



Annual Report 2023

The worst fire season on record added some incidents and offered deployment opportunities.

Callouts and activities

The average staff hours spent per call have decreased over the last decade. There are several factors at play. Some things lengthening the average are:

- responding with more personnel
- unreliable after-hours ferry transport.

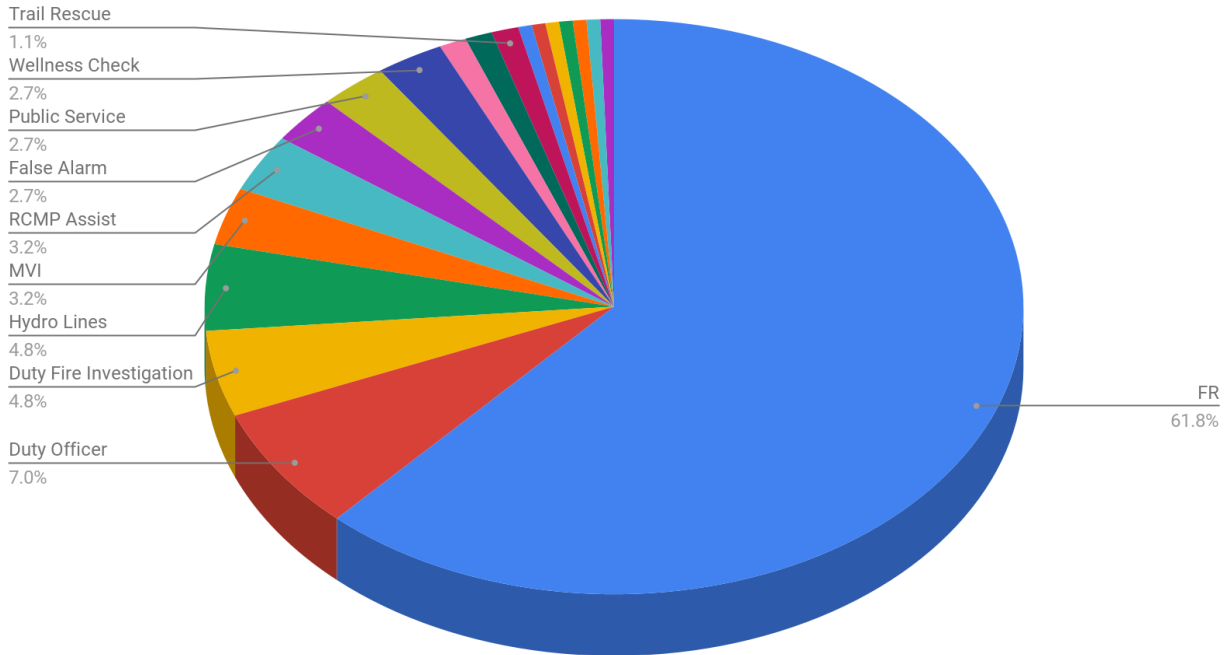
Offsetting factors are:

- quicker packaging and transport,
- getting EHS to respond to the clinic,
- putting more pressure on patients' families to transport non-emergent patients to and from the clinic.

	<u>Practices(hrs)</u>	<u>Incidents(hrs)</u>	<u>Courses(hrs)</u>	<u>Total(hrs)</u>	<u>Incident #</u>
2023	2206	1087	148	3,441	186
2022	2209	987	196	3,442	167
2021	2129	960	465	3,554	201
2020	2037	972	286	3,295	171
2019	2465	1132	130	3,802	193
2018	2943	1069	293	4,305	163
2017	1844	1025	140	3,009	179
2016	2499	898	472	3,869	140

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Our incident breakdown for 2023 with a total of 186 calls:

FR	115	False Alarm	5	Electrical	1
Duty Officer	13	Public Service	5	False Alarm (Good intent)	1
Duty Fire Investigation	9	Wellness Check	5	Structure Fire	1
Hydro Lines	9	Walk-in First Aid	2	Fire Unclassified	1
MVI	6	Brush Fire	2	Propane Gas	1
RCMP Assist	6	Trail Rescue	2	Rope Rescue	1
		Abandoned 911	1		

Call breakdown remains consistent over the last two years.

