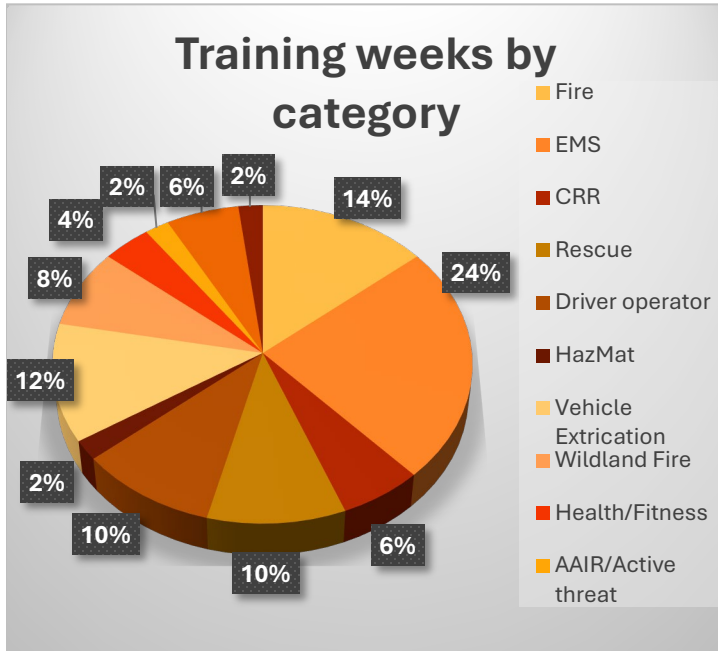
(2) Career firefighters
(2) Resident firefighters
(1) Training Officer



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Training

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Weekly on-duty scheduled training by category: WEEKS

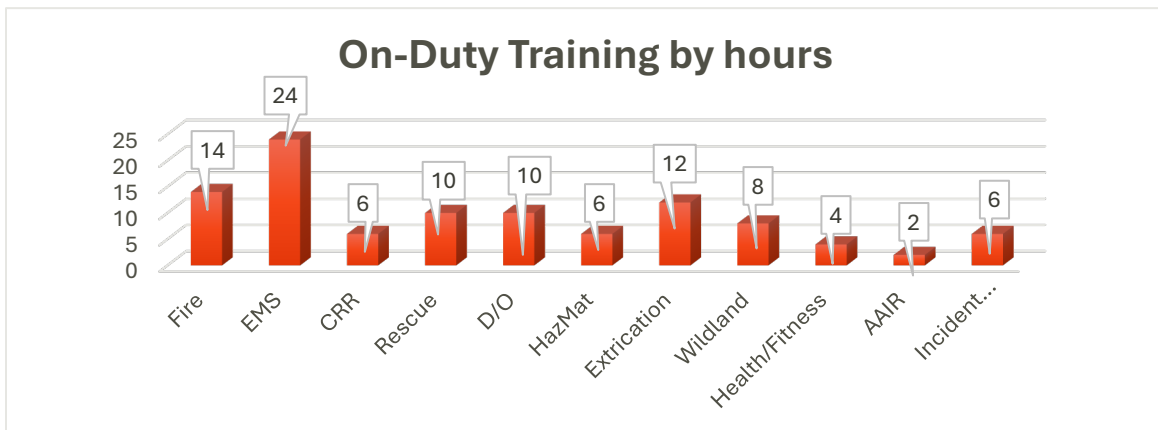
Fire: 7
 EMS: 12
 CRR: 3
 Rescue: 5
 Driver Operator: 5
 HazMat: 1
 Vehicle Extrication: 6
 Wildland Fire: 4
 Health/Fitness: 2
 AAIR/Active threat: 1
 Incident command: 3

Weekly Scheduled On-Duty Training by Hours:

(Hours attended by each individual within operations)

(Note: some training was missed by individuals due to approved leave)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Fire: 14 hours | EMS: 24 hours |
| CRR: 6 hours | Rescue: 10 hours |
| D/O: 10 hours | HazMat: 6 hours |
| Vehicle Extrication: 12 hours | Wildland Fire: 8 hours |
| Health/Fitness: 4 hours | AAIR/Active threat: 2 hours |
| Incident Command: 6 hours | |



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Recertification Courses:

EMS:

ACLS: 3 (4 hours each)
PALS: 3 (4 hours each)
CPR: 3 (3 hours each)

