



MAY 2023 | VOL 30

# HOT TOPICS

## CHIEF'S CORNER



May 4th marks International Firefighter Day each year. This is a reminder to all of us to be thankful for the countless men and women across this globe that selflessly risk their lives every day to rescue people from the perils of smoke and fire and so many other threats. Our highly trained team combats losses from fires with skill and compassion and provides leadership in times of crisis.

Being a firefighter is a chosen calling. In order to find members that are prepared to be part of a high performing team, a department must take an active approach to attracting talent. Research shows that recruitment must start with developing a talent pipeline at a very young age. That is one of the many reasons that the Oshkosh Fire Department is so excited to partner with Read Elementary as they create a playground for their students that has a firefighting theme. We see this as a way to develop our future for generations.

May is also Mental Health Awareness month. In order to retain our firefighters we must also be attentive to their mental wellbeing just as we are with their physical wellbeing. We are fortunate that we have such a dedicated peer-support team of firefighters who care and provide support to their colleagues to help them navigate the stresses of a career in emergency services. They are the definition of the brotherhood and sisterhood that makes the fire service great.

Thank you to the members of the Oshkosh Fire Department who provide exceptional Fire, Rescue, and EMS capabilities to our community. It is you that makes this the best fire department there is.

--Chief Mike Stanley



## PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

by Jennifer Skolaski, PhD

Read Elementary School is a diverse Kindergarten through 5th grade neighborhood school in Oshkosh. Read has 378 students, the only school growing in enrollment during the 22-2023 school year. 53.5% of the student population are students of color pulling from the large refugee community in Oshkosh, and 62% of kids are economically disadvantaged. Read goes beyond meeting the needs of its students to support families, and is an integral part of the community and the surrounding neighborhoods. With a larger number of students in the school, increased number of kids with social, emotional, and behavioral issues, and increased trauma and mental health crises, a team of parents, community members, and staff are looking to create a new and updated public play space that can help address many of these needs.

The Oshkosh Fire Department is partnering with Read Elementary School because of their challenges with current fire safety protocol, opportunities to increase fire prevention strategies in student homes, build relationships between first responders and students, and create employment opportunities for kids in the future.

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## PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP: READ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PILOT

(Continued from page 1)

Currently, the fire department industry is lacking women and people of color, even though there are plenty of job openings. Research notes the importance of exposing kids to potential job opportunities at an early age, so when kids play on a fire truck or help "fix" parts of the truck daily, we can help shape a new generation of firefighters and fire truck manufacturers. In this new space, any kid in Oshkosh or traveling to our community can dream of becoming a firefighter because the new playground is fire themed!

As part of this partnership, Oshkosh Fire Department will:

- Create a video on how to safely play on playgrounds (which also can be used at other parks and playgrounds to teach kids safe playing).
- Work with students on quicker response to fire evacuation both in the school and at home.
- Teach kids other fire prevention strategies that can be used at home.
- Read with students monthly to promote literacy and build relationships.
- Have lunch with students monthly to continue to break the silos between first responders and kids in our community.

This playground will create an alternative safe place for students, a place for kids to socially connect and use their imagination, a place to address the physical and mental wellbeing of students while reducing trauma, and a place that can bring pride to the surrounding neighborhood while creating stronger partnerships between school and community. With Read being a high poverty school, the team knows that raising funds from families is not realistic. They are asking for support from the community with a financial goal of \$450,000 (with \$376,419 already been raised), and a timeline of raising enough funds to break ground in summer of 2023.

You can contribute to this campaign by making a tax deductible donation to the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation (230 Ohio Street, Ste. 100, Oshkosh, WI, 54902), in the memo line please write "Read Elementary Playground Fund," or online at <https://www.oshkoshareacf.org/donate/> and find "Read Elementary Playground Fund" under Fund Title. For more information go to [www.readplayground.com](http://www.readplayground.com) or for questions contact: [build@readplayground.com](mailto:build@readplayground.com).

As firefighters you may have seen your fair share of burnt-out playgrounds, but with the help of Oshkosh Fire Department and this new playground at Read Elementary School, we can save the day and give these kids the playground of their dreams! Seeing those smiling faces light up like a five-alarm fire will be a reward hotter than any blaze you've ever fought. Let's put out the fire of outdated playgrounds and bring in a new era of safety and fun!

