



Vernon Township Fire Department

2025 Annual Report

Rising to The Call of A Growing Community — Stronger, Together



A Message from Fire Chief Mark Elder

Reflecting on 6 Years of Building a Professional Fire Department

Dear Vernon Township Residents,

As we reflect on 2025, I am proud to share the continued progress of the Vernon Township Fire Department in serving our growing community.

When this department was established in 2019, we began with a single administrative employee and a vision to build a professional fire and emergency medical services organization for our community. Six years later, we have grown into a fully staffed department operating from two stations, responding to nearly 2,000 incidents annually, and continually expanding our capabilities to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population.

This year we added a life-saving Whole Blood program in partnership with the American Red Cross, expanded operational capabilities with drone technology for search and rescue, and invested funds in TrustIndiana for the Township's first ladder truck with delivery anticipated in Summer 2026. Most importantly, we received approval of our Growth Appeal to fund critical staffing for a second ambulance. With nearly 2,000 emergency runs this year and 21 percent of incidents occurring while crews are already on another call, this second ambulance is essential for timely emergency response.

In April, our upgraded ISO Class 3/3X fire protection rating went into effect — a direct result of the investments we have made in career staffing, modern apparatus, fire prevention, and strategically located stations. This improved rating may result in lower insurance premiums for residential and commercial property owners throughout our service area.

Our new training room, completed this summer, now hosts fire, EMS, and educational programs that strengthen our public safety professionals, staff, and the public. Our team logged over 9,500 training hours this year, with notable increases in officer development, company-level training, and hazardous materials preparation.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our firefighters, medics, officers, administrative staff, reserve members, and Fire Corps volunteers. Their commitment to serving this community with professionalism and compassion is what makes this department exceptional.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Mark A. Elder

Fire Chief

Vernon Township Fire Department



Vernon Township Fire Station 431



Vernon Township Fire Station 432

The Vernon Township Fire Protection Territory Board

The Vernon Township Fire Protection Territory, established on July 1, 2020, spans the northwestern corner of Hancock County, Indiana. The Vernon Township Fire Department (VTFD) safeguards the residents of Fortville, McCordsville, and the unincorporated rural areas of Vernon Township. The Territory Board comprises the Vernon Township Trustee and a representative from the McCordsville and Fortville Town Councils. Notably, the fire chief serves as an ex-officio member of the board.



Florence "Flory" May

The Vernon Township Trustee and Board President for the Vernon Township Fire Territory, is also the President of The Registration System LLC. Additionally, she serves on the Hancock County Community Foundation Emeritus Board. Flory, a US Army commissioned officer and Gulf War veteran, holds degrees from Indiana University and Purdue University. Flory and her husband, Tony, are both graduates of these esteemed universities.



Greg Brewer

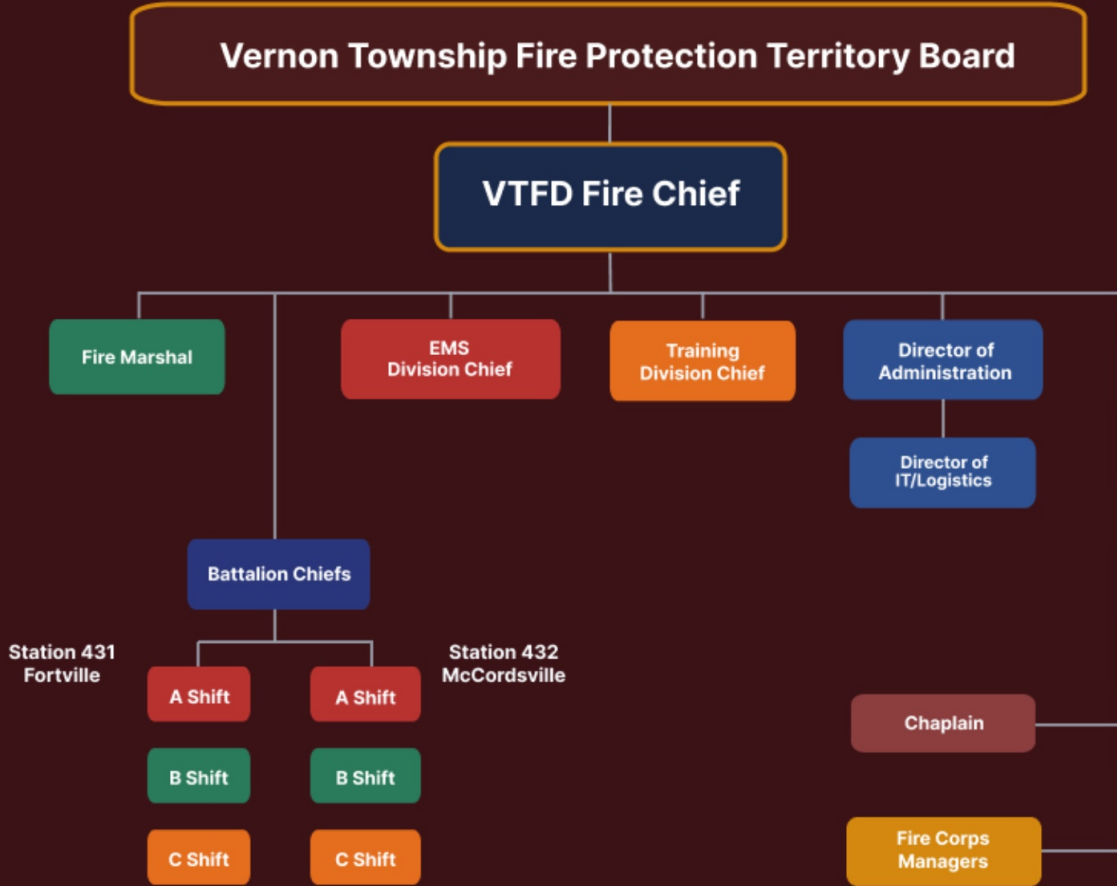
The President of the McCordsville Town Council. A Greenfield-Central High School graduate of 1992, he pursued his education at Indiana University, where he was a member of both the IU Football Program and the Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity. In 1996, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Currently, Greg holds the position of Financial Advisor/General Principal, with a wealth of 17 years of experience. Over the past nine years, he has also been a part-owner of Cornerstone Financial Services. Greg and his wife, Megan, are blessed with two children, Zach and Jacqueline.



