

DURHAM COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2021 AND 2022

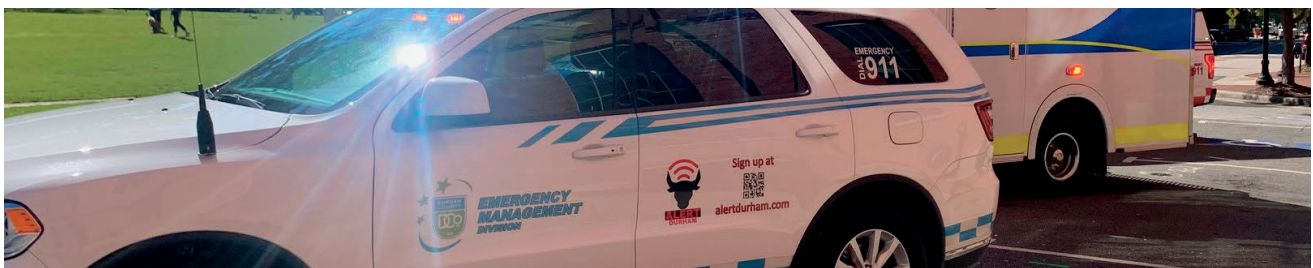


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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the FY 21-22 OES Annual Report and thank you for taking the time to read through this document.

I'll start my introduction by simply saying that the previous two (2) years have been extremely difficult on us. Working our way out of a global pandemic presented us with so many opportunities to solve complex problems that we never dreamed of having to solve. Staff shortages were exacerbated by competition with other communities and the private sector, fleet shortages were caused by new vehicle chassis availability and extremely delayed repair times caused by supply chain issues with spare parts, and a pool of qualified (and interested) talent that had the skill and knowledge to perform the diverse and complex work that is asked of us each day were difficult to find.



OES Director Jim Groves

We were not the only department in the county, state, or nation that had to deal with these types of problems. However, what sets Durham County OES apart from others is the strength, determination, and leadership intentionality demonstrated by our team members. Each person took on a personal role in leading Durham County OES through a once in a lifetime (hopefully) pandemic event. The OES team has my most sincere appreciation and regard for continually showing up to plan, train, exercise, respond, and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, all while embracing our Core Values and Guiding Principles. I hope our OES team has your appreciation as well, and if so, please take a moment to thank them in person.

So, what have we been doing outside of the pandemic? We moved out of a small logistics area into a new 34,000 sq./ft. warehouse that houses logistics, disaster supplies, trailers, and other vehicles used to provide for shelter operations and major incident support. Our EMS Division applied for and were awarded specialized funding for programs that support opioid education and overdose response, and we were able to provide significantly increased compensation to our EMTs and Paramedics to remain competitive in the EMS marketplace. Our Fire Marshal Division expanded to add staff to meet their statutory requirements for construction plan review, permitting, and mandated inspections. Our Emergency Management Division completed the Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack grant program, revised the Active Shooter Hostile Events Response (ASHER) plan, and created a locally developed and produced ASHER video for City and County employee use. In addition, our Business Services Division filled vacant positions within their area of responsibility, filled vacant positions in each of our other Divisions, and rolled up their sleeves to help the entirety of OES navigate through every obstacle and opportunity that was presented to us. They are the invisible heroes that keep OES moving forward!

Also, OES completed our first Strategic Plan that includes diversity, equity, and inclusiveness as a goal area, over 25 team members participated in two (2) multi-month leadership development courses, and over a dozen team members participated in an amazing diversity conference that we will continue to support in the future.

With the continued support of our County Manager and Board of County Commissioners, the new OES vision and mission supported by our strategic plan, and our incredible OES team, I am more excited than ever about the future and the amazing work that will be accomplished. Stay tuned!

BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION

The Business Services Division serves as the administrative and strategic arm of OES. In FY 2021 and 2022, BSD focused on several continuing and new initiatives. BSD provided strategic guidance and developed the Thriving Wage Initiative wage model for EMS, developed the FY 2023 OES budget, and identified ways to increase revenue by remodeling the EMS and FM Division fee structure.

The Logistics and Fleet sectors faced multiple challenges in the past two years. Supply chain issues and an aging fleet of vehicles contributed to difficulty keeping ambulances supplied and on the road. BSD assisted with this by purchasing twelve additional ambulances for the fleet. Senior Mechanic Anthony Bizzell has done an excellent job supporting the fleet after the departure of Terry Sineath, who left to work as Fleet Coordinator for the county.