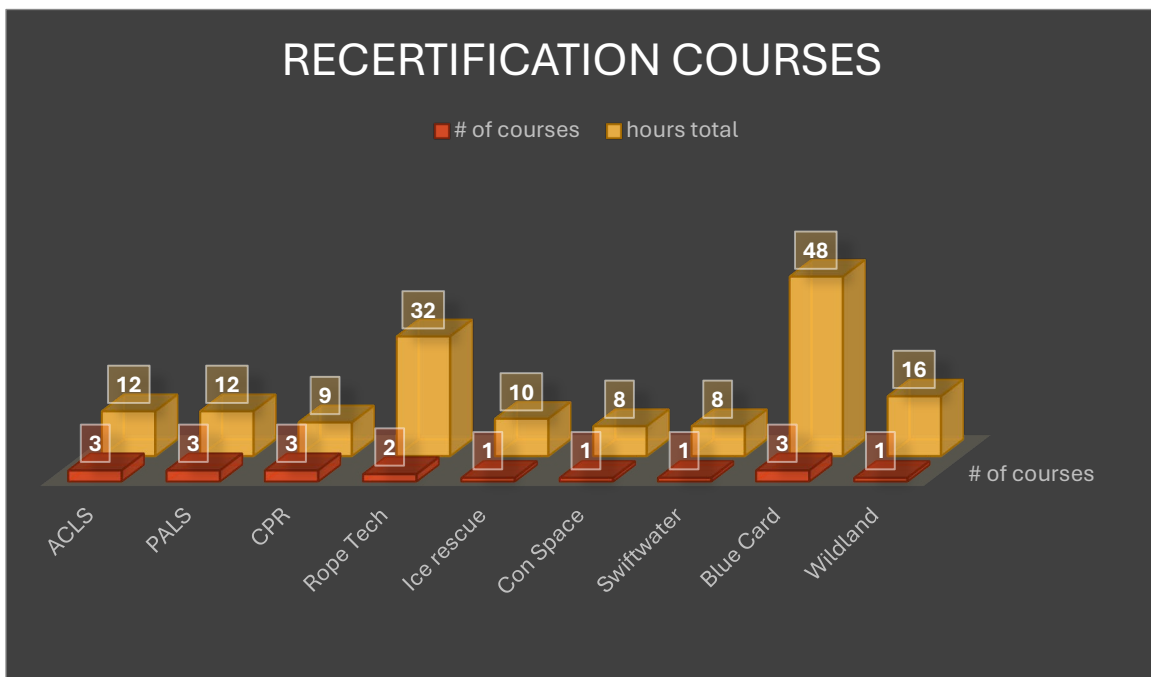
Rescue:

Rope Rescue Technician: 2 (16 hours each)
Ice Rescue: 1 (10 hours)
Confined space: 1 (8 hours)
Swiftwater Rescue: 1 (8 hours)

Blue Card Incident Command:

Recert/new cert lab courses:
3 (24 hours each) **Wildland:**

Wildland refresher: 1 (16 hours)
S-219: 1 (16 hours)



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Joint Training with Mutual Aid Partners:

MFD / MRFD:

RIT Training w/ MFD

Location MFD ST 4

40 hours

Confined Space

Location UM Campus

8 hours

Regional HazMat Response Team Training

10 days

50 Hour

MFD / MESI / MRFD:

Quarterly EMS Training

12 days

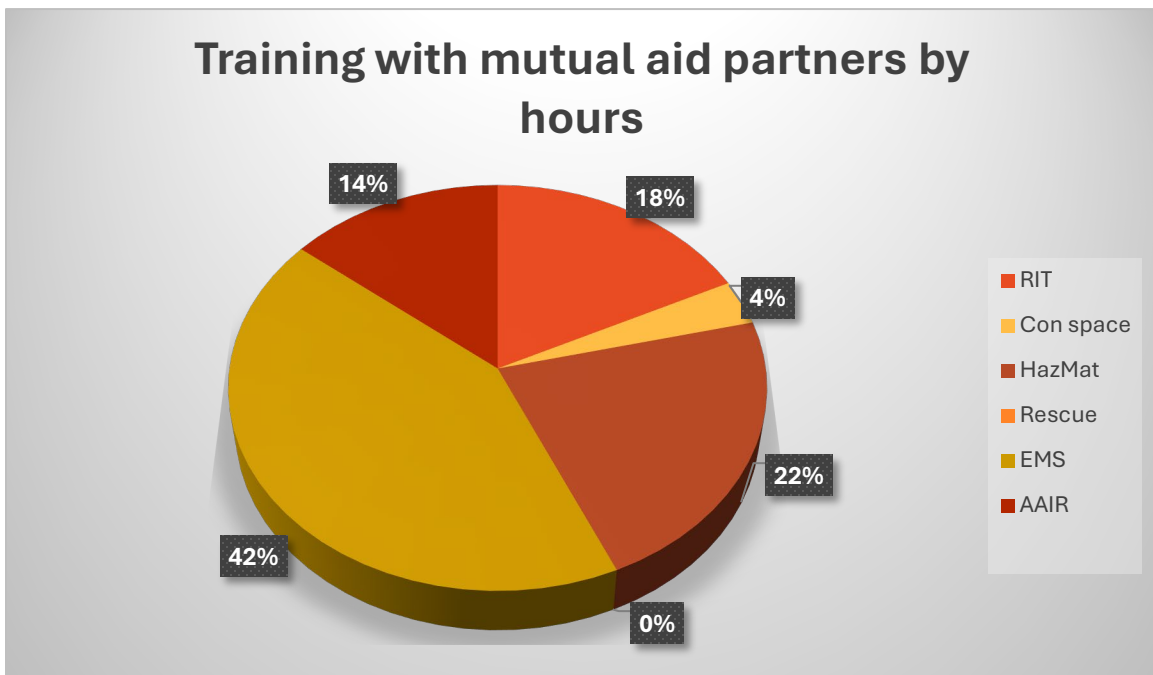
96 hours

MRFD / MFD / UMPD / MCSO / MPD:

AAIR / active threat response

4 days

32 hours



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Professional Firefighter Academy:

11 weeks

42 Days

420 Hours

IFSAC / Pro Board Certifications

FF I

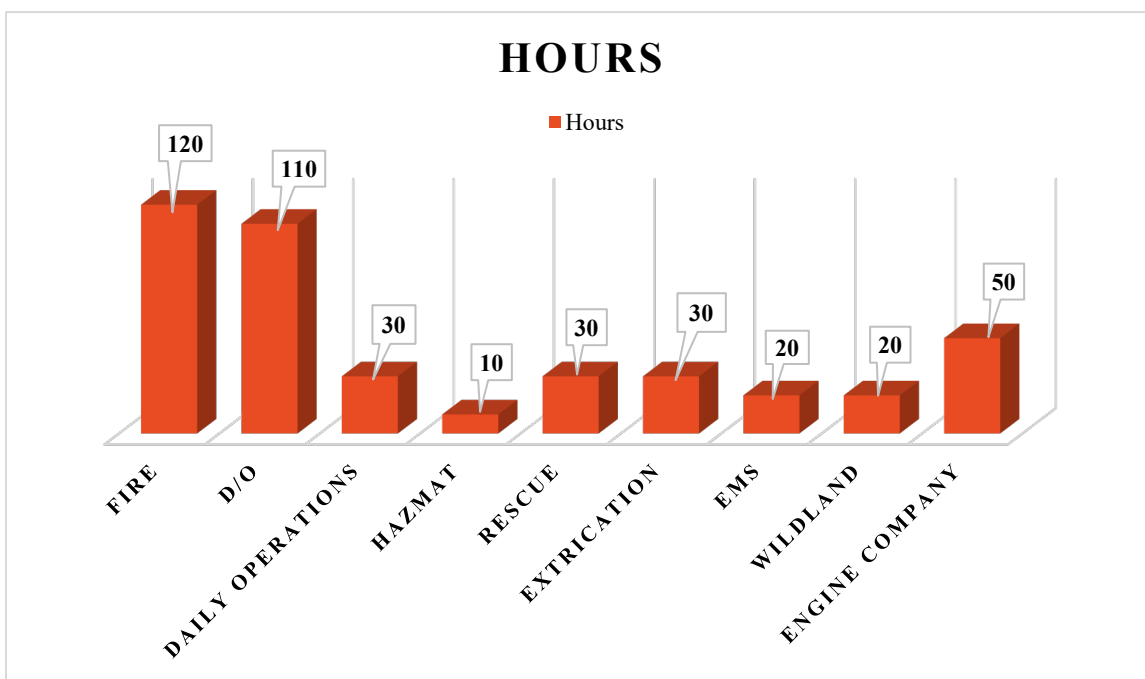
FF II

D/O Aerial Apparatus

D/O Type I

D/O Type V

D/O Type VII



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Emergency Medical Services

2025 Significant projects and/or successes:

- Recertifications for ACLS, PALS, CPR are complete for the year.
- Took possession of MRFDs first ambulance March 10th.
- OneDose in-service training completed for all shifts.
- EMSC reduced the workload on suppression members by CQI all ALS charts and by assuming the responsibility to fill Thursday EMS orders.
- Achieved our in-person training goal to achieve in person training every month in 2025.
- Participated in joint training with MFD & MESI 4/4 quarters.
- Conducted outreach training with MESI to teach tourniquet application and bleeding control techniques to officers.
- 2 members completed Advanced EMT. MRFD now has 14 AEMT providers.

Challenges encountered in 2025:

- Joint protocols with MFD/MESI/FRFD continue to be developed.
- Supply costs continue to rise.
- Outside of trauma review, patient outcome information is challenging to obtain.
- Continue to have similar high utilizers of the EMS system as relayed in 2024 report.

2026 needs for EMS program:

- Will need to resubmit for adequate capital improvement funding for cardiac monitors. Will also try to identify other possible funding sources and pursue grant opportunities.
- Research possible inventory control programs to track usage and expirations.

2026 Significant projects and/or goals planned for this coming year:

- Offer in-person EMS training each month.
- Finish outfitting and in-service MRFDs ambulance. Develop response guidelines. Goal for both to be completed is June 30, 2026.
- Continue to participate in 100% of the county wide active attack integrated response (AAIR) drills.
- Meet response time goals 90% of the time.
- Provide CQI on ALS charts.
- Develop better channels for obtaining patient follow-up.
- Complete joint protocols and implement them by Dec. 31, 2026.

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Resident-Volunteer Program

2025 Significant projects and/or successes:

- Through 2025, the Resident Firefighter Program has utilized multiple career personnel to find and interview the type of candidates we are looking for. We have hired self-motivated, compassionate, and honest individuals.
- This signifies success, as career staff enjoy working with residents and are trained to the necessary level to be effective team members, both at the station and during emergencies.
- We conducted a multi-agency Firefighter 1 academy, achieving a 100% success rate and complete FF 1 evolutions. Three volunteers from the Clinton Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) participated in the MRFD RFFs during the spring 2025 FF 1 academy. This fostered better relationships and enabled CVFD to increase personnel trained to IFSAC and Pro Board standards.
- We also conducted a joint training session at CVFD Station 1 on a class about “Reading Smoke,” taught by the MT Fire Service Training School.
- We completed 1512 hours of training as part of the RFF program. Nine MRFD RFFs earned their FF 1 Certificate. Seven RFFs obtained their Driver Operator certification for the water Tender, five for the Type 5 (Brush Truck), and two for the Pumper. All certifications are certified by IFSAC and the Po Board.
- The RFFs have increased our staffing number on calls as well. In total they have responded to 585 calls.
- RFFs have received in-house blue card terminology training as well as first due training.
- In 2025, MRFD implemented an RFF task book, a 12-week guide designed to steer residents in the right direction and ensure new RFFs are held accountable for assigned tasks.
- Starting in February of 2026, we will have 13 RFFs, the most RFFs the current RVC has supervised at one time.

