

**FIRE**

**DEPARTMENT**

**PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION**  
**JUNE 2004**

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**DISCUSSION**  
**June 2004**

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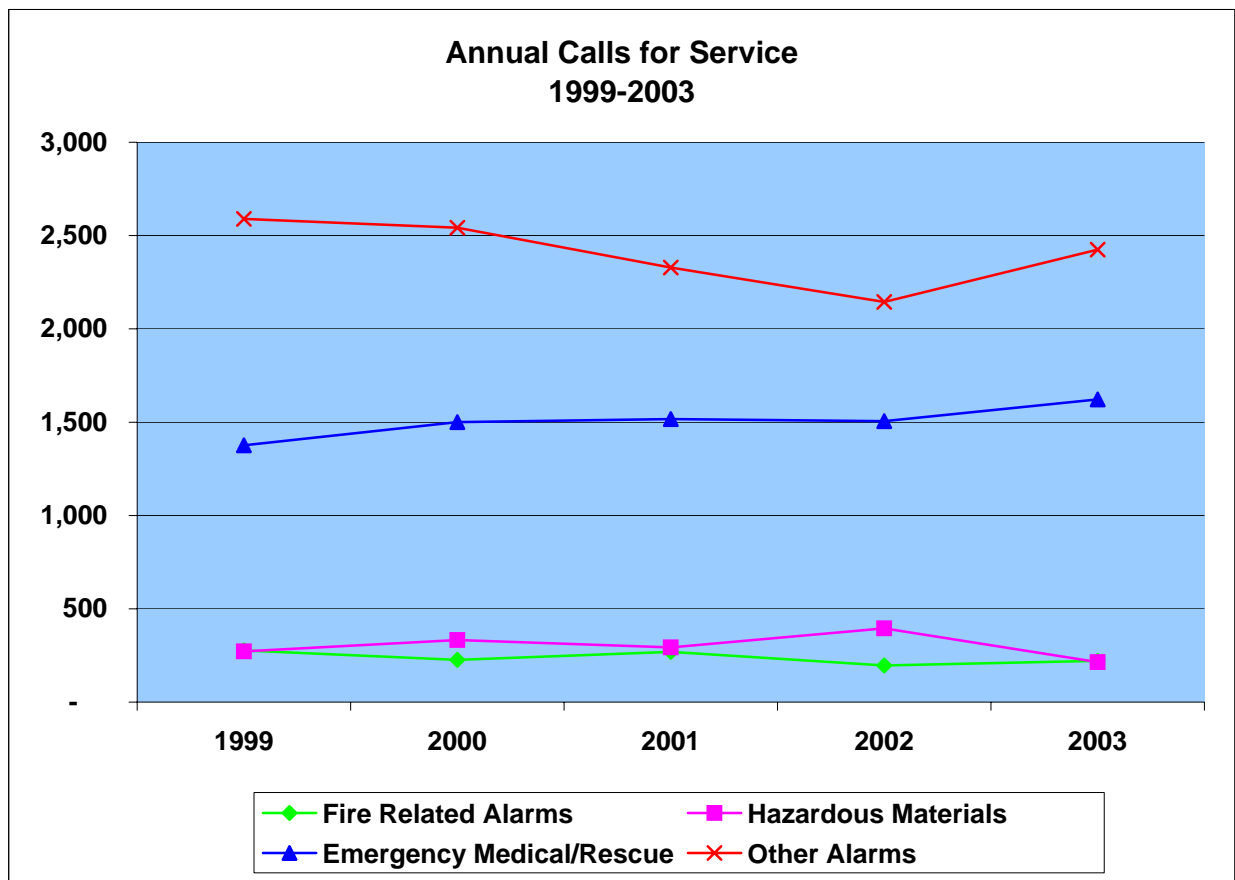
## Fire Performance Discussion