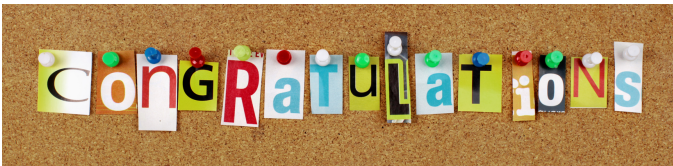


## WHAT'S NEW

At the Police and Fire Commission meeting on May 2, three Oshkosh Fire Department members were promoted:

- Bret Krajnik promoted to Captain;
- Mike Wos promoted to Lieutenant; and
- Jamie Campbell promoted to Equipment Operator.

Congratulations to all three! Best wishes in your new positions effective June 4th!



## RECRUIT ACADEMY GRADUATES

Congratulations to the graduates of our latest Recruit Academy:

- Andrew Browning. He will be working on Med 16 B Shift.
- Eric Theel. He will be working on Med 16 A Shift.

Both probationary paramedic/firefighters were joined by friends and family members at a recent graduation ceremony.



## WHAT'S NEW

April 17 was a historic day for the Oshkosh Fire Department. For the first time in our 167 year history and in the 47 years we have been operating ambulances, we have never had a unit completely staffed by female firefighters.

Megan Klansky and Ashley Engeldinger are staffing M15. They are two of our highly skilled, compassionate, and dedicated firefighter/paramedics. The community is in great hands! Congratulations to them both for adding to our history and being role models to other young women in our community.



Left to right: Firefighter/paramedics Megan Klansky & Ashley Engeldinger.



Thank you to the Oshkosh Area Women's Association (OAWA) for their generous donation! Every year the OAWA holds a fashion show to generate money which is then donated to help local non-profits. Last year OFD was one of the selected organizations.

OFD purchased 8 manikins which we will use to train community members how to perform CPR. The manikins have technology that tells the trainee if they are making compressions at the right place, the right speed and the right depth.





# EMS WEEK

Where **Emergency Care** Begins

May 21-27, 2023

This year, the 49th annual National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week is being held May 21-27. Since 1974 we have celebrated EMS practitioners and the important work they do in our community. This year's theme is: "Where Emergency Care Begins". The goal is to ensure that the important contributions of EMS practitioners in safeguarding the health, safety and well-being of their communities are fully celebrated and recognized. During EMS Week there are theme days to put the focus on different, vital topics.

## **Sunday - Health, Wellness and Resilience Day**

Today's a good day to focus on mental health for both EMS providers and the public in general. Take some time for a little self-care. Do something nice just for yourself today.

## **Monday - EMS Education Day**

At this time of the year, OFD is very involved with injury prevention education in the schools. We provide Summer Safety programs to all of the local elementary schools. Topics include: burn prevention, vehicle, bike, and water safety.

## **Tuesday - Safety Tuesday**

Take some time today to discuss safety topics with your family. Practice your home fire escape plan or your severe weather plan. You do have them don't you? If not, today's a great day to create your plan.

## **Wednesday - EMS for Children Day**

This is the day we focus on protecting our most vulnerable. Make sure your child is restrained properly in your vehicle, purchase bike helmets (for you as well), discuss pedestrian safety in your neighborhood, etc.

## **Thursday - Save-A-Life Day**

Check out how to do hands-only CPR on-line. Make sure you have an updated first aid kit in your home. Make that appointment for any medical procedure or doctor visit you've been putting off.

## **Friday - EMS Recognition Day**

It takes a team to provide excellent care. The paramedic/firefighters are grateful to have wonderful partners at the emergency departments of our local hospitals. And, we couldn't do what we do without the hard work and dedication of the dispatchers at the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office.

### **Our Mission**

The City of Oshkosh Fire Department is a highly trained team that adds value to our community by providing a wide range of emergency services with skill and compassion. We advocate risk reduction through prevention and education, and we provide leadership in times of crisis.

# DON'T BE IN THE DARK ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO PREVENT FALLS

FALLS ARE NOT A NORMAL PART OF  
AGING. RESEARCH SHOWS STRENGTH AND  
BALANCE TRAINING CAN HELP PREVENT  
YOU FROM FALLING.

The statistics are sobering every 11  
seconds; an older adult somewhere in  
the U.S. is admitted to an Emergency  
Department for a fall.

The Oshkosh Seniors Center and the  
Oshkosh Fire Department want you  
to **light up** your home for safety and  
become more knowledgeable about fall  
prevention. The first 200 people to  
schedule and complete a FREE balance  
test at the Oshkosh Seniors Center will  
receive information on fall prevention  
and a three-pack of motion sensor lights.

