

To: Borough Council

From: Samuel Iannucci, Fire Marshal

Subject: Year in review report (2024)

Date: January 5, 2025

In accordance with Chester Heights Fire Code #153, section 106.1 the Fire Marshal shall render a report to Borough Council on or before the February meeting of each year. This report contains a record of all proceedings under the Fire Code during the preceding year.

### **Our Mission Statement**

*The Chester Heights Fire Marshal's Office is committed to protecting the safety of Chester Heights' residents and their property, through fire prevention, education, code enforcement, regulations, and law enforcement.*

As the newly appointed Fire Marshal for 2024 the emphasis was on reviewing the current adopted 2003 International Fire Code (IFC), Ordinance 153 and Borough Fire Code chapter 97, along with the current inspection process of Rental Units and Commercial establishments.

Through the work of a sub-committee, it was recommended to adopt the 2018 IFC Code and make some minor changes to our Borough ordinance 153 and Chapter 97 of the Borough Fire Code.

A concerted effort was made to identify all rental and commercial properties within the Borough of Chester Heights, which by Ordinance **are required to have a yearly Fire Inspection.**

With the help of the office staff, we were able to identify and build a database of all rentals and commercial properties within the borough. This is evolving.

### **The office performed the following Inspections in 2024:**

- 118 Residential inspections were done
- 244 commercial apartment building rentals completed
- 31 U/O (sale of home inspections)
- 39 Commercial properties with multiple tenants

The goal of the inspection is not to fail properties but to ensure safety for the residents who reside, shop or work in these facilities.

A concentrated effort this year was working with the Homeowner's associations at Darlington Woods, Madison Apartments, Merrill Gardens Elder Care and living quarters and the Hollow at Fox Valley and our commercial properties to improve fire safety.

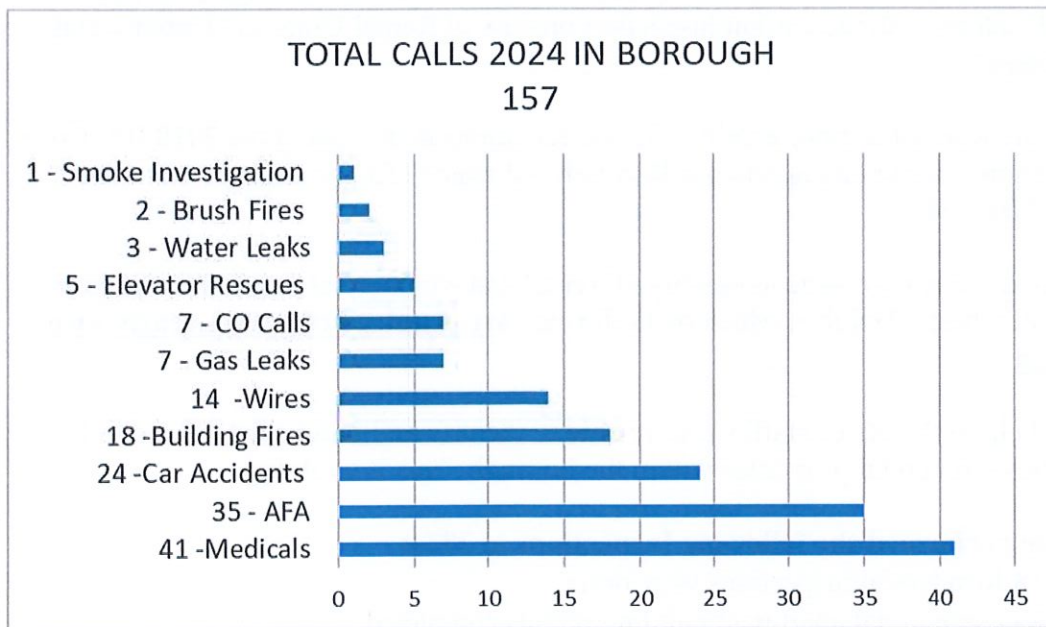
The response of residents, communities and businesses mentioned above to install and upgrade fire protection devices, where recommended and practice Fire Safety in their daily lives was awesome.

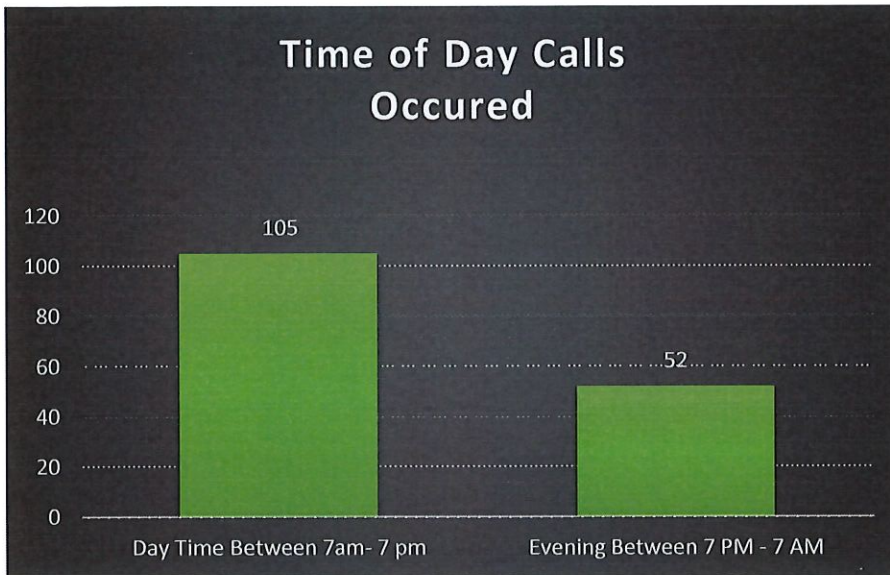
I have worked with the Fire Chief coordinating drills and communicating potential hazards identified during fire inspections. This information allows the fire company to pre-plan responses to these potential hazards. Familiarization of properties becomes incalculable when incidents arise.

### **CALLS IN CHESTER HEIGHTS**

There were one hundred and fifty-seven (157) incidents this year in the Borough. This is up from one hundred and twenty-nine (129) last year. This was a 19 % increase in incidents. The two charts below breakdown the types of calls and time of day calls occurred.

As you will see from the charts below; the first chart breaks down the call types and the second chart show that roughly two-thirds (2/3) of the calls occurred during daytime hours 7 am -7 pm.





**Fire Damage far exceeds previous years.**

This year the borough suffered its first civilian injury as a result of a fire in Darlington Woods. Fire losses to property and personal possessions expenses are estimated to exceed Two Million dollars (2,000,000.00). In addition, 4/5 families have been displaced for at least one (1) year while they rebuild the units damaged.

Madison Apartments experienced a number electrical and fireplace fires. Fireplace fires were due mainly to the flue not being opened which resulted in minimal smoke damage to the unit involved. The electrical fires were mostly caused by component failure.

The Village of Valley Brook had several fires causing minor damage.

Wawa Corporate experienced an activation of their data room fire suppression system. This is a specialized suppression system that uses a special agent to extinguish a fire but does not damage the equipment or leave a residue.

Budgetary guidelines were met this year. The main expenditures were due to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and reference books.

*Review of Fiscal 2024 foresees some additional expenses or disbursements for the Fire Marshal's office. These expenses are earmarked for Fire Safety Public Awareness, office supplies, dues, and subscriptions. A total of \$1000.00 is requested for FY 2025.*