Tonya Davis

The President of the Fortville Town Council, is also the Operations Manager at Shades by Design. She is married to her husband, Kent, and a lifelong resident of Fortville, having graduated from Mt. Vernon High School.

Fire Department Organizational Chart



*Josh Earl
Fire Marshal*



*Kiely Culberson
EMS Division Chief*



*Scott Hathaway
Training Division Chief*



*Stacy Nielsen
Director of Administration*



Battalion Chiefs Shaun Nelson, Richie Hiser, and Nick Campi



*Noah Jaehnert
Director of IT/Logistics*

Demand for Service

20,154

RESIDENTS SERVED

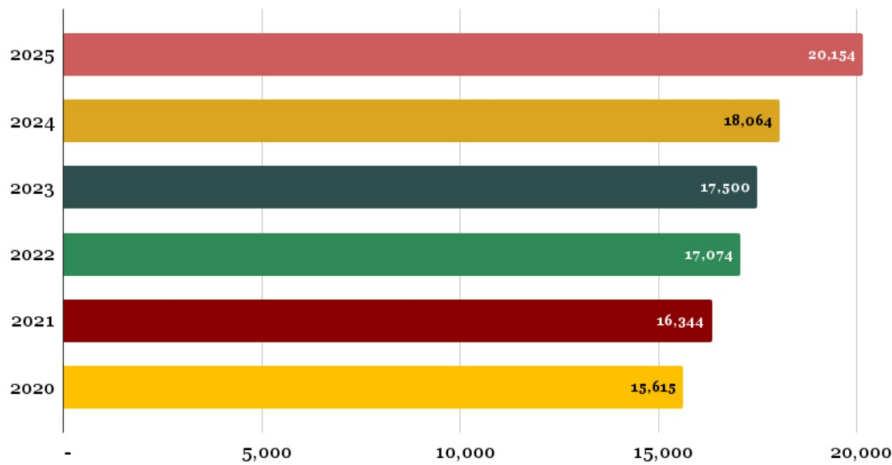
51%

INCIDENT INCREASE SINCE 2020

1,995

TOTAL INCIDENTS

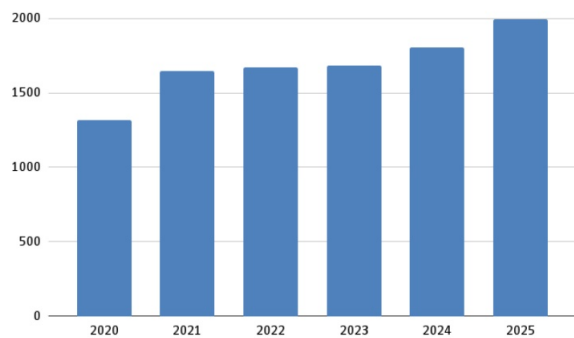
Vernon Township Population Growth 2020-2025



A Growing Community, A Growing Mission

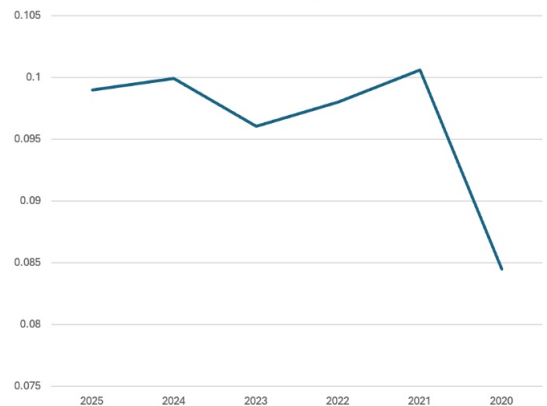
Vernon Township’s service area continues to experience rapid growth. Since 2020, the population has increased by nearly 30 percent — from 15,615 to over 20,154 residents. Total emergency incidents have risen by more than 50 percent over that same period, from 1,319 to 1,995 calls. Despite this growth, runs per capita have remained steady at approximately 0.10, demonstrating that demand is growing proportionally with the population rather than spiking disproportionately. This sustained growth pattern underscores the importance of continued investment in staffing, apparatus, and infrastructure.

