ANNUAL REPORT 2019





Holden Fire Department Mission Statement

The Holden Fire Department is a Public Safety Department dedicated to the protection of lives and property from the perils of fire and other natural and manmade disasters. This is accomplished through mitigation, prevention, public education and training. The Department is committed to provide quality service to all who are in need.



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



I respectfully submit the 2019 Annual Report of the Holden Fire Department. I am extremely proud of the hard work and dedication of the department's operational and administrative personnel. Overall department activity continues to be on the rise for both emergency responses and inspectional services. These increases are attributed to a healthy town economy and the fact that the Town of Holden is a desirable destination to live, work and visit. The on duty staff and on-call members of the department

work tirelessly to ensure that town residents and visitors alike are well cared for and protected in their time of need, regardless of the type of emergency. The following are some of our accomplishments for 2019:

- During 2019, the department has seen many changes to both personnel and operations. The Federal FY18 SAFER grant in the amount of \$928,818 that was awarded to the department allowed for the hiring of 6 additional career firefighters began on February 11, 2019. The six new members now bring career firefighter staffing to 23 members. The personnel is deployed in four workgroups of 1 shift commander and 4 firefighters with 2 firefighters assigned to an impact day shift schedule 7am to 7pm. The Emergency Management Coordinator/FF-P is assigned a day administrative schedule, but has the ability to assist with staffing and call response. With the augmented staffing, the department was able to staff the Chaffins sub-station with 2 career members during peak periods, 7am-7pm, seven days per week. The opening of the sub-station has allowed us to enhance our response capabilities to town residents in the south end of town and cut response times nearly in half. With this new staffing configuration, the department is on track to meet the requirements of NFPA 1720 in regards to the number of firefighters on scene of a fire in the first 10 minutes of the event.



OTAL GRANT AWARD- \$929,818.00



- Over the course of the year, the department sent 6 career members and 3 call members to the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's Firefighter Recruit Programs. The career members attend a 10 week

program where they are assigned to the academy for 42 hours per week and upon graduation they return to their duty shift. The call members attend a similar program that spans 4 months and is held 2 evenings and on weekends. Both career and call members graduate with the same training and certifications. Upon their return, all graduates become probationary firefighters for 1 year and continue to enhance the basic skills learned at the academy.

- The department improved our delivery of training to the firefighters. A new training program was instituted where each workgroup conducted specified training on a per shift basis. This increased the total training opportunities for both Fire and EMS to 8 per month, a significant increase from previous years. This allows for our firefighters to continue being proficient in all aspects of their job. Training manikins were purchased for both Fire and EMS training in 2019. The fire training manikins provide a life like size and weight representing adult, child and infants. These allow firefighters to perform search and rescue techniques in low visibility conditions along with drags, carries, rescue over ladders and multiple other skills. Along with the life like size, these manikins can produce a heat signature similar to a person, which allows firefighters to train on search with thermal imaging cameras. The EMS SIM-MAN manikin was purchased out of the Holden Hospital Fund. This cutting edge training tool allows EMT's and Paramedics to do scenario based training simulations. The manikin allows for advanced airway placement, intravenous lines, intra-osseous lines, cardiac rhythm interpretation, 12 lead ECG, defibrillation, and medication administration. It also has features where EMS personnel can take a palpable pulse and auscultate a blood pressure.
- Through our capital replacement program, the department replaced an aging monitor defibrillator used by our Paramedics for cardiac care. The new unit replaces one purchased in 2011 and now brings all of the department ambulances up to today's technology. The department also replaced one of the departments command vehicles, a 2011 Chevrolet Tahoe with many mechanical issues. The new vehicle, a 2018 Chevrolet Tahoe was constructed to hold the equipment used by an Incident Commander along with EMS and fire equipment.
- The department is happy to have received multiple grants throughout the course of 2019. A highlight was the Assistance to Firefighters Grant award from FEMA in the amount of \$46,828. This grant allows for the purchase of 15 sets of firefighter protective equipment. The following is a list of the 2019 grants and amounts received:

GRANT	AMOUNT
FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant	\$46,828
FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant	\$290,692
MEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant	\$4,600
MEMA Citizen Corp Program Grant	\$3,496
DFS Student Awareness of Fire Education	\$6,954
HHS Ambulance Certified Public Expenditure Program	\$36,007
TOTAL GRANTS RECEIVED 2019	\$388,577

Thank you to Town Manager Peter Lukes, the Board of Selectmen, and the Finance Committee for their continued support of the Holden Fire Department throughout 2019.

