



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

SAINT JOHN FIRE DEPARTMENT

# A WORD FROM THE CHIEF



It is a honour to present the 2023 Annual Report for the Saint John Fire Department . Like many of the things that a fire chief is responsible for, the heavy lifting in putting this celebration of service together was completed by “a very talented and dedicated team” whom I have been most fortunate to work with.

2023 was a period of significant transformation for the SJFD. The third-party fire service review concluded with a series of recommendations from which to help move forward on Common Council’s direction to create a fifteen-year strategic plan for SJFD. A renewed focus on fire prevention, data analysis, and service levels were prevalent activities of the Saint John Fire Service in the 2023 calendar year as the department begins work on its 15-year strategic plan.

Our Fire Prevention personnel worked with our operational fire crews and provided school and at home safety messages to over two thousand members of our community at nearly 40 public education sessions. Fire prevention personnel also worked closely with fire administration on providing property gravestone information into our First Due records management system (RMS), thereby providing critical property specific response and inspection information to inspectors and operational crews.

In addition to property information, fire administration, training and prevention personnel have been inputting various types of data into our new RMS systems with the goal of creating a data rich RMS that supports all activity and assessment needs to best serve our desire to be an evidence-based action orientated public safety service.

Further to service levels the Saint John Fire Department, through our larger municipal organization, had a critical role in advancing Saint John High School’s proposal on the federally sponsored Building Safer Communities Fund. In addition, and as leading participants to the Municipal Public Safety Committee and the Saint John Emergency Management Organization, fire managers Rob Nichol and Leah Robichaud received the Public Safety Committee and Common Council’s unanimous endorsement of a proposed upgrade of our municipal emergency response plan.

Further to public safety, SJFD was also a major contributor to the Province’s Regional Public Safety Committee, helping to identify priorities and objectives for best utilizing public safety resources to the greatest benefit of the regional community. While back home in Saint John our fire service members worked to create relationships with those members of our community who are living hard, visiting tent sites, introducing ourselves and creating trust for those instances where we are called to help.

Also, in 2023 SJFD continued to advance discussions on being a more inclusive, and diverse workforce, initiating action on a number of fronts. SJFD in collaboration with other first responders introduced Camp Courage (see special feature inside this report), invested in facility improvements, and took a broader look at the criteria for the candidate pool for potential HRFF candidates, setting the path for a new recruit class – All steps to be more welcoming, inclusive and diverse.

The fire service review in its assertion to shift to be more of a prevention and data focus organization noted the need to sustain a capable emergency response service. 2023 reminded us of the emergency response challenges inherent to this community’s hazard risk profile. Saint John Fire operations responded to numerous emergencies that involved medium to high hazard occupancies and most importantly demonstrated a high level of competence in minimizing the impact to property owners and citizens. The September 14 and 15 industrial fire at the AIM facility highlighted the investment that this department has put into performance competence and stakeholder collaboration.

My announcement late in 2023 of my retirement early in 2024 was quickly followed by the appointment of Deputy Chief Rob Nichol to Fire Chief and Director of SJEMO beginning January 28th 2024. I wish Chief Nichol well and I am certain that he will have much success as he leads a period of transformation change that ensures that this service will be better tomorrow than today.

On this my final message I must restate the admiration, gratitude, and respect that I have for the members of the SJFD; it was an honour to work along-side you for the past 44 years. We all should have a purpose in our lives and our fire service career has helped identify what ours is. I wish all personnel a safe and rewarding journey through this career of service.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Clifford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**KEVIN CLIFFORD**  
**SAINT JOHN FIRE CHIEF**

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Saint John Fire Department acknowledges that it is situated on the traditional territory of the Wolastoqiyik/Maliseet. The Wolastoqiyik/Maliseet along with their Indigenous neighbours, the Mi'kmaq/Mi'kmaw and Passamaquoddy/Peskotomuhkati signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the British Crown in the 1700s that protected their rights to lands and resources.

## ABOUT SAINT JOHN FIRE

The Saint John Fire Department has been operating since 1786. Today, the department is responsible for servicing 316 square kilometers.

The department's focus is on reducing loss of life, personal injury, property damage or impact on the environment through five primary services:

- Fire Rescue and Suppression
- Technical Rescue
- Fire Prevention and Investigation
- Medical First Response
- Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Emergency Response



# MISSION, VISION & VALUES



The Mission of the SJFD is to minimize the loss of life and injury, as well as damage to the environment, through effective and efficient traditional and non-traditional fire rescue services.

*Through progressive planning and leadership, provide an effective and innovative response to the evolving Fire and Rescue needs of the citizens and industries of Saint John.*

We the members of the SJFD shall base our conduct on the highest ethical standards responding to the needs of our citizens.

We shall serve with professionalism, courtesy, and respect, recognizing the diverse nature of our community.

We shall hold devotion to duty above personal risk.