Total Incidents from 2020 - 2025



2020 - 2025 Total Incidents

Runs Per Capita



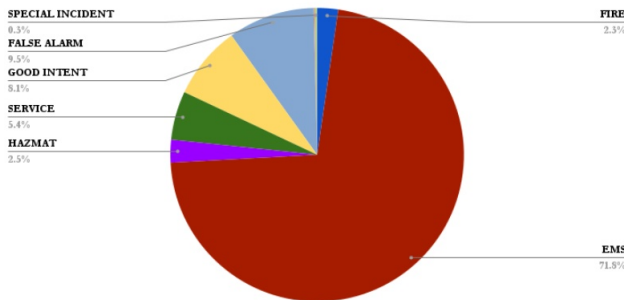
2025 Runs Per Capita

Incident Response & EMS Chief Complaint

By the Numbers: 2025 Incident Response

The Vernon Township Fire Department uses the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) to uniformly report on the full range of incident responses. In 2025, emergency medical services represented 72 percent of all incidents, with EMS calls increasing 15 percent from the prior year. The nature of medical calls continues to evolve — generalized weakness replaced injuries as the leading chief complaint. Chest pain and altered mental status calls also saw significant increases, rising 57 and 49 percent respectively, reflecting growing demand for cardiac and neurological emergency care in our service area.

2025 Incident Response by Types



19.1%

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES INCREASE

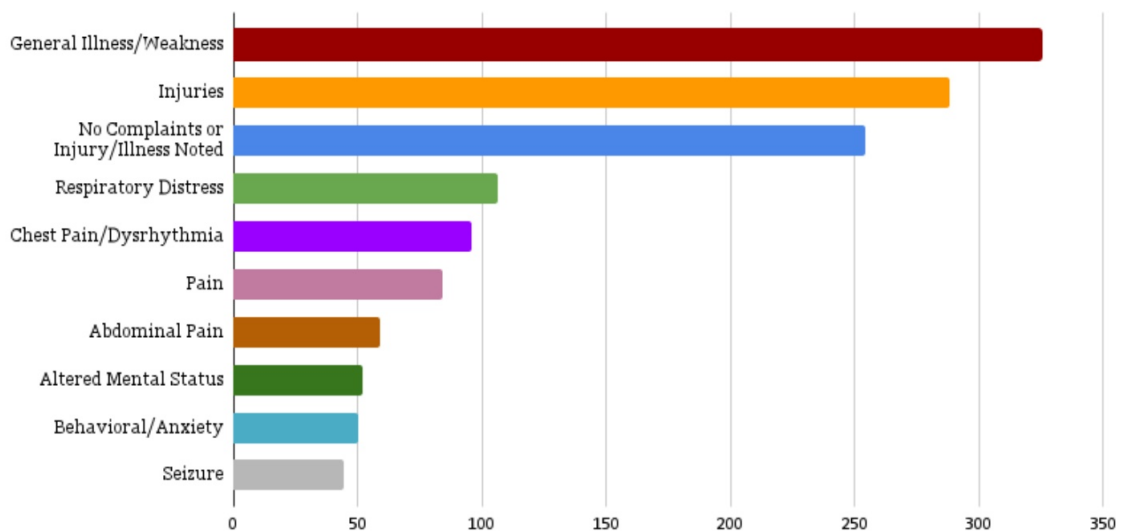
10.5%

TOTAL INCIDENT INCREASE

15%

EMS INCIDENTS INCREASE

2025 EMS Chief Complaint



Where are we responding?

