

Burlington Fire Commission Meeting

Tuesday February 10, 2026 08:31-09:21

Members Present: Chair Jake Perskinson, Vice Chair Kevin McLaughlin, Monica Chapman, Linda Sheehey (via Zoom), and Ashley Bond (via Zoom). Chief Michael Curtin, Deputy Chief of Operations Troy Ruggles, Battalion Chief of EMS Marsha McCombie, and Administrative Assistant Meghan Sweeney.

Call to Order –

Commissioner Perkinson called the meeting to order at 08:31 am.

Motion to Amend/Adopt Agenda-

Fire Commission meeting on February 10, 2026, began with a motion to adopt the agenda as submitted. Motion made by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Commissioner Chapman.

Public Comment –

No comment from member of public.

Accept Minutes from December Meeting-

Commissioner McLaughlin motioned to accept minutes as written. Commissioner Chapman seconded the motion. With no objections minutes accepted as written.

Meeting minutes using assistance from AI:

Chief's Oral Report-

Summary:

Burlington Fire Department Year in Review

The Burlington Fire Commission meeting covered the department's busiest year on record with 11,533 runs in 2025, followed by 941 runs in January 2026. Chief Curtin reported on the transition to the new NERIS reporting system, which replaced NFIRS, and highlighted significant incidents including a fatal fire on Peru Street and a second alarm on St. Paul Street. DC Ruggles discussed ongoing initiatives including a communication upgrade, a pending grant for a Zodiac boat from Firehouse Subs, and participation in a FEMA class on large population evacuations, while also noting concerns about vacant buildings and potential drone deployment for ice rescue operations.

Emergency Services Training and Collaboration

DC Ruggles explained that the department lacks ice rescue capabilities, but two members are scheduled to attend an official certification course in February. Chief Curtin reported that recruits completed their training on January 26th and are now assigned to companies. The administration division interviewed 22 candidates for open positions. DC Ruggles shared information about a new UVM Street Team mobile health van initiative, which aims to provide community paramedic services and reduce emergency room visits. The team discussed potential

collaboration opportunities with the fire department, including data sharing and resource coordination.

EMS Utilization Analysis and Preparedness

The meeting focused on analyzing data related to high utilizers of emergency medical services (EMS) in Burlington. BC McCombie presented preliminary findings from a study of individuals accounting for a disproportionate number of EMS encounters, noting an increase in the number of people and incidents over time. The group discussed potential reasons for spikes in usage and considered ways to address the issue, including connecting individuals with appropriate support services. DC Ruggles also provided an update on the city's preparedness for potential ICE events and mentioned an upcoming spring training seminar featuring presentations on fire safety and rapid intervention teams.

Next steps:

- BC McCombie and Jeff (data analyst): Meet after this meeting to build broader data across all calls, including call types, and prepare for potential further analysis and/or presentation to relevant groups (e.g., Comstat, situation table).
- BC McCombie: Consider, with leadership approval and attention to ethics, presenting impact cohort data to broader groups such as Comstat, pending leadership and ethical review.
- Chief Curtin and BFD leadership: Continue conversations with BFFA regarding potential transition to a 42-hour workweek at labor management meetings.
- BFD: Coordinate with Winooski Fire Department as needed regarding civil unrest SOG and mutual aid planning for mass casualty/civil unrest incidents.
- Two BFD members: Attend official Ice Rescue training hosted by Grand Isle Fire Department in February.
- BC McCombie (and relevant staff): Continue coordination and information sharing with UVM Street Medicine team, including sharing relevant data and exploring potential collaboration as their program develops.

Old/New Business-

- Deputy Chief Petit and Ashley: Continue work on the backdrop for ceremonies (including potential badge redesign) and provide status updates.
- Plan award ceremony for this year (targeting June), including coordination with Chief Curtin, Lieutenant Kirtlink and SFF Mund.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Chapman. All in favor meeting adjourned at 09:21 am.

Fire Commission
 Tuesday, February 10, 2026 08:30
 Fire Station #1
 136 South Winooski Avenue
 SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	EMAIL
Kevin McLaughlin	County one @ AOL.com
Jacob B. Perkinson	jperkinson@se.wyborvt.gov
Monica Chapman	mchappman@purplean.com
Michael Curtis	Mcurtis@Burlingtonvt.gov
Ray Rucolas	rrucolas@berlinvt.gov
Meghan Sweeney	msweeney@burlyngtonvt.gov

Please note that this sign-in sheet and any information provided on it will be maintained as a public record and may be subject to disclosure under the Vermont Public Records Act.



BURLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

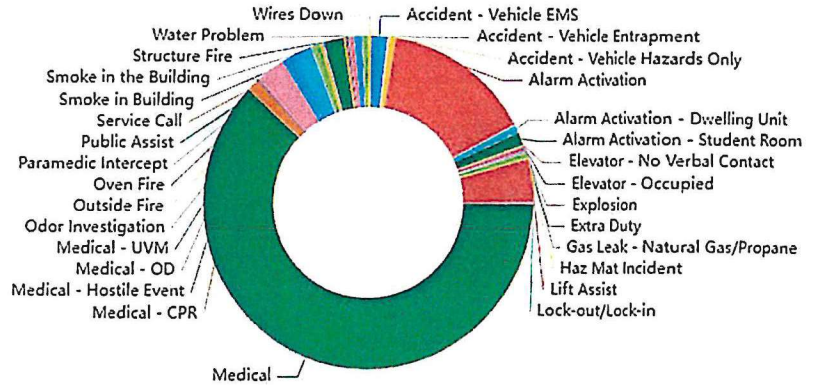
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Chief's Report to the Fire Commission: January Data Points February 10, 2026

Call Volume & Activity Summary:

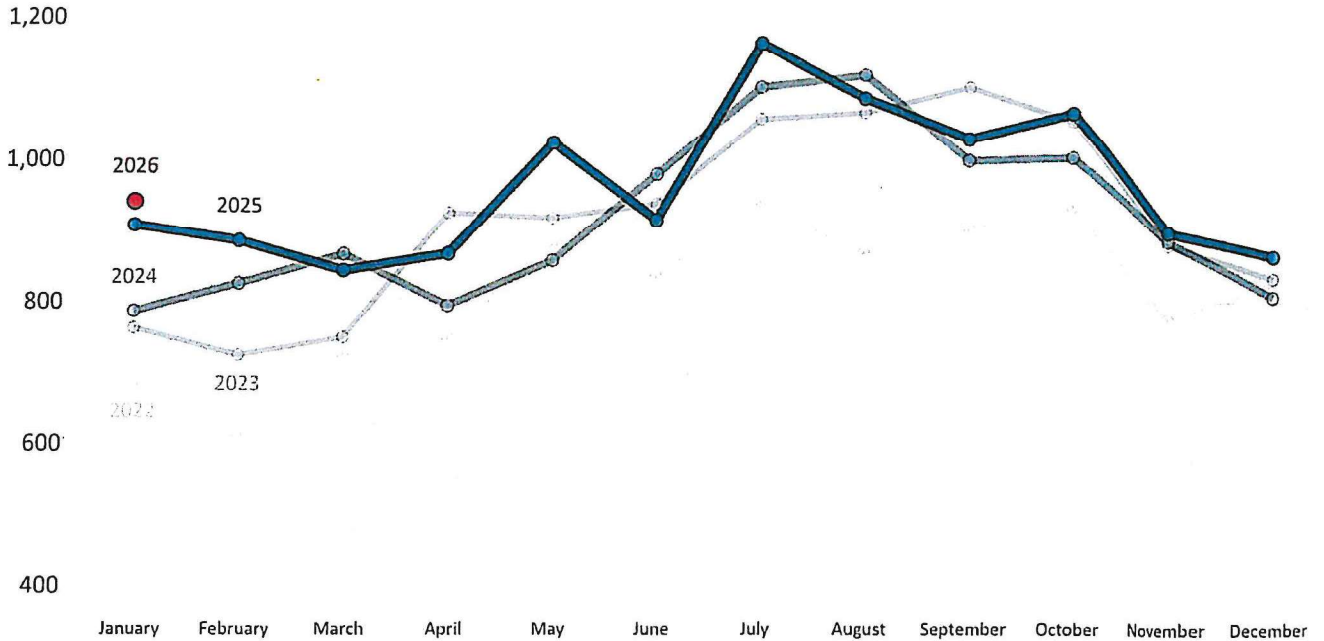
Total Incidents for the month of January: **941**
 Total Incidents: (As of 2/1/26) **941**

- Fire Incidents: 175
- EMS: 650
- Hazmat: 5
- Technical Rescue: 6
- Significant Incidents:
 1. 1/16 Shelburne Mutual Aid
 2. 1/22 2nd Alarm (Fatal) 87 Peru St.
 3. 1/25 Winooski Mutual Aid



During the same period in 2025 we responded to 908 incidents, a 3.6% increase from last year.