### Fire Suppression and Special Hazards Program

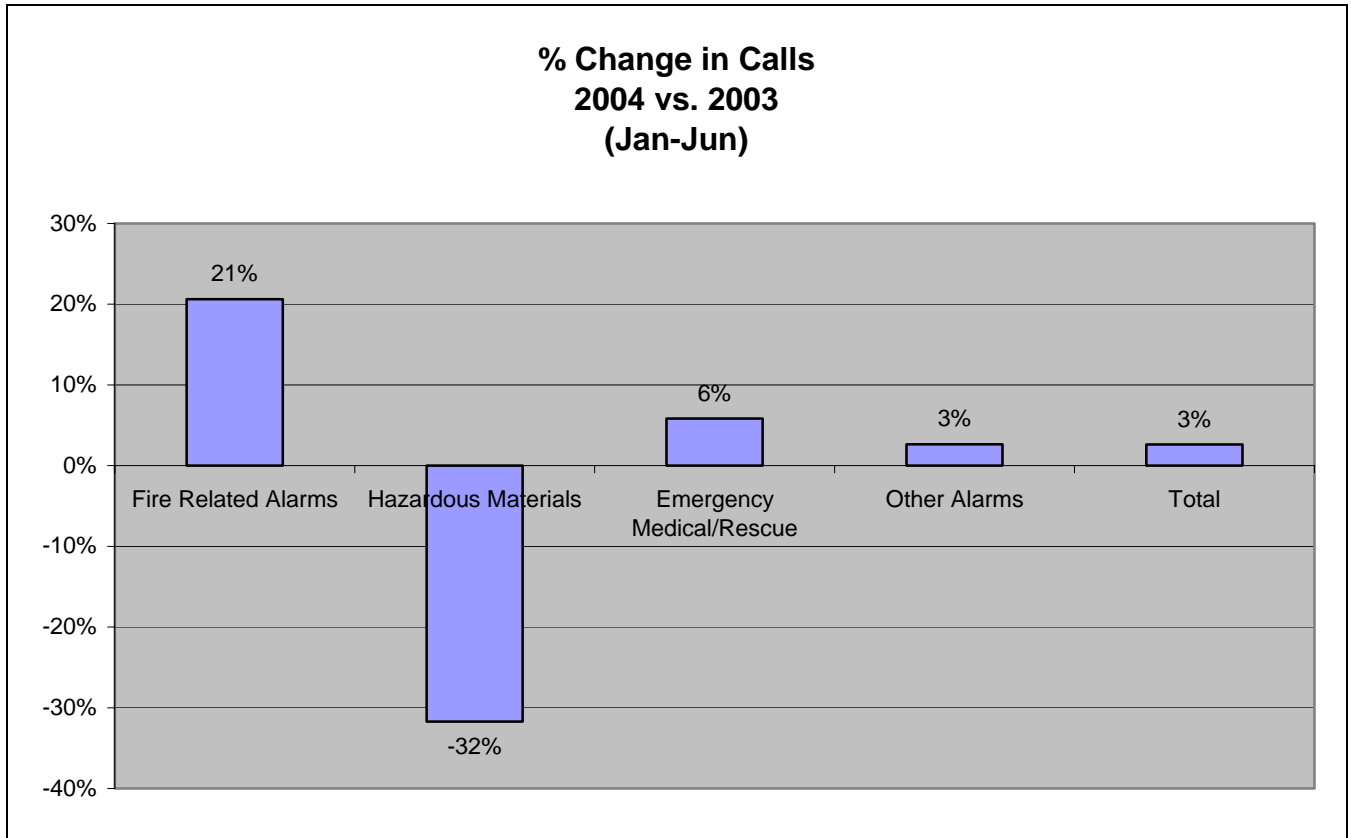
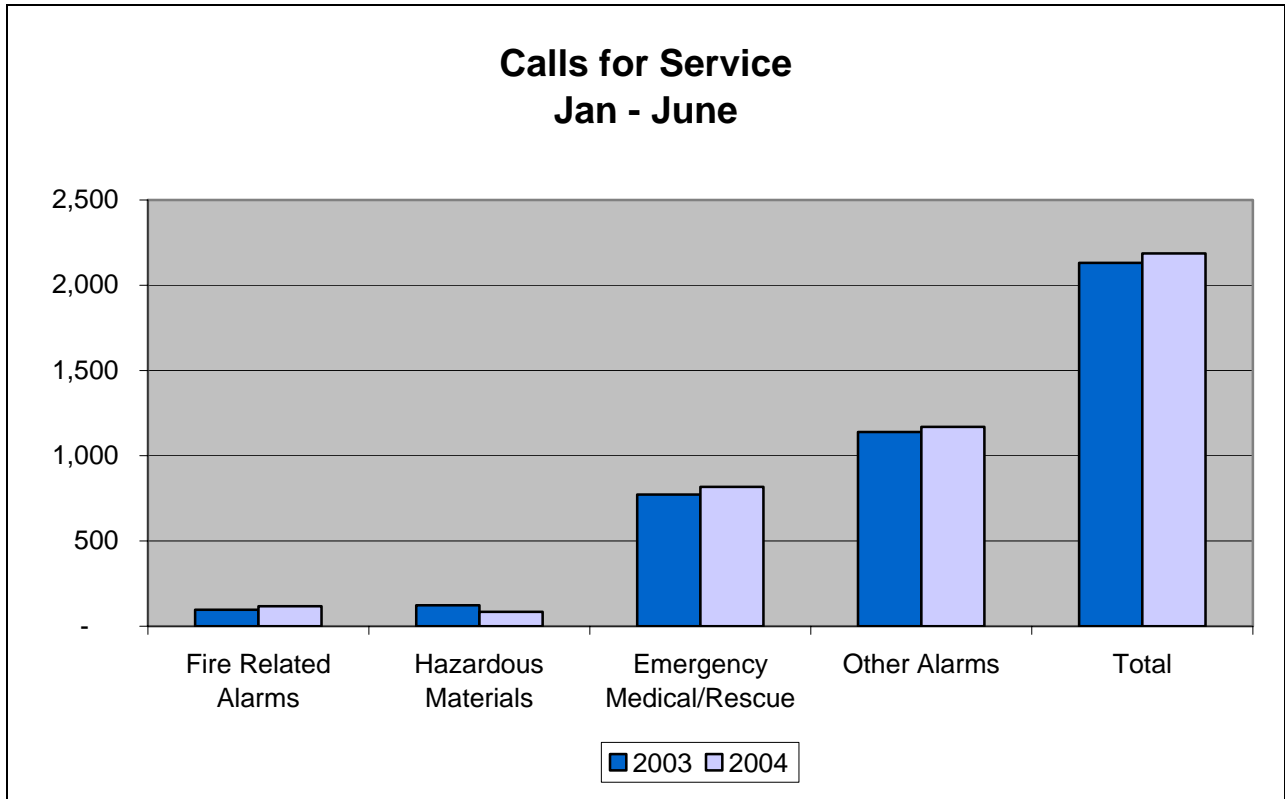
**Program Description:** This program provides emergency response to all fire, explosion, hazardous materials, heavy rescue, and special hazard calls in the community.

