

Evolution of the Nottawa-Sherman Fire Department 1979-2014 *(Draft Copy)*

Category	1979	2014
Station Facilities	4 bays, meeting room/kitchen, 1 bathroom	9 bays, 2 offices, 2 meeting rooms, kitchen, laundry/utility, 2 bathrooms, EMS ready room, air/oxygen cascade system & compressor room, storeroom, tool room, a large diesel powered generator for emergency power and a permanent barbeque grill with a covered picnic area.
Apparatus	2 tankers (tenders), 2 engines, 1 Jeep brush rig; no diesel engines & all had manual shift transmissions.	2 tenders, 2 engines, 4x4 ¾ T pickup utility/grass, 4x4 ATV grass/rescue, 6x6 2 ½ T military grass/brush, heavy rescue w/cascade air, 4x4 ¾T light rescue; only 3 have gasoline engines; only 1 (the 6x6) has a manual transmission.
Truck maintenance & modification	NSFD personnel performed nearly all maintenance, modification & fabrication of fire department vehicles & equipment.	NSFD personnel only perform minor maintenance on vehicles (washing, bulb replacement, fluid checks, etc.), all modifications, major repairs & fluid changes are performed by licensed professionals.
Fire Fighting Equipment (individual)	Helmet, rubber gloves, rubber coat, rubber hip boots Total Cost: \$500-\$800 per firefighter	Every NSFD firefighter is issued a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) approved structural firefighting helmet, Nomex hood, turnout coat, bunker pants, leather boots, leather gloves, a helmet light, a hand-held flashlight & a personally fitted SCBA mask (w/ prescription glasses if necessary); NFPA approved Nomex wild land firefighting coveralls, helmet & goggles; NFPA approved Nomex extrication coveralls & extrication gloves. Total Cost: \$3,000-\$3500 per firefighter.
Water Supply	5,200 gallons hauled in 2 tank trucks, 1,000 gallons on the engine with the tankers being refilled by drafting from streams, ponds,	7,000 gallons hauled in 2 tenders, 980 gallons on the engine with the tenders being refilled by drafting from streams, ponds, lakes,

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	lakes, swimming pools, etc.	swimming pools, etc. Over 1,000 feet of 6” hose for relaying water from a supply engine to the fire suppression engine; dry hydrants installed at strategic locations within four townships and the Village of Lake Isabella; automatic dispatch of mutual aid from neighboring fire departments for all major structure fires;
Medical equipment	Our medical supplies consisted of a 1 st aid kit & and a compressed oxygen powered resuscitator located on the main engine.	The NSFD 4x4, ¾T Yukon light rescue vehicle is loaded with the hundreds of medical items required for the performance of Medical First Responder tasks. Rubber gloves, safety glasses, mouth-to-mouth barrier devices, trauma coveralls/gowns & surgical masks are required pieces of equipment that we take to every scene. As a minimum, we now “glove up” and wear eye protection on every medical or trauma incident. The heavy rescue (a large, diesel powered box truck) carries a full complement of MFR level medical response equipment, water rescue equipment (including ice/water rescue gear), hydraulic extrication equipment and a cascade system for refilling SCBA bottles.
SCBAs (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus)	We had only two, in carrying cases; they were rarely used except in rescue attempts; we only had 4 spare bottles and no on-scene refill capability.	20-25 SCBAs; 20-25 spare bottles; individual masks assigned to each member; mobile cascade refilling station in our heavy rescue vehicle.
Communications Equipment	Truck radios, no 911 system, no pagers, no county VHF radio repeater system, all fire departments operated on a single state fire radio frequency	County-wide 911 system, multiple operating frequencies, including a county-wide VHF repeater system; a proprietary NSFD frequency pair for use with our own 150’ tower and VHF repeater system; 12-16 hand-held transceivers for officers and scene

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		operations; fax machine (receives run details from dispatch); cell phone dispatch for officers;
Fire Suppression Foam	Foam concentrate was introduced into the fire suppression water via a separate in-line external eductor; mostly used on petroleum product fires.	Class A, only via internal eductor on our main engine; externally mounted eductor on our 2½ T brush grass/truck & separate in-line eductor on our secondary engine.
Required Training	Firefighter I & CPR only. (A total of about 70 hours of a volunteer’s time.)	Firefighter I & II w/ HAZMAT certification classes; Medical First Responder (MFR) licensure class; (A total of about 350-375 hours of <u>unpaid</u> class time.) All NSFD members are required to attend approximately 24 hours of firefighter training and 24 hours of medical training every year. Medical First Responders are required to provide proof of completing 18 Continuing Education Units every 3 years (30-45 for EMTs) in order to renew their license to practice emergency medicine commensurate with their level of training.
Hazards	Normal firefighting hazards (e.g., building collapse, becoming trapped in a burning building, burns, nail punctures, broken bones and/or joints, smoke inhalation, heat exhaustion and/or stroke,) and vehicular accident hazards (e.g., lacerations, flammable liquids, hot liquids, infectious fluids & secretions).	Normal firefighting & vehicular accident hazards as listed to the left, plus : increased risk of infection by blood borne pathogens (e.g., Hepatitis, AIDS), injury from meth lab chemicals, suicidal subjects or violent subjects; increased risk of exposure to tuberculosis pathogens & influenza pathogens
Event notification	An ICSD dispatcher provided notification via “fire phones”, the external station siren could be activated by anyone	No external station siren. All personnel are now dispatched via personal pagers, run information is transmitted to our station fax machine soon after the pager activation occurs. Some personnel are allowed to receive run notifications, information & map

