

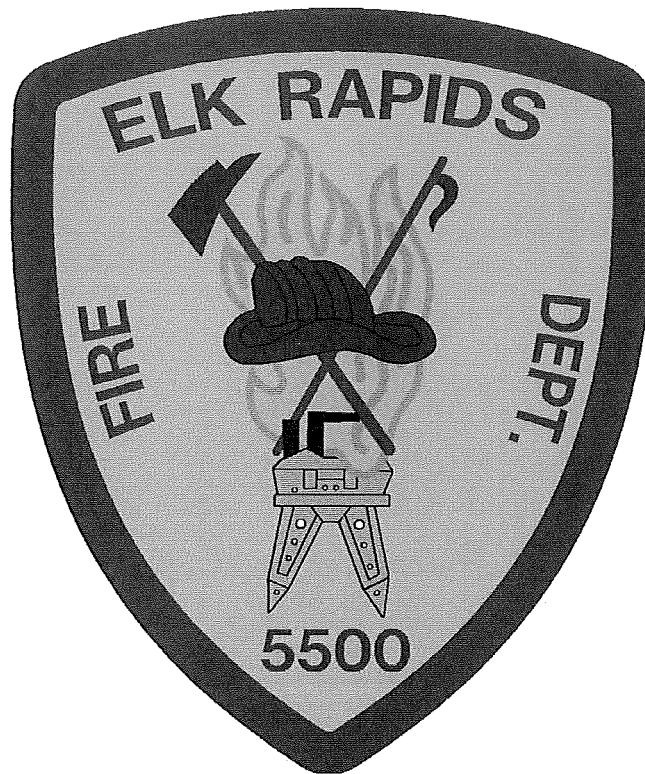
# Elk Rapids Township Fire Department

P.O. Box 502, 209 Bridge St.

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## 2025 Annual Report

### **Elk Rapids Fire Department Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Elk Rapids Fire Department is to provide exceptional fire suppression and rescue services, promote public education and fire safety, and to protect life, health, property, and the community under the provisions of Michigan Public Act 207.

# Message from the Chief

Enclosed is the Elk Rapids Township Fire Department's 2025 Annual Report. On behalf of the men and women of the department, we thank our community for your continued support throughout the years. Our department is comprised of dedicated individuals who are committed to enhancing the safety and quality of life of the residents of Elk Rapids Township. This report cannot possibly capture all of the individual efforts given throughout the year but it does represent an overview of the department's accomplishments for 2025.

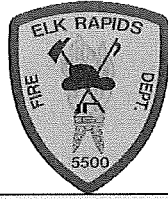
I want to thank the community for its continued proactive approach and overall awareness of public safety and bringing that to the forefront by participating in the programs that we offer. Our Smoke Alarm program continues to grow in 2025. To date we have installed over 170 smoke detectors in Elk Rapids area homes. ERFD will come out to your home, at no cost to the home owner and test or install or replace smoke alarms if applicable. Our goal is to ensure that every home has working smoke alarms. We also have an active Knox Box rapid entry system program with over 35 business and residences choosing to participate. We would also like to thank those businesses that allowed us to come in and perform Pre-Incident planning evaluations to better be prepared in the event of an emergency at their place of business. We currently have 126 businesses participating in the program.

A new service we added to the community is that of installing Car seats. ERFD now has 2 Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians on staff. This certification is extremely difficult with many potential candidates not able to pass the class on the first attempt. ERFD is the ONLY Fire Department in Antrim County able to offer this service. To date we have inspected and installed over 30 car seats. We are committed to keeping the little ones in our community safe! Just call the station to set up and appointment if you would like us to help make sure the seat is installed correctly.