**Measurement: Number of Calls for Service** – Measures the level of activity for fire suppression and special hazards for the Fire Department.

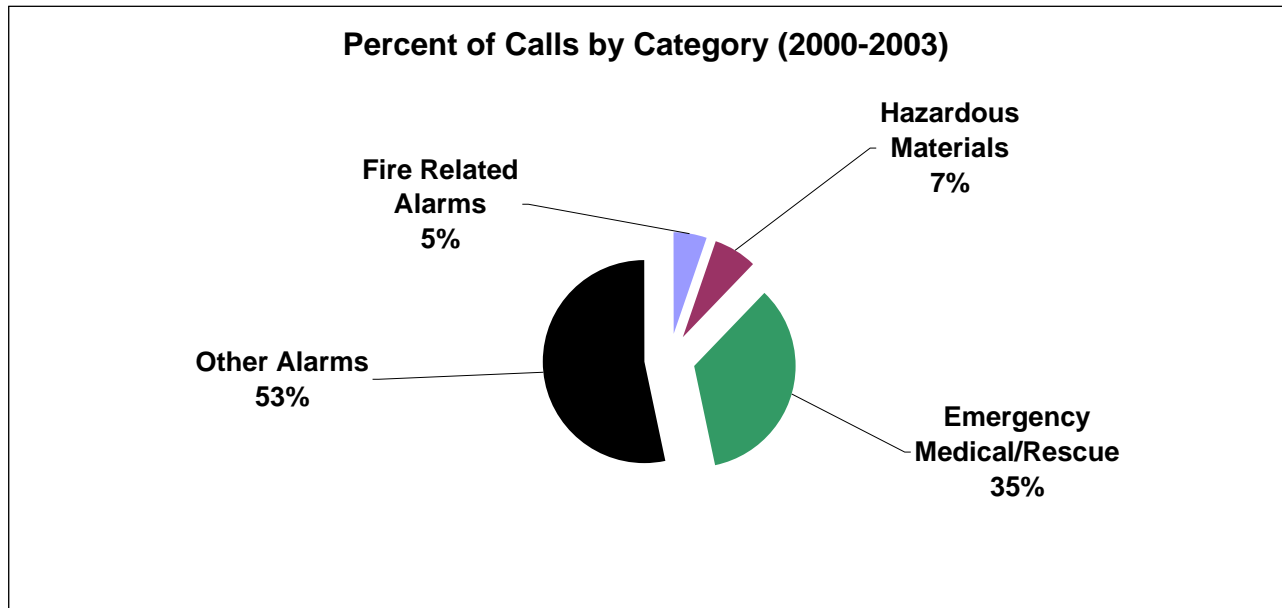
<b>Calls for Service</b>						
	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>5 Year Average</u>
Fire Related Alarms	277	226	269	196	221	238
Hazardous Materials	272	333	293	395	214	301
Emergency Medical/Rescue	1,376	1,500	1,517	1,506	1,622	1,504
Other Alarms	2,589	2,542	2,329	2,144	2,425	2,406
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,514</b>	<b>4,601</b>	<b>4,408</b>	<b>4,241</b>	<b>4,482</b>	<b>4,449</b>