Fire Department Monthly Response Totals, 2022 - 2026
 Source: First Due



Data through 1/31/2026



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Department Insights

Jan 1, 2026 @ 00:00:00.0... → Feb 8, 2026 @ 08:27:52.771

Incident Discipline Any

Incidents

967

Unit Responses

2,104

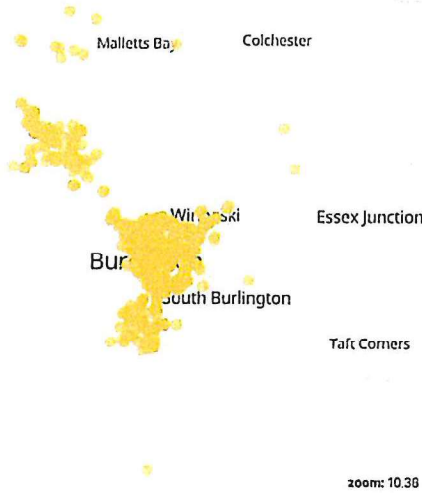
Displacements

N/A

Incident Location Categories

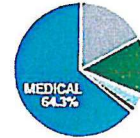
Category	Type	In
RESIDENTIAL	MULTI_FAMILY	
ROADWAY_AC	STREET	
HEALTH_CARE	NURSING_HOI	
ROADWAY_AC	SIDEWALK	

Incidents Map



Elastic Maps Service | OpenMapTiles | OpenStreetMap contributors

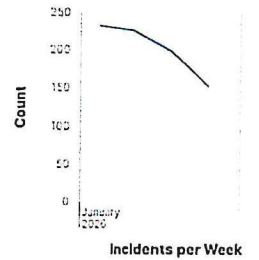
Incidents By Discipli...



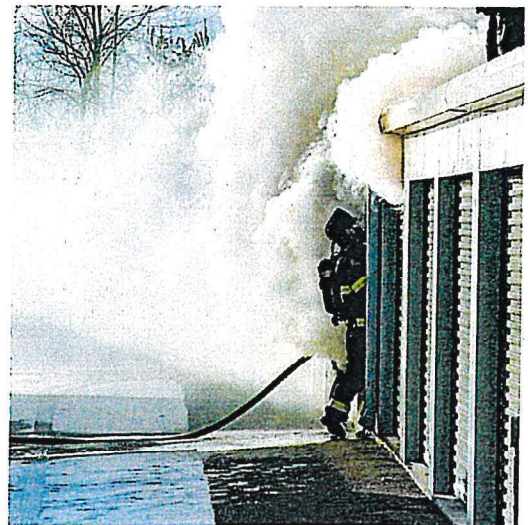
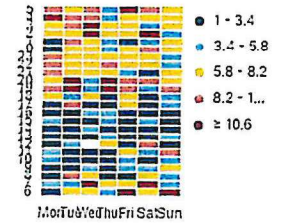
Incidents with Singl...



Incident Count Per Week



Incident Count by Hour and Day



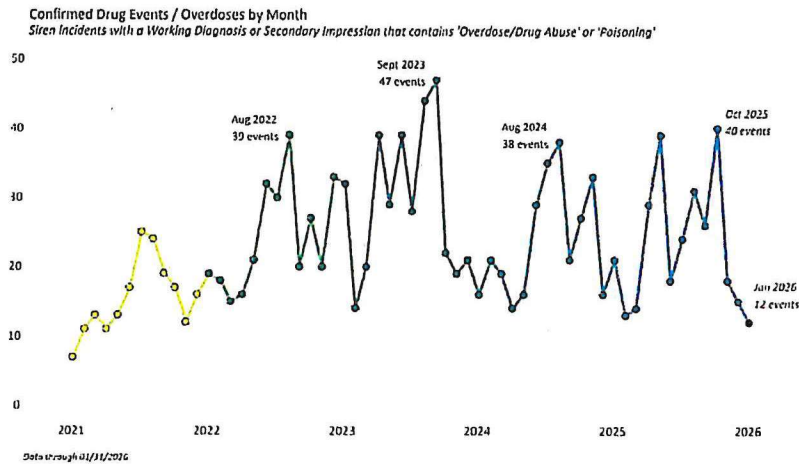


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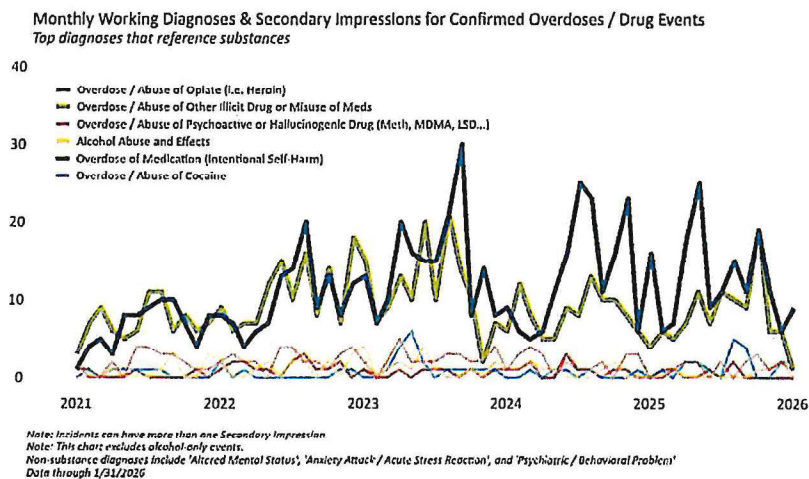
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EMS Data:

The following charts presents monthly data on EMS-confirmed overdose and drug-related incidents in our community from 2021 through January 31, 2026. It categorizes the top types of substances involved, based on working diagnoses and secondary impressions gathered in the field.



This chart shows confirmed drug and overdose incidents by month from 2021 through January 2026. Overall, incidents increased from 2021, with notable peaks in August 2022, September 2023, August 2024, and October 2025, reflecting periods of heightened overdose activity. After elevated and variable counts throughout 2025, January 2026 shows a sharp decline to 12 incidents, one of the lowest monthly totals in several years. While this decrease is significant, it represents a single month of data and should be interpreted cautiously until additional months confirm whether the reduction is sustained.



This chart shows monthly confirmed overdose and drug-related incidents from 2021 through January 2026 and highlights that opioid-related overdoses are consistently the most common and volatile driver of events, with sharp spikes—especially in late 2023, 2024, and mid-2025—followed by cases involving other illicit drugs or misuse of medications, which often rise and fall in parallel and likely reflect polysubstance use; all other categories (meth/psychoactive, cocaine, alcohol co-use, and intentional medication overdose) remain relatively low and stable by comparison, indicating that while multiple substances may be involved in individual incidents, the overall overdose burden and operational impact are overwhelmingly driven by opioids and complex drug combinations rather than single-substance events.

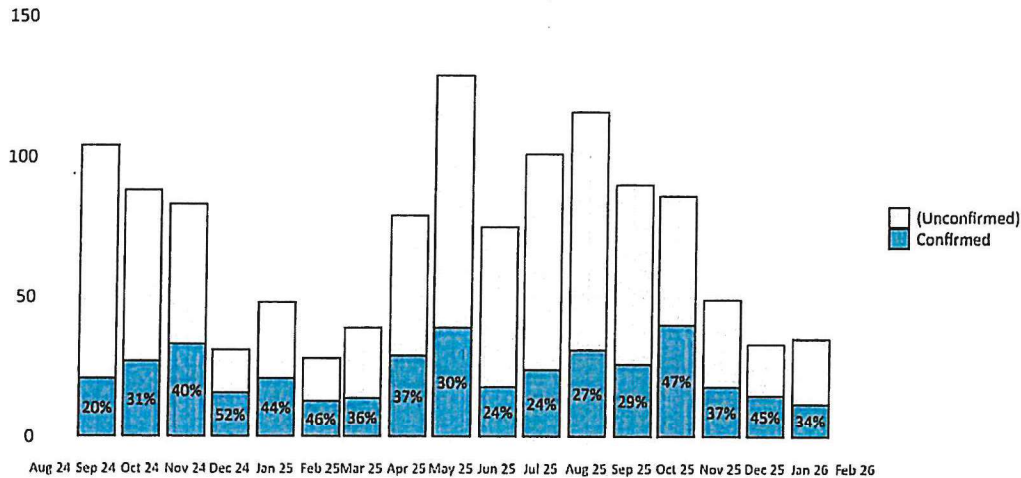


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BFD Events Dispatched as Overdoses
Confirmed on scene vs. not confirmed on scene



Aug 24 Sep 24 Oct 24 Nov 24 Dec 24 Jan 25 Feb 25 Mar 25 Apr 25 May 25 Jun 25 Jul 25 Aug 25 Sep 25 Oct 25 Nov 25 Dec 25 Jan 26 Feb 26

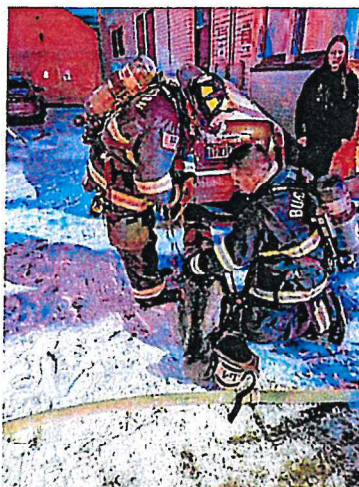
Confirmation obtained via responder diagnosis in Siren
Data through 1/31/26

This chart shows the number of BFD calls that were dispatched as overdoses each month, compared to how many were actually confirmed as overdoses once crews arrived on scene. While the total number of overdose-dispatched calls rises and falls over time, only a portion of those calls are ultimately confirmed by responders. In most months, confirmed overdoses make up roughly 20–40% of the total, with some variation

CRT Data for January 2025:

Staffed 5 days for the month of January

Total Contacts	Narcan Kits	Wound Care Kits	Comfort Care Kit	Referrals
5	0	0	0	1

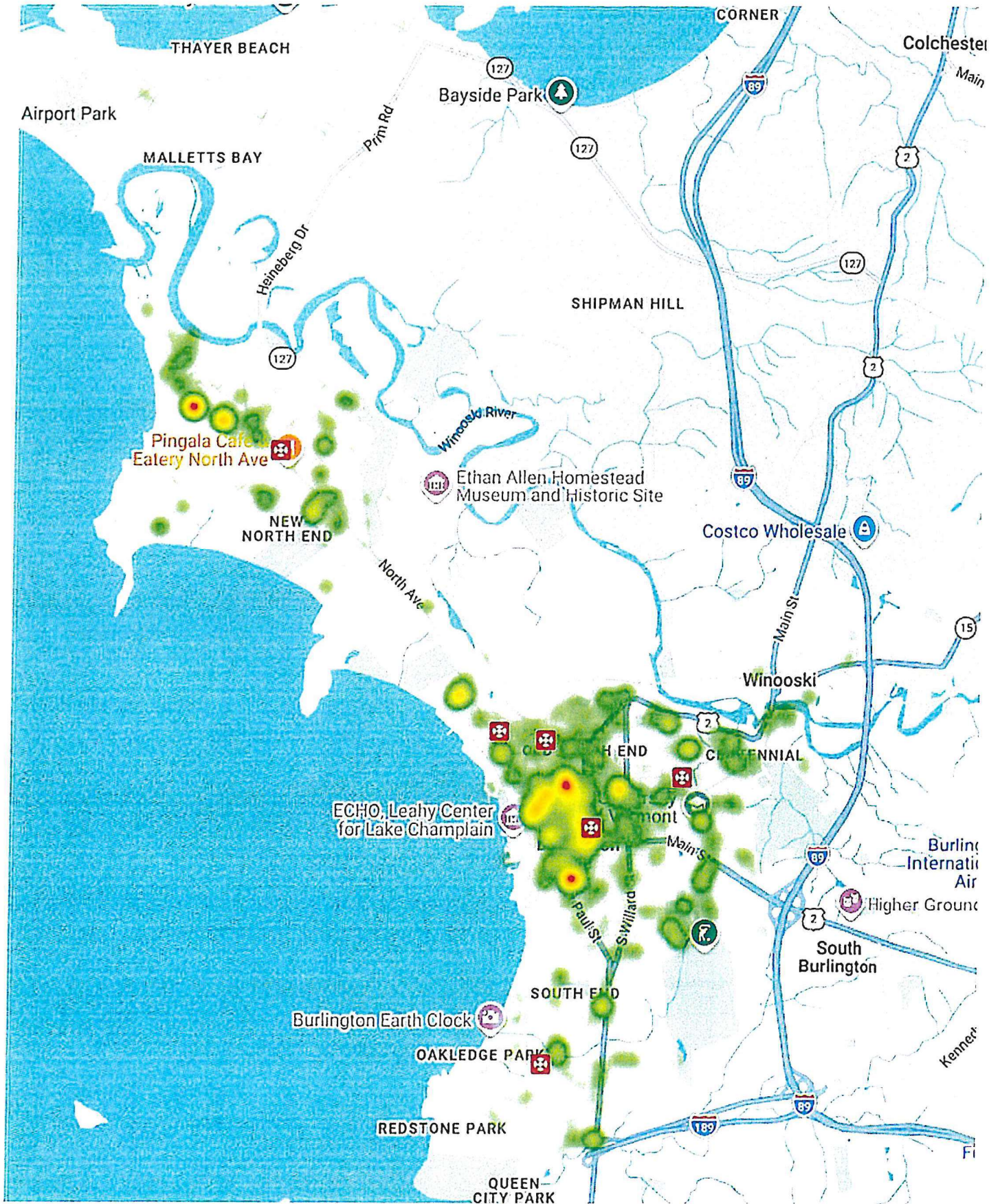




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Personnel & Staffing

Total Department Staff: Uniformed Members 90 / Authorized 95 (4 recruits came to the floor 1/26)

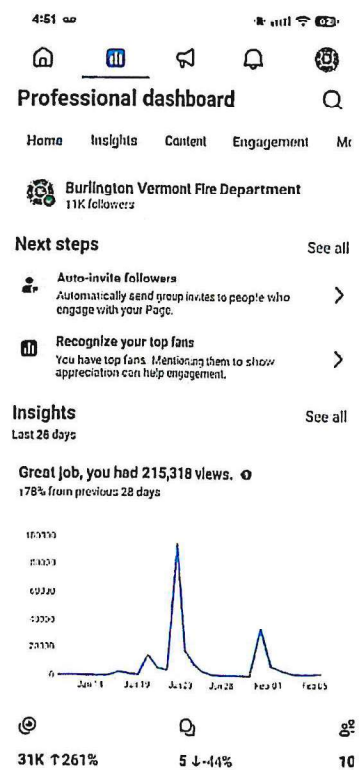
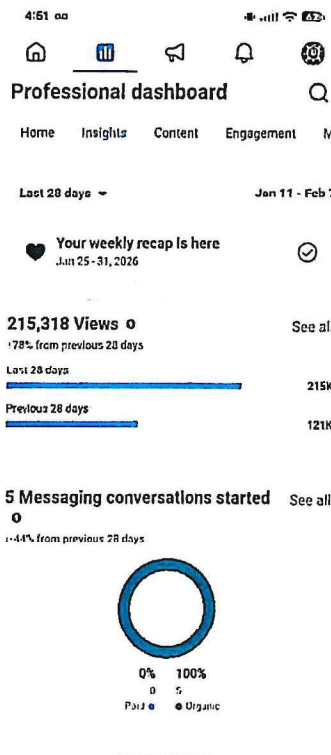
- Minimum Daily Staffing: 22
- Vacancies: 5
- Injuries/LOA/FMLA: 5.5
- Staff Training Hours: 1597
- Company Level Inspections: 5
- Preplans Completed: 84

Overtime Type	2025 Hours	2026 Hours	% + -
Minimum Staffing	871.5	1609.75	+84.7%
Mandatory	45	211.25	+369%
CRT	358	140	-60%
Emergency	0	22	+220%
Extra Duty Events	53.75	32	-40.4%

Community Engagement

- 1/13 Station 1 Tour
- 1/19 Station 1 Tour
- 1/22 Ride Along Engine 1 / Tower 1
- 1/28 Ride Along Ladder 2

Social Media:





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DIVISION UPDATES:

Training Division

- Recruit Class 25-02 is complete. Congratulations to now Probationary Firefighters Cootware, Buchanan, Piazza, and Ruffle. Thank you to Lead Instructor FF McCormick as well as all other members who assisted with the Academy.
- SFF Shaw completed Strategy and Tactics for Initial Company Operations.
- Worked with Safety Manager Tim Williams on annual safety training which will be completed in February.
- Worked with CPT Blake to create After Action Report Forms for the department to utilize after significant incidents or anytime there is an opportunity for lessons learned.
- Two members are scheduled to attend Ice Rescue Training being hosted by Grand Isle Fire Dept in February.

Operations Division:

- Attend EMS refresher classes for the month of January.
- Attend meeting on our communications upgrade and working with IT to accomplish our tasks.
- Attend budget meetings for FY27.
- Respond to building fire at 87 Peru Street.
- Participate in After Action Review of 87 Peru Street Fire.
- Participated in the SBFD Captains promotional process.
- Worked with City grant team along with Lt. Kirtlink (lead) on Firehouse Subs grant for Zodiac Boat. Grant Submitted and awaiting response.
- Met with Fire Marshal, BC of Training & BC of EMS for regular check ins and feedback.
- Attended meeting with UVMMC on their pursuit of a street medicine program in the future.
- Drone team met with VT Hazmat Chief Pat McLaughlin on Drone use, types and operational use.
- Attending FEMA on line "Out of Harms Way-Evacuation & Shelter In Place.
- Attend citywide meeting related to vacant buildings within the city and provide input to impact it puts on fire department.

FMO Division:

The FMO is working with Scott Duckworth to develop a list of businesses within the City to help with tax collection. There is currently no list of businesses in the City. Attended a monthly meeting with DPW about road construction projects and traffic calming. Attended a meeting with Bill Ward about vacant building tracking and how to encourage buildings owners to put their buildings to use. The new high school is close to being finished and The Post Apartment on South Winooski Ave. building is wrapping up.

EMS Division Update:

The EMS Division is nearing the completion of a very busy two-month period focused on department-wide EMS training. This effort included refresher training for EMTs, AEMTs, and paramedics and was specifically geared toward members seeking re-licensure during the current cycle. In total, approximately 60 members



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participated, including administrative personnel. These refreshers were designed to ensure continued clinical competency, protocol familiarity, and operational readiness across all levels of care.

In addition to training, the EMS Division, with the support of the Fire Chief, has been working to analyze EMS utilization data related to a subset of patients who account for a disproportionate share of EMS calls. This work represented a true collaboration between Captain Kyle Blake, City Data Analyst Jeff Nicholson, and Battalion Chief Marsha McCombie. The effort relied heavily on accurate and consistent documentation by field crews, without which this analysis would not have been possible.

Preliminary findings were presented to the City's Public Safety Committee on January 29th to inform further discussion and understanding of EMS system use. This information will also be presented to the Fire Commission at an upcoming meeting. Moving forward, the EMS Division will expand its analysis to include broader system-level data such as overall call volume trends, call types, transport versus non-transport rates, patient acuity, and operational impacts to support future planning and decision-making.

Looking ahead, the EMS Division will continue to collaborate with the Fire Training Division on upcoming joint training initiatives, including cold water rescue training. This training will integrate patient care simulations following water rescue, with providers continuing assessment and treatment during transition into the ambulance environment.

Administration Division:

The CAD upgrade on 1/29 went smoothly and had a better downtime turnaround.

- Station updates: Station 2: Working on the cracked sewage line.

