



ANNUAL REPORT



2025

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Introduction



As we reflect on 2025, I am incredibly proud of the dedication, professionalism, and growth demonstrated by the members of the Lakewood Fire Department. This past year marked a period of meaningful progress as we continued to adapt to the increasing demands of a growing community while remaining committed to our mission of protecting lives and property.

These advancements are direct responses to the unique dynamic of Lakewood, which remains the fastest-growing municipality in New Jersey. With a population that is estimated to have surpassed 140,000 in 2025 and a birth rate exceeding 5,000 annually, our community is expanding at a historic pace. This rapid development brings increased density, higher call volumes, and more complex infrastructure challenges. Our strategic growth in 2025 was not

just about keeping up; it was about staying ahead of this curve to ensure that whether in a new development or an established neighborhood, every resident receives the prompt, professional protection they deserve.

In 2025, we continued to expand our career firefighting force, adding nine full-time firefighters and placing an additional full-time engine in service. These advancements strengthened our ability to provide consistent, reliable coverage across the township and improved response capabilities in high-demand areas.

At the same time, our volunteer firefighters remained a critical and unwavering part of our Fire Department. Their commitment, sacrifice, and service continue to be the backbone of the Lakewood Fire Department, and their role remains as vital as ever.

This year also marked a major step forward with the establishment of a combination rescue company. This initiative significantly strengthens the Lakewood Fire Department's ability to respond to complex and technical incidents, including hazardous materials responses, rope and high-angle rescues, and structural collapse operations.

In our pursuit of operational excellence, we also implemented the USDD Phoenix G2 Fire Station Alerting System. This state-of-the-art, IP-based technology replaces outdated dispatch methods and is designed to shave critical seconds off

our response times. The system utilizes automated Voice Alert technology to deliver clear dispatch information while enhancing firefighter wellness through 'heart-friendly' ramping tones that reduce physiological stress. With integrated visual displays and mobile app connectivity, our responders now have immediate access to real-time data, ensuring they arrive on scene faster and better informed.

None of this progress would be possible without the continued support of the Lakewood Board of Fire Commissioners, township leadership, mutual aid partners, and most importantly, the community we serve.

As we move into the new year, we remain focused on growth, training, and preparedness, while honoring the traditions and values that have defined the Lakewood Fire Department for generations.

On behalf of the entire Lakewood Fire Department, thank you for your trust, support, and partnership throughout 2025. We look forward to continuing to serve Lakewood with pride, professionalism, and dedication.

Respectfully,

Jonathan T. Yahr
Chief of Department

Board of Fire Commissioners



YAKOV STEINBERG
CHAIRPERSON



HARRISON PFEFFER
VICE
CHAIRPERSON



DOVID BENDER
CLERK (SECRETARY)



