

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services 2013 year in review

With more than 39,000 calls for service (up from 37,000 in 2012), 2013 was one of the busiest years on record for Edmonton Fire Rescue Services.

Firefighters responded to 39,713 calls in 2013, including 3,278 fires and 25,510 medical calls. Other calls included vehicle collisions, hazardous materials events, and technical rescues. It was the highest volume of calls experienced in the last five years. From 2012 to 2013, turnout times for fire calls improved by two per cent and medical calls improved by one per cent.



"Edmonton Fire Rescue Services has a Master Plan, which addresses the growing demand for our services and outlines a strategic approach to grow our capacity to serve the City of Edmonton," said Fire Chief Ken Block. "This requires the support of Council and the support of the public and I am very pleased that we have had that over the years. The support of Edmontonians allows us to do our job – which is to protect life, property and the environment in our city."

There were \$65 million in fire losses in 2013, with 961 fires investigated. The Rutherford condo fire on September 29 was the most costly fire of 2013; it resulted in \$20 million in damages.

Fires resulted in two civilian deaths and 61 injuries. The majority of injuries occurred at residential homes (42) with the number one cause of residential fires being cooking-related. Other leading causes of fires were smoker's materials, electrical short circuit, and combustibles left too close to heat.

Overall, arson was again the number one cause of fires in 2013. Two hundred and thirty six fires were deemed to be deliberately set. These fires were also the most costly, accounting for \$25,862,000 in damages.

"When someone calls 911 with a fire or medical emergency, it is often the worst day of their life and they are depending on us to be having the best day of our career. Every year, our staff respond, step up, and provide that service, and I am tremendously proud of the work we did in 2013," said Fire Chief Ken Block. "I'm excited for the challenges that await our department in 2014 and beyond, as we collectively evolve to serve the City better."

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