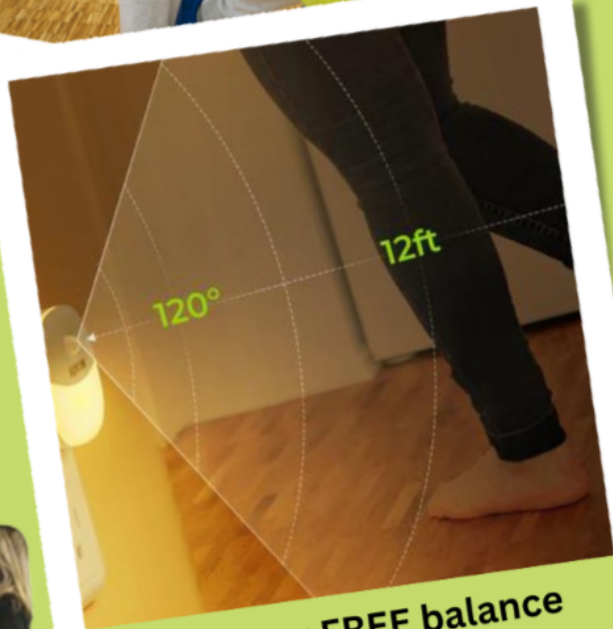
The test will help you determine your  
personal risk for falling. Exercise and  
making safety changes in your home are  
great strategies to avoid falling.

SCHEDULE YOUR  
APPOINTMENT TODAY  
WITH THE OSHKOSH  
SENIORS CENTER

📞 920-232-5300



Program possible through a grant from  
Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging



Get your **FREE** balance  
test and 3 motion lights  
for safety.





# FIRE HAZARD: POTTING SOIL ... REALLY?

by John Holland, Public Education Specialist

Here's a fire hazard that most people are unaware of—potting soil. It's true. Most of them are caused by people using a potted plant as an ashtray when they smoke outside. However, potting soil itself can ignite if it's allowed to dry out, especially in direct sunlight. We've even had a few fires right here in Oshkosh that were more than likely started by potting soil and quite a few when potted plants were used to dispose of finished cigarettes. In fact, I had a mystery melted spot on a plastic pot on my deck last year.

The reason potting soil is so flammable is because there is very little dirt in it. It consists mainly of: shredded wood, bark, peat moss, styrofoam pellets and vermiculite. While these products allow for moisture retention when they're wet, when they dry out they become extremely flammable.

So what can you do to prevent a potting soil fire at your home?

- First and foremost, never use a potted plant as an ashtray.
- If you have smokers who smoke outside provide a non-combustible ashtray (not plastic or wood).
- Use clay pots instead of plastic or wood. They are much better at containing any fires that might occur.
- Maintain planters, keeping plants fresh and watered.
- Check on them during hot and sunny weather.
- Avoid letting potting soil go completely dry.
- Discard any dead plants as soon as you can.
- Don't put potted plants near anything that is combustible.
- Don't store bags of potting soil in direct sunlight.

Granted, the chance of the spontaneous combustion of potting soil is relatively low. However, if a potted plant is allowed to dry out and something hot is placed in it, such as a cigarette, a fire becomes much more likely. So this spring as you return your potted plants outside use a little extra care on placement, keeping them watered, and never use one as an ashtray.



# LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY

by John Holland, Public Education Specialist

Did you know that Lithium-Ion batteries can cause fires or even explode? These batteries are in many of the things we use on a daily basis: cell phones, laptops, power tools, cars, toys, and battery packs for a variety of devices. If you've ordered any of the above online you might've noticed the warning label attached to the box.

Here in Oshkosh we've had fires caused by these batteries overheating in a hover board, power tool and a charging battery pack.



## SIGNS OF A PROBLEM

Stop using the battery if you notice these problems: unusual odor, change of color, increased heat, change in shape, leaking, or odd noises. If any of these occur, stop using the device and if it's safe to do so, move the device away from anything that can catch on fire. Call 9-1-1.

## TO AVOID THESE FIRES

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Only use the battery that is designed for that device.
- Do not charge any devices on a bed, couch, or anything that can easily catch fire.
- Do not overcharge.
- Avoid after-market batteries or chargers.
- Keep the batteries and devices at room temperature when possible.
- Store the batteries and devices away from anything that can catch fire.
- Do not use the device if the battery looks damaged.

## BATTERY DISPOSAL

Do not put lithium-ion batteries in the trash. Take them to a battery recycling location. In Winnebago County they can be dropped off free of charge at the **Winnebago County Solid Waste Facility, 100 County Road Y**. Hours are Monday through Friday 7 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. ; Saturday 7:00 a.m. - noon.



# APRIL MONTHLY METRICS

by MJ VanGompel, Management Analyst

Emergency Medical  
Services



700

Motor Vehicle Accidents



18

Structure Fires



14

Falls



159

Inspections



196

Overdoses



7

LET'S CONNECT