YEHUDA L. GOLD
TREASURER



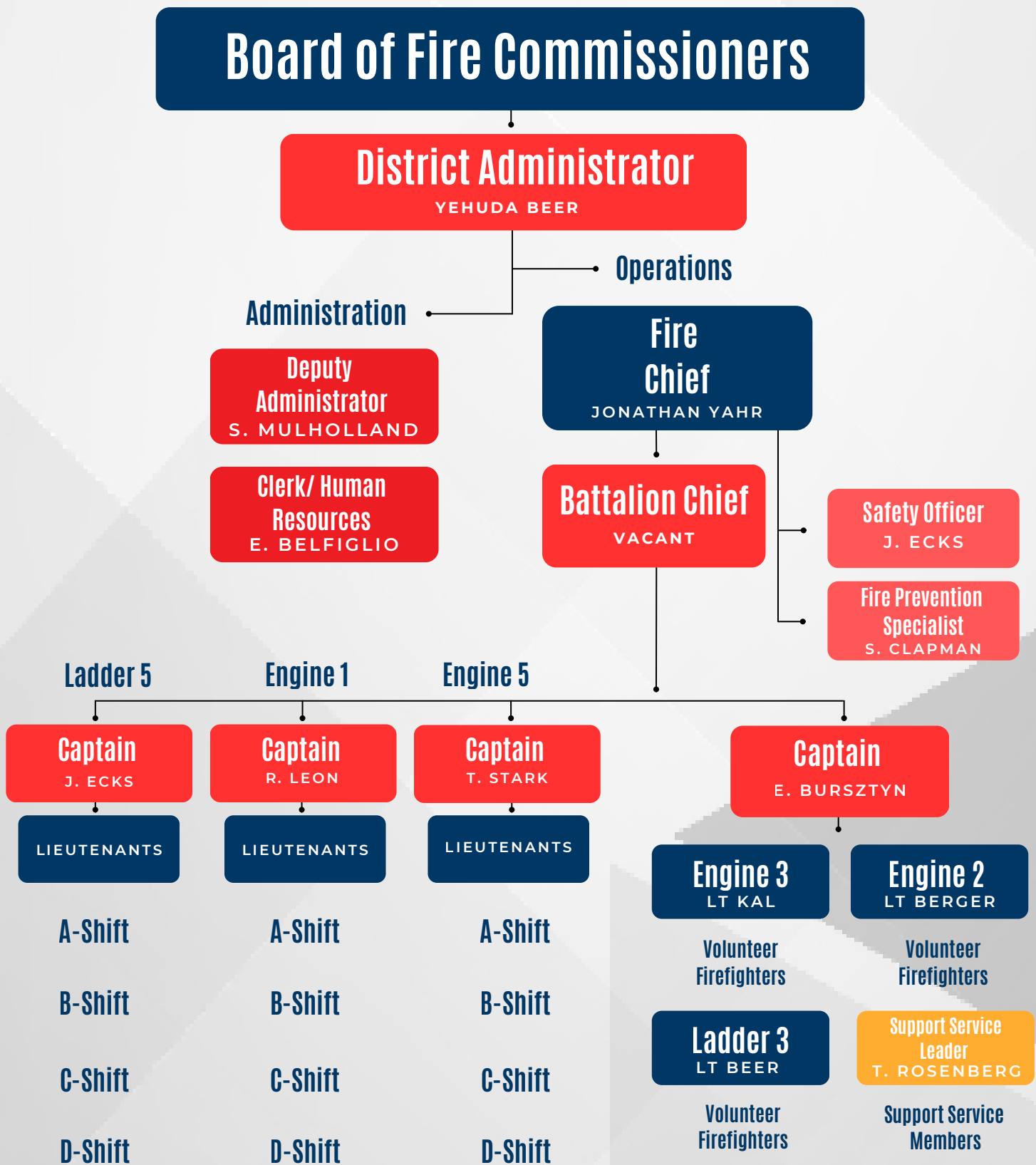
LARRY S. LOIGMAN
ASSISTANT CLERK/
TREASURER

The Lakewood Fire District is committed to providing fire services with the highest degree of efficacy. This includes the delivery of fire suppression, fire prevention, and fire education services while at the same time exercising sound fiscal control and budgetary restraint.

The Fire District is overseen by a Board of Fire Commissioners, whose members are elected by the voters of Lakewood. These Commissioners provide civilian oversight and are responsible for guiding the district's operations, policies, and financial stewardship on behalf of the community.

By setting and enforcing high performance standards, the Board ensures continued excellence in service and accountability to the community.

Organizational Chart



Reorganization of Engine Company No. 1



On Thursday, January 23, 2025 the Lakewood Fire Department, announced the appointment of nine new full-time paid firefighters and the promotion of four firefighters to lieutenant during a historic reorganization event for Engine Company No. 1.

This milestone marked the transition of Engine Company No. 1 from a volunteer company to a fully staffed, full-time paid unit, strengthening fire protection services in Lakewood. The ceremony took place at the recently renovated Engine Company No. 1 firehouse at 119 First Street. Engine 1 and Ladder 5 now operates from this location, improving response coverage in some of the township's busiest areas.

Founded in 1888, Engine Company No. 1 is the township's oldest continuously serving volunteer fire company. Its transition reflects the Fire Department's continued growth and commitment to meeting the community's evolving needs.

New Members



Evan M. LaValle



Dimitri L. Santos



Justin P. Carlsen



Joseph T. Bisogno



Tyler Decker



Devin N. Angelos



Chad S. Butler



Marvin J. Pisco



Nicholas R. Colalilo



John P. Plevritis

New Volunteers

Alan Perez-Vilchiz

Aldo Montes-Almanza

Jeremy R. Hoops

Michael J. D'Elia 3rd

Leah Shain

Promotions



Captain

Robert J. Leon Sr.

Lieutenants

Patrick R. Ortiz

Daniel M. Prodoehl

John P. Sonner

Kevin W. Brink



Life-Saving Rescue

The Lakewood Fire Department recognized the heroic actions of Lieutenant Robert Cook and Probationary Firefighter Andrew Sanchez following a life-saving rescue during a fire on March 16, 2025, at an assisted living facility on Route 70 in Lakewood. Responding to a fire alarm, the two firefighters were the first interior crew on scene and entered a burning apartment filled with smoke and heat on the fifth floor, where they located a woman trapped in her bed and rescued her, transferring her to EMS for treatment and transport to the hospital in stable condition. Their swift, professional actions helped contain the fire and prevent a tragedy, and in recognition of their bravery, Lt. Cook and Firefighter Sanchez were later honored with the Life-Saving Award by the 200 Club of Ocean County at its annual awards dinner on June 12, 2025.