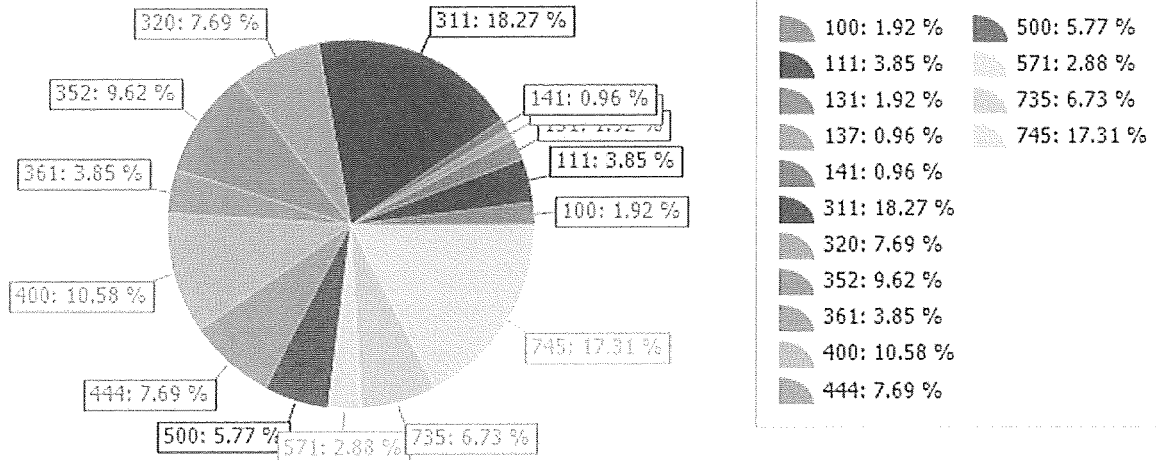
The big news for 2025 is the replacement of our aging Tanker truck. Our Truck committee has completed the process of replacing our tanker with a new 3000-gallon pumper- tanker from Spencer Fire Apparatus in South Haven Michigan. The new truck has a 3000-gallon water capacity along with a 1250 gallon per minute pump ( the old one did not have a pump). This new truck gives us the ability to better react to emergency situations and provide more efficient mutual aid with our neighboring fire departments. We are very excited to have a truck made in Michigan! This new Tanker / Pumper will also allow us to better interact with our mutual aid partners and allow better efficiency at structure fires. This will also enhance our ISO rating which helps keep home insurance rates lower in our area. I would like to give a huge shout out to our truck replacement committee who spent many extra hours over the last 2 years going over every detail of the new truck to ensure we got the replacement we needed and wanted. Capt. Vince Cooper, Lt. Joe Fischer, FF Zack Strine, and FF Shawn Fitzgerald. Congrats and great job!

ERFD also replaced our Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus or SCBA for the department. Our old packs were at the end of their service life. We now use and lighter and higher capacity (4500 PSI vs 2216 PSI ) bottles and it also allow us to better interact with our mutual aid partners. We also upgraded our air filling compressor at the station to be able to refill the new bottles.

As you will read further in this report, ERFD responded to a total of 102 incidents in 2025. This was down slightly over 2024 (114) however, the majority of the decrease increase came from a lack of severe weather events which is ok with us. We are very happy to report an 8.33-minute average response time for Emergent incidents within our Township. Just over 8 minutes for a volunteer department in a rural setting is quite impressive! ERFD also averaged a 6.40 personnel response rate to incidents and that includes daytime runs during regular business hours. Again, very impressive for a small-town volunteer department! Daytime EMS assist calls were 8 this year with 19 additional general calls for our members to assist our EMS service. A new software program for incident reporting was installed that will give us a better snapshot of our call volume for the year and make NFIRS and ISO reporting much simpler. A huge shout out to our members for their dedication and response effort.



## Incident Reports by Incident Type, Summary



### Incident Type

### Total Incident

Incident Type	Total	Percentage
100 - Fire, other	2	1.92 %
111 - Building fire	4	3.85 %
131 - Passenger vehicle fire	2	1.92 %
137 - Camper or recreational vehicle (RV) fire	1	0.96 %
141 - Forest, woods or wildland fire	1	0.96 %
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	19	18.27 %
320 - Emergency medical service incident, other	8	7.69 %
352 - Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle	10	9.62 %
361 - Swimming/recreational water areas rescue	4	3.85 %
400 - Hazardous condition, other	11	10.58 %
444 - Power line down	8	7.69 %
500 - Service Call, other	6	5.77 %
571 - Cover assignment, standby, move up	3	2.88 %
735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	7	6.73 %
745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	18	17.31 %

# Elk Rapids Fire Department

## Run Summary- 2025

Description	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Elk Rapids Township	55	56	38	45	44
Elk Rapids Village	57	73	66	51	45
Acme Township	0	1	0	1	0
Milton Township	3	7	5	4	8
Torch Township	2	1	1	0	1
Whitewater Township	3	5	4	7	4
Other Mutual Aid	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>102</b>
111 Structure Fire	5	9	5	2	4
131 Vehicle Fire	2	0	1	2	3
141 Grass / Woods Fire	4	3	0	5	2
100 Other Fire	3	3	5	3	2
311 EMS Assist	17	11	5	12	19
320 EMS Daytime Assist	28	35	28	15	8
352 Rescue, Auto Accident	19	14	19	9	10
361 Water or Ice Rescue	4	1	3	4	4
Rescue, Other	3	1	0	0	0
444 Electrical Hazard	5	18	1	3	8
400 Hazardous Condition, Other	9	17	16	11	11
561 Complaint, Investigation	0	3	1	1	1
500 Service Call, Roadway Hazard	6	14	64	5	6
571 Cover - Standby- Move Up					2
732 Fire Alarm: Malicious False	0	0	0	1	0
735 Fire Alarm: System Malfunction	14	6	5	8	7
745 Fire Alarm: Unintentional	2	9	5	13	16

Harbor Days activities were pretty much back to normal with another great fireworks show. MMR (our Ambulance provider ) supplied additional personnel to ensure everyone was well cared for. Evenings on River Street were well attended and several area Fire Department's participated. Some outdoor events went on as usual such as our Halloween event with MMR and Lakeland Elementary Trunk or Treat. ERFD also presented fire-prevention/ education programs at Lakeland Elementary

and Wooden Pony Pre Schools. All these events give us an opportunity to educate the public on fire safety, speak to the public about being a fire fighter and promoting the department. The members are very proud to serve and reach out to the community promoting fire safety.