# SAINT JOHN FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

## IAFF LOCAL 771

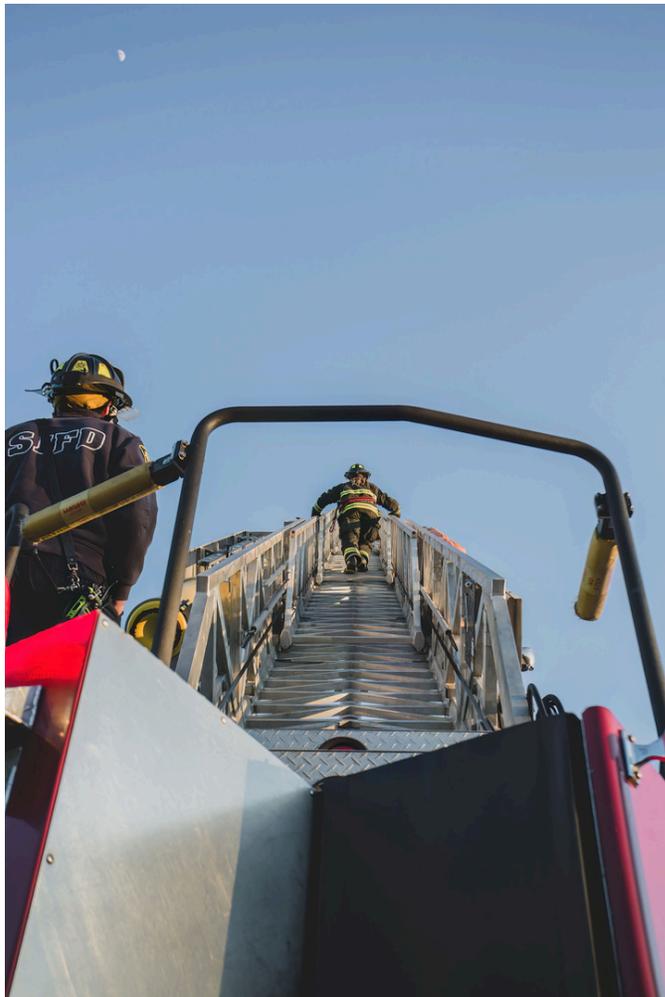


The following are some highlights of the wonderful charity work the members of Local 771 are doing in our community

- Canadian Blood Services donor drives
- Ways and Means- \$15,000 raised to support 40 families
- West Side Days BBQ
- Camp Courage
- Remembrance Day Poppy Campaign throughout the City
- Remembrance Day ceremony at TD Station
- Santa Float for local Christmas parades
- Salvation Army Christmas Kettles- 100 off duty members volunteer at various kettle locations throughout the City
- Chuck-a-Puck at Saint John Seadogs Games in support of MD
- United Way Donor
- MD walk
- Bobby's Hospice BBQ fundraiser
- Run/Walk for the cure - Rockwood Park
- Island View School fun day
- Seniors BBQ at Exhibition Park
- Island View School book fair
- Lunch program for St. John the Baptist School
- Fun day at the Firefighters Museum
- Make a Wish Foundation
- Compassionate grief Centre annual "Jason Zelward physical challenge"

# SERVING SAINT JOHN

SAINT JOHN'S UNIQUE MAKEUP OF RESIDENTIAL, OLD BALLOON FRAME HOUSING STOCK, COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES & HEAVY INDUSTRY PRESENTS FIREFIGHTERS WITH EXCEPTIONAL RESPONSE CHALLENGES



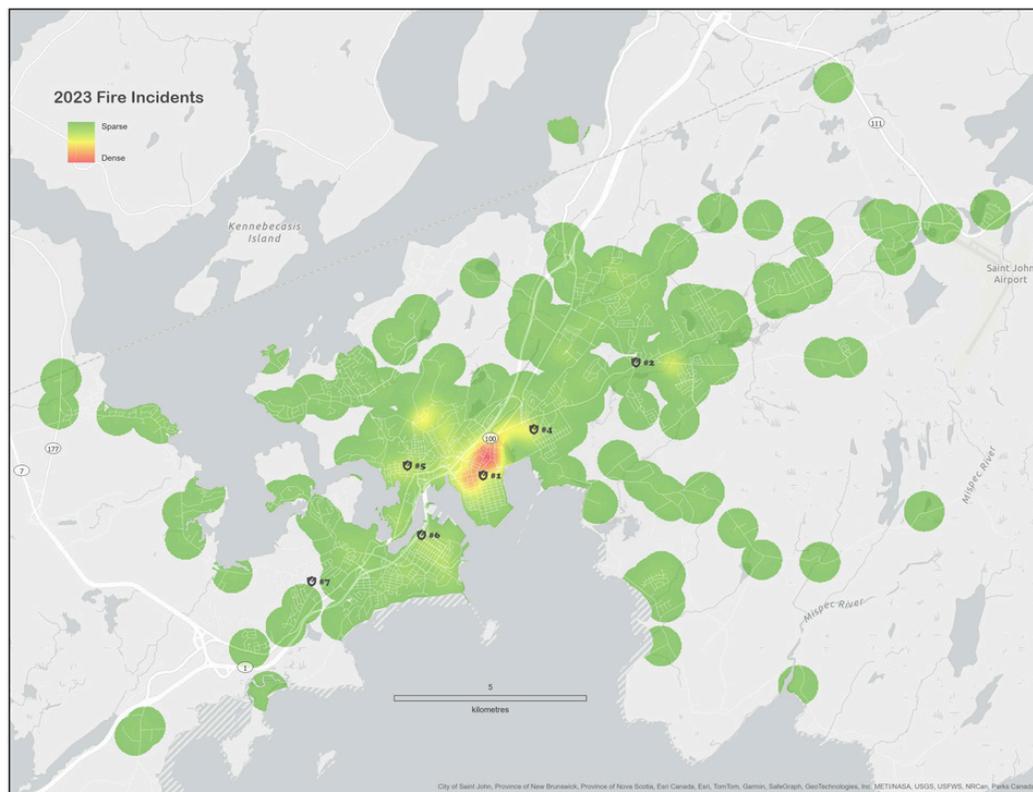
*The SJFD is one of three provincial heavy hazardous materials response teams in New Brunswick*