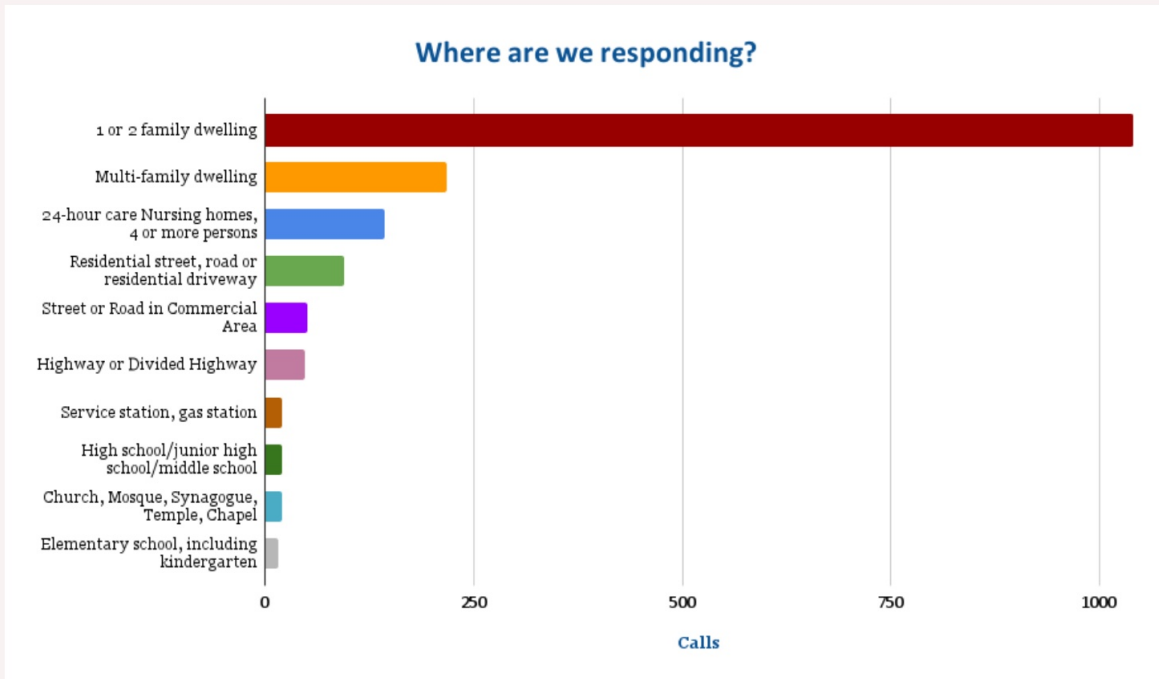
Protecting Our Neighborhoods

The majority of VTFD's emergency responses occur in residential settings. Over 73 percent of all calls in 2025 were to residential properties, including single-family homes, multi-family dwellings, and residential roadways. Nursing homes and assisted living facilities account for 7 percent of calls, reflecting the specialized care needs within our service area. The remaining calls are distributed across commercial areas, highways, schools, and other locations.



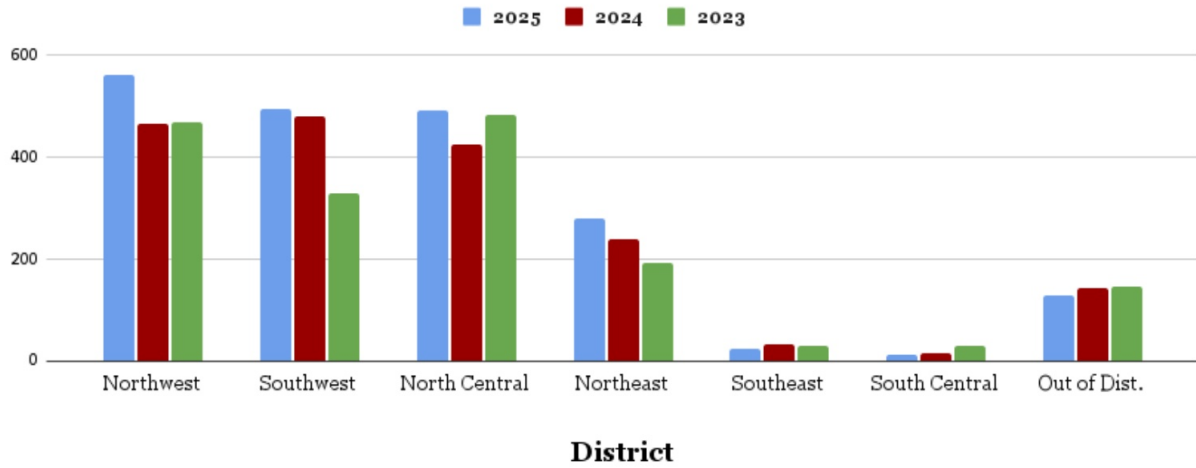
VTFD crews in vehicle extrication training to practice stabilization of vehicles involved in accidents and the safe removal of patients.

Where are we responding?