Significant Events:

- Grass Fire
- Structure Fire

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- Two serious motor vehicle incidents
- Attempted suicide
- High Salal Rope Rescue

Recruitment and Retention

Our experiment with bringing on recruits in January succeeded, with us retaining five of the seven (Byron, Nanna, Carlie, Sam, Alan). Sadly, we lost two other new people, a 4-year member (Gabe) and a 10-year member (Sol), giving us a net five-member gain.

Our “service level” breakdown is:

- 4 Full-Service Firefighters
- 17 Interior Firefighters (3 in training)
- 2 Exterior Firefighters (6 in training)
- 6 Suppression Rookies
- 2 Medical Rookie
- 2 Auxilliary/Support

Three rookies who began to challenge the in-house test last year were unable to complete it before the end of 2023. We will do a renewed push to get them through the test early in the year. Another off-island member plans to return to Hornby in May and will resume a more active role with us.

Training

Working around volunteers' schedules with school, family, travel, and life in general is a constant complication for all volunteer departments. Ours is no exception, and when we get engaged, smart, and strong candidates, we do what we schedule juggling is necessary to keep those people. Every year, what seems like a one-year task turns into a multi-year journey to train rookies to be interior firefighters.

The expanded medical scope curriculum is available and we are working on upgrading all of our FRs. There are another two people with expired licenses who are hoping to get recertified this year.

The training facility is turning out to be a fantastic resource. Another year went by without our auto-extrication pad and the integrated roof prop that can weatherproof the SPU trailer. We now have a contractor who is looking forward to building those items and are planning on taking advantage of that in the next few months.

Jac has been slotted into the regular duty officer rotation. We may lose him for the summer as things heat up at the meadery, but for now, he is adding a welcome break for the rest of us and is doing excellent work.

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The extra training courses that our members took part in this past year are:

Chainsaw training - 1 member

ICS 100 – 1 member

Fire Service Instructor – 1 member

FR License - 4 members

Live Fire - 1 member

WSPP-WFF-1 certification - 2 members

Incident Safety Officer - 1 member

EOC Essentials - 1 member

Fire Prevention and Community Engagement

FireSmart Home Ignition Zone Assessments increased significantly this year as a result of a Forest Fest presentation I did in the fall, several HIRRA mentions, and the horrible fire season we had this year. Wildfire risk is increasing every year. We will embark on two projects to increase our ability to protect our community:

- I have begun working with BC Wildfire Service to do a wildfire risk reduction project on the HIRRA leased lands between the firehall and Solans Road.
- Four members are travelling to Parksville this spring to participate in an Engine Boss course.

Several local organizations have expressed interest in a fire extinguisher workshop. I hope to be able to do three or four of them before summer.

Finance

The operations grant for 2023 was \$244,329. HIFR closed out 2023 with a projected surplus of \$8000. Additional capital requisitions were:

- \$9,500 in protective equipment (bunker gear)
- \$350,000 Tender (62) replacement
- \$4,800 in breathing apparatus cylinders.

We benefitted from a Provincial grant (\$15,000) to continue the work on our structure protection trailer and purchase some significant equipment for our fire operations.

Significant Accomplishments

Here are some of our accomplishments in 2023:

- Completed another successful program of chipping yard waste
- Added a duty officer to the rotation
- Sent two members on deployment
- Significant improvements to our structure protection trailer

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In Conclusion

Thank you to everyone on HIFR for your hard work and long hours of community service. Every one is making a positive difference in our community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Doug Chinnery', is written on a light green rectangular background.

Doug Chinnery,
Fire Chief