SAINT JOHN FIRE HAS 6 FIRE STATIONS LOCATED STRATEGICALLY AROUND THE CITY

WE EMPLOY 124 PERMANENT FIREFIGHTERS

20 CASUAL STAFF WE CALL "HOLIDAY RELIEF" FIREFIGHTERS WHO FILL IN FOR ABSENCES.

10 MANAGEMENT STAFF & 2 ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



# FIRE PREVENTION & INVESTIGATION

## 2023 STATS

- 13 SCHOOL VISITS  
(634 STUDENTS & STAFF)
- 10 COMMUNITY EVENTS  
(1189 VISITORS)
- 30 FIRE INVESTIGATIONS
- 10 COMMUNITY  
INFORMATION SESSIONS
- 11 OFM ORDERS
- 339 INSPECTIONS
- 196 RE-INSPECTIONS

*The Fire Prevention Division promotes a proactive approach to fire & life safety through public education, training, inspections and code enforcements*

*Saint John Fire kicked off their annual fire prevention week (October 8-14, 2023) with a focus on cooking safety*

- Watch what you heat. Always keep a close eye on what you are cooking and set a timer to remind you that you have something on the stove
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove and always keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner
- Have a child and pet free zone of at least three feet around the stove or barbeque and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried

## TRAINING DIVISION

*Located on Grandview Avenue, the department's training facility has more than 2,500 square feet of internal training space and consists of offices, classroom, live fire facilities, and post-fire decontamination facilities*

## 2023 TRAINING

- FIRST RESPONDER  
TRAINING
- EMERGENCY WILDLAND  
FIREFIGHTER TRAINING
- ICE RESCUE TRAINING
- HAZMAT TRAINING
- TECHNICAL ROPE RESCUE  
TRAINING
- DRIVER OPERATOR  
TRAINING
- BOAT RESCUE TRAINING
- ANNUAL POINT LEPREAU  
TRAINING

# OUR EMPLOYEES

*We are committed  
to our employees  
and the service,  
dedication and  
expertise they  
bring to the Saint  
John Fire  
Department and  
Community*



## PROMOTIONS

### CAPTAIN

MARC CAREY  
PETER ALEXANDER

### QUALIFIED CAPTAIN

PETER LAVIGNE  
TERRY CROPLEY  
CHRIS CLINTON  
STEPHEN JOHNSTON  
PAT CURRIE  
SONNY URQUHART

### LIEUTENANT

PETER CHRISTIAN  
SCOTT GOGUEN  
TREVOR PRICE

### QUALIFIED LIEUTENANT

ANDREW ROONEY  
BILLY SHEPPARD  
CHRIS WORTHMAN  
CRAIG HUSSEY  
CRAIG MELVIN  
DAVID MACCREADY  
DEREK DOUCETTE  
JEREMY HARLEY  
JUSTIN HORTON  
LAURIE ROBICHAUD  
MARK ARRAND  
MIKE MEW  
PATRICK THEBEAU  
RYAN FERRIS

## RETIREMENTS

JD MURRAY  
SEAN JOHNSON  
GEORGE MORROW  
MARK MCCORMICK

## PERMANENT HIRES

JOSHUA CROPLEY  
CRAIG PRICE  
ADAM MCILLWRAITH

# LONG SERVICE AWARDS

## 15 YEAR PROVINCIAL PINS

Derek Doucette  
Mark Arrand  
Ryan Ferris  
Patrick Thebeau  
Justin MacDougall  
Adam Ketchum  
Melissa Martin  
Natalie Harvey  
Ryan Brown  
Scott Nason  
Tyler Embree  
David Flewelling