As always, thanks to all our dedicated staff at the Holden Fire Department for their hard work that saves lives and property each year in the Town of Holden.

2020 Goals-

- 1. In 2020, the Fire Department is due for our public protection classification review through the Insurance Services Office (ISO). Through the years, the Department has fared well, rating out in 2017 with a 4/4X. Over the next year, work will continue to try and bolster the Public Protection Classification to a level 3/3X. The increased rating would be a great accomplishment for the Department and the Town. The Insurance Services Office rating helps set all home insurance rates, therefore the residents should see a reduction on the cost of insurance policies.
- 2. Over the last few years, both the Fire Department and Holden Police Department have worked to put together protocols for joint responses. Over the next year, the two departments will enter a new phase of training in responding to Active Shooter/ Hostile events. Once completed, this training will enhance response and allow for the department to include area towns in larger training events and inclusive response plans.

Respectfully Submitted:

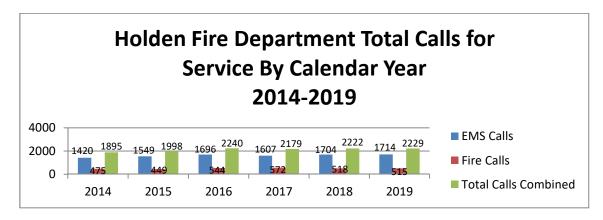
Russell Hall, Chief of Department



DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

WHILE THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE OPERATIONS DIVISION IS TO RESPOND TO EMERGENCY AND NON-EMERGENCY CALLS, PERSONNEL ALSO CONDUCT BUILDING FAMILIARIZATION WALK-THROUGHS, PRE-PLANNING ACTIVITIES, TRAINING, PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS, VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE, AND OTHER ROUTINE ACTIVITIES.

In 2019, Holden Fire personnel responded to 2229 calls for emergency services, an increase in call volume from 2018. Over the last 5 years (2014-2019) the department has seen an overall call increase of 17.6% (334 Responses), averaging 3.5% yearly. The Department expects this trend to continue at the current pace or increase due the continued growth in the local economy, both on the residential and commercial markets.



Starting in July of 2019, the Department started staffing station 2 during the hours of 7am-7pm, seven days a week. This staffing plan was aimed to reduce the response times during the busiest hours of the day, particularly to the south districts (Chaffins) of Holden. Data from 2019 shows with the staffing of Station 2 from 7am-7pm, response times have decreased overall on an average of 1 minute and 22 seconds. Response times to the south districts improved by over 3 minutes to 3 minutes and 57 seconds. We are pleased with the reduction of response times as every second counts in an emergency.

TREND: RESPONSE TIMES

Year	Dispatch to Arriva (in minutes)			
2013	6.34			
2014	6.04			
2015	6.37			
2016	6.30			
2017	6.60			
2018	6.29			
2019 (Jan-Ju	ne) 5.28			
2019 (July- D	ec) 4.35			

Response times for the fire service are important for two reasons—first, to save lives and second, to reduce the damage to someone's property. An emergency response to the scene can vary depending upon how far the emergency is from the fire station.

Response time starts when crews are alerted by dispatch of an emergency to the time crews arrive at the incident scene.

In 2019, response times were significantly reduced. This was mostly in part to staff at Station 2 7am-7pm

23.89 PERCENT
RESPONSE TIMES REDUCED BY:

Station 2 (Chaffins)-87 Adams Road Renovations

Station 2 (Chaffins) located at 87 Adams Road was originally built in 1960 with various renovations over the years. For the first time ever, the station would be staffed 7am-7pm, seven days a week. The conditions at the station would not support on-duty personnel. Chief Hall worked up a plan with funds from the operating budget to make improvements to this space. The Department of Public Works- Building and Grounds division were imperative to this project as they completed the work with labor at no cost to the Town. The balance of the renovations was completed by fire department staff and contractors. Some of the improvements included a new HVAC system, build out of a kitchen space, and construction of a PPE storage area with proper ventilation that is isolated from the living quarters.