Charlene Nelson began work as the Human Resources Representative. She expanded the recruitment pool for the EMS division by participating in multiple events and job fairs, including the NC Pride Expo, the Char-Meck DEI Conference, and recruitment fairs at local universities and community colleges.

Paramedic Robert Dowbiggin stepped up to serve as the interim OES Technology Systems Analyst following the retirement of Ann Keller. Robert continues to support the complex and ever-evolving technological needs of the organization.

BSD provided grant development support to the Community Paramedics program in obtaining a CARA grant, assisted EMS in obtaining BOCC approval to purchase the BioQuell and Stealth Power systems, and worked on developing the OES patch via a local minority-owned vendor.

Plans for FY 2023 include leveling up logistics tracking, improving fleet metrics, an increased focus on staff development, and creating workgroups to increase productivity. BSD will continue to partner with other departments and divisions to meet their objectives.



Deputy Business Services Manager Tracey DeShazo rescues a training baby from flooding during a group training exercise.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION: OVERVIEW

The mission of the Emergency Management Division is to foster a culture of preparedness and community resiliency through coordination and collaborative partnerships and to serve as a leader in preparing for, mitigating against, responding to and recovering from all types of hazards.

"With dual responsibilities for both the City of Durham and Durham County, we are working towards aligning our overall approach to disasters," writes Chief Elizabeth Schroeder. "We engage in outreach events in the community. Our goal is to understand their needs so we can better meet them, provide education and training and ultimately equip them with tools and information that they can use to have the best possible outcomes in disaster situations. We also work closely with our public safety partners to bring everyone together and coordinate training and expand our capabilities. We work with City and County officials to ensure support for their continuity of operations. We evaluate and refine our processes are committed to continuous improvement."



EM Coordinator Hayden Smith developed and facilitated a Sheltering Tabletop Exercise to test capabilities with partners from The Red Cross, DSS, Public Health, the Duke Healthcare Coalition, Durham Public Schools, NCEM and others.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION: PLANNING

Much of the EM Division's work the past two fiscal years has been related to various deployments of the EOC (Emergency Operations Center). In addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the EOC was activated for the following incidents:

- **TROPICAL STORM ELSA**
- **SOUTHPOINT MALL SHOOTING INCIDENTS**
- **SEVERE WEATHER (THUNDERSTORMS, WINTER STORMS, TORNADOES)**
- **BRENTAG INCIDENT AND OTHER HAZMAT SITUATIONS**
- **AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT**
- **ELECTIONS**
- **BIMBE FESTIVAL**
- **WARMING/COOLING CENTERS**



EM Chief Elizabeth Schroeder with Durham Police Department and Durham Fire Department liaisons.

The Emergency Management Division has also focused on continuity of government activities, including:

- Workshops
- 1 to 1 meetings with departments
- The Monthly Continuity Newsletter
- 150+ continuity plans updated with federal feedback
- Additional departments added to the continuity system

In addition, EM has continued efforts to align their program to EMAP standards. They have updated their All Hazard EOP Base Plan and functional annexes, and have continued training in handling CCTA (complex coordinated terror attacks.)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION: OUTREACH



The EM Team handing out tote bags, household emergency plans and other items at the McDougald Terrace community to promote hurricane preparedness and general safety.



In addition to their planning duties, the Emergency Management Division also engages in community outreach. During the past two years, they have partnered with Durham County Public Health, Duke University, Durham County EMS, Durham Neighborhood Improvement Services, public safety agencies, and others at outreach events to build relationships and promote community resiliency. EM has also worked with EMS to promote the "Stop the Bleed" trauma course in McDougald Terrace and other Durham Housing Authority communities .

Another responsibility of the EM division is coordinating and planning emergency shelters for disasters and extreme weather events. In FY 2021 and 2022, they held more than fifty coordination and planning meetings regarding emergency shelters, and led a Shelter Activation and Operation tabletop exercise with over 12 community stakeholders. EM assisted the American Red Cross during walkthroughs and surveys at the primary emergency shelter sites.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES: OPERATIONS



The EMS Division has over 150 credentialed team members providing emergency medical care on our ambulances. Staffing shortages have persisted through both fiscal years and frequently limited the number of available units on day shift to 15 to 18 and on night shift to 7 to 10. Our transport units are staffed with emergency medical technicians, advanced emergency medical technicians, and paramedics.