## 20 YEAR FEDERAL MEDALS

Billy Sheppard  
Craig Hussey  
Craig Melvin  
Justin Horton  
Andrew Rooney  
Chris Worthman  
David MacCready  
Laurie Robichaud  
Mike Mew  
Jeremy Harley

## 30 YEAR FEDERAL MEDALS

Geoff Ferguson  
Thomas Foley  
Peter Lavigne  
Trevor Tompkins  
Mark Higgins  
Jeff Kearney  
Roy Nolan

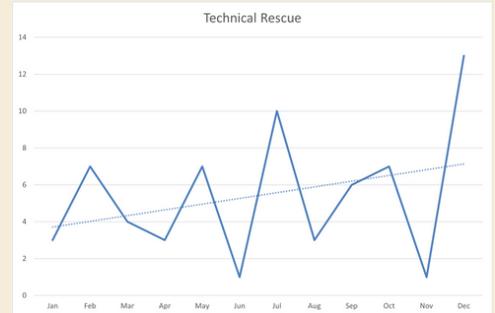
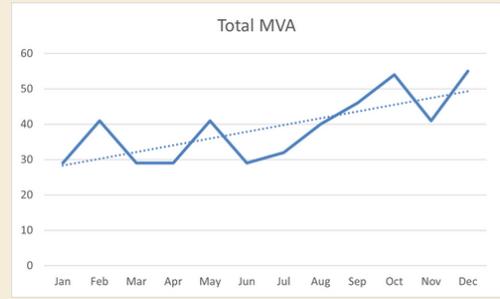
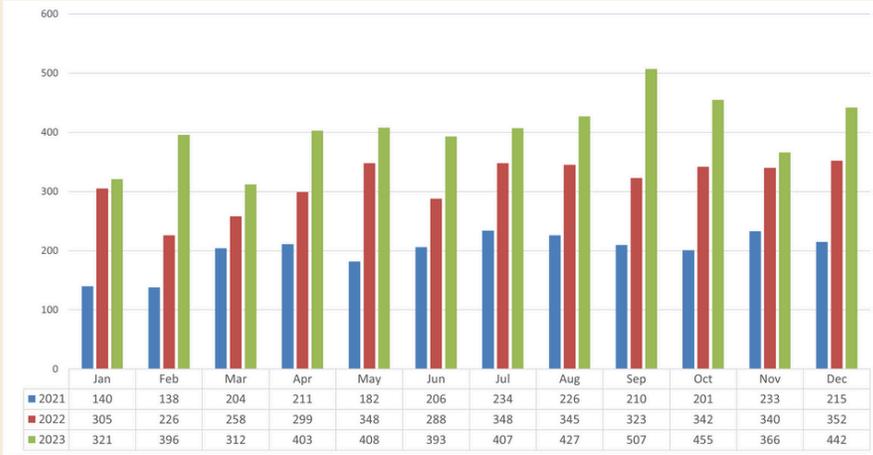
## 25 YEAR PROVINCIAL MEDALS

Terry Cropley  
Peter Tait  
Ed Moyer  
Colin Lucas  
Todd Walsh  
Joseph Shelley  
Paul Hallett  
Sonny Urquhart  
Alison Campbell  
Daniel Coates  
Rob Nichol  
Peter Christian  
Scott Goguen  
Trevor Price

## 35 YEAR PROVINCIAL BARS

Joseph Furrow  
Stephen Hamm  
Gordon Chase  
Peter King  
George Morrow  
Mark McCormick