Apparatus



In 2018, new maintenance and testing programs were implemented. These programs focused more on preventative maintenance rather than repairing items after they break. Although this program may cost more upfront, we believe it will save money down the road by avoiding unexpected costly repairs. Furthermore, our fire apparatus is being sent to the dealerships for repairs more often than in the past due to the highly complex systems contained in these vehicles. The average age of the front line fire apparatus is 12 years old.

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Engine 1	2009 Rosenbauer/ Spartan	27,797 Miles/ 2342 Hours
Engine 2	2017 E-One	10,007 Miles/ 793 Hours
Engine 3	2005 HME/ Central States	15,978 Miles/1509 Hours
Engine 4	2009 Rosenbauer/ Spartan	13, 065 Miles/ 1030 Hours
Tower 1	1998 Sutphen Aerial Tower	15870 Miles/ 2705 Hours
Ambulance 1	2017 F550 Horton	41716 Miles/ 2930 Hours
Ambulance 2	2015 F550 Horton	88,486 Miles/ 5541 Hours
Ambulance 3*	2012 International 4300	92,847 Miles/ 5502 Hours
Forestry 1	2014 F450	1910 Miles
Forestry 2	1986 Harsco 5 Ton	10503 Miles
Car 1 (Fire Chief)**	2019 Chevy Tahoe	3081 Miles
Car 2 (Deputy Chief)	2013 Chevy Tahoe	56663 Miles
Car 3 (Shift Officer)	2015 Chevy Tahoe	66059 Miles
Car 4 (EM/ Academy)	2008 Ford Explorer	99,046 Miles
Squad 2	2012 F350 P/U with plow	27,532 Miles

^{*} scheduled to be replaced FY21 Budget/ ** replaced FY20 Budget

Massachusetts Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Division (HazMat)



The Holden Fire Department continues to support two hazardous materials technicians on the District 6 State Team. The State HazMat teams respond to incidents both in our district and across the state. Having these members as a part of the teams brings a higher level of training and experience that will improve both the district team and our local Department. The HazMat techs are also responsible for maintaining chemical inventories and coordinating local responses in Holden. The members are expected to complete monthly trainings in addition to maintaining required certifications. In 2019, Holden HazMat Technicians responded to 14 incidents throughout the district.

DISTRICT 8 TECHNICAL RESCUE/ DIVE TEAM



The Holden Fire Department is part of the Mid State Technical Rescue Team; consisting of members from Fire Departments across northern central Massachusetts. The team consists of highly trained firefighters that respond to incidents that are typically outside the abilities, both in training and equipment, of most fire departments. The team conducts monthly training, for both dive rescue and the technical rescue groups. All members are required to attend a certain amount of drill hours per year to maintain their skill sets. Some of the trainings conducted in 2019 included swift water rescue, tower rescue, wide area search, structural collapse, and heavy vehicle rescue.











2019 Midstate Tech Team Responses

Team	Incident Type	Location
Tech Team	Large Animal Rescue	Ashby
Tech Team	High Angle/ Carry Out	Princeton (Wachusett Mnt.)
Dive Team	Missing Swimmer	Harvard
Dive Team	Body Recovery	Berlin
Tech Team	High Angle/ Tree Rescue	Leominster
Tech Team	Large Animal Rescue	Westminster

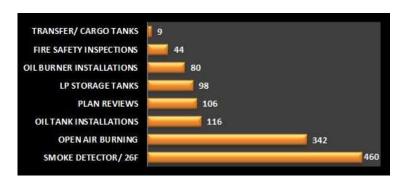


FIRE PREVENTION

THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION PROVIDES A FULL RANGE OF SERVICES TO PROTECT OUR CITIZENS, VISITORS TO OUR COMMUNITY, AND EMPLOYEES OF OUR LOCAL BUSINESS AGAINST THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY THROUGH EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES. THE DIVISION APPLIES A PROACTIVE/EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO FIRE PREVENTION AND ENCOURAGES ALL TO PRACTICE SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE DAY...EVERYDAY.