Chief of the Year



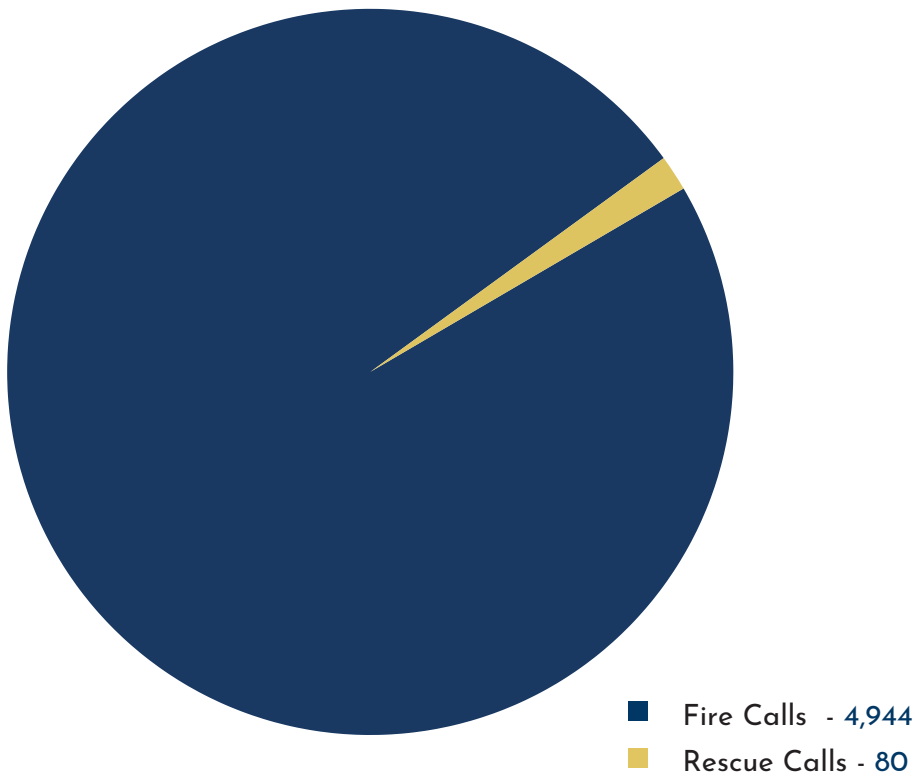
In 2025, Fire Chief Jonathan T. Yahr was honored as Fire Chief of the Year by the New Jersey State Fire Chiefs Association. Presented during the Association's annual meeting at the New Jersey State Firemen's Convention, this prestigious award recognizes Chief Yahr's outstanding leadership, professionalism, and unwavering dedication to public safety.



Under his vision and guidance, the Lakewood Fire Department has achieved significant growth, operational improvements, and enhanced service to the community. While this honor highlights Chief Yahr's personal commitment to the fire service, it also reflects the collective efforts and accomplishments of the Fire Department's firefighters, officers, administration, and the Board of Fire Commissioners.



Call Volume Data



In 2025, the Lakewood Fire Department responded to a total of 5,024 calls, which included both fire and rescue incidents.

AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME

Response time is measured from the moment the Fire Department is dispatched to when the first unit arrives on scene. This average is calculated based on all 5,024 calls responded to in 2025. The Lakewood Fire Department covers a 25-square-mile area, ensuring rapid response to emergencies throughout the township.

Response times decreased significantly compared to 2024, with the average reduced by more than 30 seconds. In 2024, the average response time was 7 minutes and 4 seconds. Despite responding to a higher call volume in 2025, the Fire Department achieved faster response times overall.