# 2023 STATS



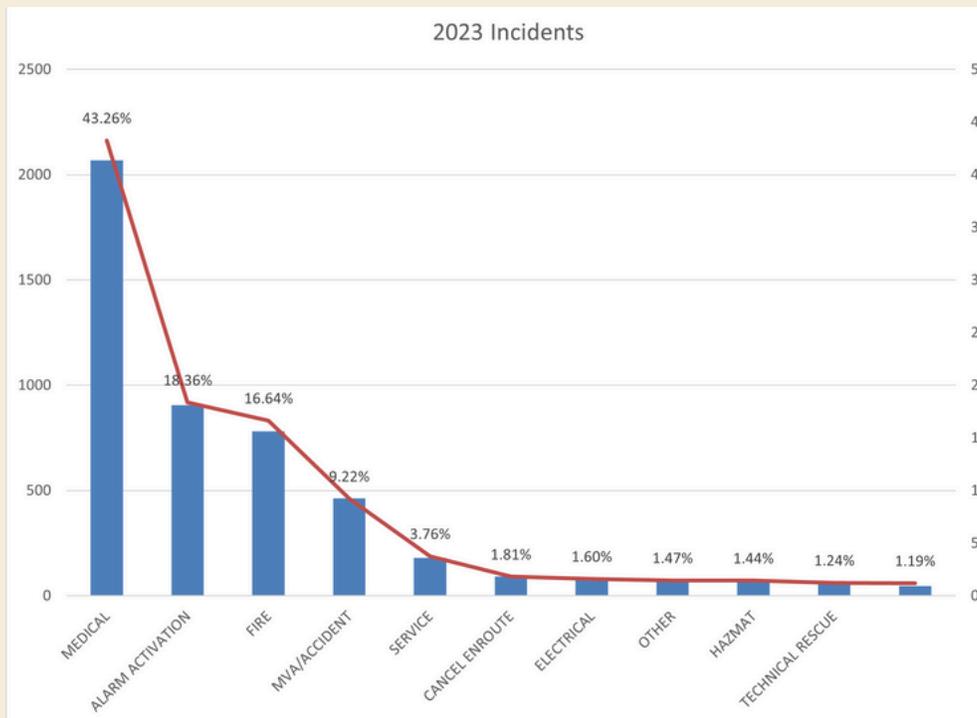
**4,822**  
Total Calls

**1,084**  
Additional calls compared to 2022

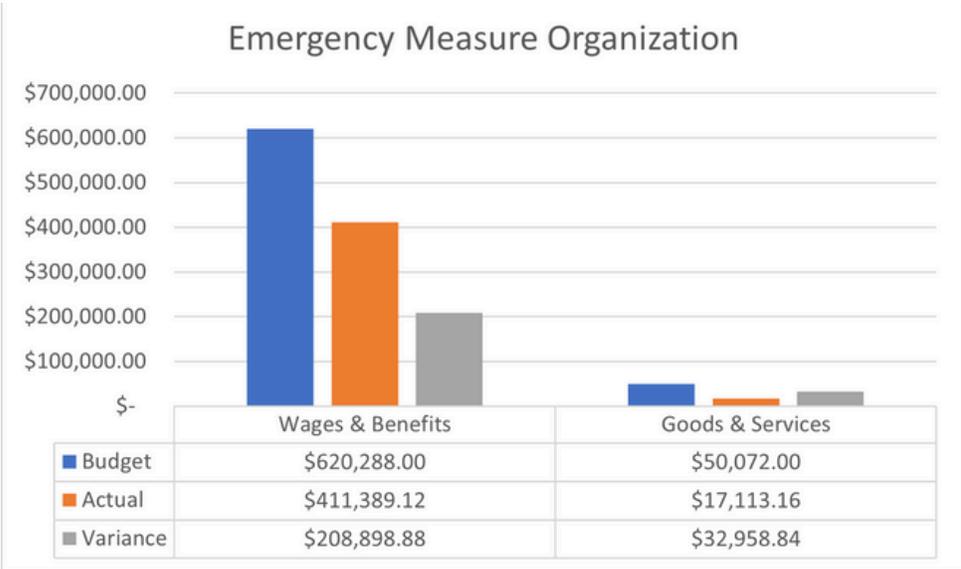
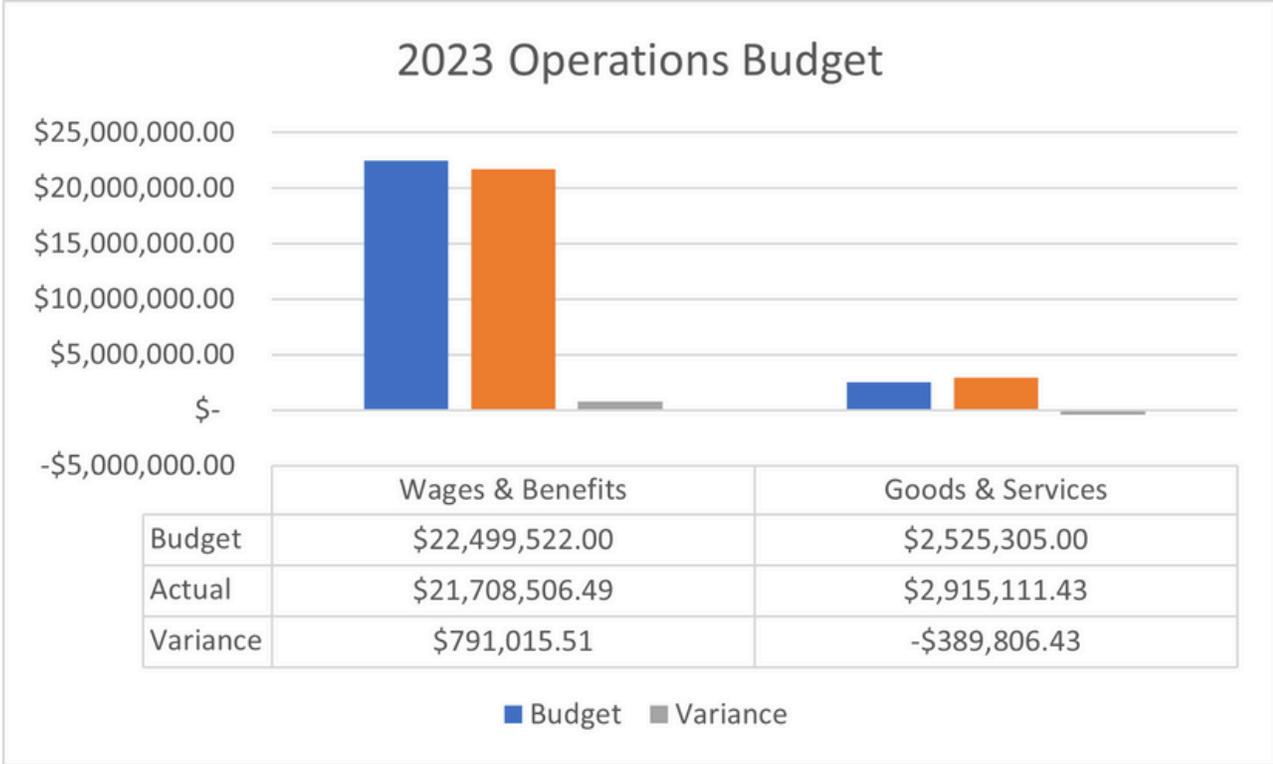
**784**  
Fire Calls