## Fire Performance Discussion



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**Results:** Total calls for service increased by 241, or 5.7%, in calendar year 2003. Fire related alarms increased by 25 calls for a total of 221 in 2003. This level is more consistent with prior years than 2002, which was unusually low. Hazardous materials calls decreased by 181, due in part to a change in the classification of calls from “hazardous” to “other” to conform to national guidelines. For example, a benchmark of 55 gallons has been set as the cut-off between hazardous material calls and other calls, such that a gasoline spill of less than 55 gallons would no longer be considered a hazardous material call. The department consistently received approximately 1,500 emergency medical calls per annum in years 2000-2002. However, emergency medical calls increased by 116, or 7.7%, in calendar 2003. Other alarms increased by 281, or 13.1%, to total 2,425 for 2003. A portion of this increase is due to the reclassification of hazardous material calls, as discussed above. The remainder is due to the return of calls to more historic levels, after an unusually low volume in 2002.

In comparing year-to-date figures through June 2004 versus 2003, total alarms increased by 56, or 3%. Fire related alarms increased 21% (20 calls), emergency/medical rescue 6% (45 calls), and other alarms 3% (30 calls), while hazardous materials calls decreased 32% (39 calls) over this same period. Based upon the level of activity through June, total calls for service for 2004 will approximate that of the past three years.

Most calls for service during the five year period 1999-2003 were for other alarms (54%). Emergency medical/rescue accounted for 34% of total calls, hazardous materials 7% and the fewest calls for service were fire related alarms at 5%. Year-to-date figures for calendar 2004 show a similar composition of calls with 54% other alarms, 37% emergency/medical rescue, 4% hazardous materials, and 5% fire related.