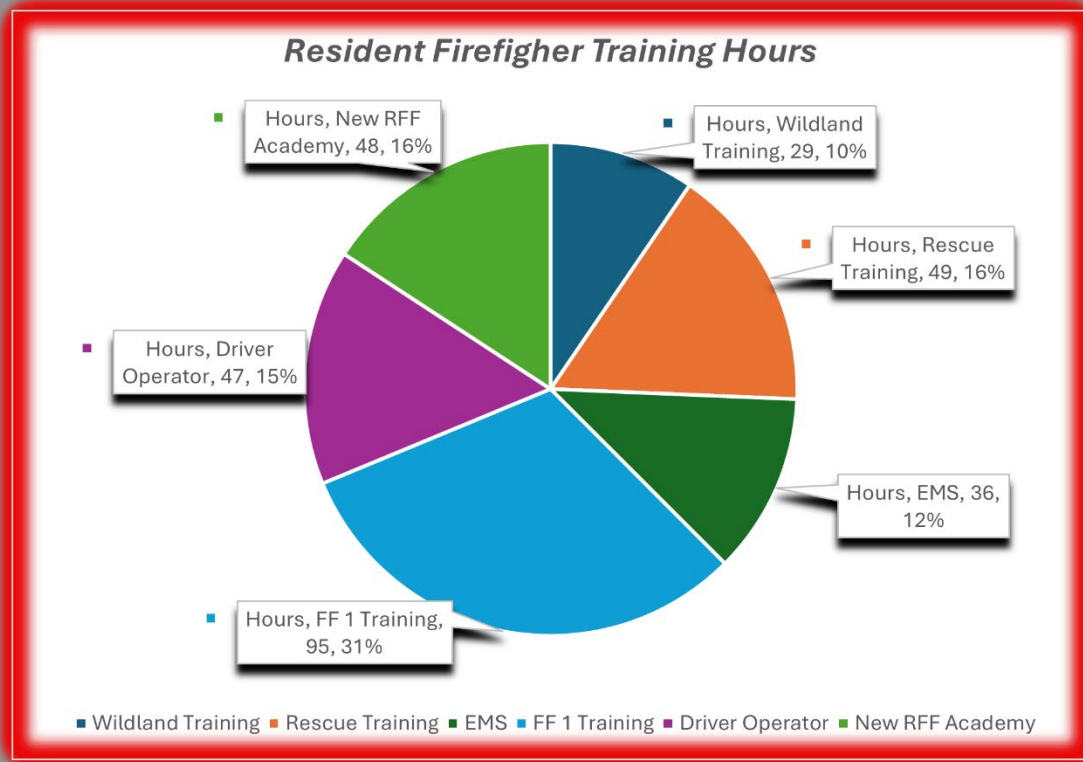
2026 Significant projects and/or goals planned for this coming year:

- Live fire training with residents to get them educated prior to their first experience being a true emergency/structure fire.
- Maintain at least one RFF per shift at a minimum.
- Expedite the onboarding process.
- Training for the RFF program will continue to use the Montana Fire Service Training School for residents, as it is IFSAC and Pro Board-certified.

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Technical Rescue Program

We have recently overhauled our rescue program organizational chart, implementing a program manager that has oversight of all the programs, and then individual program subject matter experts. Lieutenant Mediate is the overall program manager focusing on the budget and purchasing with instruction as needed. Engineer Rossier is the SME over all things rope rescue training. Engineer Brown is the SME for all things swift water and ice rescue training. Captain Huleatt is the SME for all things confined space. This reorganization has given more ability for the instructors to focus on training, and less concern over administrative tasks such as purchasing, scheduling, and budget planning.

Over these past two years we have increased our rope rescue technician level refresher trainings from one annual training to two so that we can better maintain proficiency and increase the time spent training on new equipment and techniques. We have been making big changes in the way MRFD performs rope rescue over the past year. All personnel are now familiar with the new patient packaging system and the high to low angle rigging replacement. We have made changes to our rigging to allow for faster, safer, and more efficient transition from low to steep to high angles. We will continue to build on the rope program by incorporating tower rescue training, as well as high tension guidelines.

With swift water rescue we began purchasing new drysuits to replace old and leaking ones and will continue to phase out older suits. We are adding more back up bags, to allow for quick replacement or training use. We had one technician level refresher this year and are going to increase that to two refreshers to keep the current number of techs fresh and within cycle. We had a joint water rescue training with Missoula City Fire and Missoula County Search and Rescue. We are going to continue doing joint training across all disciplines of technical rescue. We applied for a grant for two power watercrafts for water rescue, again, and are very excited about this possibility.

The confined space team has consolidated all the equipment to the rescue trailer and truck at station 6. This adds to the overall efficiency, as the rescue truck can now be dispatched without the need for a water tender. We are further applying for more grant money to purchase an Arizona Vortex Rescue Tripod, allowing us to expand our confined space and rope rescue capabilities.

The UTV continues to be utilized on multiple calls over the year assisting in locating victims, transferring personnel, and forwarding victims to transporting agencies. With the

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implementation of Rescue 306 as a rescue platform and highly capable vehicle, the UTV is not being regularly utilized as much as in the past when it was our only option.