**43%**  
Medical Calls

**18**  
Water/ Ice Rescue



# 2023 BUDGET DATA



*Every community needs a well-equipped fire department.*

*Have you ever wondered how much all the necessary equipment costs?*

- One set of bunker gear is over \$3,000
- One helmet is \$650
- A pair of gloves is over \$200

This gear, according to NFPA requirements, must be replaced every 10 years

# CAMP COURAGE

The First Responders Society



The first ever, NB Camp Courage was held in August 2023. The annual camp was established in 2006 and up until 2023 had only been hosted in Halifax and Calgary.

It was created to introduce careers as First Responders – such as Paramedic, Police Officer, and Firefighter – to young women and gender-diverse youth aged 15-19.

The camp provided information, inspiration, education, and empowerment, leaving youth with the confidence to achieve any goal, career, or dream they desire.

Camp participants took part in hands-on exercises and training, coaching on preparing for fitness requirements for these fields and heard from other females who have chosen a profession in emergency services.



*Camp Courage was a new partnership between Saint John Fire, Saint John Police and Ambulance NB, bringing an interactive camp to the City, offering young females and gender-diverse teens an opportunity to explore a career in First Response.*

# SAINT JOHN EMO



## Exercises



JUNE 6-8  
CBRNE PROVINCIAL  
EXERCISE



SEPTEMBER 13  
HAZMAT RAIL EXERCISE  
MONCTON



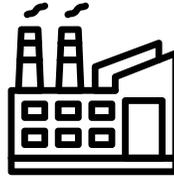
NOVEMBER 8  
SJ AIRPORT:  
TABLETOP



SEPTEMBER 19  
DP WORLD  
EXERCISE



MAY 16  
EAST SJ TERMINAL  
FULL SCALE



SEPTEMBER 20  
ANNUAL PLNGS  
EXERCISE

## MERP Update

### Updated List of Potential Hazards

- Flooding
- Extreme Weather
- Complex Structure Fire
- Forest/Wildfire
- Extreme Temperatures
- Power Outage
- Landslide/Erosion
- Public Health/Pandemic
- Cyber Attack
- Active/Violent Threat
- Communication Failure
- Air Quality
- Aviation Incident
- Port/Marine Related Incident
- Potable Water
- Civil Disorder/Mass Gathering
- Critical Infrastructure Failure
- CBRNE

In 2023 Saint John EMO made significant updates to our Municipal Emergency Response Plan (MERP). An MERP is any plan, program or procedure prepared by a municipality that is intended to mitigate the effects of an emergency or disaster and to provide for the safety, health or welfare of the civil population and the protection of property and the environment in event of such occurrence.



# 2023 SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS

On Saturday, **August 12th** a call was received for a male in Cardiac Arrest on Harbour Passage, and Engine 1 responded. The nearby Platoon Chief arrived first, and initiated CPR. When the crew of Engine 1 arrived, they took over CPR and administered 3 shocks from their AED. After this series of field actions, the citizen regained consciousness, and the ambulance arrived.

Ambulance New Brunswick staff, along with our fire service staff continued to treat the patient while he was transferred to the hospital. Our post incident information is that AED and CPR restarted the heart, and the citizen had survived the cardiac arrest incident.



Photo Credit: CBC News



Photo Credit: CBC News

On **November 24th** crews were called to 49 Adelaide Street for a large 3 division structure fire. The arriving crew reported heavy smoke coming from the building.

The interior crew reported fire on all levels with the heaviest fire being on the second and third floor. Additional units were called to come to the fire and help with fire attack.

After conducting interior operations for over an hour and with the exposure building, which was just 3 feet away being threatened by flames, crews hit the fire hard with elevated master streams. The expert positioning of Ladder Tower 1 was critical. (See photo)

After about 15 minutes utilizing elevated master streams to attack the exposed fire, crews were able return to interior operations and cycled through the highly physical task of tearing ceilings and walls apart to expose the remaining fire.