Throughout FY21 and FY22, we provided paramedic level service on our transport units while exploring alternative staffing models. We set a record on August 19, 2021 with 203 responses in a 24-hour period. August 2021 was also a record month with 5,121 responses recorded for the month.

We had several promotions to celebrate in FY21 as Max Patterson, Mike Szymanski, and Chris Langdon were promoted to shift lieutenant, Mark Oniffrey and Mike Hummel to captain, and Gordon Smith to Deputy Chief for Operations.

In FY22, Gabrielle Gezzar, Ryan Grebe, Michael Kiehart, and Josh Tomkoski were promoted to Senior Paramedic Field Training Officer. In addition, Jacob Boothe, Andrew McDonald, Ryan Shaw, Amy Thomas, and Donald West successfully completed the paramedic field training officer process and Frank Potter completed the Advanced EMT field training officer process and are now working to train and mentor the newest members of our team.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES: EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Education and Professional Development Section conducted three recruit academies in each fiscal year to on-board new team members as well as conducting bi-monthly continuing education sessions for all members of our team. The eight-week recruit academy is designed to get our newest hires up to speed on our patient care protocols, driving Durham County ambulances, and reviewing skills and equipment to prepare them for working in the field full-time. Once recruits finish the eight-week academy, they begin their field training and evaluation phase before being cleared to independently practice.



In order to keep our team on the leading edge of clinical practice, bi-monthly continuing education sessions are held for all four shifts. These sessions utilize both internal and external speakers to ensure a wider perspective of patient care is presented and include case studies and patient care protocol updates. In FY21, our team provided and completed over 7,700 hours of continuing education. In FY22, that number soared to over 8,800 hours.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES: CLINICAL AFFAIRS



The Clinical Affairs section oversees all aspects of patient care delivered by our team. This includes an annual protocol review and update, quality assurance of care and reporting, infection control, and working with our peer review committee. Clinical Affairs continued to provide, in conjunction with our medical directors, guidance on protective equipment and decontamination procedures related to the pandemic and other emerging infectious diseases.

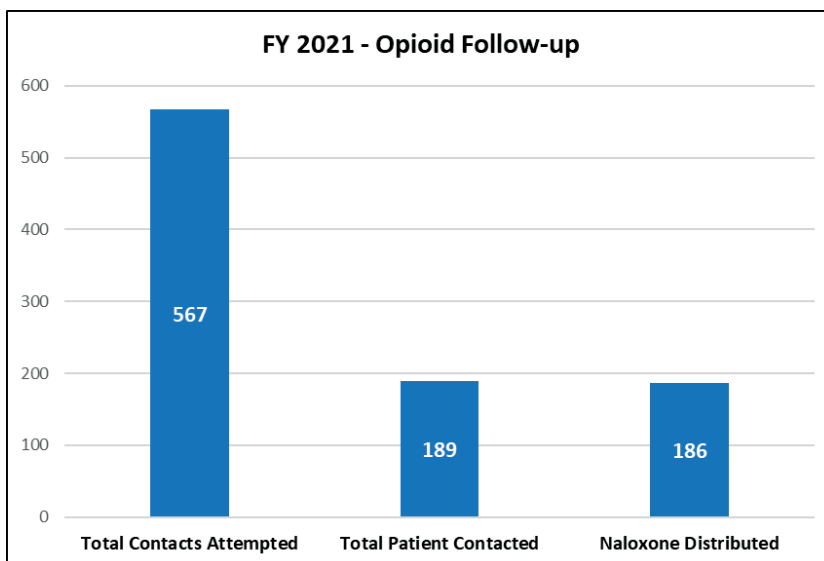
In addition, Clinical Affairs continues to work on data collection and reporting through our electronic patient care report system. Work continues on several research projects regarding EMS and showcasing the incredible work done by our team.