Rope

- New Rescue Program SME
- 2 technician level refreshers.
- Continue to implement TTRS and new equipment.
- Added multiple resources for equipment accountability.
- Developed equipment replacement schedule.
- Continue to work with other agencies for planning training, purchasing equipment, and skill development.

Water/Ice

- Purchasing new drysuits to replace old and leaking suits.
- Developing a replacement schedule for equipment.
- 2 technician-level refresher courses for swift water.
- Reapplied for tourism grant for 2 powered watercraft.
- Joint training with MFD and MCSAR.
- Developing Driver Operator training program for powered watercraft.

Confined Space

- 1 Technician Refresher.
- 1 suppression level awareness training.
- Consolidated rescue equipment location.
- Applying for grants for new equipment.

UTV/306

- Mounted a new bracket for better gear hauling.
- Utilized on multiple incidents.
- Acquired chains for better snow access.

Challenges:

- Accomplishing regular training is difficult for several reasons, including limited opportunities in the training schedule, limited resources available to use for hands on training, and the geographic layout of the fire district makes it difficult to bring together multiple companies at the locations where hands on training can be completed while still covering the response needs of the district.
- Financial needs to expand our equipment to better cover the implementation of AVL and MRFD crews working semi-autonomously or with other departments.

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2025 Significant projects and/or successes:

- Lt Mediate and Eng Rossier attended Level 3 Advanced Rope Technician training, allowing for new idea's and a higher level of training at MRFD.
- Lt Mediate and Eng Brown are scheduled for Advance Swift Water Rescue Technician training, to allow for a higher level of training.
- Confined Space budget and equipment consolidated.



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Health and Wellness

The MRFD Health and Wellness Program provides resources and training to promote physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of all MRFD employees. The Health and Wellness Program is guided by a program manager. The program manager is supported by a committee. The Health and Wellness Program has two dedicated training weeks per year. One week is typically dedicated to a physical readiness course and the other week is dedicated to focused training around a pillar of health and wellness, i.e. Sleep, Nutrition, Resilience, etc. The Health and Wellness Program also provides a brochure with various resources available to MRFD members.

2025 Significant projects and/or successes:

- O2X delivered sleep science training.
- O2X app made available to all employees.
- Plyometric boxes purchased for all stations.
- Participation in voluntary firefighter physical readiness course by nearly all employees on A, B, and C shifts.
- Mental health resource brochure emailed to all employees.

2026 Significant projects and/or goals planned for this coming year:

- Host O2X training on a health and wellness topic TBD.
- Provide O2X app to all employees.
- Deliver a monthly newsletter by email to the District containing various health and wellness related information and resources. The monthly newsletter will always contain the mental health resource brochure.
- Deliver additional education with Friday Health and Wellness sessions provided by guest speakers.
- Build framework and cost analysis for MRFD moving to NFPA compliant annual physicals.
- Establish a survey to capture measurable outcomes of the Health and Wellness program.

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Resource/Fleet Management

The maintenance of all MRFD apparatus is the responsibility of Resource Management, which consists of the resource/fleet manager (RM) and the assistant resource/fleet manager (ARM).

Apparatus is maintained according to manufacturers' recommendations, NFPA standards, federal, state, and local transportation laws.

Required qualifications for employees of Resource Management include certification from the Emergency Vehicle Technician Certification Commission. The current certification requirements for the resource/fleet manager are pre-hire and include Level I, Level II, and Master Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) certification as well as additional certifications in hydraulic systems, foam systems, and advanced electrical systems. The assistant resource/fleet manager requires minimum certifications of Level 1 EVT and fire pump certification. The ARM has 24 months from the date of hire to obtain these certifications. Resource Management division employees are confirmed/qualified firefighters and can be called upon to assist with emergency operations as needed. Maintenance facilities and tools are housed at Station #2.

All vehicles undergo daily, weekly, and monthly inspections by duty crews, which are electronically documented in district record-keeping software. Staff vehicles are inspected by the resource manager at least annually. Medium-duty apparatus (those weighing less than 20,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) have periodic maintenance/full service performed by the resource manager at 5,000-mile intervals or at least annually. All heavy apparatus (those weighing more than 20,000 pounds GVW) receive periodic maintenance/full service from the resource manager at 300-hour intervals, but no less than annually.

All apparatus capable of pumping 500 GPM or more have their pump capacity tested annually per NFPA 1911 guidelines. Aerial devices have the ladder and associated equipment non-destructive tested by a qualified third party every five years.

2025 Significant projects and/or successes:

- MRFD acquired a new ambulance, water tender, and forklift
- RM attended an ambulance training program and became Level 1 EVT ambulance certified, ARM completed EVT level 1 testing, finishing up ASE certification for full Level 1
- Much needed storage space was added, allowing more organization of the maintenance facility

2026 Significant projects and/or goals planned for this coming year:

- RM will attend the EVTCC annual test question review conference.
- RM will be recertifying Master Level EVT, ARM will complete ASE certification for full Level 1 EVT
- RM division will be implementing a new annual aerial inspection in the spring.