Station 4: Door opener was replaced. All stations have had a significant increase in Natural Gas. Please be mindful and keep the heat on apparatus floor at a reasonable temperature. Most significant increases were at Stations 1 and 2, but seen across the board.

- SOG updates: Working on pre-employment screening and an observer policy.

- Moving forward with Annual Evaluation rollout with UKG.

- 22 candidates are currently moving forward with interview process.

40th
ANNIVERSARY

BURLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT SPRING TRAINING SEMINAR

April 2 & 3, 2026 | Burlington, VT
PRESENTED BY:
THE BURLINGTON FIREFIGHTER'S RAINY DAY FUND

2 DAYS



TROY RUGGLES
BURLINGTON FIRE



STEVE BARTON
MANCHESTER FIRE



STEVEN SHAFFER
BOSTON FIRE



DANIEL MADRZYKOWSKI
FIRE SAFETY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

\$20
LIMITED
SPACE

2
APR



TAPS & TACTICS

Switchback Brewery

160 Flynn Ave.
Burlington, VT 05401

6:00pm-9:00pm

"What I've Learned" Join Deputy Chief Troy Ruggles on Thursday evening at Switchback Brewery for this exclusive look into the lessons learned of a 44-year veteran of the fire service.

Tickets are limited to the first 90 registrants.

\$20 registration fee includes a certificate, two hot dogs, and a drink ticket.

\$100

3
APR



LESSONS LEARNED

Hotel Champlain

60 Battery St.
Burlington, VT 05401

8:00am-4:00pm

"Beacon Street" Deputy Chief Steven Shaffer will detail the tragic events and lessons learned of the March 26th, 2014 fire that claimed the lives of two Boston firefighters. Special guest Daniel Madrzykowski, Senior Research Director at the FSRI, will present on wind-driven fires.

"Realities of RIT" Not your basic RIT classroom. Lieutenant Steve Barton leads this real-world discussion on RIT and how to be an operational part of the fireground.

\$100 registration fee includes a certificate, breakfast, lunch, coffee, and cookies.

REGISTRATION & ACCOMMODATIONS

A BLOCK OF HOTEL ROOMS HAS BEEN RESERVED AT HOTEL CHAMPLAIN. RESERVE BY 3/3/26 TO SECURE THE DISCOUNT. TO REGISTER, BOOK A ROOM, OR CONTACT A COORDINATOR, SCAN THE QR CODE.

All proceeds will benefit the Burlington Firefighter's Rainy Day Fund, a nonprofit that provides assistance to Burlington Fire Department members, both past and present, experiencing an unforeseen life event.

REGISTER NOW





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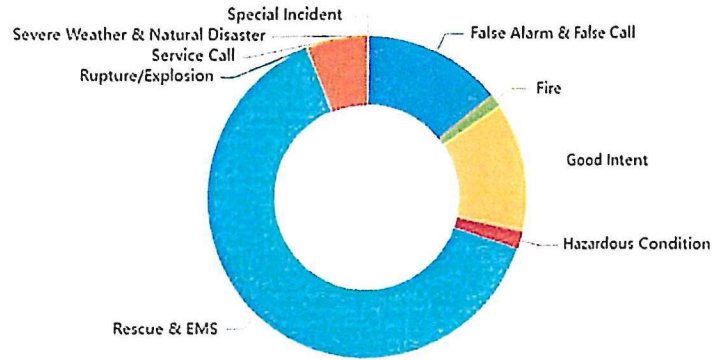
Chief's Report to the Public Safety Committee: End of Year Data Points January 22, 2025

Call Volume & Activity Summary

Total Incidents for the month of December: 864
 2025 Total Incidents: 11,533 (Busiest Year)

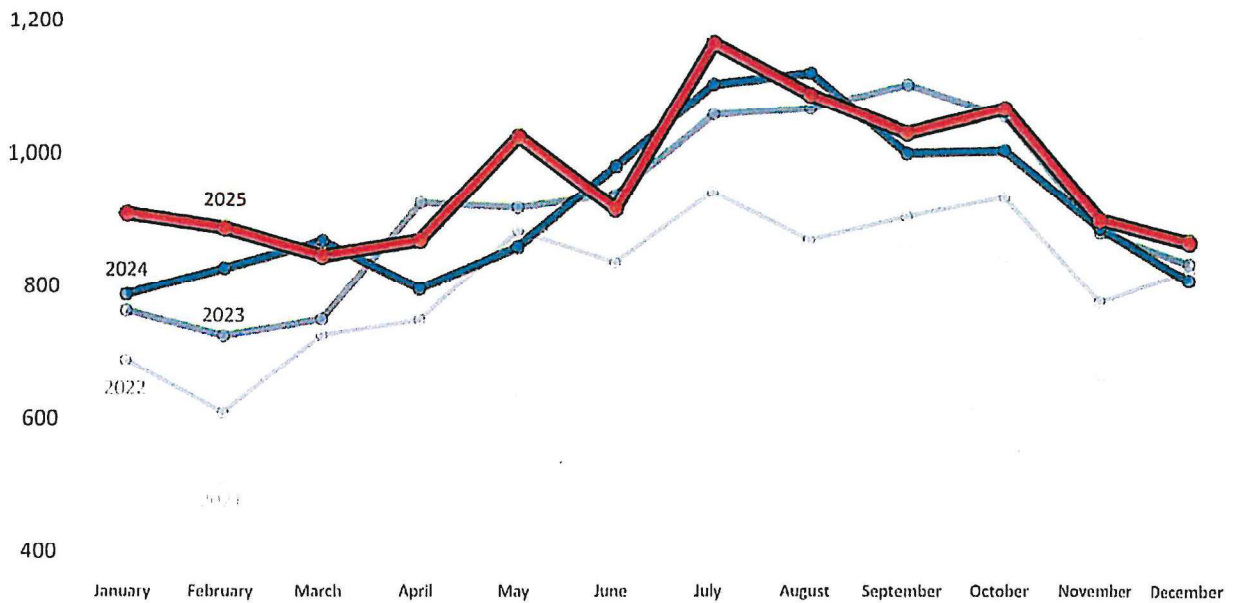
- Fire Incidents: 1,782
- EMS: 7,689
- Hazmat: 220
- Service Call/Public Assist: 2,186
- Significant Events:

- 12/26 2nd Alarm Structure Fire 365 St. Paul St.
- 12/30 1st Alarm Structure Fire with multiple rescues 103 Archibald St.

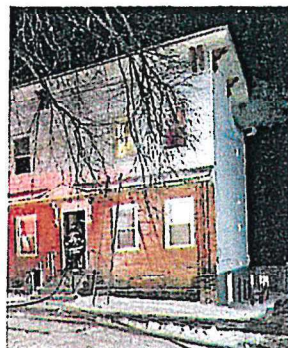


During the same period in 2024, we responded to 10,995 incidents, a 4.9% increase from last year.

Fire Department Monthly Response Totals, 2021 - 2025
 Source: First Due



Data through 12/31/2025





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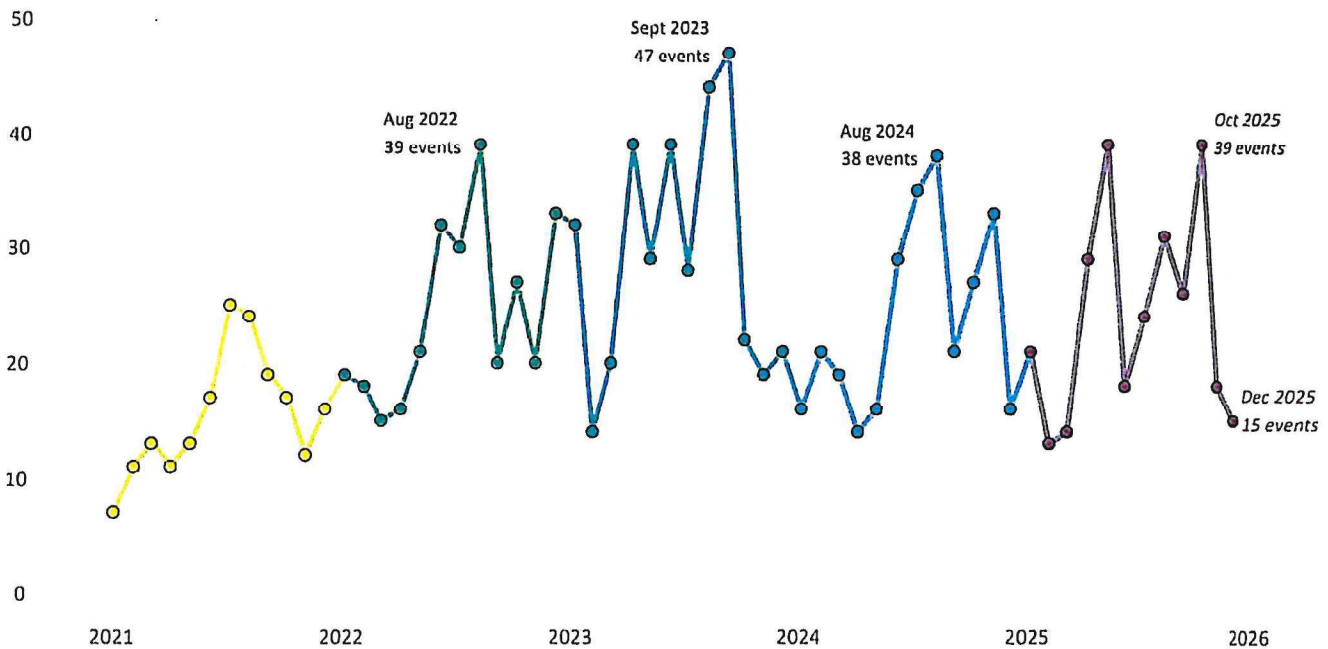
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EMS Data:

The following charts presents monthly data on EMS-confirmed overdose and drug-related incidents in our community from 2021 through December 31, 2025. Confirmed drug and overdose incidents have increased significantly since 2021, rising from relatively low monthly totals to a consistently higher baseline beginning in 2022. The data show recurring late-summer and early-fall peaks, with notable surges in August 2022 (39 events), September 2023 (47 events), August 2024 (38 events), and October 2025 (39 events), indicating both sustained growth and a seasonal pattern. While monthly totals fluctuate year to year, overdose-related calls remain elevated and represent a continuing demand on resources, requiring advanced life support interventions, medications, and extended on-scene times. Overall, this trend underscores that overdose response is no longer episodic but an ongoing operational workload.

