



# The Tailboard

WFD's Quarterly Newsletter

Waco Fire Department

1016 Columbus Ave.

Waco, TX 76701

[@WacoTX Fire](https://twitter.com/WacoTXFire)



## Citizen Fire Academy coming soon

The Waco Fire Department will be hosting the first ever Citizen's Fire Academy that will run for four weeks in September leading up to Fire Prevention Week (October 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>).

The Citizen Fire Academy is open to persons 18 years of age or older living in McLennan County. Participants will learn about the firefighter hiring process, an overview of the WFD, fire prevention, special operations, emergency medical services, fire investigation, hazardous materials, firefighter safety, fire apparatus operations, fire ground operations, emergency management, training requirements, and administration of the WFD.



The intent of the CFA is not to train citizens to become firefighters; rather, it's an opportunity to experience firsthand the duties and responsibilities of firefighters. After completing the program, graduates will be able to use their knowledge to create a safer home and work environment and educate others about the WFD and the services provided to the community.

The class will be limited to 25 students and held every Thursday night in September from 6:30 – 9:30 PM at the Emergency Services Education Center (ESEC) at 7601 Steinbeck Bend Drive. Interest for the class can be made through the following link:

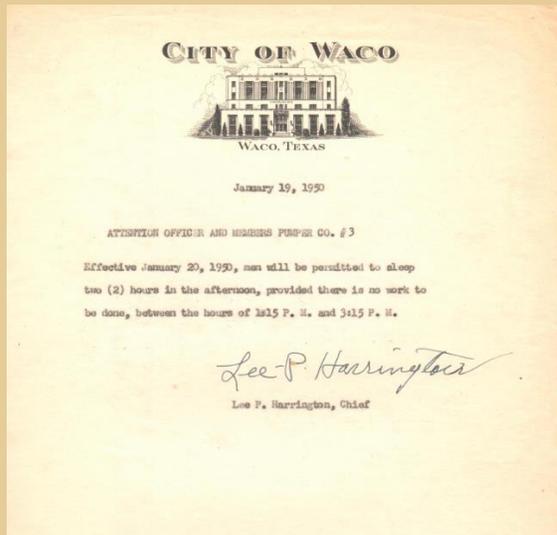
<https://bit.ly/373li7X>

or visit our website at [www.waco-texas.com/fire](http://www.waco-texas.com/fire)

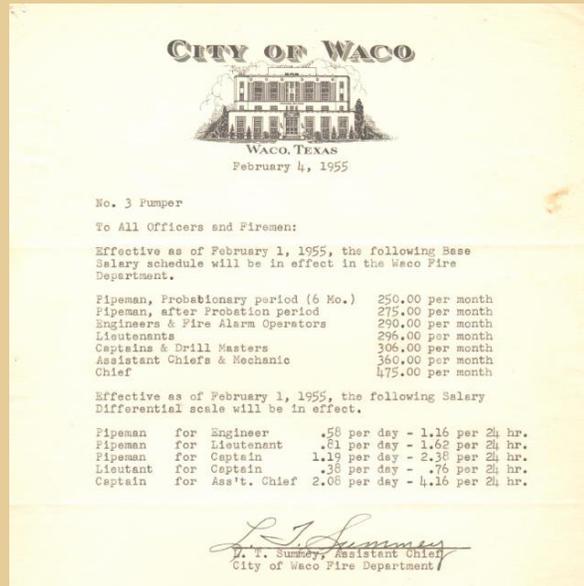
# Blast from the past...old WFD memos...