For the fifth year in a row, Durham County EMS was honored with the American Heart Association's 2022 Mission:Lifeline Gold Plus designation for outstanding cardiac care. Through the division's ongoing quality management programs, cardiac-related calls are reviewed and data regarding care and transport of ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (heart attack) and out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patients is compared against performance measures established by the American Heart Association. Those agencies performing at or above the AHA measures are recognized with either Gold or Gold Plus ratings. Durham County EMS continues to perform at the Gold Plus level.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES: COMMUNITY PARAMEDICS

Our Mobile Integrated Healthcare/Community Paramedic team has worked diligently to create a safer and healthier community through collaboration with partner agencies in responding to crisis situations and assisting with more routine healthcare matters. Throughout FY21 and FY22, the team has worked to expand their role in the community and caring for our patients. In coordination with the Durham County Department of Public Health, they provided needed in-home vaccinations for both COVID and the flu to patients unable to access the public clinics and they provided support for those public clinics. They have worked closely with partner organizations to address behavioral health issues and served as subject matter experts on a number of projects involving our most vulnerable and under-resourced patients.



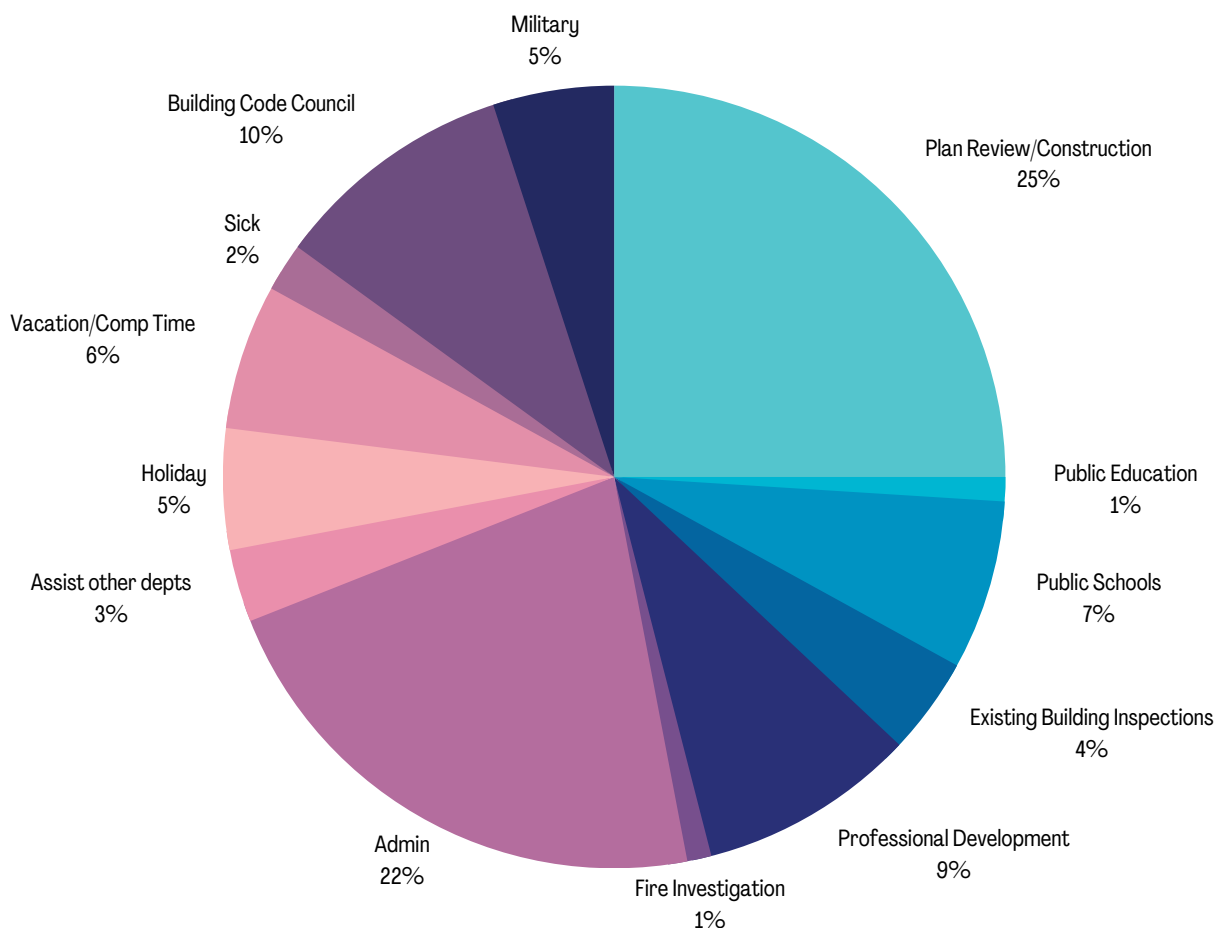
Through its work in opioid follow-up, 911 response, fall prevention, vaccinations, referrals, and community connections, the team has provided expert medical care and compassionate connection to resources for citizens of Durham County who face challenging medical or behavioral conditions. The MIH/CP program continues to provide services both in non-emergency and emergency settings and continues to work with community partners in caring for those in need.

FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION: OVERVIEW

The Fire Marshal Division promotes community risk reduction practices by providing effective fire safety education, fire code administration, fire investigations, and fire suppression to reduce the impacts on the human, social, economic, political, and environmental community.

The Fire Marshal Division has experienced significant changes in the last two years. Chief Fire Marshal Mark Schell retired December 1, 2020 and was replaced by Jason Shepherd. On July 1, 2021, we started to account for time spent on our mission focus areas. This allows the fire marshals to paint an accurate picture of where the customer demand is in their office. This model has allowed the division to grow in attempt to meet the needs of the community. They were able to hire another Assistant Fire Marshal in July 2022 and two part-time fire inspectors.

The Fire Marshal Division's fire code administration is the most time demanding service provided to our community, particularly in our construction industry with plan review and construction inspections. Our community is growing tremendously; in FY22, they conducted 626 plan reviews for new construction. Once the certificate of occupancy is issued, they are tasked with fire inspections of the facility for the life of the building.



FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION: SAFETY



In February 2022, the Fire Marshal Division entered into a local agreement with Durham City Fire Department to collaborate with their Fire Marshal Division for fire inspections, fire investigations and public fire education. We are excited to announce this as we will work to develop a fire investigation task force that will work to assemble expert fire investigators together in a team approach.

The Fire Marshal Division is grateful for the assistance from County Risk Management for the purchase of personal protective equipment for our fire investigation delivery service. Our team was outfitted with boots, gloves, and structural firefighting gear. Additionally, Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department donated used air-packs to our team until we purchase our new air-packs, which we anticipate doing in July 2022.

INSPECTION AND PLAN REVIEW DATA
ROUTINE FIRE INSPECTIONS: 248
FOSTER HOME INSPECTIONS: 16
STOP WORK ORDERS: 16
CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS: 615
LIFE SAFETY PLAN REVIEW: 267
FIRE PROTECTION PLAN REVIEW: 371

FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION: COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Through their hard work, Bahama Volunteer Fire Department lowered their ISO rating from 5/9E to a 4/9E. These public protection classification ratings directly affect the insurance premiums homeowners and business owners pay. A lower rating will benefit the owner by lowering insurance premiums. Congratulations to the Bahama Fire Department! Chief Needham would like to emphasize that Bahama Volunteer Fire Department continues to respond to any needs of the community when they dial 9-1-1 for service.



Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department purchased a 2022 Pierce Rescue/Engine to replace a 1990 Engine. This apparatus comes with technical rope rescue storage and full complement of extrication equipment with an anticipated delivery of July 2022. We are anticipating an ISO inspection for the department in August 2022.

Redwood Volunteer Fire Department received federal grant funding which allowed them to purchase 30 MSA air-packs, 60 new air bottles and 50 face masks. This purchase replaced their 2008 air-packs. The department also purchased 15 sets of turnout gear for their firefighters and provided the community with over 50 hours of public education. The fire department is also anticipating an ISO inspection in September 2022.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES LEADERSHIP



BUSINESS SERVICES

Deputy Business Services Manager Tracey DeShazo, Administrative Officer/HR Liaison Charlene Nelson, Senior Support Assistant (Accounts Payable) Angela Gudge and Finance Manager Katrina Harrell.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

EM Planner Dominic Minor, EM Planner Jinizha Johnson, EM Coordinator Hayden Smith, Senior EM Coordinator Nate Sanders and Chief Emergency Manager Elizabeth Schroeder.



EMS

Deputy Chief Gordon Scott Smith, Chief Mark Lockhart, Assistant Chief Lee VanVleet, Assistant Chief Jacqueline Holmes, Dr. Erin Hanlin and Dr. Anjni Joiner.

FIRE MARSHAL

Chief Fire Marshal Jason Shepherd, Assistant Fire Marshal Greg Boyden, and Assistant Fire Marshal Tyler Fitts.