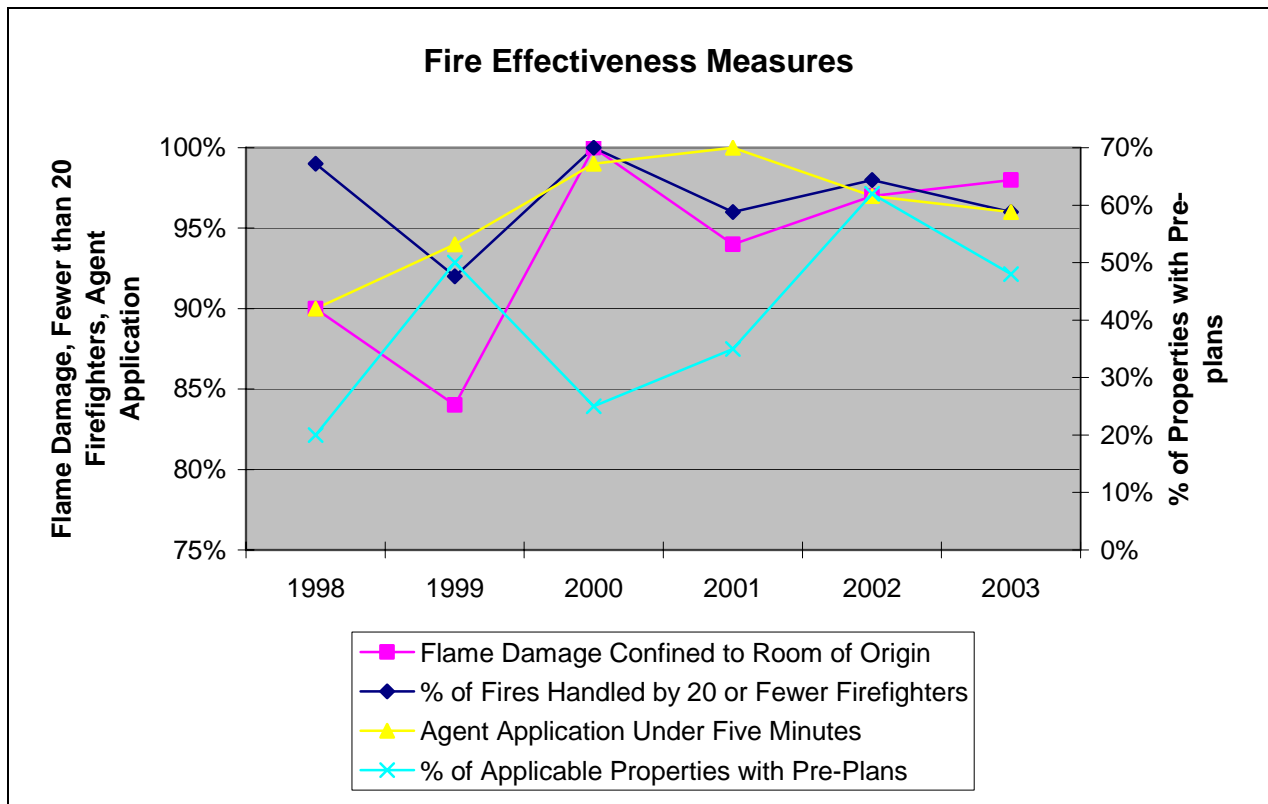
## Fire Performance Discussion

### Fire Suppression and Special Hazards Program

**Program Description:** This program provides emergency response to all fire, explosion, hazardous materials, heavy rescue, and special hazard calls in the community.

**Measurement: Fire Effectiveness** – Measures the Department's success and effectiveness when responding to fire calls.

<u>Fire Effectiveness Measures</u>						
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Extent of Flame Damage Confined to Room of Origin	90%	84%	100%	94%	97%	98%
Percentage of Fires Handled by 20 or Fewer Firefighters	99%	92%	100%	96%	98%	96%
Agent Application Under Five Minutes	90%	94%	99%	100%	97%	96%
Percent of Applicable Properties with Completed or Updated Pre-Plans	20%	50%	25%	35%	62%	48%



## **Fire Performance Discussion**

**Results:** The percentage of fires handled by 20 or fewer firefighters measures the effective allocation of staffing within the Fire Department, while preplanning helps to provide the most efficient delivery of emergency services by knowing the layout and location of hazardous materials in facilities. Of particular importance are measures of extent of flame damage confined to room of origin and agent application time.

The percentage of fires handled by 20 or fewer firefighters is 96% for 2003, versus a low of 92% in 1999. This data indicates that current staffing levels are adequate to handle the volume of fires in West Hartford effectively.

The percent of applicable properties with completed or updated pre-plans is an indicator of how efficient the department can be in fighting fires. In 1998, 20% of pre-plans were completed compared to 50% in 1999, 25% in 2000, 35% in 2001, 62% in 2002, and 48% in 2003. The department has identified 632 commercial properties for which pre-plans are necessary and anticipates 100% will be completed in approximately two years.

As detailed on the graph above, the percentage of fires contained to the room of origin has varied from a low of 84% to 98% in 2003, the last full year for which data is available. Improved performance and consistently high percentages is due in part to the efficiency of the Fire Department and also to other variables such as built-in extinguishment systems and/or automatic alarms and smoke detectors.

With regard to agent application under five (5) minutes, 96% of incidents met the criteria of applying agent in under five minutes in 2003. This measure has been in the mid- to high-90's for several years, versus a low of 90% in 1998. This measure indicates that the department has been effective at minimizing fire damage and loss.

The consistency of the fire effectiveness measures indicates that the department is adequately staffed and meeting its targets. The January 1, 2003 reorganization of the Fire Department, which reduced minimum staffing levels to twenty-one personnel through the investment in new fire apparatus, was not expected to diminish the effectiveness of the department. The performance data for 2003 and the first six months of 2004 have shown this to be true.

