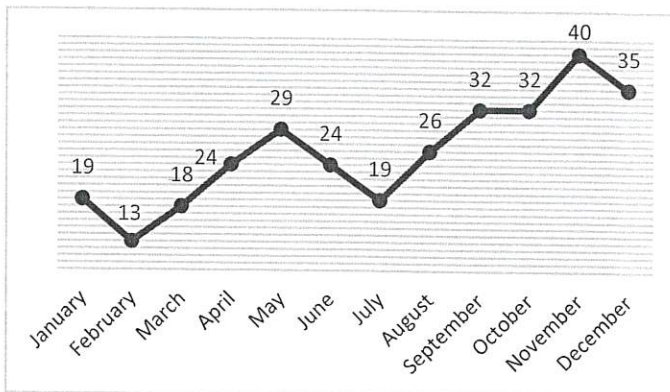




To: Honorable Mayor and Houston City Council  
 From: Christian Hartley, Fire Chief *CH*  
 Thru: Mayor Virgie Thompson *VT*  
 Subj: Fire Chief's Report – January 2022

Fire – Local	9	Fire – Aid	14
Rescue	2	Comm Service	2
EMS	7	Landing Zones	1

<b>TOTAL CALLS -</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CALLS TO DATE – 2021</b>	<b>313</b>



December was the end of the tumultuous and unpredictable year that was 2021. We will be participating in an all-departments annual report at this meeting so this report will focus solely on this month and not the year in total. There were several aid fires in Willow and West Lakes, as well as local fires. This month saw no fatalities from fire, a welcome reprieve from the last couple months.

A fire on Pick-a-Dilley Street saw a brave teenager grab a fire extinguisher while his father evacuated the home and mother dialed 9-1-1, and that teen was able to save the home. The chimney had collapsed into the home and heat and flame escaped it, igniting wall and ceiling items on fire. Because of the teen's quick actions, the home still stands. Houston firefighters ensured the fire was completely out and returned the home back to the family. Another successful fire in Houston was an ATV that caught fire in a shed directly next to a residence and heating oil tank. But a fire extinguisher and snow shovel were all we needed to extinguish the fire and remove the 4-wheeler from the shed.

The most significant call in Houston this month was a vehicle accident in which one driver was killed, a passenger seriously injured, and another driver injured. One of the vehicles involved caught fire, and crews had to split resources to fight the fire in the pickup while also extricating the patient from the SUV. From time of arrival of rescue truck, the critically injured patient was removed in only 8 minutes despite significant damage to the vehicle. Altogether from the time of the initial 9-1-1 call until the patient was loaded in an ambulance and transport initiated, only 20 minutes had past. This accident occurred in a location known to responders for its hazard, and is evidence of the need for lighting. It is a sloped turn and is often the site of accidents involving moose and other vehicles. We would strongly encourage the city to petition the State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities to increase the lighting between Cheri Lake Road and Dana Court.

At 313 calls for the year, we were one shy of tying the record for the most number of calls in Houston's history. That record is from 2014, and was only that high because at the time Houston was responding to every single ambulance call. We have since adjusted our responses to only those calls that may pose an immediate danger to health or life. To have that high of a call volume this year is very concerning, considering it continues an upward trend in our call volume for the past few years. It is common that emergencies increase during times of economic challenge, and this is just evidence of that on a local level. The only way we can address this risk is to increase public education, injury prevention, and partnership with our mutual aid departments.



