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Withering Volunteerism: The Impending Crisis for Fire and EMS Across New York State

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Outline of Presentation

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Scope of Problem
- Fire Service
- Emergency Medical Services
- Going Forward

Definitions

- EMT
- Advanced EMT
- Paramedic
- Career
- Volunteer
- Fire Districts
- Fire Protection District
- Fire Department
- Fire Company
- Interior Firefighter
- ISO Rating

Operating Environment

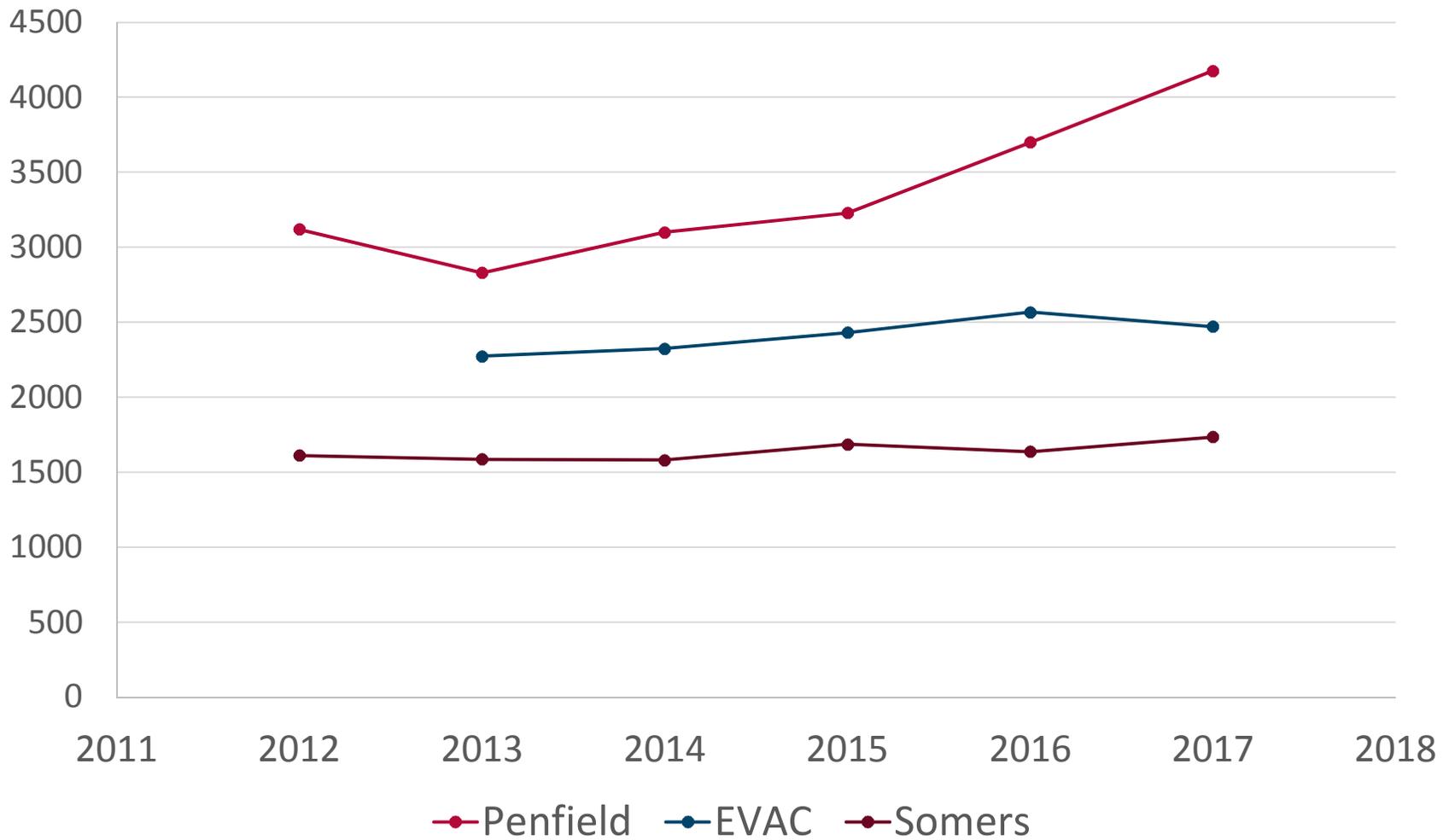
- Call Volume for EMS and Fire is increasing
- Number of volunteers is decreasing
 - In 2014, it was estimated that 15,000 volunteer firefighters had stopped serving in previous 20 years. About a 12% decrease in ranks
 - 77 ambulance services stopped operations between 2012 and 2017
- Costs are rising
 - New York State Firefighters Cancer Benefit Program
 - Premium estimated of \$300 per year per firefighter
 - Standards for gear replacement and cleaning will further drive costs
 - Communications equipment costs continue to rise
- Public expectations are increasing
- Standards for Fire and EMS training is increasing
- Age of population is increasing
 - 65 to 84 are twice as likely to use EMS than the whole population
 - 85 and older at six times as likely to use EMS than the whole population