Confirmed Drug Events / Overdoses by Month

Siren incidents with a Working Diagnosis or Secondary Impression that contains 'Overdose/Drug Abuse' or 'Poisoning'



Data through 12/31/2025

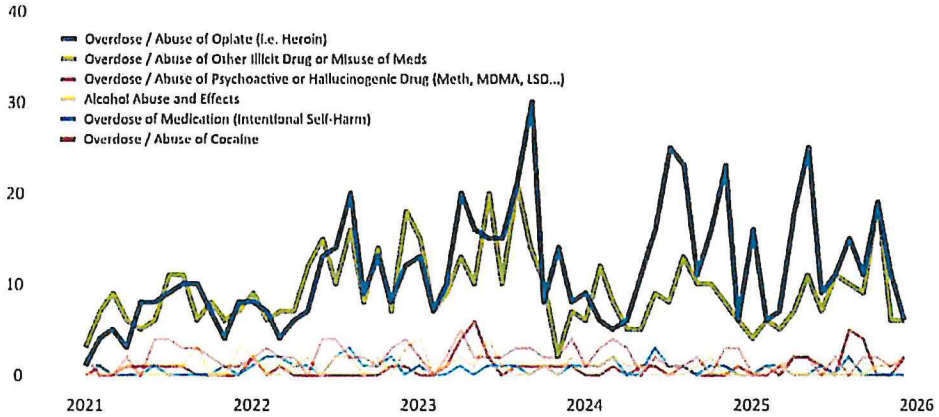


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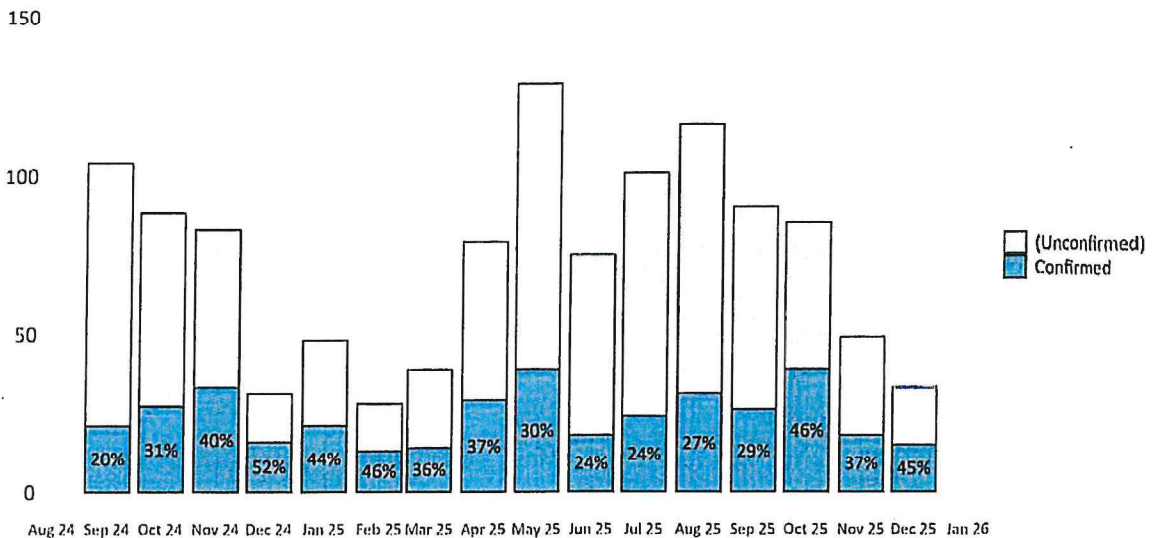
Monthly Working Diagnoses & Secondary Impressions for Confirmed Overdoses / Drug Events
 Top diagnoses that reference substances



Note: Incidents can have more than one Secondary Impression.
 Note: This chart excludes alcohol-only events.
 Non-substance diagnoses include 'Altered Mental Status', 'Anxiety Attack / Acute Stress Reaction', and 'Psychiatric / Behavioral Problem'
 Data through 12/31/2025

- From 2021 through 2025, confirmed overdose and drug-related incidents show that opioids remain the primary driver of overdose activity, with frequent and sometimes sharp monthly spikes, particularly from late 2023 through 2025. Overdoses involving other illicit drugs or misuse of medications consistently represent the second-highest category and often rise alongside opioid cases, underscoring the growing prevalence of poly-substance use. Events involving psychoactive or hallucinogenic drugs, cocaine, and intentional self-harm via medication occur at lower but steady levels, contributing to ongoing EMS and hospital demand. Overall, the data reflect a sustained overdose environment that continues to place significant operational, training, and public health demands on emergency response and healthcare systems.

BFD Events Dispatched as Overdoses
 Confirmed on scene vs. not confirmed on scene



Confirmation obtained via responder diagnosis in Siren
 Data through 12/31/25



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- This chart shows that a significant portion of BFD calls initially dispatched as overdoses are not confirmed as overdoses once crews arrive on scene, with confirmation rates fluctuating month to month. Overall call volume varies, with noticeable spikes in spring and late summer 2025, but confirmed overdoses consistently represent roughly one-quarter to one-half of dispatched incidents. Several months (e.g., Dec 24, Jan–Feb 25, Oct–Dec 25) show higher confirmation percentages despite lower total volume, while higher-volume months often have lower confirmation rates. This trend highlights the operational impact of overdose dispatches that ultimately prove unconfirmed, reinforcing the importance of accurate call triage while acknowledging the necessity of treating these incidents as high-risk until clinically ruled out on scene.

CRT Data for December 2025:

Staffed 5 days for the month of December

CRT	Total Contacts	Narcan Kits	Wound Care Kits	Comfort Care Kit	Referrals
December	10	0	0	0	3
2025 Total	1,144	49	73	56	30

Personnel & Staffing

Total Department Staff: Uniformed Members 90 / Authorized 95 (4 in recruit academy)

- Minimum Daily Staffing: 22
- Vacancies: 5 (December)
- Injuries/LOA/FMLA: 5
- Staff Training Hours: 1,237 (December)
- Company Level Inspections: 3

Overtime Type	2025 Hours	2024 Hours	% + -
Minimum Staffing	10,611.5	7296.5	+ 45.4%
Mandatory	2,394.5	1415.25	+ 69.2%
CRT	3045.75	3326.75	- 8.4%
Emergency	218.75	229.25	- 4.5%
Extra Duty Events	703.25	807.25	- 12.88%

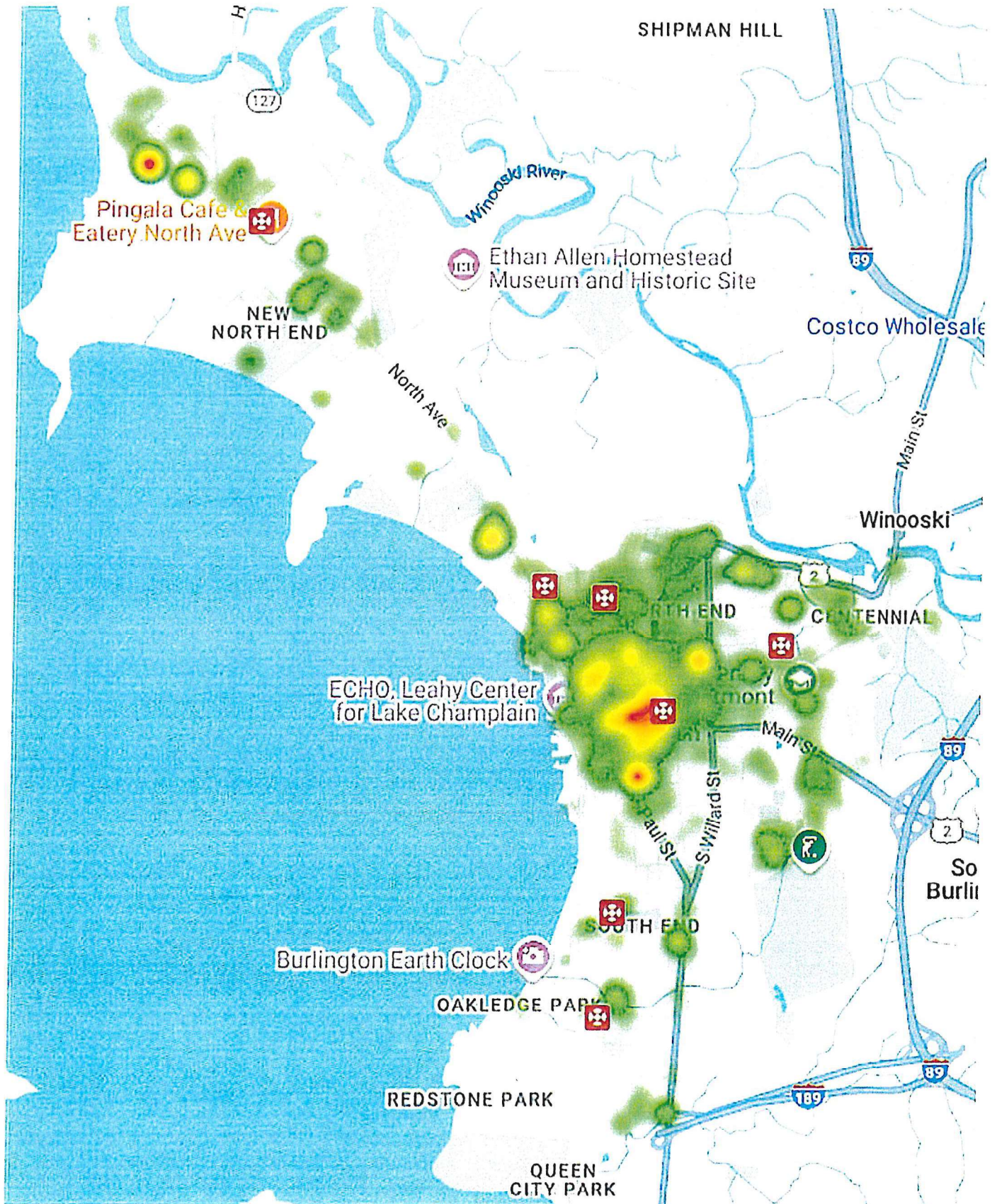
4 Recruits in school on the floor January 26