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HazMat Program

Missoula Rural Fire District deploys an engine-based hazardous materials (hazmat) response within the district boundaries. All suppression personnel are trained to the hazmat operations level, as defined by NFPA 470. Response functions include establishing incident command (ICS), recognition, product identification, isolation, denying entry into the hazard area, protecting victims, evacuation of immediate areas, decontamination, and protection of exposures, including the environment. Mitigation actions include preventing the spread of hazardous materials release while taking protective measures to avoid contact with hazardous products.

MRFD is also the home agency to one of six regional hazardous materials response teams in the State of Montana. The Missoula regional team consists of hazardous materials technicians from three agencies, including MRFD, the Missoula City Fire Department, and the National Institute of Health-Rocky Mountain Lab. The team is equipped with a 2012 Freightliner squad set up to tow a 32-foot hazmat response trailer.

In the event a hazmat incident occurs within the MRFD response area that exceeds the capability of internal resources, the Missoula regional team will be dispatched.

Another new partnership has been developed with the University of Montana (UM). The regional hazardous materials team assisted the Montana Civil Support Team (CST) in identifying several mislabeled or non-labeled chemicals in December of 2025 on the UM campus. The regional team assisted UM with proper identification and safe removal of those chemicals. Subsequently, 2 UM employees have expressed interest in joining the Missoula Regional Team and we hope to add them to the team in 2026.

2026 Significant projects and/or goals planned for this coming year:

- Continue training with our regional hazmat partners which include Missoula City Fire Department, Rocky Mountain Labs, and Butte Fire Department. Continue to maintain strong presence regionally by focusing on training/outreach with local industry and target hazard specific training. Focus training needs to facilitate everyone's needs and interests to the best of our ability. Focus on simplifying our training so personnel are better prepared and experienced when dealing with routine hazmat incidents. We just finished the development of the training plan for the Missoula Regional Hazmat Team for 2026, utilizing input from all entities involved.
- Continue to utilize the Civil Support Team (CST) for both advice and training. In 2025 we set up a couple training drills with them, and we plan to continue developing and fostering that relationship. We have learned a lot from their experience and expertise.
- Keep MRFD Hazmat Personnel engaged in training and the program in general. Motivate and encourage our newest members so MRFD has a solid foundation within the HazMat Team moving forward. Continue to gain interest and add new members to the HazMat

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Team as members leave or retire. In 2025, no new team members were added to the MRFD HazMat Team.

- Continue to secure grants to bolster our training and upkeep of both the HazMat rigs and equipment. In 2026, we secured an HMEP grant for \$18,000 to continue to attend the hazmat symposium in Florida for the next 3 years (2026-2028). The Homeland Security Grant is still unknown for 2026; we hope to know if we have received it in the next couple months.



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Wildland Program

The control of wildland fire has been a primary mission of Missoula Rural Fire District since its founding. Although the approach has changed over the years, the mission remains the same in that the primary goals are the protection of life, mitigation of property damage, and fire prevention to minimize the impact of fires. While MRFD is prepared to respond to wildland fires year-round, much of the threat tends to be seasonal, beginning in March and continuing through the summer, which historically wraps up by the end of September. All District members are trained in basic wildland response (at a minimum) and are issued wildland fire-specific PPE.



MRFD continues to advance its Wildland Fire Program, focusing on enhancing wildfire response and preparedness throughout Missoula County. Key initiatives include pursuing a countywide communications plan, expanding technological capabilities (such as increased use of services like Starlink), and evaluating the wildland fire training budget to ensure personnel obtain necessary qualifications.

Staffing remains a critical focus, with ongoing evaluation of the need for additional members to manage diverse projects and improve internal

capacity to address the complex challenges posed by wildland fires. MRFD is committed to ensuring the program has appropriate staffing, equipment, and specialized apparatus dedicated to wildland fire response.

Collaboration with partner agencies is emphasized to promote safe, effective, and efficient wildfire response. The district also recognizes the need for improved standardization and communication across all partners involved in wildland incidents. MRFD is dedicated to continually assessing and enhancing its Wildland Fire Program to meet the evolving demands of wildfire management in the region.

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2025 Significant projects and/or successes:

- Coordinated wildfire response to several high-risk incidents while maintaining safety of responders, the public and minimal to no damage to property.
- Multiple month deployment to California with excellent reviews.
- Regional recognition of mid-level qualifications and special requested assignments as overhead.
- Deployment on many incident management teams to assist on large incidents.
- Development of an internal Red Card Committee for certifying and initiating new wildland fire qualifications.
- Increased internal capacity in the wildland program by adding multiple new individuals and delegating responsibilities.



2026 Significant projects and/or goals planned for this coming year:

- Continue to provide for career advancement through the issuing and review of qualification task books.
- Initiate a minimum of three task books and review three task books every year.
- Establish a county wide communication plan through MCFPA by the first of June.
- Purchase adequate supply of hose, fittings and chainsaws as identified in the minimum cache compliment by May 1st.

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Community Risk Reduction

The Missoula Rural Fire District Community Risk Reduction Division is comprised of a Deputy Fire Marshal; however, all members of the organization assist in the implementation of department prevention goals. Programs managed by the CRR division include plans review, business inspections, code enforcement, public education, child passenger safety seat fittings, and fire cause and determination investigations. The goal of the CRR division is to minimize the loss of life and property through education and proactive code enforcement. The CRR division leverages several important community relationships to achieve this goal.

Throughout 2025, the Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD) faced several significant challenges that shaped the direction and focus of the department. Limited time and personnel resources to proactively develop public education programs beyond what is currently being offered.