We have also added 2 more firefighters certified to level 1 & 2 along with the Haz Mat certification.

I am very proud of the members of this department and appreciate all the time and dedication these fine men and women have put in. We have a great team here and are proud to be your fire department. We appreciate the continued support and stand ready to serve our community.

**The Elk Rapids Township Fire Department operates  
with the following Chain of Command.**

Fire Chief – Ken Williamson - CPST

Deputy Chief – Chris White

Captain – Vince Cooper

1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and Safety Officer – Joe Fischer - CPST

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and Equipment Officer – Tony Jones

**Personnel – 2025**

Loretta Burfiend – Joined 2013- FF I & II, FO II, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR, EMR  
Nicholas Carpenter - Joined 2001- FF I & II, FO III, Fire Instructor 2 Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR  
Kyle Clark - Joined 2015 - FF II, FO II, Haz Ops, A-Ext – WR, BNA  
Vincent Cooper – Captain - Joined 2009 - FF II, FO II, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR, EMR  
Joe Fischer — 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant - Joined 2009 - FF II, FO II, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR – C P S T  
Shawn Fitzgerald -Joined 2000 - FF II, FO III, Fire Instructor 1, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR,  
Russell Fryske – Joined 2023 - FF II, Haz OPs, A-Ext , WR, EMT  
David Gildersleeve – Joined 2011 - FF I & II, FO III, Fire Instructor 1, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR  
Neil Harris – Joined 2018- Firefighter I & II – Hazmat ops. WR  
Tony Jones – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant - Joined 2018 – FF I & II – Hazmat - AW, WR  
Brian Lark – Joined 2023 – FF I & II + HAZMAT certified.  
Kelly Lark – Joined 2023 – FF I & II+ HAZMAT certified.  
Donald Marker – Joined 1978 - FF I, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR  
Rafael Medina - Joined 2013- FF I & II, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR  
Robert Shugart - Joined 2016- FF I & II, FO III, Fire Instructor 1, VFIS - Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR  
Zack Strine - Joined 2016- FF I & II, Haz OPs, A-Ext , WR, EMT – Instructor 1  
Phillip Vandenberg – Joined 2011- FF I & II, FO II, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR  
Christopher White – Deputy Chief, Joined 2009 - FF I & II, FO II, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR, EMR  
Rick Whisler –Joined 2022 – Firefighter I & II –Haz-Mat Ops.  
Ken Williamson - Chief, Joined 1990 – FF II, FO III, Haz Ops, A-Ext, WR, EMR CPST

**KEY:** FF I = Fire fighter one - FF II = Fire fighter two, FO I = Fire officer one, FO II = Fire officer two, FO III = Fire officer three, CO – Company Officer, Haz Aw= Hazmat Awareness Haz Ops – Hazmat Operations, A-Ext = Advanced Extrication, EMT = Emergency Medical Technician, EMR= Emergency Medical Responder, WR = Water Rescue CPST = Child Passenger Safety Technician

### **Experience Level of 20 Staff :**

1 year or less experience: 0 members = 0%  
1 – 5 years' experience: 6 members = 32%  
6 – 10 years' experience: 8 members = 40%  
11 – 15 years' experience: 3 members = 15%  
16 – years and over experience: 3 members = 15%

### **Current Employee Age Range:**

21 Under: 0= 0%  
22-29: 3 =18%  
30-39: 2 = 12%  
40-49: 7= 32%  
50-59: 1 = 6%  
60 + 7 = 32%

## **Recruitment & Retention**

ERFD is happy to report the addition of 2 new certified Firefighters to our ranks in 2025. Our roster is at 20 members. Volunteer firefighter numbers are falling to critical levels across the nation. Finding new personnel is an ongoing process and attracting new members will continue to be a major focus and challenge going forward. State and Federal Laws are ever changing making it very difficult to attract and retain members. 32% of our members are over 60 years of age. The demographics and housing situation in our Township makes it extremely difficult to attract new members. In 2018 Elk Rapids Fire Department started a Recruitment / Retention retirement incentive program. In 2025 Elk Rapids Township paid \$13,500.00 to 12 members who qualified to receive the retirement incentive. Elk Rapids Fire Department is working hard to recruit new and retain its current members. We have a great team here at ERFD and a very supportive community. If you are, or know of anyone who may be interested in joining the department please have them contact us.