Fire Departments and Population Protected

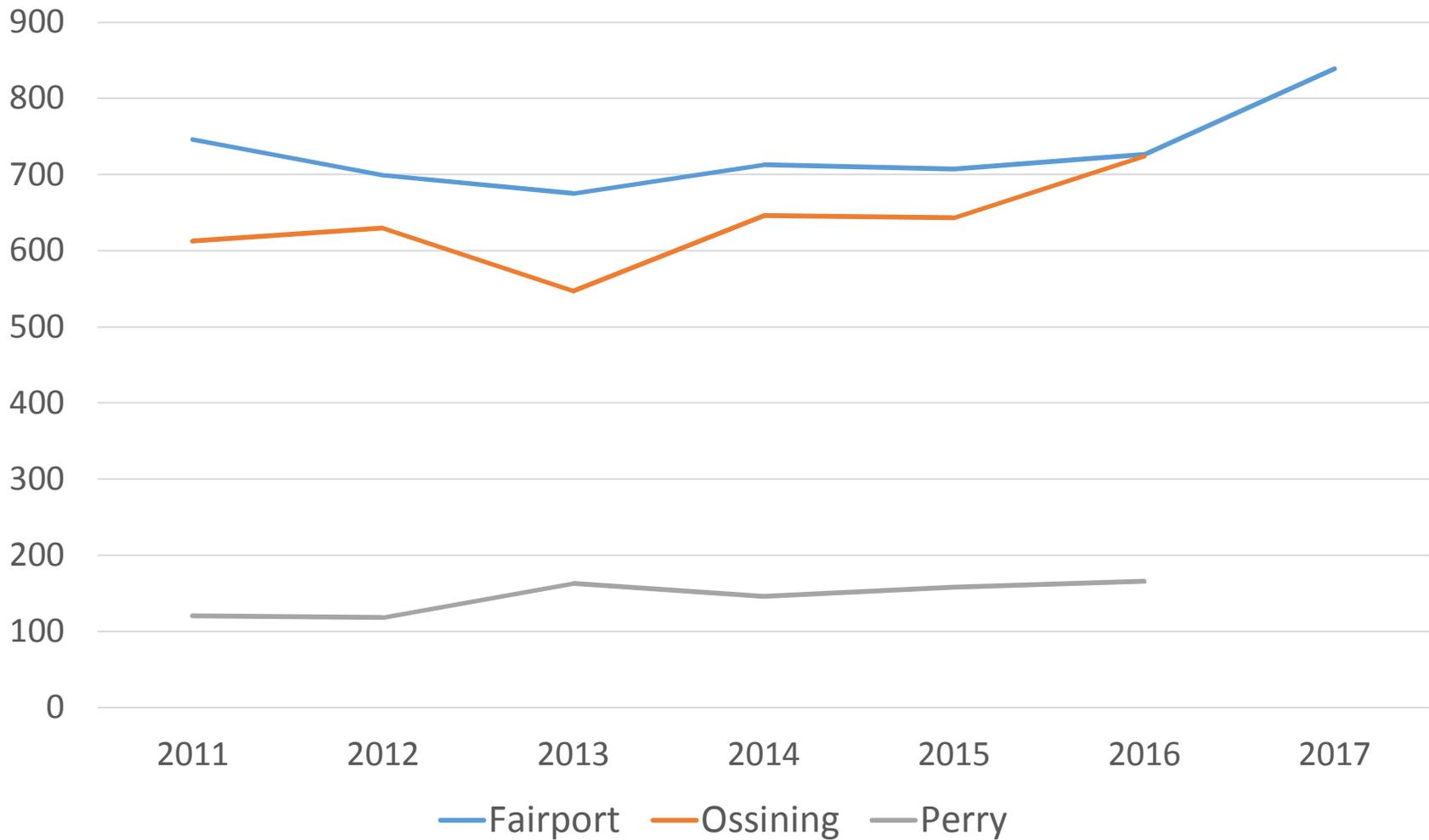
More than a million	NYC
250,000 to a million	Buffalo
100,000 to 249,999	Rochester, Yonkers, Syracuse, Albany
50,000 to 99,999	17
25,000 to 49,999	85
10,000 to 24,999	214
5,000 to 9,999	276
2,500 to 4,999	382
Under 2,500	810
Total departments	1,790