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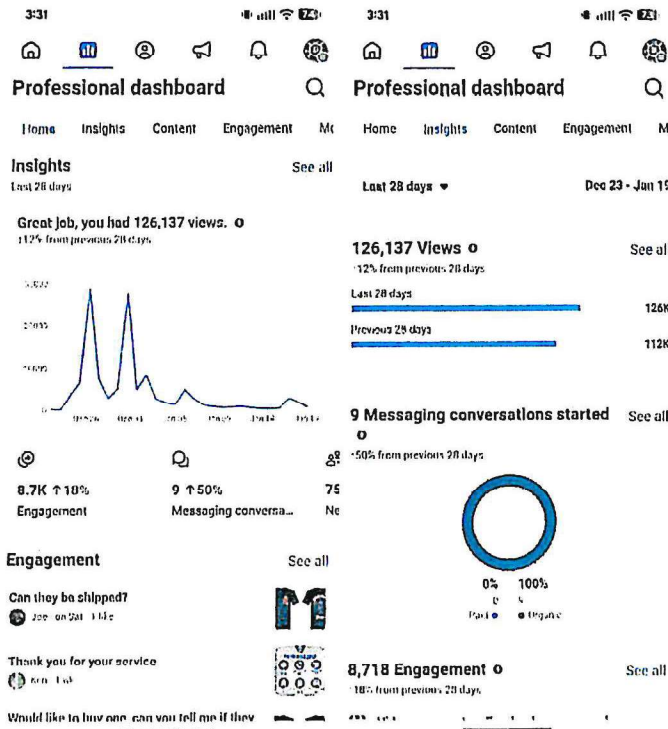
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December Community Engagement

- 12/6 Polar Express
- 12/7 polar Express
- 12/17 Ladder 2 Ride along
- 12/17 Joint Training with Winooski FD
- 12/18 Operation Fire Cuffs



• Social Media:



EMS Utilization Trends & Impact Cohort Overview

Burlington Fire Department – EMS Division
Public Safety Committee | January 29, 2026

DATA TIMEFRAME: JANUARY 1, 2017 – DECEMBER 31, 2025

SOURCE: SIREN (STATEWIDE INCIDENT REPORTING NETWORK), VIA IMAGETREND

THIS ANALYSIS IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO REFINEMENT AS ADDITIONAL DATA ELEMENTS ARE INCORPORATED.



What is the Impact Cohort?

Impact Cohort

A small subset of individuals who account for a disproportionate number of EMS encounters over time. Identified through retrospective analysis of EMS encounters in the SIREN database to better understand patterns of repeat system use and operational impact.

To support analysis and discussion, individuals are grouped into tiers based on the **number of EMS encounters within a single calendar month**.

These tiers are analytical tools only and do not reflect patient acuity, intent, or appropriateness of care.

