

Mason's Island Fire District Annual Report

2025-2026 Fire and Safety Committee – Jeff Miceli

Fire Services Contract Update

This past February, Mystic Fire Department (MFD) requested revisions to the fire services contract to address a necessary budget increase and extend the contract duration for budget stability.

The budget increase primarily covers a staffing initiative to fund additional 24/7 firefighter/EMT positions to offset the decline in volunteer firefighters and reduce the ongoing reliance on mutual aid from neighboring departments to respond to emergencies. The initiative, importantly, always provides four career firefighters on duty—two at Hoxie and two at Mystic Hook & Ladder.

Maintaining four on-duty firefighters ensures compliance with OSHA “two-in, two-out” requirements for structural fire response. This staffing model optimizes response times, enhances life safety, and helps preserve favorable insurance ratings and their cost.

To support their plan, the budget will be increased by 9% in Year 1 and 7% in Year 2. From the negotiation, further increases will be capped Years 3 through 5, at 4% or the prior year's Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is higher. The cap structure will be renegotiated Year 6 given the uncertainties of predicting the economic environment ahead.

Incident Report

There were 44 incidents in MIFD from May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026. The total was like last year and similarly higher compared to prior years that typically ranged from ~30 to 35.

As in previous years, most of the incidents were for emergency services at 60% followed by non-emergencies at 28%. Non-emergencies, a new category for MFD reporting, pools minor incidents into one group.

In this category, there were 12 incidents, eg, false alarms and public service trips (fireworks). In addition, there were 4 electrical incidents (eg, power lines down,

shorting), 1 steam leak and 1 motor vehicle accident without injury and 1 house fire.

Incident Type	Number	Percent
EMS	26	60%
Non-Emergencies	12	28%
Electrical	4	9%
House fire	1	2%
Steam leak	1	2%
Vehicle accident no injury	1	2%
Total	44	

Incidents were highest in July and August with 8 and 6 events, respectively, and lowest in winter months and June with 2 events reported for each.

Mason's Island Fire District (MIFD) Emergency Preparedness – Rod Cook, Kit Hartford, Betsie Lebel, Cindy Martin, Jeff Miceli

Last fall, the MIFD Emergency Preparedness Plan was formally introduced to residents at a meeting held at Mason's Island Yacht Club (MIYC), with strong attendance. We thank MIYC for the use of its clubhouse. The Plan is posted on both the MIFD and Mason's Island Property Owners Association websites.

During the same period, the Emergency Preparedness team met with the Mystic Fire Department (MFD) to review the plan, clarify coordination with Stonington emergency services, identify conditions that could limit emergency vehicle access to Mason's Island, and discuss potential access points for the MFD fire boat. As a result, MFD is now familiar with the plan, particularly the key role of Contact 1, and a line of communication has been established among Contact 1s, Chief Clarkin, and Deputy Chief Bernier. This coordination is expected to serve the community well during emergencies.

The team tested resident communication last October by issuing an alert message to the 8 neighborhood contacts in advance of a Nor'easter. Although loss of access to the island was not anticipated, the exercise—initiated by Contact 1—provided an opportunity to activate the initial phase of the plan. The alert was successfully distributed to residents by neighbor contacts within a short period of time.

During the major snowstorm this February, the team received regular updates re the status of the storm from Deputy Chief Bernier. Fortunately, access to the island was not impacted and the Emergency Preparedness Plan was not activated.

We urge all residents to sign up for the Stonington Alerts notification system which provides accurate and immediate notifications to your cell, work or home

phone, via text, email or voice message. The Atlantic hurricane season is from June 1 to November 30.