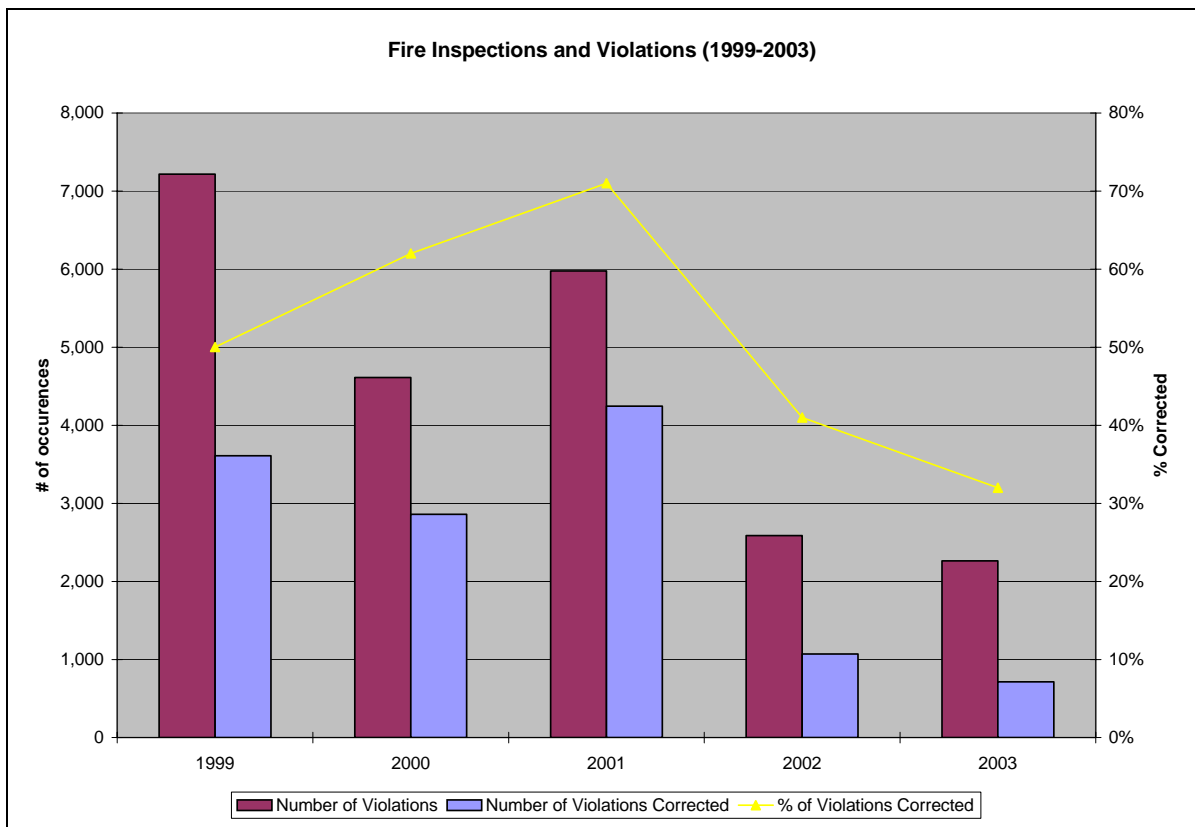
## Fire Performance Discussion

### Fire Inspections and Code Enforcement Program

**Program Description:** This program provides inspection of town properties to ensure fair and consistent fire code enforcement.

**Measurement: Fire Inspection and Violations** – Measures the level of activity for fire inspections and measures how successful the department is in getting property owners to correct violations.

<b><u>Fire Inspections &amp; Code Enforcement</u></b>					
	<b><u>1999</u></b>	<b><u>2000</u></b>	<b><u>2001</u></b>	<b><u>2002</u></b>	<b><u>2003</u></b>
Number of Inspections	965	1,041	1,215	716	932
Number of Violations	7,218	4,612	5,979	2,588	2,264
Number of Violations Corrected	3,611	2,860	4,246	1,070	714
Percent of Violations Corrected	50%	62%	71%	41%	32%



## **Fire Performance Discussion**

**Results:** Annual fire inspections help reduce the risk of fires. The goal of the Fire Department had been to conduct 1,200 inspections on an annual basis. The department met this goal in 2001 as three fire inspectors were on staff (two on a part-time basis). Since this time, the fire inspector positions have not been fully staffed, resulting in fewer inspections. In addition, the fire inspector positions have assumed additional responsibilities including: plan review; school education programs; juvenile fire prevention; investigative duties; and, approximately 200 hours of training a year. In order to address this situation, six personnel received fire inspection training in 2003 such that all company level officers (Lieutenants and Captains) are now fire inspection certified.

Instead of concentrating on the number of inspections performed, the department has shifted the focus of the program to the % of violations corrected. It is felt that changing the emphasis from the number of inspections performed to the % of violations corrected will result in a more effective fire inspection program. The goal is to correct 60% of all violations noted. This target takes into account that some violations cannot be corrected and the owner instead files for a variance. As detailed on the graph above, 32% of violations were corrected in 2003. This percentage has risen to 59% during the first six months of 2004.