Monthly Tier Definitions

Baseline Use: 1–2 EMS encounters per month

Watch Tier: 3–5 EMS encounters per month

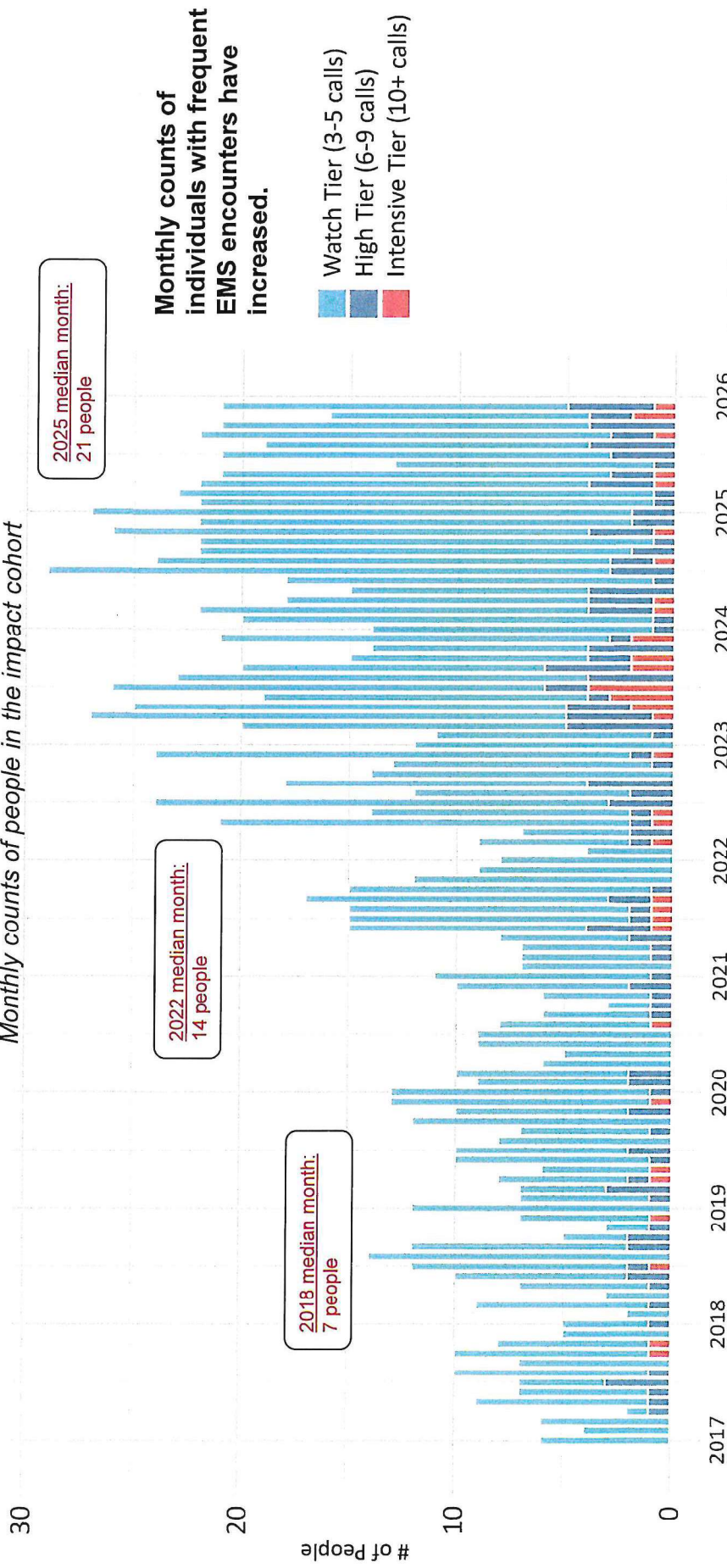
High Tier: 6–9 EMS encounters per month

Intensive Tier: 10+ EMS encounters per month



Impact Cohort

Monthly counts of people in the impact cohort

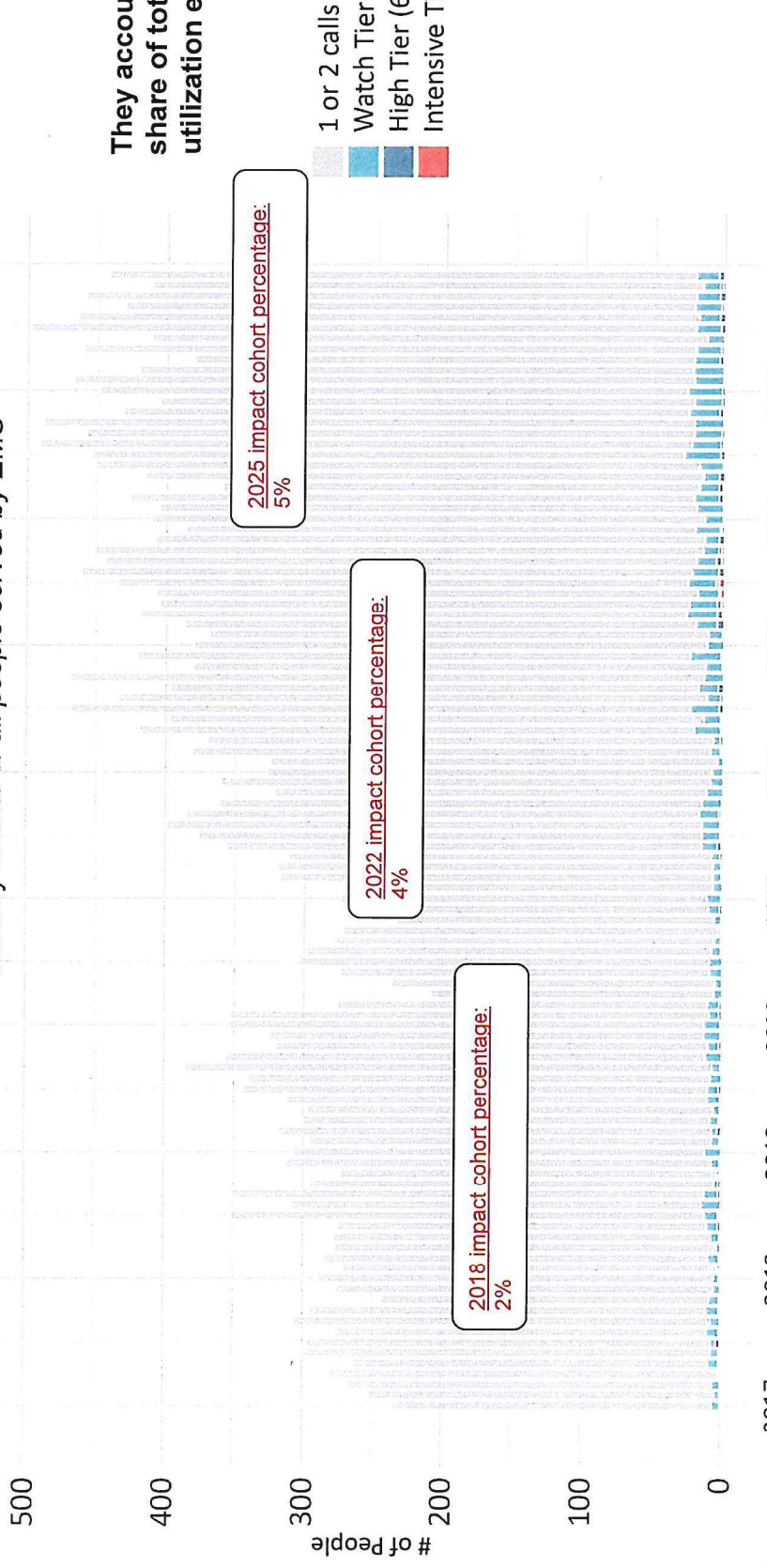


Source: *iren*
Data 11/2017-2/31/2025

Analysis preliminary and subject to change

All Utilizers

Monthly counts of all people served by EMS



They account for a small share of total EMS utilization each month.

2025 impact cohort percentage: 5%

2022 impact cohort percentage: 4%

2018 impact cohort percentage: 2%

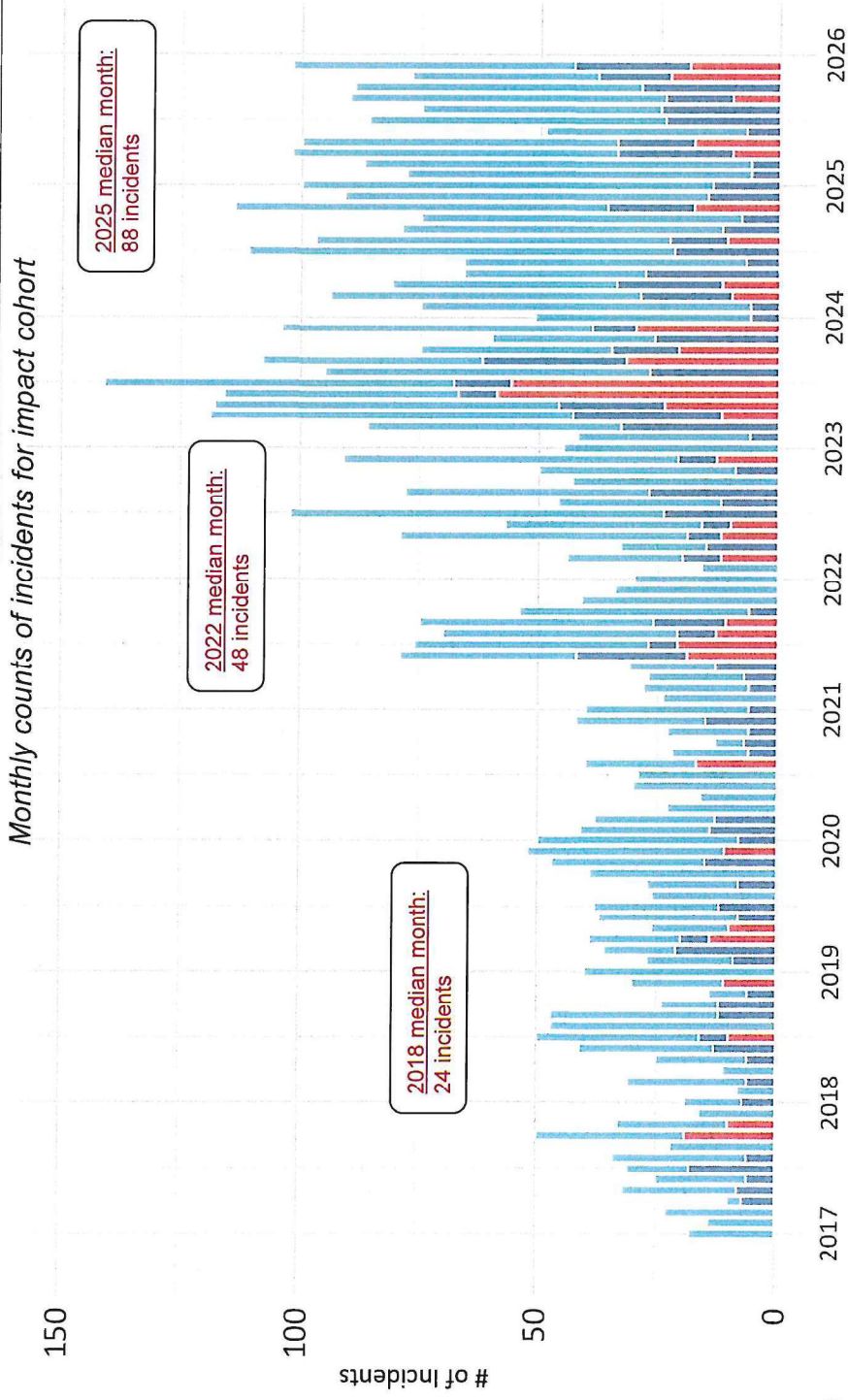
- 1 or 2 calls
- Watch Tier (3-5 calls)
- High Tier (6-9 calls)
- Intensive Tier (10+ calls)

Analysis preliminary and subject to change

Source: Iren

Data: 1/2017-2/31/2025

Incidents for Impact Cohort

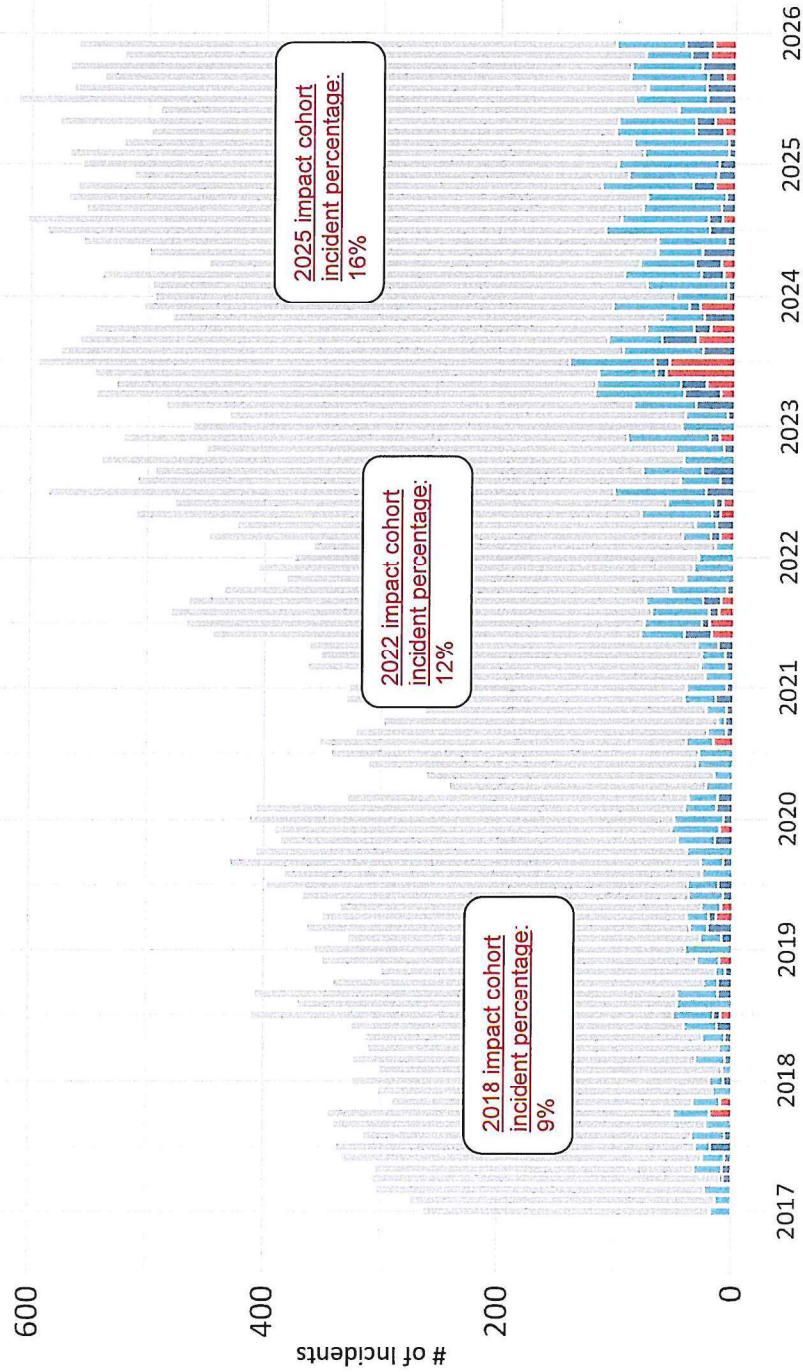


Source:
 Data from 1/1/2017-2/31/2025

Analysis preliminary and subject to change

Incidents for All Utilizers

Monthly counts of incidents for all EMS utilizers



The percentage of total incidents they represent has also increased.