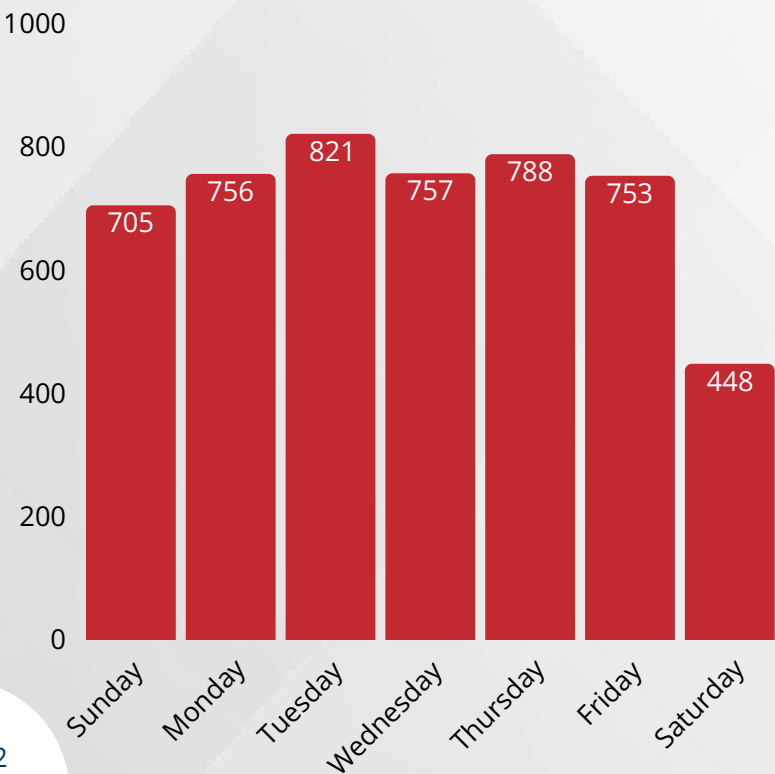
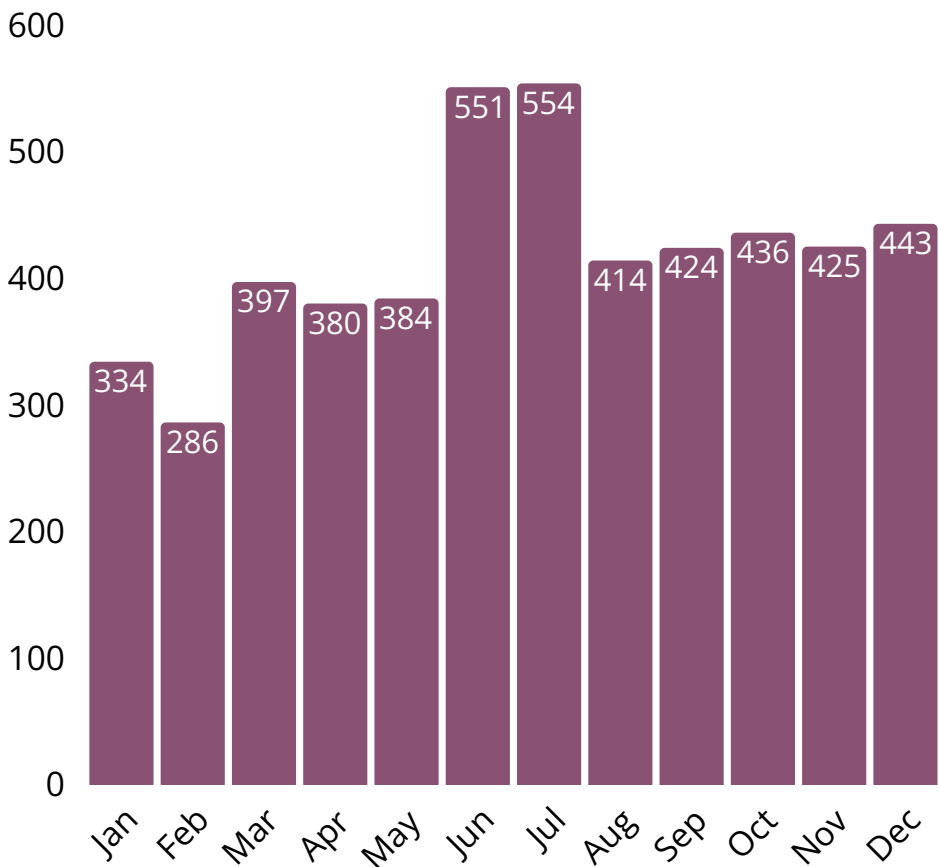


**Response time is the time interval from when the dispatch alert is received at the station until the fire unit is on scene.*

Call Volume Data

Call By Month

In 2025, call volume varied throughout the year. February was the slowest month, with 286 calls, likely due to seasonal factors. On the other hand, July was the busiest month, with 554 calls, reflecting a higher number of emergencies and incidents during the summer months. Analyzing these patterns helps us better allocate resources and ensure we're prepared to respond effectively all year round.