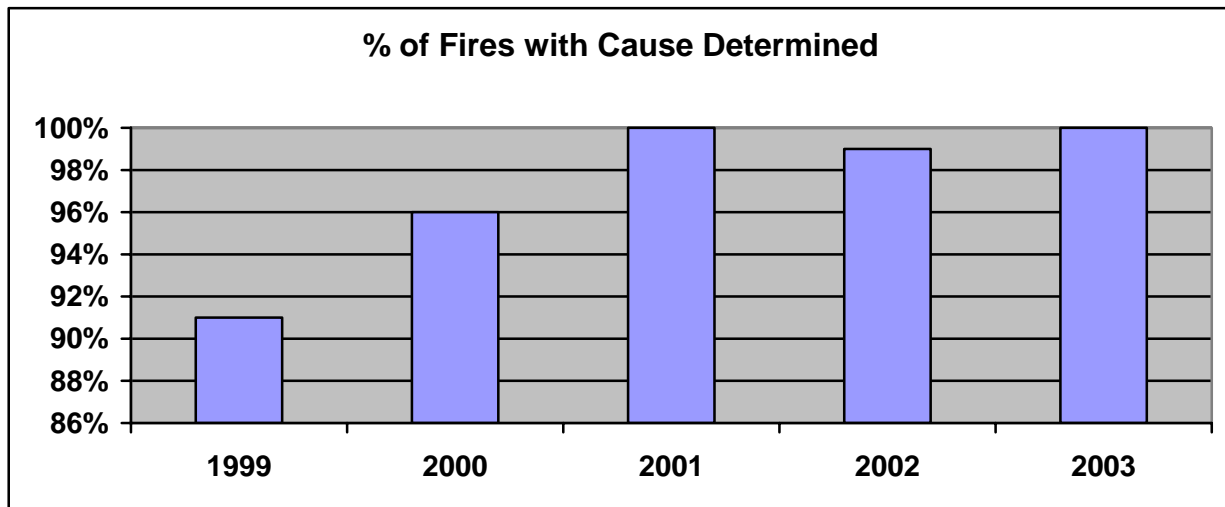
## Fire Performance Discussion

### Fire Investigations

**Program Description:** The Fire Marshall is required by state statute to investigate and report the origin and cause of any fire or explosion that occurs within the community.

**Measurement: Fires Investigated** – Measures the level of activity for fire investigation and measures how successful the department is in determining the cause of fires and explosions.

<u>Fire Investigations</u>					
	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Number of Fires	23	26	138	82	38
Number of Fires with Cause Determined	21	25	138	81	38
% of Fires with Cause Determined	91%	96%	100%	99%	100%
Number of Fires Investigated	23	26	22	24	15
Clearance Rate on Incendiary Fires	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



**Results:** The department has been very successful in determining the cause of fires, varying from a low of 91% in 1999, with 21 out of 23 fires with cause determined, to 100% in 2003, when there were 38 fires. The clearance rate on incendiary fires, those that involve the willful destruction of property, has consistently been 100% over the time period analyzed.

## Fire Performance Discussion

### Emergency Management

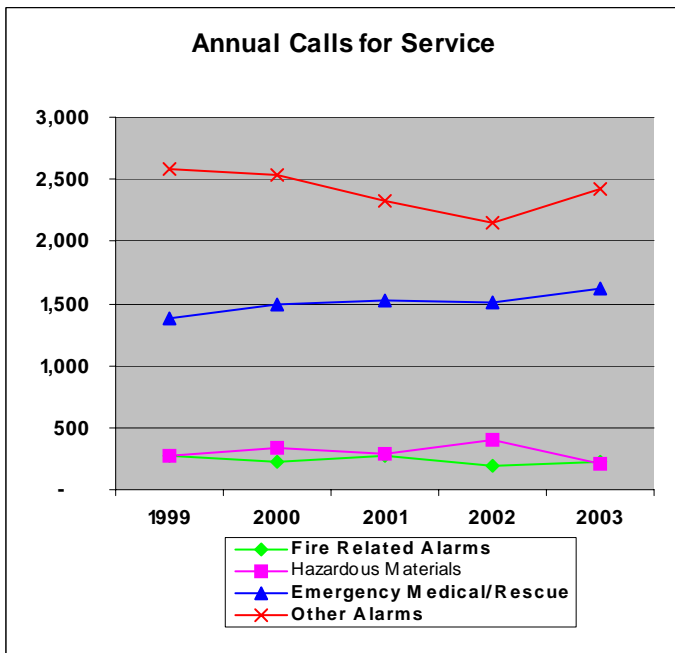
**Program Description:** This program provides the advance planning and preparation for any type of natural or man-made disaster that may affect the community. This service includes the coordination of all mitigation, emergency, and recovery phase activities.

**Measurement:** Disaster Responses and Training – Measures the level of activity and the training completed to ensure preparedness for disaster responses.