Source: NFPA, Number of FD in US by Pop. & State, 2012-2014

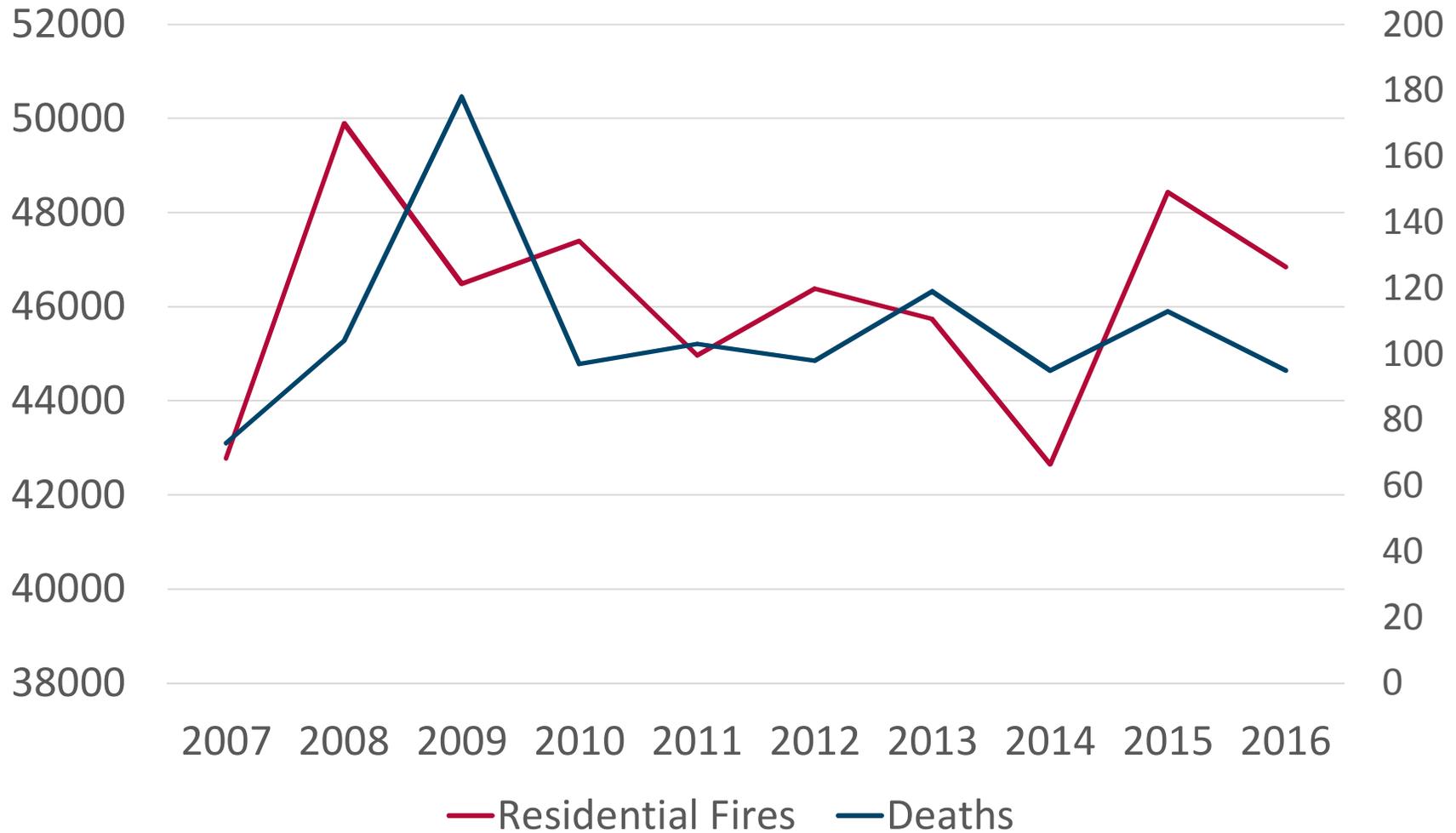
Trend of EMS Calls



Trends of Fire Calls



Residential Fires and Deaths in New York



Volunteerism in Decline

- Decline in overall volunteerism, not just public safety
- Volunteers in essential services need to be replaced
- Contributing factors include:
 - Increased societal demands
 - Need for additional income
 - Higher levels of training required
 - Increased demand for services
 - Administrative burden has heightened
 - Generational imperative had changed
 - Strong leadership and organizational cohesion are influential
 - Ties to community are weaker
 - Housing costs can drive people away
 - Fewer employers allow employees to be released
 - Shift work from manufacturers has left

