

April 25th – May 1st

During the week of April 25th – May 1st the Virginia Fire Department responded to a total of Seventy-five calls Six Fire calls and sixty-nine EMS calls. The EMS calls are split forty-five 9-1-1 calls and twenty-four transfers. First the Transfers, which only brought us to two Hospitals to get Patients Essentia Health Virginia and Cook hospital. We brought these Patients to a variety of different Hospitals; Fairview Riverside Hospital Minneapolis, Fairview University Center Minneapolis, Fairview Range Medical Center Hibbing, St. Luke's, Essentia Health St. Mary's, Miller Dwan, and local Nursing Homes. The 9-1-1 calls brought us to six different communities; once to Iron, Twice to Britt, Embarrass, and Gilbert, four times to Mt. Iron, and the rest thirty-four calls in Virginia. These Patients were transported to either Essentia Health Virginia or to Fairview Range Medical Center in Hibbing. During this week our busiest day was Tuesday with sixteen EMS calls, the slowest was Monday with four. The number one reason for dispatch was breathing problems. We performed sixty-one procedures and administered thirty-nine medications. We treated more women (35) than men (34) with the average age being 59. During this same week last year (2015) we did fifty-two EMS calls, thirty-three 9-1-1 calls and nineteen transfers.

During this week the Fire Marshal attended the Minnesota State Fire Marshal Conference in Minneapolis and focused training on the new 2015 MN state fire code which went into effect on May 1, 2016 with most changes affecting new construction. As spring/summer camping seasons are upon us please remember to check with the MN DNR website to see burn restrictions in our area.

Unlike many natural disasters, most wildfires are caused by people—and can be prevented by people, too. Meteorologists are not yet able to forecast wildfire outbreaks, so people in fire-prone areas should plan ahead and prepare to evacuate with little notice. Here are some tips on how to prevent wildfires and what to do if you're caught in the middle of one.

How to Prevent a Wildfire

- Contact 911, your local fire department, or the park service if you notice an unattended or out-of-control fire.
- Never leave a campfire unattended. Completely extinguish the fire—by dousing it with water and stirring the ashes until cold—before sleeping or leaving the campsite.
- When camping, take care when using and fueling lanterns, stoves, and heaters. Make sure lighting and heating devices are cool before refueling. Avoid spilling flammable liquids and store fuel away from appliances.
- Do not discard cigarettes, matches, and smoking materials from moving vehicles, or anywhere on park grounds. Be certain to completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.
- Follow local ordinances when burning yard waste. Avoid backyard burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water, and fire retardant nearby to keep fires in check. Remove all flammables from yard when burning.

Evacuation Tips

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Know your evacuation route ahead of time and prepare an evacuation checklist and emergency supplies.
- Wear protective clothing and footwear to protect yourself from flying sparks and ashes.

Before You Leave, Prepare Your House

- Remove combustibles, including firewood, yard waste, barbecue grills, and fuel cans, from your yard.
- Close all windows, vents, and doors to prevent a draft.
- Shut off natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies.
- Fill any large vessels—pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, or tubs—with water to slow or discourage fire.

If Caught in a Wildfire

- Don't try to outrun the blaze. Instead, look for a body of water such as a pond or river to crouch in.
- If there is no water nearby, find a depressed, cleared area with little vegetation, lie low to the ground, and cover your body with wet clothing, a blanket, or soil. Stay low and covered until the fire passes.

- Protect your lungs by breathing air closest to the ground, through a moist cloth, if possible, to avoid inhaling smoke.

Low (Green)—Fire starts are unlikely. Weather and fuel conditions will lead to slow fire spread, low intensity and relatively easy control with light mop-up. Controlled burns can usually be executed with reasonable safety.

Moderate (Blue)—Some wildfires may be expected. Expect moderate flame length and rate of spread. Control is usually not difficult and light to moderate mop-up can be expected. Although controlled burning can be done without creating a hazard, routine caution should be taken.

High (Yellow)—Wildfires are likely. Fires in heavy, continuous fuel such as mature grassland, weed fields and forest litter, will be difficult to control under windy conditions. Control through direct attack may be difficult but possible and mop-up will be required. Outdoor burning should be restricted to early morning and late evening hours.

Very High (Orange)—Fires start easily from all causes and may spread faster than suppression resources can travel. Flame lengths will be long with high intensity, making control very difficult. Both suppression and mop-up will require an extended and very thorough effort. Outdoor burning is not recommended.

Extreme (Red)—Fires will start and spread rapidly. Every fire start has the potential to become large. Expect extreme, erratic fire behavior. **NO OUTDOOR BURNING SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN AREAS WITH EXTREME FIRE DANGER.**