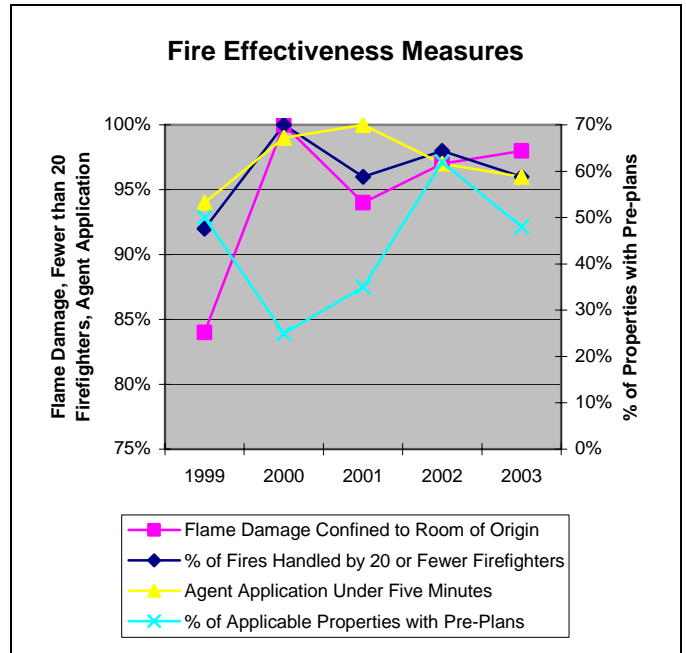
<b><u>Disaster Responses and Training</u></b>					
	<b><u>1999</u></b>	<b><u>2000</u></b>	<b><u>2001</u></b>	<b><u>2002</u></b>	<b><u>2003</u></b>
Number of Disaster Responses	2	0	0	3	5
Number of LEPC Meetings Conducted	2	0	1	1	6
Number of Table Top Exercises Conducted	1	2	1	1	1
% of Firefighters Trained in All- Hazards	90%	90%	70%	98%	100%
% of Firefighters trained on Annex T	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%

**Results:** In each of the years analyzed, the department has been successful in conducting table top exercises and LEPC meetings. The percentage of firefighters trained in specific areas has been consistently high as well. The department appears to have successfully prepared and planned for a potential natural or man-made disaster.

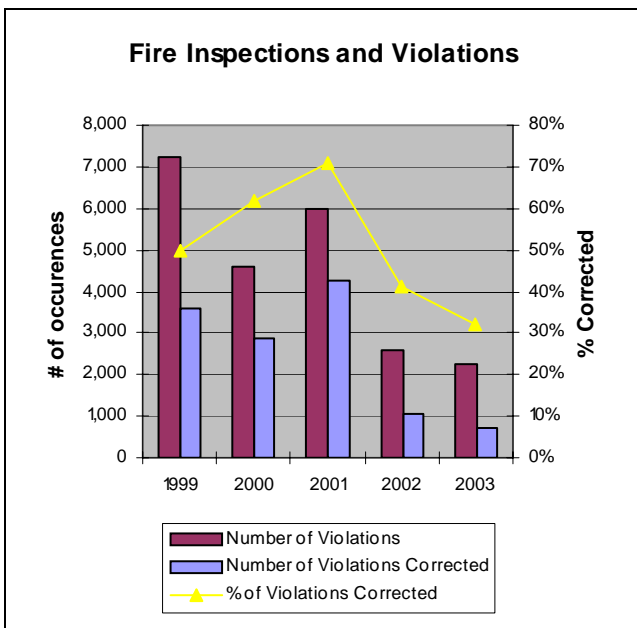
# Fire Department Performance Summary 2004



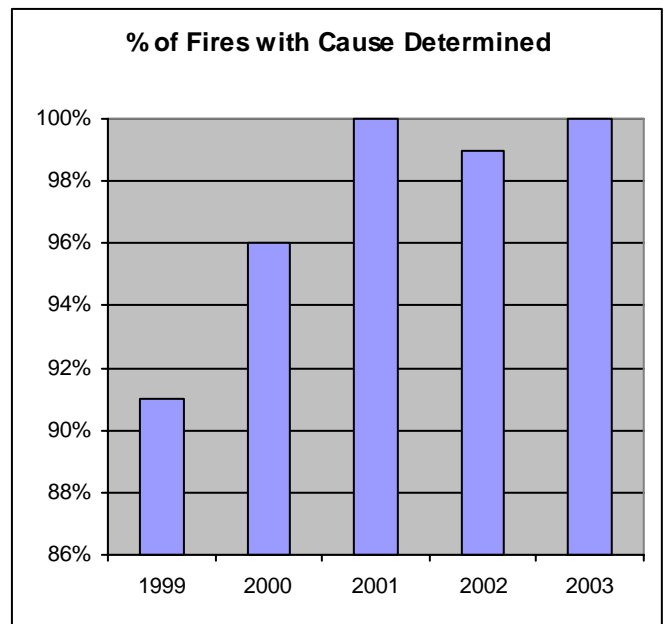
- Call volume in 2003 was typical.
- Emergency medical/rescue calls continue to increase.
- Swing from “hazardous” to “other” due to classification in conformance with federal guidelines.



- High percentages were maintained for effectiveness measures, despite reduced staffing.



- The Department is not currently meeting its inspection and violations corrected goals. The focus of the program is changing to % of violations corrected instead of # of inspections made.



- Over the past five years, the Department has been very successful in determining the cause of fires through its Fire Investigations program.