Additionally, ensuring fire investigators were available off-shift to investigate incidents proved difficult. This highlighted the need for enhanced training and mentoring within the team.

The department also experienced ongoing challenges with its business inspection software, which required back-end improvements beyond the capabilities and available time of the District Fire Marshal (DFM). Scheduling and tracking business inspections in line with NFPA frequency standards remained a priority, but progress was hampered by software limitations. A lack of time and limited scheduling opportunities impacted MRFD's ability to provide District-wide training in all areas of Community Risk Reduction (CRR). Recognizing these constraints, the CRR Division identified the need to secure funding for additional division positions to better meet the growing responsibilities and expectations of the DFM role. There was also a recognized need for additional equipment, such as water extinguishers, to enhance hands-on learning during training classes. To address gaps, a dedicated training budget for fire investigation classes and in-house training was identified as critical for maintaining competencies in investigation techniques, report writing, and photography. Further, assistance from software professionals was sought to improve the inspection module within the Image Trend system and to help reduce the workload carried by the lone DFM. Improving the usability of the Image Trend software remains a priority to help streamline operations and significantly reduce the workload expected of the DFM position.

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2025 Significant projects and/or successes:

- Successful delivery of fire prevention school programs to local elementary schools (K-2nd) in Missoula County.
- Partnership with the Red Cross to provide smoke detectors to those in need. This will allow MRFD to more accurately document how many detectors are being installed/donated, plus ensure a steady supply from the Red Cross free of charge to the Fire District.
- Fully implemented investigation module within Image Trend used by all MRFD Fire Investigators.
- Delivery of seven (7) fire extinguisher classes to various businesses within our District and Frenchtown. This was two (2) more than in 2024.

2026 Significant projects and/or goals planned for this coming year:

- Continue to seek assistance from professional Image Trend software SME's to improve usability of that system. Once improvements are made, users will be able to use the business inspection module more easily, see more clearly all business inspections completed, and be scheduled for future inspections. This will be accomplished by Q1 2027.
- Onboard at least 3 more fire investigators. This would increase team participation by 40% over current staffing. Based on MRFD training request procedures, and timeline. Onboarding additional investigators may not be possible until Q2 2027.
- Schedule quarterly team training sessions to review investigation techniques, report writing within Image Trend, and camera use. Quarterly training would begin once a training budget has been established.
- Continue to provide fire extinguisher training to those who request a class.
- Collaborate with regional partners in the development of a Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention program.



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Missoula Rural Firefighters IAFF Local 2457

Recap of 2025

Each year Local 2457 budgets to send members to conferences on educational opportunities and events to keep our members informed and up to date with current events that affect firefighter health and safety, pension systems, and political action. Below are the events members from Local 2457 attended.

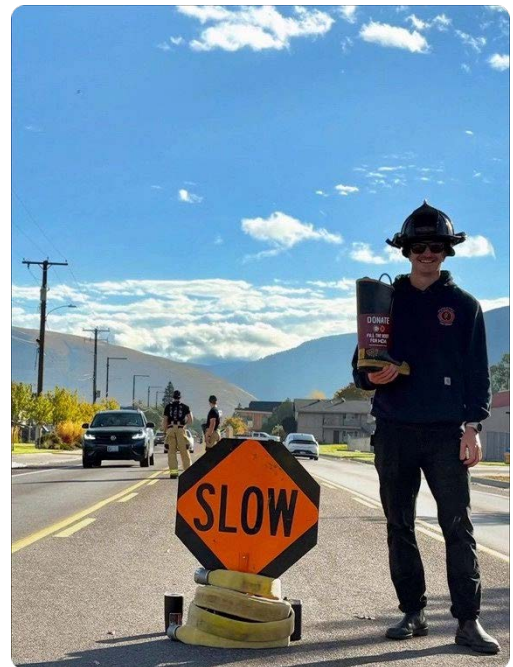
- Montana Professional Fire Fighters Convention, Havre, MT
- Mini Ed Sponsored by the IAFF 7th District, Kalispell, MT
- Shaping the Future Conference, Butte Montana

IAFF Local 2457 prides itself on being involved within the community we serve. Each year we partner with Operation Warm and provide children and young adults winter coats who don't have access to one. In 2025, 210 coats were given to those children in need. Additionally, a total of 50 pairs of shoes and socks were distributed.



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Since 1954, the IAFF and the Muscular Dystrophy Association have teamed up to 'Fill the Boot' and raise money for those who are impacted by Muscular Dystrophy. With the help from the members of the Missoula Community, Local 2457 raised approximately \$13,000.



Each year Local 2457's hockey team, the Raghorns, play a family friendly hockey game to raise money for the Dan Merritt Benevolent Fund. The money raised is used to assist Local 2457 members, family members, and members of the first responder community when dealing with life's hardships. In the future, we hope to have more fundraising events throughout the year with more community involvement.