Eight people were displaced after a structure fire near the corner of Charlotte Street and Harding Street in Saint John's Uptown area, on **October 1st**. Crews found heavy smoke coming from the building upon arrival, and made repeated interior attacks. After several attempts, crews moved to a defensive strategy.

It took more than three dozen Saint John firefighters about two hours to knock down the fire. No serious injuries were reported; however, a woman was treated at the Saint John Regional Hospital for smoke inhalation.

Due to heavy smoke in the area, the Saint John Fire Department sent an emergency alert through the provincial Alert Ready notification system to notify citizens of the shelter in place recommendation.



Photo Credit: CBC News

In the early morning hours of **June 23rd**, crews were dispatched to an alarm activation at a multi-unit building on Bayside Drive.

Upon arrival Rescue 4 did not see smoke, however upon further investigation, smoke was discovered in the basement of one of the businesses. The call was upgraded to a structure fire and additional crews were dispatched. Further smoke was discovered in an office area of an adjacent business.

The crews did a through investigation using thermal imaging cameras, and located the origin of the fire, which had been extinguished by the Rescue 4 crew, first on scene.

It took just 11 mins to have the fire knocked down which prevented further businesses being affected.



## CO Incident May 2-4

Two homes in the Millidgeville area were evacuated on May 2nd, 2023, over elevated levels of carbon monoxide. One owner called 911 after her carbon monoxide detector had activated. Once firefighters arrived on scene, they used their own gas monitoring equipment and confirmed the elevated levels ranged from 75 parts per million to 300 parts per million. To note, individuals would feel symptoms in the range of 50-100 parts per million, people may experience headaches, shortness of breath, tiredness or find their motor functions impaired.

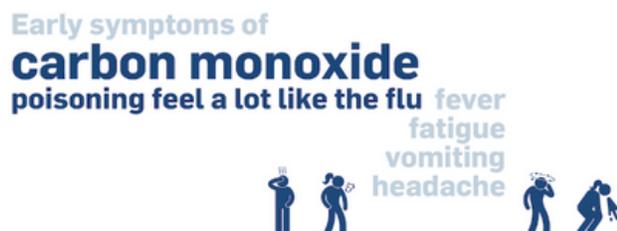
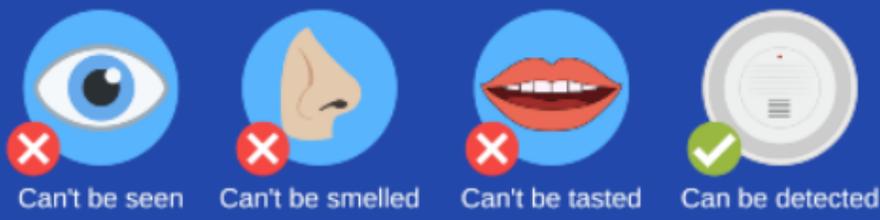
Ladder 5 took many readings in the first home, opening windows, etc. They also checked levels in adjacent homes, and discovered higher levels of carbon monoxide at the house next door to the original complainant. The homeowner was transported by ambulance to the Regional Hospital to be checked out, due to prolonged exposure.

Liberty Gas was contacted and homeowners were evacuated until the source was identified, and levels dropped. The following day, Ladder 5 was back on scene investigating both homes, in full PPE. It was determined that blasting in the area, the day before may have been the source. Liberty Gas took soil readings and found that on the blasting side of the road, readings scored around 100 ppm near the first home, and 0 ppm was found next to the other home. The Department of Environment and the Saint John Water Department were called to aid in the investigation.

It was determined that high levels of CO are a natural occurrence after blasting. With the concussion wave and the pressures involved, a pocket of CO can migrate through cracks in rock and soil and find natural infrastructure in the ground to follow, such as water mains, sewer and LNG lines into basements causing high CO levels. This pocket in the ground can last for 3 -7 days before it dissipates.

The scene was turned over to David Peterson of the Environment who also called Worksafe and Public Health to get them involved to ensure that in 3 - 5 days it would be safe for the owners to return home. The homeowners were advised to contact a plumber to come in and properly seal off the Kitec pipes to avoid any further issue.

## Carbon Monoxide - The Silent Killer



Know the symptoms. Protect yourself from CO poisoning.

# AIM FIRE

On September 14, 2023 Saint John Fire responded to a reported fire at the American Iron and Metal (AIM) facility, located in the Port of Saint John. It is estimated that this was the highest volume of water used for fire suppression in the city's history.

Saint John EMO issued a voluntary shelter-in-place order for residents in the City's South end and Millidgeville areas.

Residents were asked to remain in their homes, due to air quality concerns. It was recommended windows remain shut, and to turn off HVAC systems, as the plume and smoke were filled with chemicals and contaminants, making it hazardous. Port Saint John also activated their emergency operations.