submitted by Lt. Tracy Blackshear

## Naptime? In 1950, the chief okayed it.

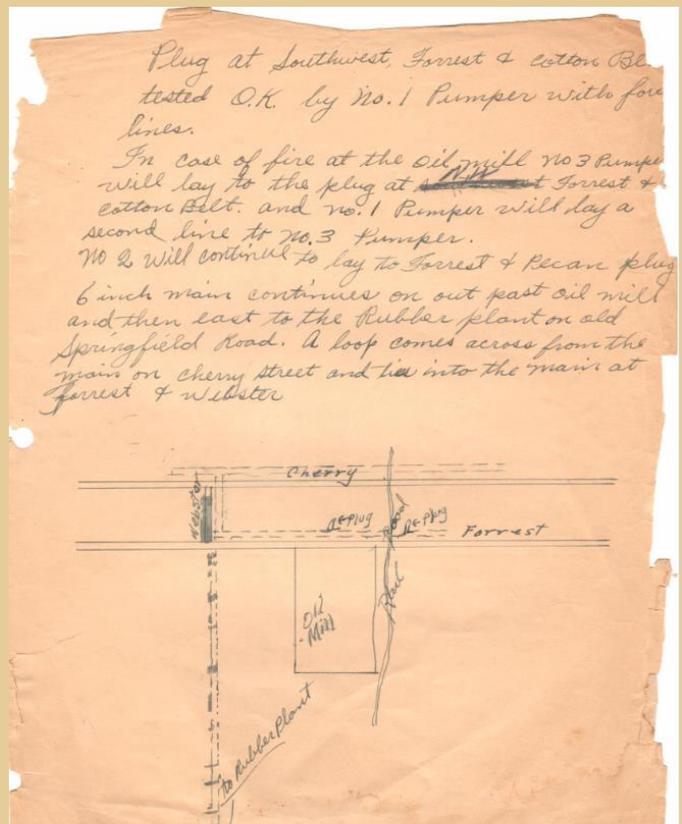


## An honest wage for an honest day's work? Perhaps in 1955.



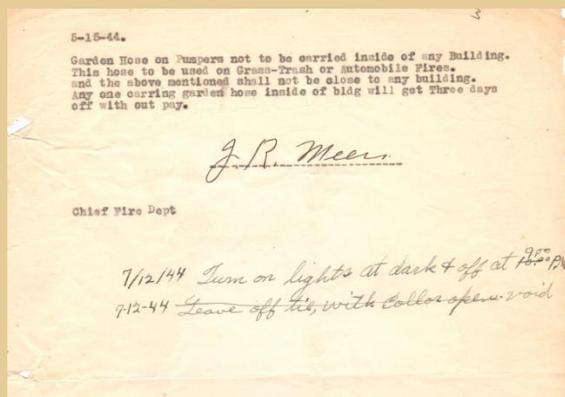
## Pride in their work...

As has always been the case, Waco Firefighters have always taken great pride in the details of their work. This old hand-written pre-fire plan at the "Old Mill" on Forrest St. in East Waco shows the water supply options. (Unknown timeframe)



## Just like today

Just like policies found in the WFD Emergency Operations Manual dictate which size hoseline should be used for which types of fires (residential, commercial, vehicles, etc.), in 1944, Chief Meers had to put it in no uncertain terms that the use of garden hoses carried on fire engines should not be used on structure fires or suffer a three-day suspension.

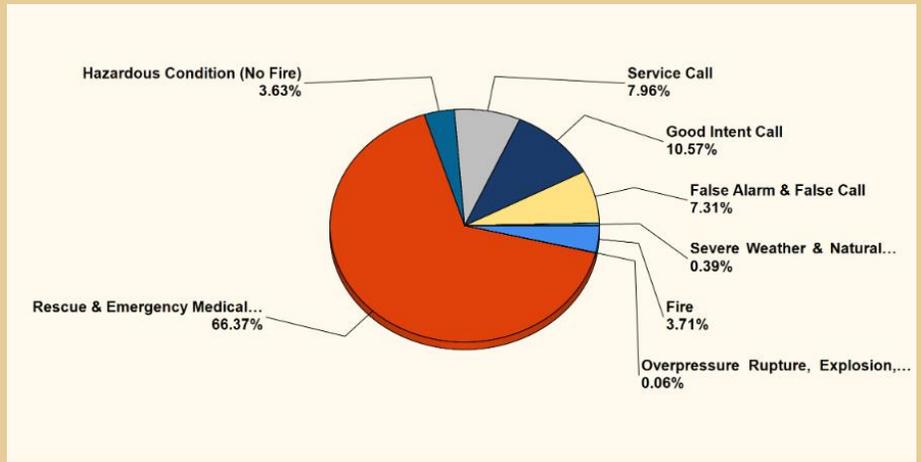


# Second quarter statistics for 2021

After a unusually busy first quarter that included the February winter storm that caused nearly a month's worth of calls in nine days, the second quarter of 2021 returned to a more typical three-month period for Waco Firefighters. A series of rainy and stormy spring days caused isolated significant issues and strained resources at times.

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, severe afternoon thunderstorms came in waves and caused two separate lightning strike structure fires. As firefighters were picking up from a 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm house fire in the 6500 Block of Vista View Drive in southwest Waco, firefighters across town were alerted to a challenging attic fire at the Brookdale Lakeshore Assisted Living center at 1700 W. Lake Shore Drive. The fire at Brookdale resulted in Waco Firefighters assisting staff and AMR ambulance personnel with relocating 24 elderly residents and their beds to a sister facility on N. Martin Luther King Blvd. This relocation was necessary due to a water leak and no functioning air conditioning caused by the attic fire. Firefighters demonstrated true compassion while assisting, often during periods of very heavy rain.