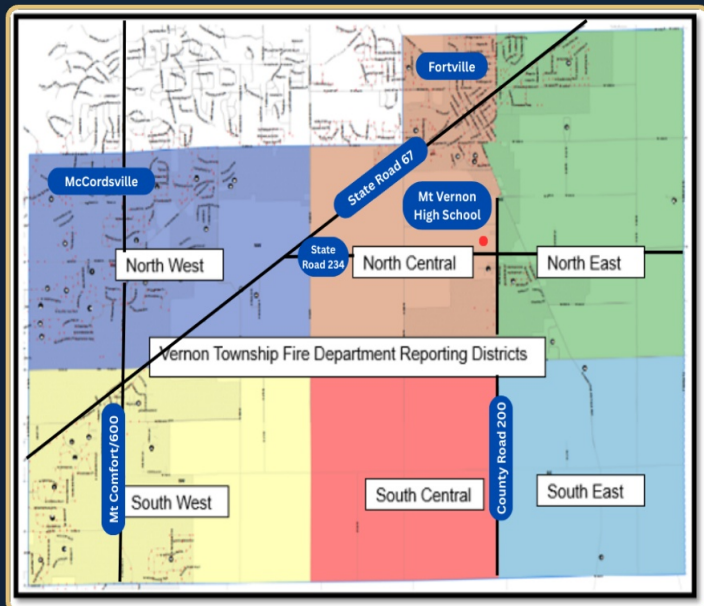
Incidents Per Reporting District

Incidents Per Reporting District 2023 - 2025

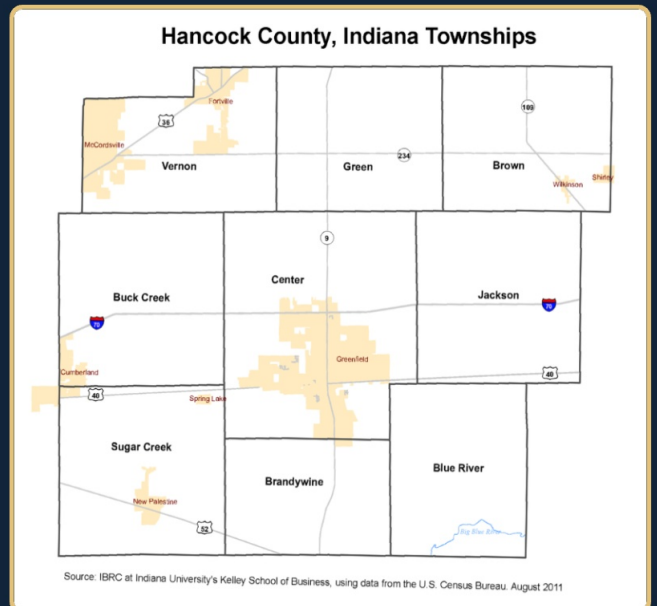


Serving Every Corner of Vernon Township

While Vernon Township spans a large area in northwest Hancock County (from 700 West to Meridian Road, and the county line south to 600 North), the majority of emergency calls are concentrated in the western districts, specifically within and around the Town of McCordsville. The Northwest district saw the largest increase in 2025, rising from 467 to 562 calls. The Southwest and North Central districts also saw significant volume. Out-of-district mutual aid responses decreased slightly from 143 to 128, reflecting VTFD's growing capacity to handle calls within its own territory.



Vernon Township Fire Department Incident Response Map



Source: IBRC at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, August 2011

Hancock County Map

Response Time & Simultaneous Calls

Respond Around the Clock

Vernon Township Fire Department operates from two stations. Station 431 is in Fortville; Station 432 is in McCordsville. Personnel are on duty 24 hours per day, 7 days per week ready to respond immediately to any call for assistance. Response times improved across nearly all metrics compared to 2024, despite continued growth in call volume.

1:16

AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME

6:28

AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME

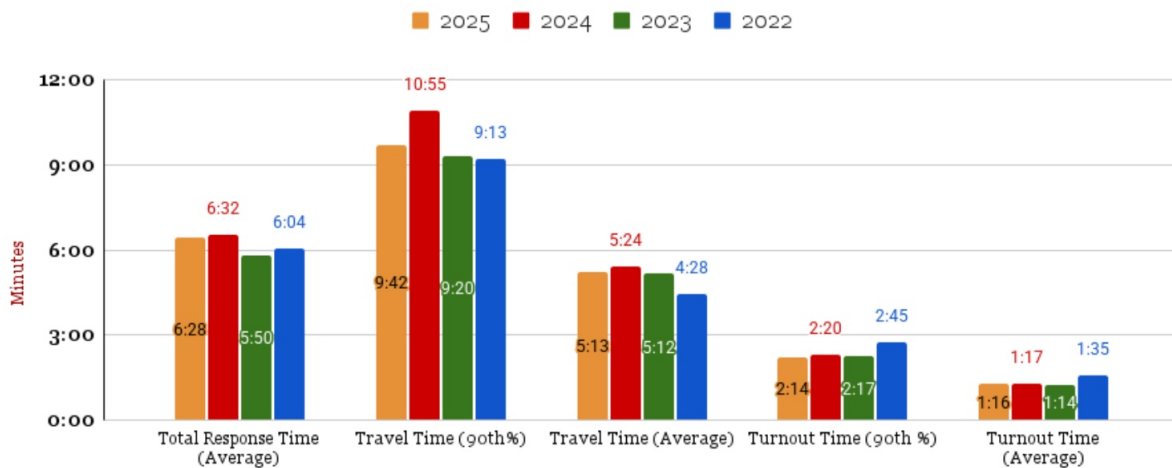
21%

CALL OVERLAP

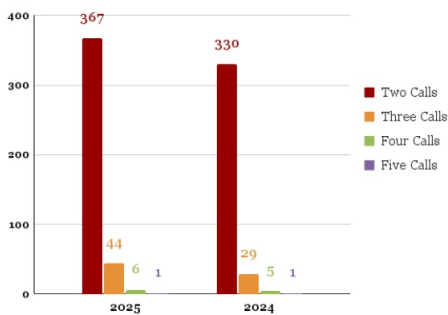
Turnout Time: Measures the time elapsed from when the emergency dispatcher informs the fire unit of an emergency and when the unit leaves the fire station.

Travel Time: Elapsed time from when an emergency vehicle goes enroute to the time that it arrives to the incident.

Response Time 2022 - 2025



Number of Simultaneous Calls 2024 - 2025



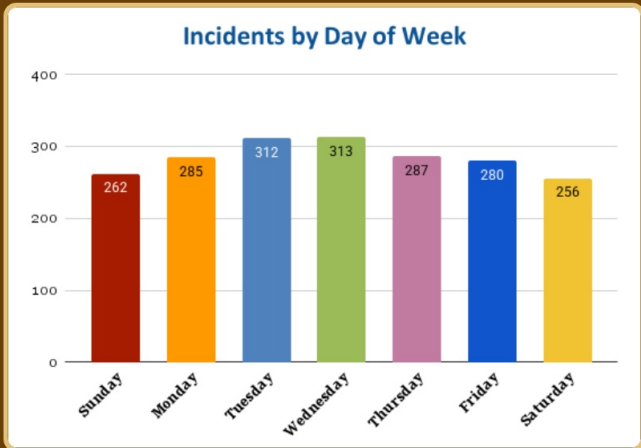
When Every Second Counts

This chart shows the number of calls that occur within the same timeframe. Our goal is to handle incidents with our resources, but at times the impact of these instances requires the assistance of other agencies through mutual aid. In 2025, 21 percent of incidents occurred while crews were already on another call — up from 20 percent in 2024. This increasing overlap directly supports the need for the second ambulance funded through the Growth Appeal.