In 2019, the Fire Prevention Division continued to focus on providing plan review, inspections, and investigations aimed at ensuring a fire-safe community. As the local economy continued to grow in 2019, plan review and construction activity remained steady throughout the town. Residential development outperformed commercial overall, however commercial development saw a significant increase from previous years.

Plan review projects ranged from large commercial projects to small tenant improvements; from single family dwellings to multi-unit apartment complexes. Some of the projects reviewed included the renovation of a large 92,000 square foot commercial warehouse, construction of 2 residential subdivisions, and the construction of several new commercial structures. In addition, the Fire Prevention division reviewed over one hundred residential projects that included both significant remodels and new construction.



FIRE INSPECTIONS



As laws, codes, and ordinances are continually changing, the fire prevention staff must maintain training and current certifications to meet the qualifications of their positions. This year, 4 members completed their Fire Prevention Officer 1 certification. This 80 hour training teaches the skills to conduct inspections, interpertation of codes, and best fire prevention practices. The Deputy Chief also completed the Fire Prevetion Officer II certification, a course that focuses on plan/ construction review and management of the local fire prevention programs.





Deputy Sean Smith

The Fire Prevention Division has 2 certified advanced fire investigators. The investigators work closely with the Holden Police Detective Bureau and the Department of Fire Services Fire and Explosion Investigation Section. In 2019, investigators conducted 5 investigations, ranging from outside fires to large loss building fires.





EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

THE EMS DIVISION PROVIDES CLINICAL DIRECTION, MEDICAL OVERSIGHT AND SUPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENTS EMS OPERATIONS. EMS PERFORMANCE IS ANALYZED THROUGH A QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI) PROGRAM. THE EMS COORDINATOR WORKS WITH THE TRAINING DIVISION TO COORDINATE AND DELIVER EMS-RELATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

The Holden Fire Department operates three class I ambulances at the Paramedic Level. This is accomplished, in large part, by training and retention of a group of experienced EMT-Basics and EMT-Paramedics. Operating a Paramedic level service allows our residents and visitors access to the best pre-hospital care available. Paramedics are trained to bring many of the same interventions available in the hospital to the patient's side. This includes cardiac monitoring, 12 Lead ECG, intravenous drug administration, pain management, and a variety of airway management tools. Clinical support is provided by UMass Medical Physicians in conjunction with department level oversight by EMS Coordinator/Paramedic Ethan Naiman.

2019 proved to be another busy year for our EMS Service –responding to 1,718 requests for EMS assistance. Of the 1,324 ambulance transports performed by our EMS service, 89.46% of them received paramedic level assessment and/or interventions.

	JAN '19	FEB '19	MAR '19	APR '19	MAY '19	JUN '19	JUL '19	AUG '19	SEP '19	OCT '19	NOV '19	DEC '19	TOTAL 2019
ASSIST, PUBLIC	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	8	18
CANCELLED	5	3	0	1	3	1	1	4	4	2	3	5	32
NO TRANSPORT	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	8
TRANSPORTED	105	121	108	94	101	94	113	105	100	116	126	141	1324
TREATMENT													
WITH NO													
TRANSPORT	36	19	21	21	30	44	28	30	25	34	24	24	336
TOTAL	147	146	130	119	135	140	145	140	129	154	155	178	1718



In addition to responding to requests for EMS service from residents and visitors to the Town of Holden, our ambulance has also responded to requests for service from Hubbardston, Rutland, Sterling, Oakham, Barre, Paxton, Princeton, West Boylston, and Worcester. Our ambulance service also provided ambulance coverage at special events throughout town, which included the deployment of an EMS Bike team at Holden Days.