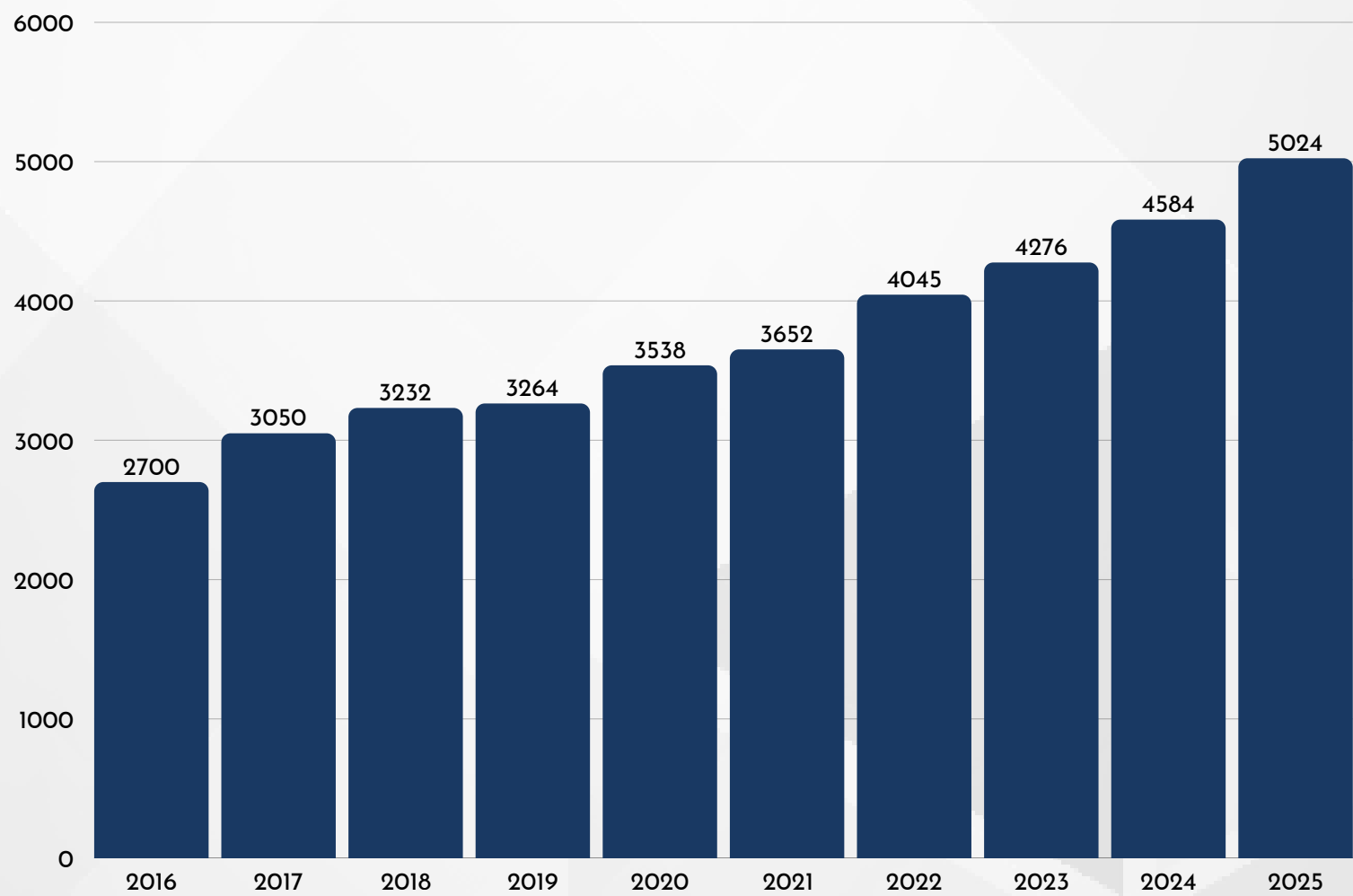


Call By Day Of The Week

During 2025, our busiest day for service was Tuesday, with a total of 821 calls. In contrast, Saturday was the least busy day, recording 448 calls.

Call Volume Over Ten Years

Over the past decade, our call volume has nearly doubled. In 2016, the Lakewood Fire Department responded to 2,700 calls, whereas in 2025, that number rose to 5,024. As the town continues to grow, so does the demand for Fire Department services. To meet this increasing need, it's vital that we have the resources and capabilities in place to maintain the high standard of fire protection our community relies on.



Incident Data

Most Frequent Structure Fire Response Breakdown

Lakewood
Fire
Department
responded to
269 structure
fires in 2025

Call Type	Number of Calls
Private Dwelling (1 or 2 Family)	208
Apartments (3 family or more)	31
Public Assembly (Church, restaurant, etc.)	7
Schools and Colleges	4

Other Frequent Fire Calls Breakdown

Call Type	Number of Calls
Hazardous Conditions	534
Hazardous Material Responses (Spills, Leaks, etc.)	412
Rubbish/ Dumpster Fires	88
Vehicle Fire & Outside Fires	52