On the morning of June 8<sup>th</sup>, a flash flooding event generated 15 calls for water rescues in 27 minutes. Events like this underscore the importance of having not only a Swiftwater Rescue Team at Fire Station 1, but also why every piece of fire equipment carries lifejackets, rope throw-bags, and other basic water rescue equipment to support operations when the response system is strained.



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOT
Fire	173	3.71%
Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat(no fire)	3	0.06%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident	3094	66.37%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	169	3.63%
Service Call	371	7.96%
Good Intent Call	493	10.57%
False Alarm & False Call	341	7.31%
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	18	0.39%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4662</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



(Side) Executive Deputy Chief R.M. Bergerson and Lieutenant Brian Siems work with AMR and on-site staff personnel to coordinate the moving of 24 elderly residents onto facility buses to move them to another assisted living center.



(Side) Lieutenant Brian Siems slowly pushes a resident to an awaiting bus during one of several brief downpours during the extended incident.



# Retirements, new hires, and promotions

The following members retired from WFD in the second quarter of 2021:

- Lt. John Linda on April 30<sup>th</sup> with 42 years of service.
- Lt. Gerald Groppe on April 30<sup>th</sup> with 32 ½ years of service.

The following member joined WFD in the second quarter of 2021:

- Tracy Miles, CSR – Fire Alarm Office

The following members promoted in the second quarter of 2021:

- April 25<sup>th</sup>
  - Lieutenant Scott Garner
- May 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - Lieutenant Michael Sauer
  - Lieutenant David Campbell
  - Lieutenant Terry Rouse
  - Engineer Craig Camp
  - Engineer Philip Mynarcik
- June 6<sup>th</sup>
- Captain Philip Burnett
- Engineer Brandon Barsh



*J. Linda*



*G. Groppe*



*T. Miles*



*S. Garner*



*M. Sauer*



*D. Campbell*



*T. Rouse*



*C. Camp*



*P. Mynarcik*



*P. Burnett*



*B. Barsh*

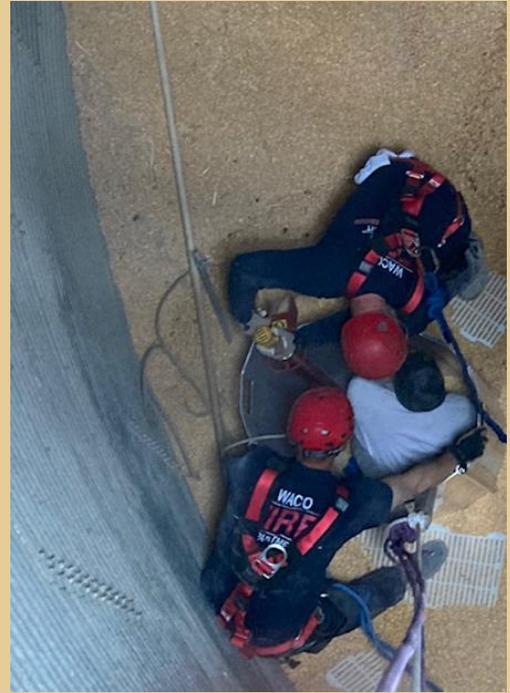
# Technical Rescue Team shows they are ready for anything

The members of Fire Station 1 on Peach Street in East Waco wear many hats during a shift, and their value was shown on several interesting incidents during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021. As a multiple discipline unit known as the "Technical Rescue Team" or TRT for short, in addition to being firefighters, EMT's and paramedics, members of the TRT are highly trained and equipped for specialized rescue situations that include flood and swift water, trench collapse, confined spaces, cliff/high-angle, underwater/dive, and just about any scenario that can be imagined where somebody gets stuck or trapped. The TRT, like Waco's Hazardous Materials Response Team responds to a six-county regional area that includes Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan Counties.

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the TRT was requested for a man trapped in a grain silo in Chilton, TX. A "grain tube" that was purchased two years ago after a similar incident in Clifton, TX was used to successfully rescue the man with minor injuries. This rescue would not have been successful if it weren't for the specialized training and equipment the TRT is fortunate enough to have.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, TRT personnel were called to assist law enforcement agencies with the removal of human remains from deep inside a coal unloading area of the Sandy Creek Coal Plant in Riesel to assist with their investigation.