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Event Types	Fires, accidents, heart attacks, ice skating rinks, swimming pool filling, cat rescues, parades, community Halloween & Christmas activities, annual auction fundraiser.	images via their cell phones. Fires, accidents, all medical emergencies, parades, carbon monoxide alarms, medical alert alarms, hydrocarbon (& skunk) odors, fuel leaks, down or sparking power lines, illegal burns, tornado watch conditions, community Halloween & Christmas activities, annual auction fundraiser.
Mutual Aid	Rarely were other departments called for assistance.	Every Isabella County rural department routinely requests mutual aid from at least one other department during a major structure fire. Mutual aid agreements are critical to our mission performance because there are days when we don't have enough NSFD firefighters available to even get all of our trucks to the scene.
Initial Attack	Usually, one team w/ 300 foot long 1" high pressure rubber hose; no foam capability; no SCBAs; 1 ½" & 2" hoses and a deluge gun were available.	Usually, two teams (using SCBAs) w/ 1¾" foam capable lines, 2 additional foam lines (1½" & 2") available along with additional non-foam lines (1½" & 2") and a deluge gun. The smallest hose we use on structure fires now is a 1.75" inside diameter line which delivers 3 times the volume of water of a 1" line (and weighs 3 times as much when full!).
Fire Investigation	Very limited; conducted only by the primary department responsible for extinguishment.	Fire investigation is often relegated to the Isabella County Cause & Origin team, consisting of members from several departments. The ICCO team members have all had extensive state sponsored training in the techniques necessary to determine the cause & origin of fires.

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Response Restrictions	None; the first firefighter to the station would immediately get en route to the scene with the main engine (or the grass rig).	Policy requires at least 2 personnel per vehicle, 4 in 11-3 when personnel are available.
Response in POVs	Many firefighters drove their vehicles directly to the scene. Most carried their gear in their vehicle.	All non-officers respond to the station.
Officer Response	All available officers responded to every scene.	Officer response is limited on medical and mutual aid runs.
Firefighter Response	All volunteers responded pretty consistently with no restrictions on the numbers responding.	<u>Very</u> frequently, we have only one or two people available to respond during normal daylight working hours. Our only mandatory duty schedule is from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. where response to medical runs is restricted (by the fire board) to seven first responders (including 2 command officers). During evening hours, we have a consistent response by 75%; sporadic response by the rest.
Incident Command	An officer was always in command.	Incident command system training is part of required training for Michigan firefighters. Any NSFD firefighter can be an incident commander (theoretically).
Membership Composition	All were local working men, including many local businessmen; no women.	Many of our members work outside our county. Only three members are local business owners; one is out of town most days; another often cannot leave his business when we are paged out.
Community Mindset	Employer's generally cooperated and released employees w/ no penalty to the employee.	Only one of our non-businessman members is allowed to leave his job to respond to fires.
Member Resident Status	Fairly even balance of members from both Nottawa & Sherman Townships	3 of our members live in Nottawa Township (2 in Weidman); 5 live in Coldwater Township; 1 lives in Gilmore Township; 14 live in Sherman Township.

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Officer Selection	All officers were elected by members; completion of officer classes was not mandatory.	Appointed by the joint fire board; command officers are now required to be fully certified with the State of Michigan Fire Fighter Council.
Wages/Benefits/Compensation	All the steak we could eat once a year lots of soft drinks & an occasional alcoholic beverage. We were truly volunteer firefighters.	Realistically, we are now a “part-time, paid” department even though we are paid a flat fee (not hourly). The 2014 Rate: \$15/fire runs & accidents; \$13/medical runs & scheduled meetings (& some special events, some work details.) (Neighboring “volunteer” departments pay as much as \$18/hour, depending on training level and attendance.) All NSFD members are enrolled in a very meager retirement program. We still get the all-you-can-eat steak dinner w/ soft drinks; no alcoholic beverages.
Budget & Expenditures	Very “transparent”; monthly membership input & oversight.	No transparency; very little membership input; no oversight.
Meetings	One monthly meeting for everything.	Monthly maintenance/business meeting; monthly medical training meeting; monthly firefighter training meeting; occasional extra training meetings.
Fund Raisers	An annual auction was held in one of the two Weidman taverns.	An annual auction held in the community building, an annual breakfast held at the fire station, an annual golf outing held at The Pines golf course.
Firefighter’s Association (NSFA)	The NSFA didn’t exist, yet.	A non-profit association comprised of all NSFD members with a mission of raising money for equipment (fire & medical), a scholarship program and several other community service grants.
Written Policies	Non-existent or unavailable to members.	The NSFD now has a set of 60 or more policies that use up close to 200 sheets of

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		<p>paper when printed out. In addition, we are now governed by State of Michigan Medical Protocols, a 250 page document. The thousands of pages of recommendations published by the National Fire Protection Association are now considered to have the authority of laws.</p>
Alcohol Policy	<p>Each firefighter was allowed to judge his own level of alcoholic impairment. Alcoholic beverages were on hand at the fire station 24/7 and sometimes appeared at the scene of a fire.</p>	<p>NSFD has an unwritten (Chief’s verbal) “zero tolerance” policy that prohibits members from responding if they have had 1 or more alcoholic drinks within 8 (?) hours of the event.</p>
Tobacco Policy	<p>Any kind, any time, any place.</p>	<p>NSFD has an unwritten (Chief’s verbal) “zero tolerance” policy that prohibits members from using any form of tobacco product on scenes and inside the station.</p>