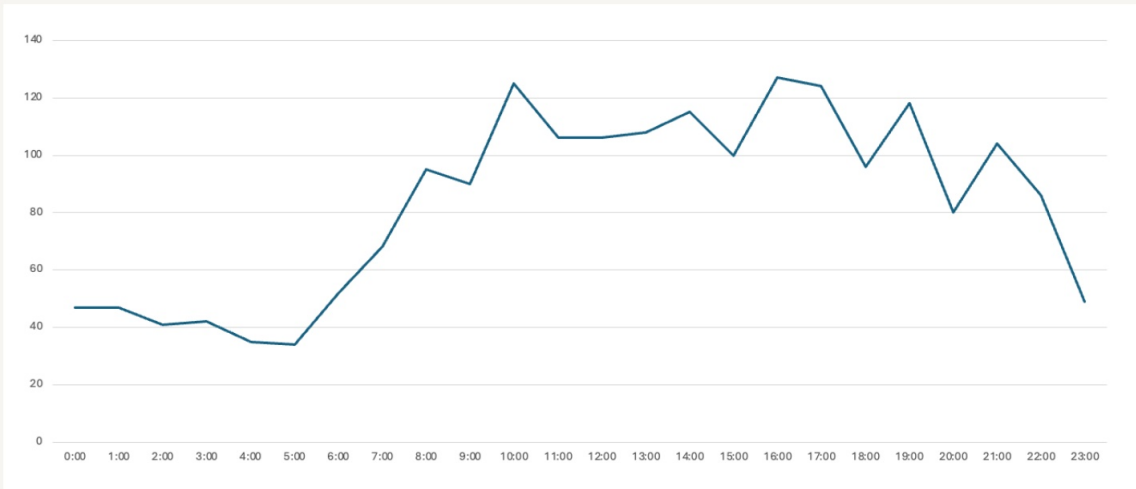
When Do We Respond?

Patterns in Our Response

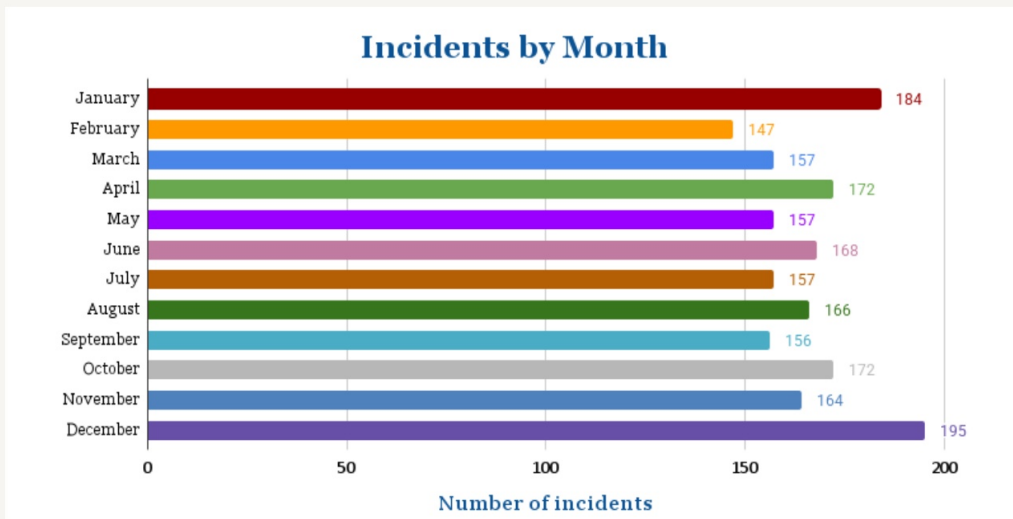
Understanding when incidents occur helps the department plan staffing and allocate resources effectively. In 2025, incidents were distributed fairly consistently throughout the year, with December being the busiest month at 195 calls and February the slowest at 147. Wednesday was the busiest day of the week, and the majority of runs occur between 10:00 AM and 8:00 PM.



2025 Incidents by Day of Week



2025 Incidents by Hour of the Day



2025 Incidents by Month

Community Risk Reduction

Prevention Before Emergency

Community Risk Reduction focuses on preventing emergencies before they happen. VTFD's Fire Prevention division conducts inspections of commercial properties and public buildings to ensure compliance with fire safety codes. Plan reviews evaluate new construction and renovation projects for fire safety requirements before building permits are issued. Public relations and education events bring fire safety awareness directly to residents through school visits, community gatherings, and safety demonstrations. Fire investigations determine the origin and cause of fires to support prevention efforts and, when necessary, law enforcement.



VTFD crews touring Mt. Vernon Community School Corp. buildings to identify important life safety features, note potential hazards, and discuss different operational scenarios.



VTFD crews touring a new townhome in McCordsville to get familiar with building structures.