Amongst the vast array of calls for service where our providers have made a positive impact, a few deserve special acknowledgement. This year, Paramedics identified 8 Myocardial Infarctions (more commonly known as a Heart Attack) in the field, alerting the hospital and the Cath Lab, resulting in faster treatment and positive outcomes for all eight of the individuals. Also earlier this year, our Providers, along with Holden Police were



dispatched to a residence for an unresponsive patient, who had no pulse and was not breathing. Because of the quick actions of both the Holden Fire Department EMS providers and the Holden Police Officers, the patient made a full recovery and later returned home. However, one of the most exciting moments for the department in 2019 was having the opportunity to recognize two youths who assisted a family member during a medical emergency, calling 911, and providing palliative care until help arrived. For their efforts, they were issued a "Community Service Award" by the Department and an opportunity to meet with the EMS Providers who responded.

Many of our successes would not be possible without the proper equipment. We take pride in being able to offer some of the best equipment available to help make our providers successful. In 2019 we have continued to update some of our equipment to the most state-of-the-art available. This includes new glucometers, new

laryngoscopes, a new cardiac monitor, and updates and preventive maintenance to other equipment. The department also added a third Transport Ventilator to its array of equipment. The Holden Fire Department is one of the only Fire Departments to be trained to operate, and carry, transport ventilators for ventilator dependent patients. As the Fire Department frequently responds to a facility with this specific population, this piece of equipment has proved invaluable.

The Fire Department's EMS Service provides training for its members through monthly training, while also working to provide community outreach opportunities. Our department members have provided community CPR and First Aid instruction to town officials, schools, and other interested parties. We anticipate building upon this community initiative to be able to offer more community CPR classes to individuals in 2020. Our EMS service also boasts two high-fidelity simulation mannequins that assist in training, remediation, and skill retention of our providers. We remain committed to finding ways to continue to grow our simulation program, and use realistic scenarios to ensure our providers are ready to provide the best care to our customers.

TRAINING DIVISION

HOLDEN FIREFIGHTERS MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS AND ABILITIES THROUGH ONGOING TRAINING OVERSEEN BY THE DEPARTMENTS TRAINING OFFICER. ALL CAREER AND CALL PERSONNEL MUST UNDERGO ANNUAL FIREFIGHTING, RESCUE, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING.

Training and education is essential for maintaining and improving critical firefighting, rescue and medical skills. Training provides an opportunity to update members on new standards and industry "best practices." Training allows firefighters to become familiar with equipment and procedures while working effectively and efficiently.

Firefighters receive training on a wide range of topics and skill from the most commonly used skills to the most complex rescues. Crews practice for structure fires, vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, high angle rescues, and hazardous materials incidents just to name a few. The training coordinator is responsible for assessing training needs, developing a training calendar and curriculum, coordinating the delivery of instruction for the specialized training programs. Career firefighters receive most of their training while onduty, while evening and weekend trainings are generally geared toward the call firefighter force.



The Training Division was very active in 2019 offering curriculum from back to the basic concepts to specialized trainings. One of the most significant projects for 2019 was a full scale live burn exercise that was run in conjunction with the Rutland Fire Department. This joint training effort was the first time our departments have taken part in a training of this magnitude. Combined training with our mutual aid partners allows for a greater knowledge of what each department's capabilities are.



2019 Training Topics

Ground Ladders	Knots/ Ropes Review	SCBA- Donning/ Doffing
Ice Rescue	Vent Enter Search (VES)	Ground Ladders
Hydrant/ Water Supply Ops	Basic Search- Small Area	Pump/ Hydraulics
Drafting/ Water Supply	Off Road Operations/ UTV	Tower Training
Tech Rescue Review	High Point Rescue	Air Bag/ Rescue Struts
Vehicle Extrication	Engine Company Hose Advancement	High Rise Pack Deployment
Drags and Carries	Master Stream/ Blitz Gun Ops	Gas Meters/ Air Monitoring
Open Water/ Swift Water Rescue	Thermal Imager/ Search (TIC)	HazMat Review

In 2019, the Department was able to send 2 members to an intense 24 hour Heavy Vehicle Extrication class held at the Connecticut Fire Academy. This program was paid for through a grant received from the Central Massachusetts Homeland Security Council.







EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management ensures that the town is prepared to withstand, respond to and recovery from both natural and man-made disasters and emergencies. This is accomplished through coordinating the development of multi-departmental response and recovery plans as well as enhancing community resilience through community-level preparedness, education and training.

