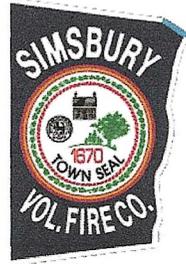


THE SIMSBURY VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

871 HOPMEADOW STREET SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Todd M. Myers
Chief of Department



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Annual Report of the Fire Chief May 12, 2025

I am honored and proud to present the Annual Report of the Fire Chief for the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company. The Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company recently completed its 80th year of service to the Town of Simsbury. This could not be possible without the 80-year partnership with the Simsbury Fire District. The fire service and the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company continue to evolve as the needs of the community change. While providing basic fire protection to the Town of Simsbury, the fire company also provides technical rescue services that include High Angle Rescue, Cold Rescue, Confined Space and technical motor vehicle extrication.

The Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company finished the year with 100 active members, 89 regular members and 11 junior firefighters. In 2024, we responded to 928 calls for service. This is the most calls for service ever recorded by the SVFC in our 80-year history. The call volume represents an 8.5% increase or 73 additional calls for service from 2023.

As we look toward the future we are well positioned and enthusiastic about maintaining an all-volunteer workforce. This of course is not possible without the unwavering commitment of our volunteers. Our membership is ready to respond to any emergency at all hours of the day. This level of sacrifice, dedication and perseverance cannot and has not been replicated by any other group around. To the membership of the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company, I want to say thank you for all that you do!

This past year we were met with new and emerging challenges. The Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company is committed to staying on top of these challenges and

new ones that we will be facing in the future. We recently completed a full year of partnership with the Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance and are now fully integrated into responding to cardiac arrest calls in town. We continue to improve our training and awareness while responding to emergencies involving lithium-ion batteries. A generous donation from the Hoffman family provided us with EV blankets to better respond to fires and emergencies involving electric vehicles. Each fire engine is now equipped with material or containers to mitigate the dangers from lithium-ion batteries we find in everything from Cell Phones, toys, Electric Scooters, E-bikes and laptops.

We recently researched and with the support of the Fire District and a generous donation from Dyno Nobel, implemented a drone program. The drone which is equipped with thermal and IR capabilities will allow firefighters to leverage technology to enhance our firefighting and rescue efforts. While we have trained a core group as pilot trainers, our hope is that in the coming year we can incorporate more members into piloting the drone and provide us with an eagle's eye view and enhance our capabilities at a moment's notice.

The Auxiliary completed its first full year of integrating a rehab component to our response at structure fires, technical rescues and hazardous materials incidents. This endeavor is constantly evolving, and we look forward to continued support.

Training continues to be a source of pride and members generously and willingly participate in regular Monday night training. Fire and rescue related topics are delivered every Monday night for a minimum of (2) hours and often longer. The preparation, research and scheduling of these events start weeks and often months in advance. In addition to Monday night training courses many members take on additional internal and external training opportunities. Weekend high angle rescue training, swift and cold-water rescue training, Rapid intervention team and vent enter search topics have been added to the already busy training schedule. This past year (5) members were certified to the FF1 level and (4) completed the FF2 certification. Several members completed their boating certification and (7) members were licensed by the State of CT to operate fire apparatus. These are just a few examples of the training opportunities our members take on in addition to their busy schedules. All the training and certifications demonstrate what our members are willing to do for your safety.

We continue to prepare for the future and are closely monitoring our current equipment and apparatus while preparing for the future needs of the department and town. In 2024 we signed a contract to replace Rescue 14. The 23-year-old apparatus now serves as our only heavy rescue truck and will be replaced with a similar vehicle but with more space and flexibility for our growing and ever-changing needs. We look forward to the vehicle's delivery in late 2027. Apparatus replacement is a major concern, and we are already anticipating the cost of T12 to be well over 2 million dollars and taking (3) years to build. As we look at the future we are preparing for a significant wearing apparel replacement and breathing apparatus replacement in the coming years. We thank the Fire District for the support and partnership in long-range planning.

In 2024 we experienced two significant milestones that cannot go without mention. Chief Jim Baldis retired after almost 47 years in the fire company and almost 20 as Chief of Department. This is the second longest tenure as Chief, and we want to thank Jim for all his years of service and especially his leadership. Deputy Chief Kevin Kowalski attained 50 years of service. This unprecedented level of commitment has only been accomplished (1) other time. Most of Kevin's tenure has been in leadership roles and a significant number of our policies and procedures are the result of his direct input or design. We all thank Kevin for his continued level of commitment to our organization and what he continues to do each day.

We recognize that each member of our community that chooses to become a volunteer member is a precious gift and there are constant challenges that our volunteers face with balancing personal time and the time they are required to give the Fire Company for training and incidents. We embrace the need for flexibility. We are committed to working closely with each volunteer to acknowledge that balance and not take advantage of their generosity.

Since its formation in 1944, an agreement exists with the Simsbury Fire District that the members of the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company would provide firefighting services at no charge. This 80-year-old agreement continues to this day and has resulted in labor cost savings in the millions of dollars that have been and continue to be saved by Simsbury Taxpayers versus the cost of a fully or partially paid fire department. In return for these savings of labor costs, The Simsbury Fire District is committed to providing the best in personal protective equipment, tools and training

necessary to meet the constantly changing demands of today's fire service and to keep our volunteers safe.

Beyond the training and readiness of our members, we rely on the support of administration, equipment and apparatus to get the job done. I wish to thank our District Fleet Mechanic for the outstanding job he continues to do to ensure our apparatus is maintained, kept up to standards, and will meet our expectations. Thanks to our District Maintenance staff who maintain the grounds and buildings in addition to the hydrants throughout town. Thanks to our District's Dispatching Staff for the continued professional service and support given to the Fire Company and community. A thank you to the Fire Marshal's Office for the advice and support throughout the year and managing the public fire education events. Thank you to our Emergency Management team for their leadership and guidance. And thank you to our District administrator for fiscal oversight and continual monitoring.

I cannot thank enough the officers, firefighters, Auxiliary and juniors' members for the hard work, dedication and professionalism they continue to give The Fire Company, The Fire District and this community.

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