2025 By the Numbers

In 2025, the department completed 509 inspections, reviewed 49 building plans, hosted 41 public education events, and conducted 4 fire investigations. Public education events have nearly doubled since 2022, reflecting the department's growing commitment to proactive community engagement alongside traditional emergency response.



Fire Marshal Josh Earl presenting at the annual Fire Inspectors Association of Indiana's Leadership Conference.



VTFD Public Safety Day Event

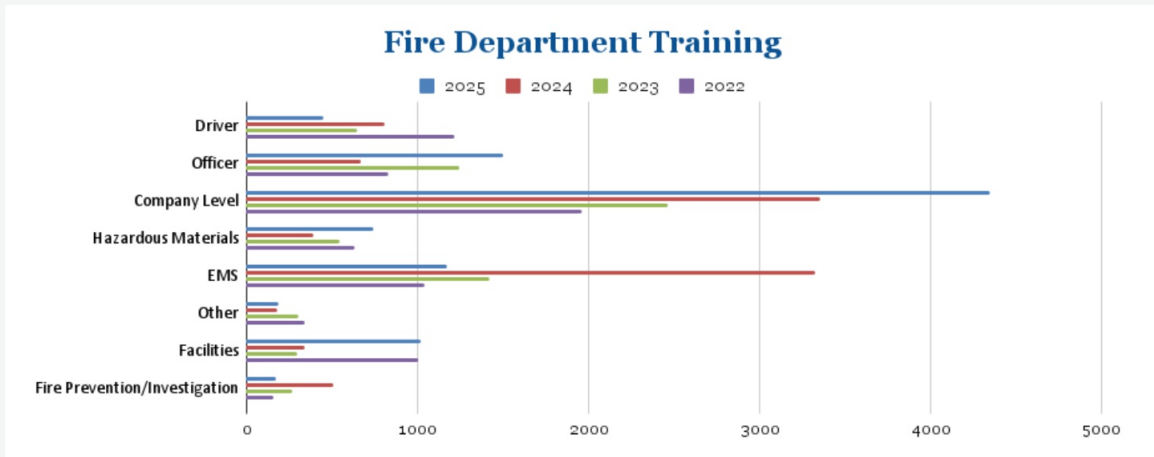
Fire Department Training

Investing in Our People

In 2025, VTFD personnel completed 9,572 total training hours. Officer training more than doubled and hazardous materials training nearly doubled from the prior year, reflecting the department's investment in leadership development and specialized response capabilities. Company-level training reached 4,346 hours, the highest in department history. The new training room, completed in summer 2025, provides a dedicated space for fire, EMS, and educational programs.



VTFD is conducting joint live fire training with Greenfield Fire Territory, Buck Creek Township Fire Department, and Sugar Creek Township Fire Department at Greenfield Fire's Training Grounds



9,572

TOTAL TRAINING HOURS

1,497

OFFICER TRAINING HOURS

738

HAZMAT TRAINING HOURS



VTFD New Training Center completed in Summer 2025



VTFD Officers attending the Technology Summit to learn about different types of technology for emergency responses, connect with vendors, and network with other departments

Preserving Our Fire Protection History

New Historic Display in the Vernon Township Fire Training Center

The history of Fortville Volunteer Fire and McCordsville Volunteer Fire are now proudly displayed in the new Vernon Township Fire Training Center, featuring antique fire equipment, photographs, and artifacts. The merger of these two departments led to the establishment of Vernon Township Fire Department in 2019.

This display is made possible by ALT Construction, Director of Administration Stacy Nielsen, and DELV Design.



Capturing 160+ Years of Fire Protection in McCordsville, Fortville, and Unincorporated Vernon Township Areas

Founding Years

- 1889 - Fortville Volunteer Fire
- 1952 - McCordsville Volunteer Fire
- 2019 - Vernon Township Fire Department
- 2020 - Vernon Township EMS Division
- 2020 - Vernon Township Fire Protection Territory



Whole Blood Program

59

AVERAGE AGE

86%

SURVIVAL OF HEMORRHAGIC SHOCK

<3 mins

TRANSFUSION TIME



FF/Paramedic Maddie Clock, FF/Paramedic JP Mudd, FF/Paramedic Nathan Wright, and EMS Division Chief Kiely Culberson received the VTFD Award of Merit for their work in bringing the program to life.



EMS Chief Kiely Culberson with VTFD first unit of LTO + WB

Saving Lives in the Field

In November 2025, VTFD became the first fire department in Hancock County — and only the sixth agency in Indiana — to carry whole blood on an ambulance. In partnership with the American Red Cross Indiana Region, the department now stocks Low Titer O-Positive Whole Blood on the primary ambulance at Station 432, equipped with a Delta APRU blood cooler, QinFlow blood warming device, and LifeFlow rapid infusion sets.



Just two weeks after launch, crews administered two units of whole blood to a mother experiencing a life-threatening postpartum hemorrhage. She was released from the hospital the next day.