Top 3 Busiest days

12/14

65 Calls

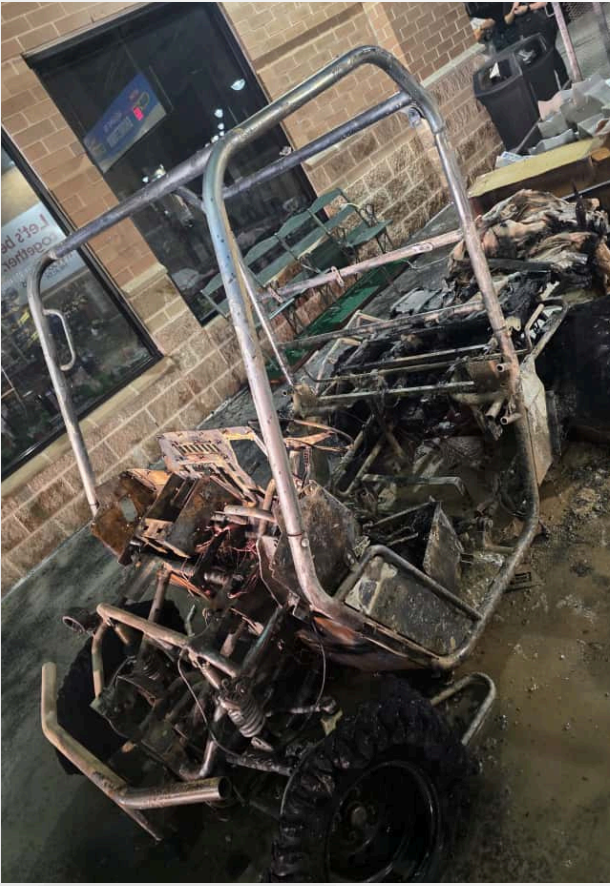
7/1

44 Calls

6/24

39 Calls

Lithium-ion Batteries



Lithium-ion battery fires continue to be a growing concern. This year, the Lakewood Fire Department responded to multiple incidents involving these batteries, and the number of fires is increasing. These fires are extremely dangerous, spread very quickly, and are difficult to extinguish once they start. Residents are strongly encouraged to follow proper storage, charging, and recycling guidelines, and to avoid using damaged or uncertified batteries, to help reduce the risk to their homes and families.



Lakewood Community Coalition



In 2025, the Lakewood Fire Department remained an active participant in the Lakewood Community Coalition, working alongside the Lakewood Police Department and local faith based leaders. This partnership allows the Fire Department to better understand the unique needs of Lakewood's diverse community and stay aware of quality of life and safety concerns affecting neighborhoods and places of worship. Through open communication and collaboration, the coalition helps strengthen relationships, improve community awareness, and support the Fire Department's mission to protect lives and property throughout Lakewood.

Career Division



The Career Division of the Lakewood Fire Department plays a vital role in ensuring the community's safety by providing 24/7, 365 days a year fire protection services. Comprising full-time firefighters organized into four shifts that work 24 hours on duty and 72 hours off duty, this division staffs two engines and a ladder truck, responding to emergencies, maintaining equipment, and fire apparatus. Their dedication and expertise ensure the Fire Department operates efficiently, providing a reliable and immediate response to emergencies and enhancing the overall safety of Lakewood residents.

Volunteers



The Volunteer Division of the Lakewood Fire Department plays a critical role in the operations of the Fire Department, ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. These dedicated volunteers provide essential services during emergencies, including firefighting and rescue operations. Their commitment to service helps maintain the Fire Department's ability to respond quickly and effectively to incidents, especially as the town continues to grow. Volunteers are the backbone of our Fire Department, and their ongoing commitment is vital to ensuring we can provide top tier fire protection. We rely on passionate individuals to join our ranks and help us continue to protect Lakewood, and we encourage those with a desire to serve to consider volunteering.

Support Service



The Support Service team plays a crucial role in assisting firefighters and command staff during emergencies. They provide vital support by supplying equipment, refilling SCBA bottles, managing tools and resources, and ensuring the safety and efficiency of operations on the scene. Although they don't engage in direct firefighting, their contributions, such as providing additional lighting and restocking fire apparatus, are essential to the success of emergency responses. Support Service personnel follow strict guidelines, ensuring they remain outside hazardous areas and work under the direction of the Incident Commander. Their dedicated efforts help enhance the effectiveness and safety of firefighting teams while ensuring critical resources are available when needed.

Rescue Company



The Lakewood Fire Department continues to prepare for the launch of its new Rescue Company, created to enhance the Fire Department's ability to respond to complex and technical emergencies. Approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners on January 13, 2025, the Rescue Company will be staffed by a combination of career and volunteer firefighters and will handle specialized incidents including hazardous materials responses, structural collapses, trench rescues, high- and low-angle rope rescues, and confined space operations. Supported by advanced equipment and ongoing training that meets national standards, the Fire Department is well positioned to activate this unit, with members already trained in rope rescue, confined space, trench rescue, structural collapse, and HAZMAT operations. The formation of the Rescue Company reflects the Lakewood Fire Department's continued commitment to innovation, collaboration, and enhanced community safety.

Public Education Unit



In 2025, the Lakewood Fire Department's Public Education Unit was busy with numerous presentations and outreach activities. They conducted over 100 presentations, reaching thousands of children and adults throughout the year. These included small classroom sessions, large school assemblies, senior center visits, and community events. Our outreach efforts have been growing exponentially.



Plan Review



Fire Department personnel reviewed over 90 site plans.

The Lakewood Fire Department reviews site plans submitted from the Planning and Zoning Boards. Our role in this process is to provide recommendations that ensure the efficient and effective delivery of fire suppression, Fire Department access, and overall effectiveness in emergency response.

Mutual Aid



In 2025, the Lakewood Fire Department provided mutual aid to other fire agencies 7 times. Additionally, they received assistance from other Fire Departments for 44 higher-risk incidents. This collaboration underscores the Fire Department's commitment to mutual aid agreements and the importance of resource-sharing in enhancing emergency response capabilities.