- 1 or 2 calls
- Watch Tier (3-5 calls)
- High Tier (6-9 calls)
- Intensive Tier (10+ calls)

2025 impact cohort incident percentage: 16%

2022 impact cohort incident percentage: 12%

2018 impact cohort incident percentage: 9%

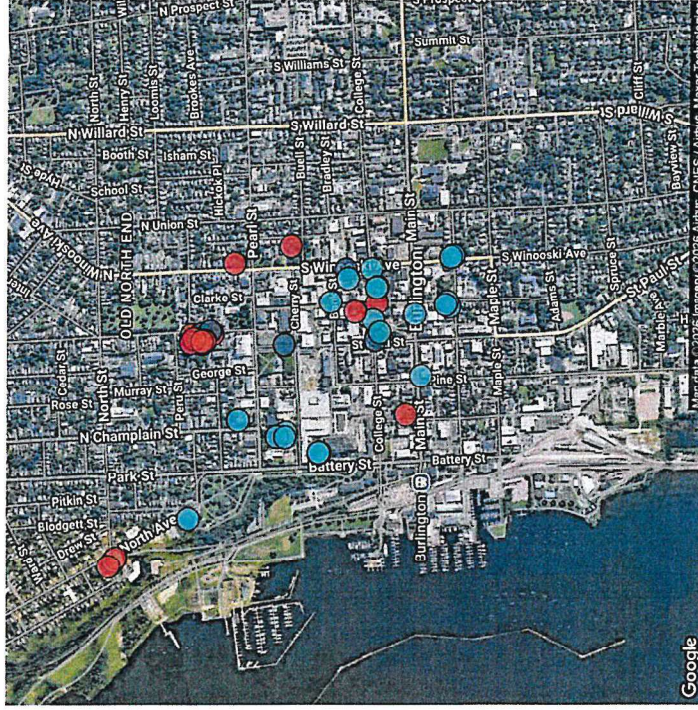
Analysis preliminary and subject to change

Source: iren

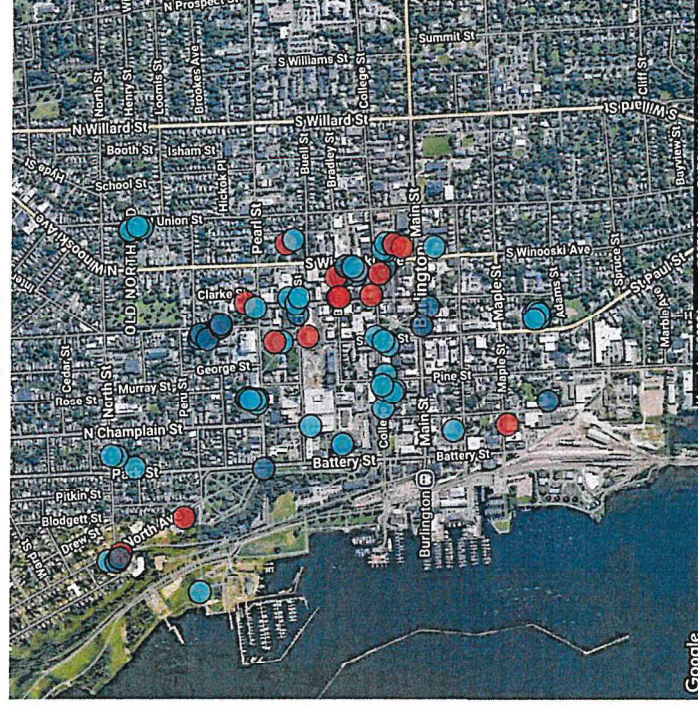
Data: 1/2017-2/31/2025

Mapping Impact Cohort Incidents

November



December

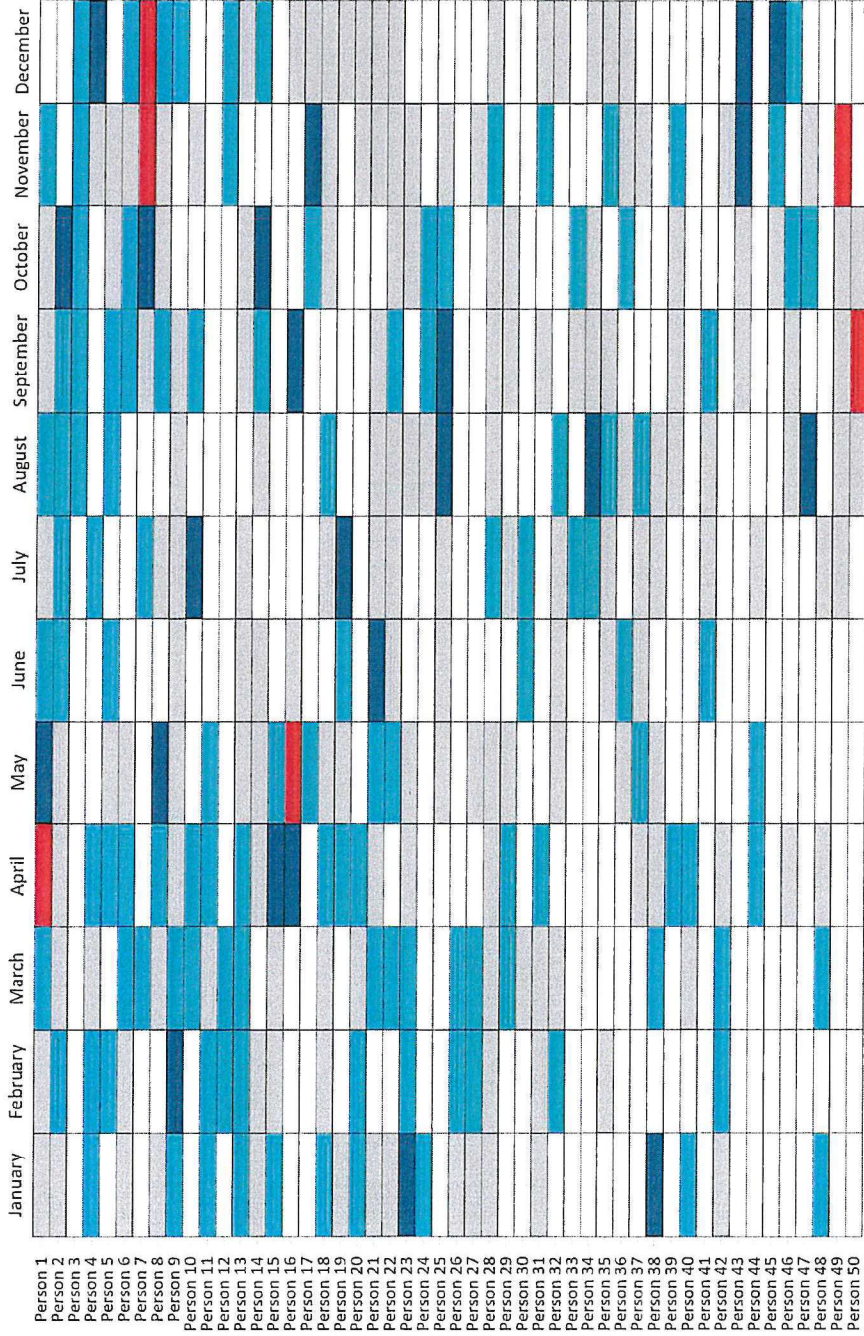


Tracking where impact cohort incidents occur supports more efficient response.

- Watch Tier (3-5 calls)
- High Tier (6-9 calls)
- Intensive Tier (10+ calls)

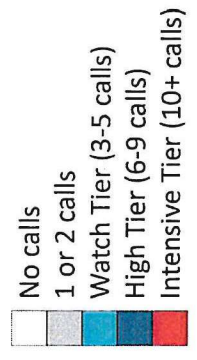
Not all incidents represented due to some missing location data in Siren. Currently working on a fix for that.

Mapping Impact Cohort Incidents



Inclusion required meeting EMS watch list criteria at least twice, or appearing once in the intensive tier, during calendar year 2025.

People with the most impact cohort months are at the top.



Source:
 Data from 11/2025-2/31/2025

Analysis preliminary and subject to change

Potential Areas for Further Analysis

Nature of EMS Interactions

Understanding call types, timing, responder impressions, and transport patterns

Utilization over time

Examining how individuals move between utilization levels and whether patterns persist

System intersections

Exploring whether EMS utilization overlaps with other systems, where appropriate and feasible

Data refinement

Continuing to improve data completeness and analytic methods