According to the province's air quality data, the amount of fine particulate matter in the air on Thursday was the highest it's been since December 2021. It's the second highest ever reported on the province's charts.

The fire burned in a heap of scrap metal for 40 hours, with 83 Saint John Fire personnel involved in fighting the fire.

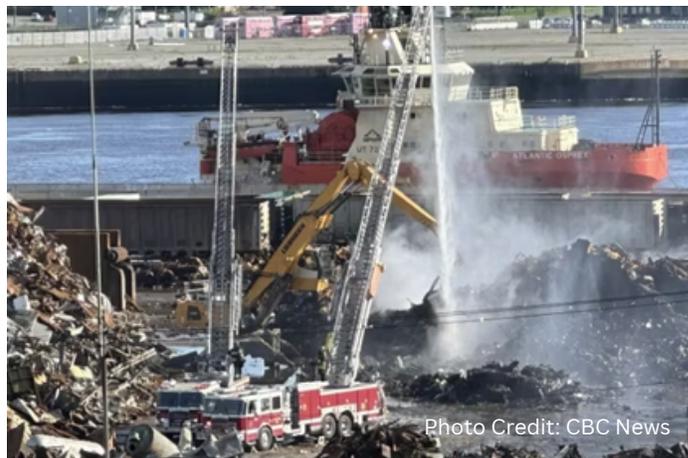


Photo Credit: Saltwire

The magnitude of the fire required significant interagency support from industry and municipal partners. Two Atlantic Towing vessels, Spitfire III and Atlantic Osprey, provided water from Saint John Harbour to support extinguishing the fire.

The Atlantic Osprey propelled 16,800 gallons of water a minute onto the fire over an 18-hour period, discharging almost 15 million gallons of water, in total.

The Spitfire III provided water for aerial trucks from the Saint John Fire Department and Irving Oil, on the scene.

Irving Oil responded with its 100-foot aerial truck along with additional resources to assist. Irving Oil's aerial truck was equipped with elevated thermal imaging technology, which was used to outline areas on scene that were still smoldering.

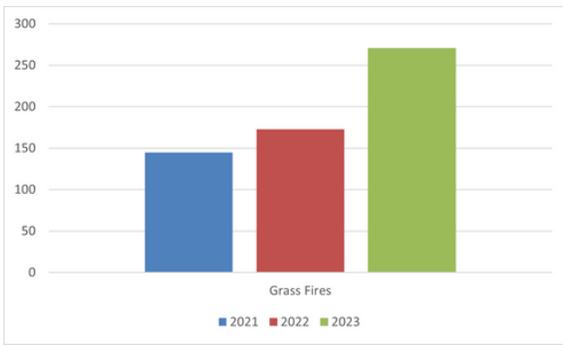
The Kennebecasis Valley Fire Department's Tanker 1 was part of a water shuttle operation which assisted in transporting water from hydrants nearby.

# CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING..



Encampment fires occur because people often use fire for cooking or warmth. Inside the homeless encampments, residents may use or store propane, butane, car batteries, or other hazards.

Saint John Firefighters have visited encampments to familiarize themselves with the areas and contents. During visits, they have encouraged people living there to use safe warming practices.



**Grass fires** are a significant concern for the department. 2023 was a record breaking year for wildfires across the country, including here in the Maritimes. Grass fires can quickly spread and result in significant damage.

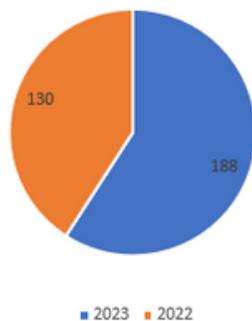


## Opioid Epidemic

Saint John has been dealing with an opioid crisis leading to a major increase in overdose-related calls

Firefighters are trained to administer naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal medication, which was required 130 times during 2023, each dose is about \$100

Administered Narcan Doses



# JOIN US

Firefighting is more than just putting out fires.

Working in a team, firefighters are community minded individuals who provide an essential service.

Firefighting provides an opportunity to give back to your community in a variety of ways. From public education with various community groups and schools to fundraising and helping citizens when in need. No two days are ever the same.

If you enjoy a challenge, troubleshooting, a dynamic work environment, varied training opportunities, and are looking for a rewarding career – Firefighting might be for you.

Saint John Fire has a dedicated team of professionals committed to delivering a high standard of service to our community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Qualified individuals interested in a rewarding and challenging career with the Saint John Fire Department are invited to apply for Holiday Relief Fire Fighter (HRFF) positions. SJFD typically recruits every two years depending on vacancies.

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities in which we live and which we serve. We encourage and support applications from Indigenous, and members of visible minority groups.

For more information about the process and required qualifications please visit our website at the address below.

<https://saintjohn.ca/en/public-safety/saint-john-fire-department/firefighter-recruitment>



# CONNECT WITH US



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