Mutual aid fire agreements are crucial to the Lakewood Fire Department, as they provide additional support and resources during large-scale emergencies. These agreements allow neighboring Fire Departments to assist in times of need, ensuring a more efficient and coordinated response to incidents that may overwhelm local resources. The value of mutual aid lies in its ability to provide specialized equipment, extra personnel, and expertise, which can significantly improve response times and outcomes in critical situations. Furthermore, these partnerships strengthen relationships between Fire Departments, fostering a collaborative approach to emergency management. In Lakewood, mutual aid agreements ensure that, regardless of the size of an emergency, the Fire Department can rely on a network of support to protect the community and enhance overall safety.

Department Training



Over 11,000 man hours of training completed by Fire Department personnel.

In 2025, members of the Lakewood Fire Department dedicated countless hours to training across a wide range of disciplines, including fire training, Hazmat response, driver training, technical rescue, vehicle extrication, and more. Our team participated in both in-state and out-of-state training programs, ensuring we receive the highest level of expertise to provide top-tier service to our community.

One highlight of our training efforts was a multi-agency drill held at Church and Dwight, designed to strengthen our coordination with other local organizations and enhance our readiness for large-scale incidents. This drill reinforced our commitment to collaboration and effective teamwork in high-pressure situations.

Department Training



Notable Incidents of 2025



Three Alarm Structure Fire – Former Piner Elementary School

On October 3, 2025, at approximately 7:30 p.m., the Lakewood Fire Department responded to a massive three-alarm fire at the former Holy Family School (also known as the former Piner Elementary School) on East County Line Road. Fire crews encountered heavy fire in the cafeteria area of the large building, prompting a third alarm and mutual aid from neighboring Fire Departments including Howell, Brick, and Toms River. At the time of the incident, the building was occupied by a Polish supplementary school, with approximately 80 students and staff inside; all occupants evacuated safely after smoke was detected, and no injuries were reported. The fire caused extensive damage, resulting in a total loss of the cafeteria, significant damage to the auditorium and gym, and a partial ceiling collapse, while classroom areas were largely spared.

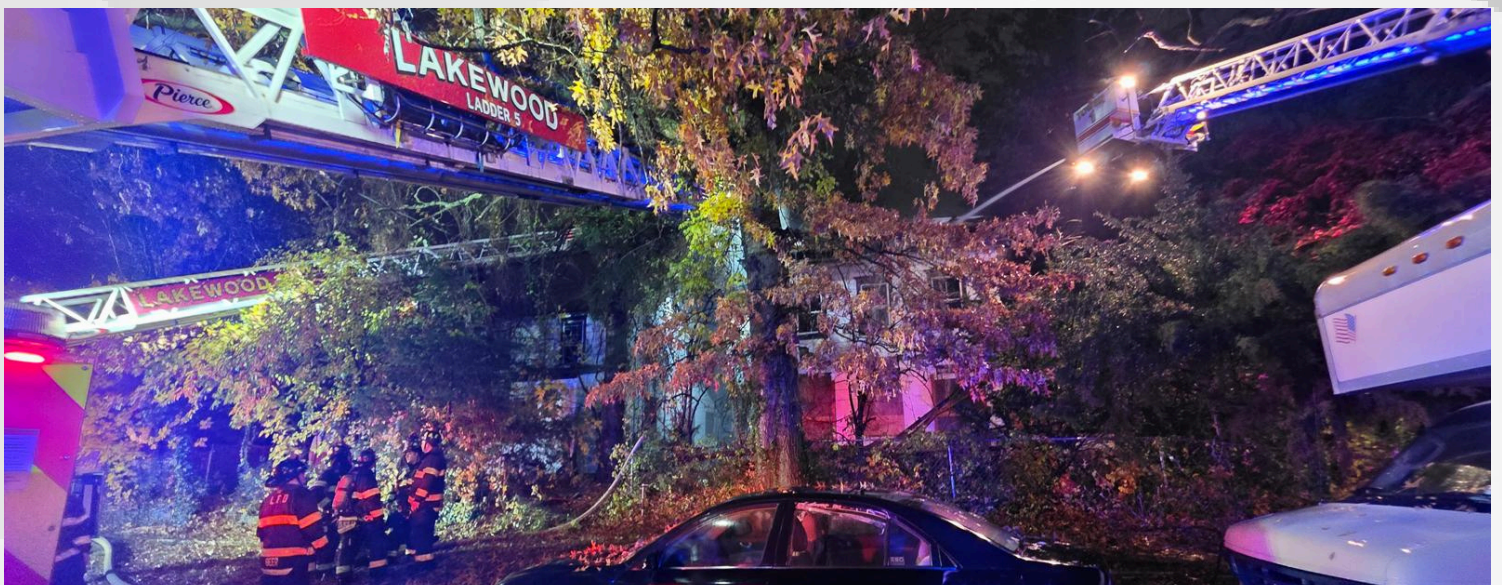
Notable Incidents of 2025



Hazardous Materials Incident – Overturned Fuel Tanker

On June 23, 2025, at approximately 7:00 a.m., the Lakewood Fire Department responded to an overturned diesel tanker truck carrying approximately 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel. The Lakewood Fire Department and Berkeley Hazmat Teams worked together to secure the leak and ensure there were no additional hazards to the public.