VERNON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT WHOLE BLOOD PROGRAM
STARTED 8/21/2025
@AMERICAN RED CROSS OF INDIANA
HEMORRHAGIC SHOCK TREATMENT

VTFD HAS AN 86% SURVIVAL OF HEMORRHAGIC SHOCK, VERSUS 38- 65% MORTALITY RATE NATIONALLY (ONE PT IN CARDIAC ARREST ON ARRIVAL, ROSC TRANSPORT)

AVERAGE UNITS GIVEN: 1 (8 UNITS FOR 7PTS)
 TRANSFUSION TIME: <3 MINUTES
 AVERAGE AGE: 59
DATA COLLECTED 8/21/2025-8/17/2026

NEXT BLOOD DRIVE: MAY 21ST, 2026 1:00PM-6:00PM
 602 VITALITY DRIVE, FORTVILLE, IN, 46040

Next Blood Drive is on May 21, 2026 at Vernon Township Office

Drone Technology



VTFD Director of IT Jaehnert and Fire Chief Mark Elder accepting a grant check of \$10,000 from NineStar Operation Round Up for first thermal imaging drone

6
SEARCH FOR PERSON ON LAND

2
BRUSH OR BRUSH & GRASS MIXTURE FIRE

1
BUILDING FIRE

1
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE OR HEAVY EQUIPMENT FIRE

A New Era in Emergency Response

In August 2025, the Vernon Township Fire Department launched its first drone program, adding a powerful new tool to its emergency response capabilities. Made possible by a generous grant from NineStar Connect's Operation Round Up, the drone provides real-time aerial views and is equipped with thermal imaging camera technology to locate hidden hot spots in structure fires and missing persons.

The drone enhances department operations across multiple areas: allowing crews to assess dangerous structures or hazardous material scenes from a safe distance, quickly scanning large or hard-to-access areas like farmlands and wooded areas during search and rescue operations, improving situational awareness during large-scale emergencies and after severe storms, and aiding community initiatives like Project Lifesaver by helping locate vulnerable individuals more quickly and safely. The drone is also a key component of the Hancock County Drone Team, a collaborative effort that ensures this advanced technology is available for mutual aid across the county.



Vernon Township firefighter/paramedic Miranda Tuggle, left, looks over the display controls Tuesday while firefighter Noah Jaehnert demonstrates the new drone (photo credit: Tom Russo | Daily Reporter)

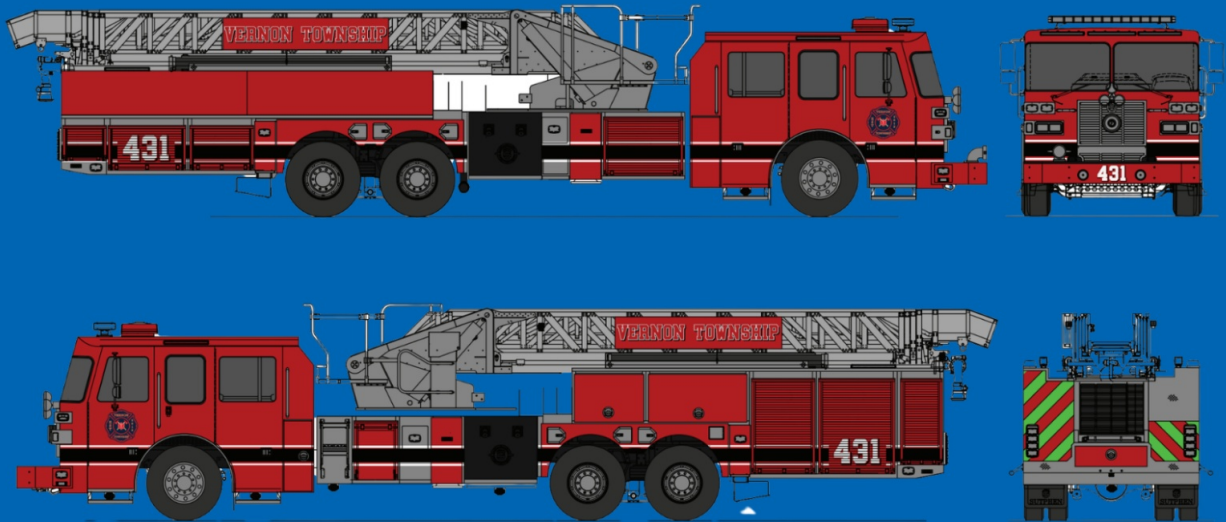


Vernon Township Fire Department Chief Mark Elder, left, along with VTFD Director of Technology and Logistics Noah Jaehnert demonstrate the new drone the department has to help in fire rescue and other tasks. (photo credit: Tom Russo | Daily Reporter)

Looking Ahead to 2026

Expanded Emergency Medical Services — Growth Appeal funding will allow VTFD to staff a second ambulance, addressing increased call volume and improving emergency medical coverage

New Ladder Truck (Quint) — Summer 2026 — The Fire Department's first ladder truck arrives Summer 2026, enhancing fire suppression and rescue capabilities for multi-story and commercial structures



2026 Vernontownship Fire Department Quint (credit: Sutphen Towers Graphics)

Thank You, Vernontownship

The progress in this report reflects the trust and support of the residents, businesses, and community partners of Fortville, McCordsville, and Vernontownship. To the men and women of VTFD — your dedication and professionalism are the foundation of everything we accomplish. As our community continues to grow, so does our commitment to keeping it safe. We look forward to serving you in the years ahead.



Vernontownship Fire Department Administration

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