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, TRT was again requested for a pickup truck in the Brazos River near Colcord Avenue and N. University parks Drive. Firefighters using the Rapid Diver Pro system were able to make entry into the water and search the vehicle within a very short time. Unfortunately, a body was found in the vehicle that had been in the water for several days; however, the equipment and training used adds another component to the capabilities that Waco Fire has.



*(Above) Members of the TRT work to safely rescue a man trapped in a grain silo incident*



*(Side) A TRT member descends a ladder with a safety rope attached and breathing apparatus to access the area where human remains were found inside a coal plant.*



*(Side) Personnel from Engine 7 and Station 1 operate using a safety rope and the Rapid Diver Pro system to quickly search a submerged vehicle in the Brazos River.*

# Firefighter health and safety at the forefront in switch of services



Firefighting is a dangerous career with higher incidences of cardiac issues, cancers, and behavioral health issues than most professions. In Waco, annual physicals are required for all personnel hired after 2010 and any member of the Swiftwater Rescue and Hazardous Materials Response Teams. Ensuring firefighters are in good physical condition to perform on the emergency scenes and reducing injuries are key goals of the Waco Fire Department. The Department, working with Human Resources evaluated several options for moving away from the current means of conducting physicals at a local occupational medicine clinic. Long wait and unit out of service times, inadequate staffing at the facility, and other issues prompted looking for other solutions. On Duty Health was selected to perform physicals for members and will provide comprehensive annual exams and cancer screenings at the old Employee Health Clinic located at the City of Waco Operations Center once a year. The format allows for On Duty Health to set up a temporary clinic and evaluate all members requiring physicals over approximately 20 days once a year. Since focusing on firefighter physicals is all that On Duty Health does, all components of the exams are firefighting specific. The exams will comply with NFPA 1582, Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments, and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) joint [Wellness Fitness Initiative \(WFI\)](#).

The Waco Fire Department is excited to start using On Duty Health for annual physicals and looks forward to the more efficient scheduling and time management involved for coordinating the process.

**HELP  
WANTED**

## Honor Guard seeking members

- submitted by Eng. Jeremy Downs



The Honor Guard is growing and is looking for more members.

The HG has a piping instructor available for free lessons and are about to start meeting at Station 1 once a month.

Anyone interested in participating in the HG or pipe band should contact Dean Cummings, Neil Cummings, or Jeremy Downs.

Also, our Honor guard/Band event next May, <https://tntwaco.com/>, is already starting to fill up with pre-registrations from Florida to California. We are expecting between 100-150 people from across the country to attend.

Details can be found on the event website.



## From the chief's desk...

As I stated from the very beginning of my tenure, my vision for this organization is to take it from "Good to Great". To accomplish that, I must have members on the bus and in the right seat. We must take on the mantra of "One Department, One Vision, One Direction" because as one of the largest fire service entities in Central Texas we have the potential to impact this city and the fire service in this region hugely. We must continue to display to our customers our commitment not only to public service but also to the fire service community. When we speak of "the family" camaraderie, unity, and dedication to the fire service, our efforts should be exhibited by staying true to our vision "We Exist to Serve". We must take it upon ourselves to continually strive to make a positive impact upon our community.

We are amid a very intensive, time-consuming, and participative endeavor- accreditation. As an all-hazards response agency, we are faced with increasing demands and decreasing resources to meet those demands. Therefore, planning becomes essential to our fire service organization to make the best use of available resources. The accreditation process is a comprehensive fire and emergency services evaluation model, it has already enabled us to examine past, current and future service levels, and performance, e.g., Fire Dispatch staffing, HazMat, and Technical Rescue staffing and response protocols, and compare them to industry standards and best practices. The 2021-2022 budget is anticipated to have enhancements but remember we must have patience and "trust the process." Your assistance and involvement will continue to be paramount in the direction and future of the Waco Fire Department- "One Department, One Vision, One Direction"!

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## New battalion chief trucks hitting the streets soon

The era of the white Chevy Suburban Battalion Chief vehicles is coming to an end soon with the addition of red Chevy Silverado 1/2 ton pick-ups. After taking delivery this quarter, the Fire Maintenance Shop personnel (Matt Clark, Anthony Galgano, and Jacob Raborn) have worked on fabrications, graphics, and emergency lighting to improve the units and get them ready for service. The Fire Shop members are very talented and do way more than just repair fire trucks as they go above and beyond daily to ensure that the WFD is responding safely. The camper-shell design allows PPE to be stored separate from the Battalion Chief and reduce exposure to carcinogens. Let's face it, red just looks better than white for fire department vehicles!

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