Emergency Management planning in Holden is overseen by the town's Fire Chief, who is also the Emergency Management Director. Within the Fire Department, the Emergency Management Coordinator carries out the coordination, planning and training aspects of emergency management for the town and is assisted by members of Holden CERT.

Our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is comprised of volunteers who help during emergencies. Each member of our CERT team has completed a 20 hour, 9 module basic training program that spans over the course of several months. The basic training program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Holden CERT currently has 22 active members with 7 new members that have joined the team during 2019. Holden CERT members have logged over 1,000 volunteer hours for the town this past year. Some of their activities this year have included:

Assisting the town with setting up and staffing a cooling center during the excessive heat this area experienced on July 20th and 21st.

- Participation in a shelter operations drill on August 3rd.
- Staffed a preparedness education table for Holden Days and at the Fire Department open house.
- Provided preparedness education sessions to residents at Colony Retirement and Checkerberry Village during the month of September.
- Assisted with preparing shelter operations for a predicted ice storm on December 29th and 30th.





During 2019, Emergency Management focused on three main planning goals; updating the town's sheltering plan, which included a sheltering exercise held at Mountview Middle School in early August, working closely with the Wachusett School District and the surrounding towns to develop an all hazards school response plan, and enhancing the town's capabilities in treating injured victims with major hemorrhaging.

Two fire department personnel became registered instructors for the American College of Surgeons' "Stop the Bleed" program. This program teaches lay persons how to recognize and treat individuals suffering from major bleeding through the use of direct pressure, pressure bandages, and proper tourniquet





placement. Since the springtime, "Stop the Bleed" courses were held in the Wachusett Regional School District and several town departments. To date, over 70 individuals in town have been trained in bleeding control techniques. In addition to the training, bleeding control kits were purchased using emergency management funding and were installed in every town run public building ensuring the proper bleeding control equipment was available and easily assessable.

In addition to local planning, Holden's Emergency

Management also coordinates all the planning activities
for a regional Emergency Planning Committee; *The South*

Wachusett Regional Emergency Planning Committee (SWREPC). This regional planning committee, which is made up of the towns of Boylston, Holden, Sterling, and West Boylston, is established through the Federal Emergency Planning and Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986. Members represent all four towns and all key departments in those towns including: Administration, Department of Public Works,



Board of Health, Light, Police and Fire, as well as local industry and organizations such as the American Red Cross and University of Massachusetts Medical School. The Committee looks at various types of disasters and hazardous material problems that could impact the towns, develops plans to address those incidents, and tests those plans to ensure first responders are proficient with the plans to address these incidents. The Committee meets quarterly and works closely with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). Annually the committee conducts a major hazardous materials spill simulation to test our readiness and skills at responding as a unified team to a major disaster.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

HOLDEN FIRE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES NUMEROUS PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP KEEP CHILDREN AND ADULTS SAFE FROM FIRE AND OTHER HAZARDS.

The driving force behind the public education division is to reduce the risk of injuries and death from fires, drowning, medical emergencies, and other preventable causes. The Holden Fire Department has a longstanding presence in our local schools by sending personnel to teach age-appropriate lessons on fire prevention, smoke detectors, exit plans, carbon monoxide poisoning, and chemical poisioning. Outreach consists of both assembly and classroom-based sessions in all of our schools.

The Department of Fire Services awarded the Holden Fire Department \$6,954 for fire safety programs. A total of \$4354.00 was allocated to School SAFE and the remaining \$2600.00 was allocated to Senior SAFE.



The senior SAFE program supports fire and life safety education for senior citizens. This program is run in conjunction with the Senior Center/ Elder Services. In 2019, the smoke and carbon monoxide program was able to distribute 68 detectors to 27 senior households. About 1/3 of these detectors were also installed by Fire Department personnel. Working with outreach worker from the Senior Center, the department was able to install unique smoke and carbon monoxide detection for a hearing impaired resident. This installation included unique notification devices that were wired at no cost through a donation from a local electrical contractor.







In November, the Department sponsored a "Surviving a Fire Seminar." This program outlined general fire safety tips, residential code requirements, and suggestions for improving overall fire safety.







HOLDEN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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