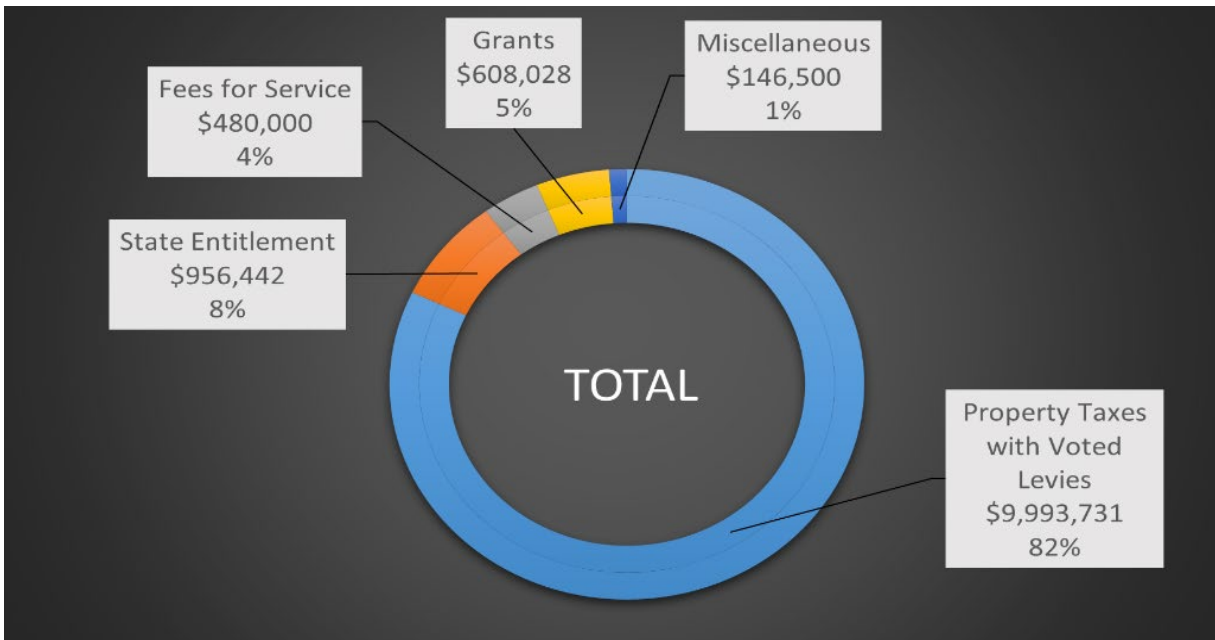
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Finance

FY 26 Funding Summary

The majority of funding is received from the regular property tax and the voted mill levies. MRFD also receives funding from the State Entitlement (MCA 15-1-121) and all hazard/fire mobilization reimbursements (included in Fees for Service).

The majority of Miscellaneous funding comes from surplus, donations, rebates, interest, etc. The MRFD funding budget is broken into five major categories:

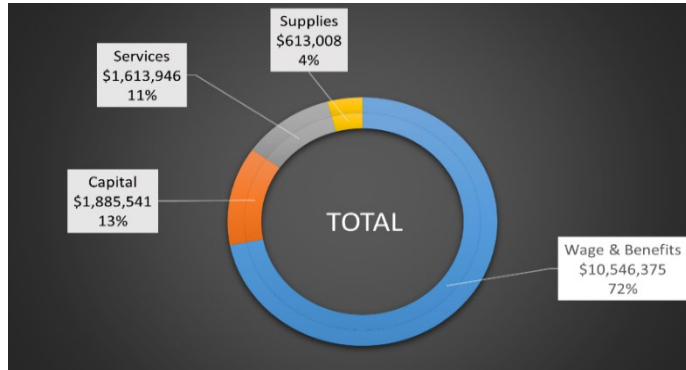


| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Property Taxes with Voted Levies | \$9,993,731 | 82.02% |
| State Entitlement | \$956,442 | 7.85% |
| Fees for Service | \$480,000 | 3.94% |
| Grants | \$608,028 | 4.99% |
| Miscellaneous | \$146,500 | 1.20% |
| Total | \$12,184,701 | 100.00% |

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FY 26 Expense Summary

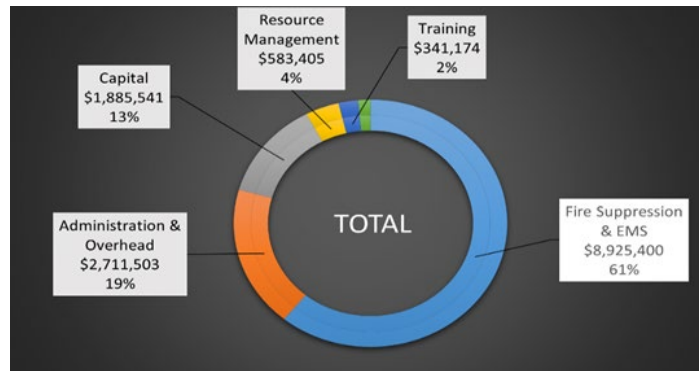
The MRFD budget is broken into four major categories:



| | | |
|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| Wage & Benefits | \$10,546,375 | 71.95% |
| Capital | \$1,885,541 | 12.86% |
| Services | \$1,613,946 | 11.01% |
| Supplies | \$613,008 | 4.18% |
| Total | \$14,658,871 | 100.00% |

FY 26 Program Expense Summary

The MRFD budget is broken down to six major divisions:



| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Fire Suppression & EMS | \$8,925,400 | 60.89% |
| Administration & Overhead | \$2,711,503 | 18.50% |
| Capital | \$1,885,541 | 12.86% |
| Resource Management | \$583,405 | 3.98% |
| Training | \$341,174 | 2.33% |
| Community Risk Reduction | \$211,849 | 1.45% |
| Total | \$14,658,871 | 100.00% |

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End of Report

