FIRE & EMS

Chief Dean Ortlieb

The Urbana Fire Division (UFD) is a 24-hour organization that responds to EMS, fire, and rescue emergencies. The division is led by a fire chief and is operational organized into three shifts, each consisting of a captain, lieutenant, and five firefighters. The captain is in charge of the crew's daily operations. The division serves the city of Urbana and surrounding areas, including all of Urbana Township and parts of Concord and Salem Townships. UFD is responsible for protecting a population of approximately 14,840 people and covering 74 square miles. At minimum manpower, the division maintains a staff of five people per day.

Mission

The mission of UFD is to establish a scalable framework that encourages excellence in fighting fires and saving lives, promotes the cultivation of intellectual and organizational profitability, maximizes individual and organizational performance, and supports continual individual and organizational growth to meet the needs of the community.

UFD aims to fulfill its mission through five dimensions of risk reduction, including minimizing negative economic impact, public education, emergency operations, safety engineering practices, and code enforcement. These efforts have resulted in an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 3 out of 9, with 1 being the highest rating. ISO uses data and analytics to evaluate fire agencies, with lower scores indicating a higher ability to manage property and casualty risks. Insurance companies may use these scores to determine insurance premiums for residential and commercial properties. There are three main obstacles to further improve the division's ISO rating:

- Capacity of having the appropriate amount of trained personnel to respond to calls within 10 minutes
- The lack of reliability of our mutual aid partners
- Growing residential and industrial risks

Personnel

Training remains a high priority for UFD, with 897 logged training hours in 2025. In addition, the following personnel have obtained individual certifications to help improve the division:

- Captain Croker: Fire Officer IV, from Bowling Green University
- Lieutenant Nitchman: Leadership in Supervision, from the Ohio Fire Academy

UFD is at full staffing with the addition of its newest Probationary Firefighter Dylan Newman. Additionally, during 2025 Firefighters Fulling and Lawton successfully completed their yearlong probationary training. Further, Firefighter Sidders was named firefighter of the year and Firefighter Perry received the division's fitness award.

Equipment

In late 2025, Medic 1 was involved in an accident and is currently undergoing evaluation for repair. Additionally, UFD is in the process of replacing Engine 2, a 2004 Pierce fire engine and Truck 1, a 1997 Pierce bucket ladder truck. In 2025 the division secured $4,785.14 in grant funding to purchase equipment that supports and enhances operational capabilities.

Operations

UFD divides its operations into three main categories and assigns each shift officer to oversee one of these areas. Captain Croker is responsible for EMS, Captain Beverly is responsible for rescue, and Captain Countryman is responsible for fire operations. On average, all three operational sectors take over 30 minutes per incident. However, some incidents may take several hours, while others may last a few minutes. To manage these incidents effectively, the division maintains minimum staffing levels of one shift officer in a command vehicle, two firefighters on EMS, and/or three firefighters on a fire apparatus.

UFD receives compensation for EMS incidents. In 2025, UFD updated its EMS billing policies by implementing a dynamic billing model based on usual and customary fees. Billing is processed through a third-party provider, and in 2025 the division received more than $700,000 in EMS revenue.

In 2025, UFD responded to 69% more incidents than in 1992, the last time the division increased its manpower. Table 1 shows a summary of UFD's operations since 1992. The population of the community served by the division has remained relatively constant over this period.

Table 1 Historic Operational Summary for the Urbana Fire Division

Incident Type	1992	2000	2010	2020	2025
EMS	1431	1564	1885	2408	2524
Rescue	N/A	145	148	130	303
Fire	396	418	515	357	256
Total Incidents	**1827**	**2127**	**2548**	**2895**	**3083**

Table 2 presents a comparison of the division's EMS, rescue, and fire incidents between 2024 and 2025. In 2025, out of a total of 2,524 EMS incidents, 1,892 involved transports, representing over a 75% transport rate.

Table 2 2024 to 2025 Division Incident Summary

Incident Type	Total Incidents		Percent of Total		Daily Average	
Year Comparison	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**
EMS	2438	2524	80%	82%	6.66	6.92
Rescue	303	303	10%	10%	.83	.83
Fire	291	256	10%	08%	.80	.70
Total Incidents	**3032**	**3083**	**100%**	**100%**	**8.29**	**8.45**
Multiple Incidents in Progress	570	594	19%	19%	1.56	1.63

Townships

UFD has contracts with several township agencies to provide services to these communities. UFD uses a service fee calculator (SFC) to calculate fees in a fair and consistent manner. If a township only requests one of the services offered, the SFC is reduced by half. These contracts with the township agencies roughly increase the population served by the division by approximately 4,000 people, accounted for 17% of all the divisions incidents, and generated an additional $471,683 in contract revenue. Table 3 compares the number of incidents in the townships from 2024 to 2025.

Table 3 2024 to 2025 Township Incident Summary

Incident Type	Urbana Township		Salem Township		Concord Township		Total Townships	
Year Comparison	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
EMS	403	360	44	39	16	24	463	423
Rescue	59	45	17	11	N/A	N/A	76	56
Fire	69	38	9	7	N/A	N/A	78	45
Total Incidents	**531**	**443**	**70**	**57**	**16**	**24**	**617**	**524**

Identified Risks Impacting Operational Capacity

UFD has identified several risks that may limit our ability to respond effectively with appropriately trained personnel and sufficient capacity during incidents:

- Urbana is experiencing upward trends in both industrial and housing growth, increasing demand on EMS, fire, and rescue resources.
- Staffing shortages of qualified personnel in mutual aid departments are reducing their reliability, which in turn increases delay in response and competency concerns upon their arrival. In 2025 the division asked for and received mutual aid 103 times and provided mutual aid 73 times.
- Current trends indicate that qualified personnel are becoming increasingly difficult to find. The division currently has five EMTs; it takes approximately 15 months to educate an EMT to become a paramedic. The trend could influence our EMS competency level or the care we provide on incidents.
- Senior communities typically result in increased demand for services. With approximately 20% of the City's population either at or nearing the senior age group, EMS demands is expected to rise.
- The NFPA staffing standard to fight a residential structure fire safely is 17 firefighters available within the first 10 minutes. The division averaged 1.63 multiple incidents in progress a day, with a minimum staffing level of just five personnel.

Risk Reduction

UFD employs various EMS and fire risk reduction measures to ensure the safety of our community. Some of these measures can be quantified and are listed in Table 4.

Table 4 2025 Summary of EMS and Fire Risk Reduction Activities

Activity	Type	Amount
CPR Cards Issued	EMS	99
Car Seats Installed	EMS	37
Community Paramedic Referrals	EMS	30
Safety Inspection	Fire	1769

Sharing Our Vision for 2026 and Beyond

In 2026, UFD plans to submit specifications for a new fire engine and ladder truck to update the age of our fleet and to enhance our operational capabilities.

Our vision for our personnel is to create and maintain a positive work environment where they take pride in their work and strive to exceed community expectations in their efforts to fight fires and save lives. Furthermore, we are actively developing and implementing contingency plans to ensure consistent core operations in EMS, fire, and rescue.