Notable Incidents of 2025



Two Alarm Structure Fire – Vacant Residential Building

On November 25, 2025, at approximately 9:00 p.m., the Lakewood Fire Department responded to a reported brush fire, which was quickly determined to be a working structure fire involving a vacant residential building. Heavy fire was observed venting from the first and second floors at the rear of the home. Due to unsafe conditions, Chief Yahr ordered an exterior only attack, and a second alarm was transmitted as flames threatened a nearby residence just 10 feet away. Mutual aid was provided by Howell, Jackson, and Point Pleasant Borough. The fire was brought under control by 10:21 p.m. The vacant, turn-of-the-century structure was nearly destroyed and required demolition the following day.

Notable Incidents of 2025



Two Alarm Structure Fire – Residential Building

On August 7, 2025, at approximately 4:05 a.m., the Lakewood Fire Department responded to a major two-alarm fire at the Westgate apartment complex at 70 Sanz Town Road. Firefighters arrived to find heavy fire on the rear and sides of a three story, occupied building, prompting a second alarm and assistance from neighboring Fire Departments including Brick and Howell. Firefighters initially faced a threat of roof collapse, so they transitioned to “defensive” and fought the fire from the outside before safely moving inside to extinguish remaining hot spots in the walls and attic. The building sustained significant damage, particularly on the upper floors, and nearby homes were briefly threatened. Thankfully, no residents or firefighters were injured.

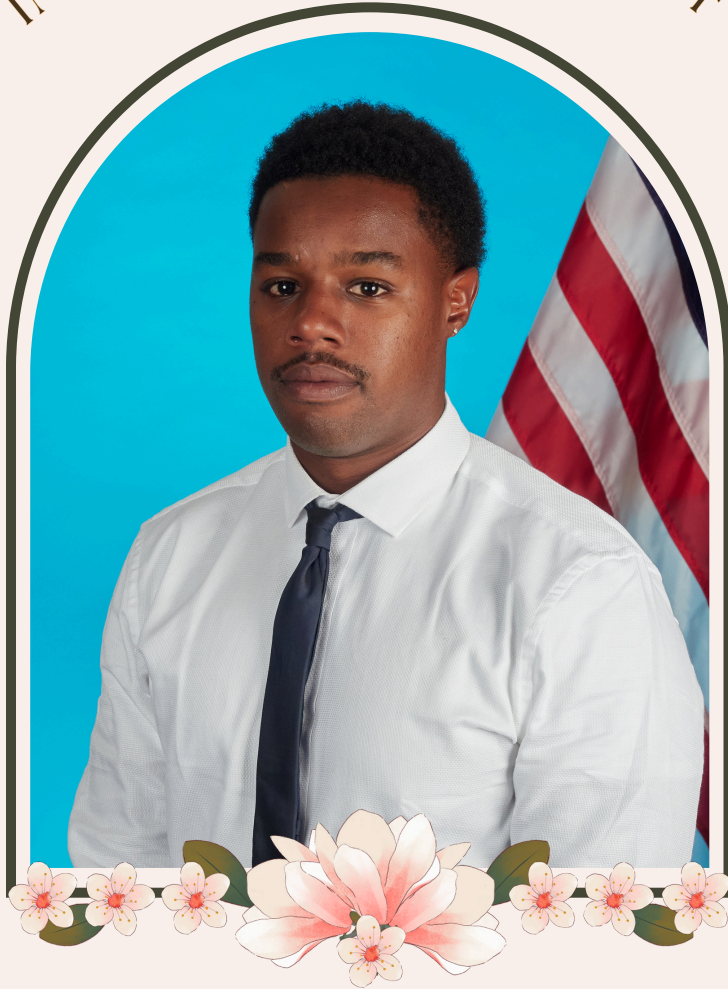
Notable Incidents of 2025



Two Alarm Structure Fire – Residential Building

On July 22, 2025, at approximately 8:05 a.m., the Lakewood Fire Department responded to a two-alarm structure fire at a three story, multi-unit residential building located at 2012 Hickory Court. First-arriving units were on scene in under six minutes and encountered heavy fire conditions, prompting a second alarm that ultimately brought 12 fire companies and approximately 80 personnel to the scene. The fire caused significant damage to two units, with an additional six units sustaining smoke and water damage, displacing 13 residents. No injuries were reported, and assistance for displaced residents was coordinated through the American Red Cross.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Qua'dry W. Lyons

10.22.1995 - 01.14.2025

Forever remembering a firefighter
whose service and kindness made a
difference to so many.