## **Department Training**

Training is the utmost of importance for our agency to thrive. It fosters teamwork and guides us in honing our skills and learning new tactics. The more we train the more we are able to perform our core goals of Life Safety, Incident Stabilization, and Property Conservation. The department continues to strive to train all of our personnel to NFPA, MIOSHA, and Training Council Standards. We continue to make this department be the best it can be and provide the best service we can to our community that we serve.

Our training policy requires members to meet a minimum of 35 training hours on an annual basis. ERFD had over 710 hours of training this past year. This year our training topics covered several key areas: Pump operations, Roof Ventilation / Chain Saw Operations, SCBA, RIT, Tactical Set-ups, Water / Ice Rescue, Extrication, Ladders, Hazmat, Incident Command and Radio Procedures.

## Mutual Aid

We provide mutual aid services to Milton, Whitewater, and Torch Lake Townships on a regular basis and occasionally Grand Traverse Metro Fire and the United States Coast Guard.

We still have an automatic aid agreement with Milton and Torch Lake Townships for Structure Fire responses within Elk Rapids, Milton and Torch Lake Townships. This ensures a 3-station response to all structure fires that occur within the 3 Townships. We provided mutual aid times last year.

The following is a breakdown of Mutual Aid Responses for 2025:

Torch Lake Township Fire Dept. - 1  
Milton Township Fire Dept. - 5  
Whitewater Township Fire Department- 4  
Grand Traverse Metro Fire – 1

The Fire Chiefs from Elk Rapids, Milton and Torch Lake try to meet several times per year to find ways for the three departments to continue to work together, interoperate better and be more proficient. The three departments have adapted various ways to meet these goals. Training together several times per year helps keep the inter-departmental communication flowing smoothly.

## Grants and Donations:

ERFD has been very fortunate in the past receiving grants and donations from many sources such as Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, The Department of Natural Resources, Mobile Medical Response and The Elk Rapids Rotary as well as some private donations. ERFD did apply and was awarded 10K from the S O M Fire Equipment Grant fund.

## ISO

The Insurance Services Office or ISO is an insurance industry driven organization that collects information on municipal fire protection efforts in communities throughout the United States. This information is collected and distributed approximately every five years or so. In each of these communities ISO analyzes data such as response times, available water supply, available manpower, age and type of equipment, department records and number of fire stations in comparison to response area. They then assign a Public Protection Classification from 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program doesn't meet ISO's minimum criteria. This number rating system is used by most insurance companies to determine rates charged to customers based upon the community they live in.

ISO looks at 3 main areas when calculating scores to come up with the final overall rating. The Village and Township are rated separately due mainly to the available water supply and the ability to provide adequate water flows for a period of time. In the Village the first area of importance is to determine the community's ability to provide adequate water supply. The Village has the advantage of Fire Hydrants whereas you have to transport water to areas outside the Village (Township) for fire suppression. Our Department of Public Works provides the water supply for the Village area thru its system of Fire Hydrants and the Water Tower for storage. The testing and tracking of water flow capabilities are paramount to being able to provide sufficient water supplies to structure fire

incidents. This information accounts for 40% of the overall score. The second part is to look at the Fire Department as a whole with special focus on records of the department. Response times, training records, maintenance records, apparatus capabilities and equipment are all evaluated. The Fire Department section makes up another 40% of the score. The addition of our new Pumper tanker along with better tracking of our training should result in better scores on the Fire Department side. They also look at the Communications Center (911) and evaluate how a department is dispatched for emergencies, this accounts for 20% of the overall score. Each section is evaluated on a point system. ERFD had the most recent survey done in 2024, the last one was in 2018. Our ISO rating is currently 6 in the Village and 7 in the Township. The community unfortunately did lose some ground on the last survey and we are working hard to mitigate the higher score.

## Elk Rapids Fire Fighter's Association

The fire fighter's association is made up of members of the fire department. The association supports the fire department throughout the year in various capacities. A portion of each firefighter's run pay is donated to the association and this funds our monthly business meetings, Summer Picnic, Annual Awards Banquet and various other community activities.

### The Elk Rapids Fireman's Association operated with the following officers.

President – Tony Jones

Secretary – Rick Whisler

Treasurer – Neil Harris

## Future Plans

- Recruiting new members & retaining current members is of utmost importance. The average age of our firefighters is over 40 years old.
- Combining our Rescue and 2<sup>nd</sup> due pumper into 1 unit to allow more efficient apparatus operations.
- Replacing some flooring in our station which is now 25 years old.