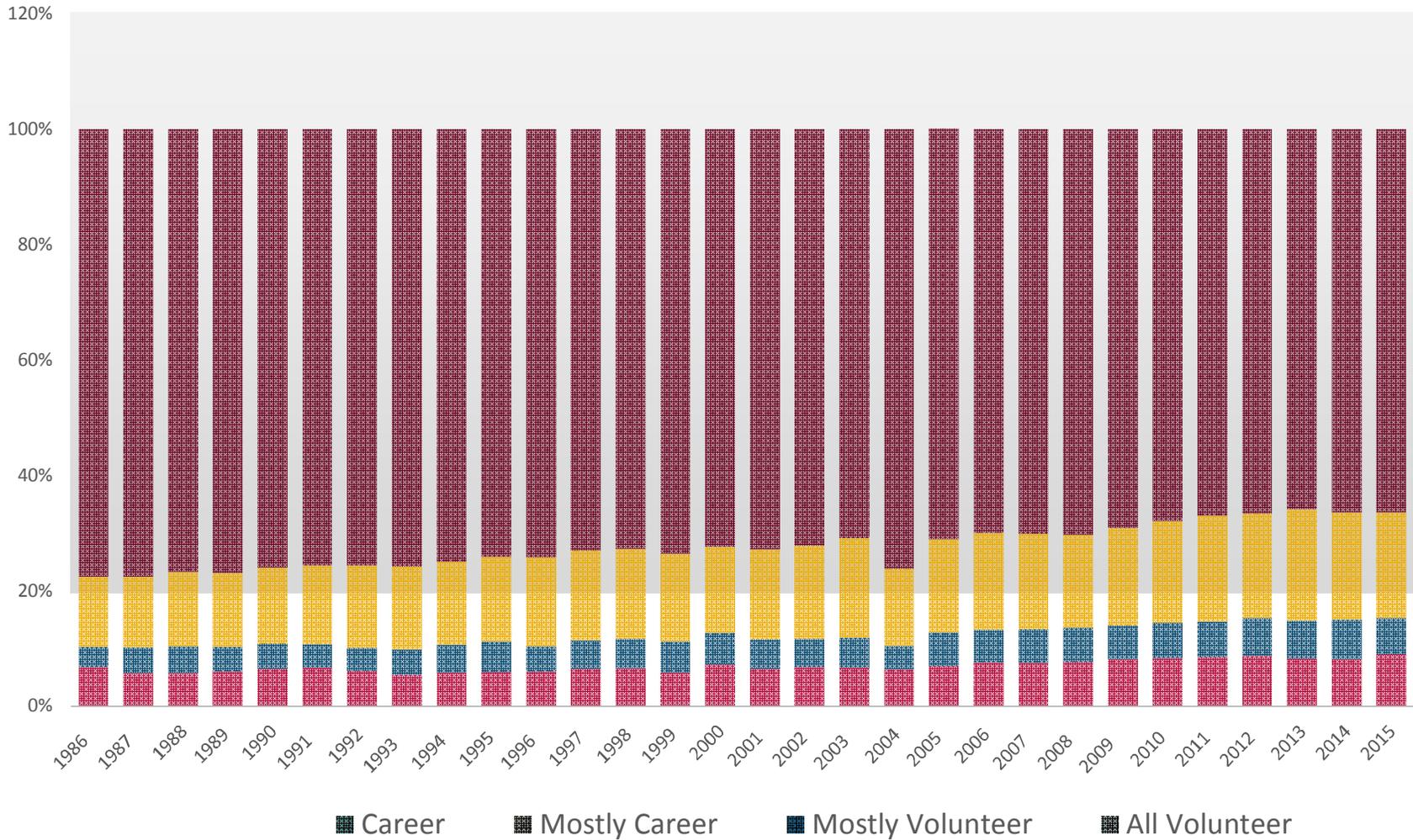
EMS Questions to Ask

- What are your sources of revenue?
 - If they bill: How do they handle collections?
- What is the level of care on the ambulances?
- Where does paramedic service come from?
- What is your 90th percentile response time to life threatening calls?
- What is your 90th percentile response time to other calls?
- How often do you request mutual aid?
- How does the mutual aid process impact response times?
- What is their fiscal health – Reserves? Capital Plan? Controls?
- How do you measure patient care success?

Ideas to ensure quality EMS services

- Support paid staff, if appropriate
- Have an open relationship
 - Plan for the routine and extraordinary
 - Communicate about limitations
- Ask for accountability
- Support and encourage collaboration and shared services
- Recruit youth through Explorer or junior member programs
- Understand the basic costs
 - About 1,000 calls a year needed to generate revenue sufficient to operate one ambulance
- Help reduce costs where appropriate
 - Use of municipal bids
 - IT support
- Support (write) grant applications
- Administrative supports

Share of Volunteer Fire Departments vs. Career



Questions to ask the Fire Service

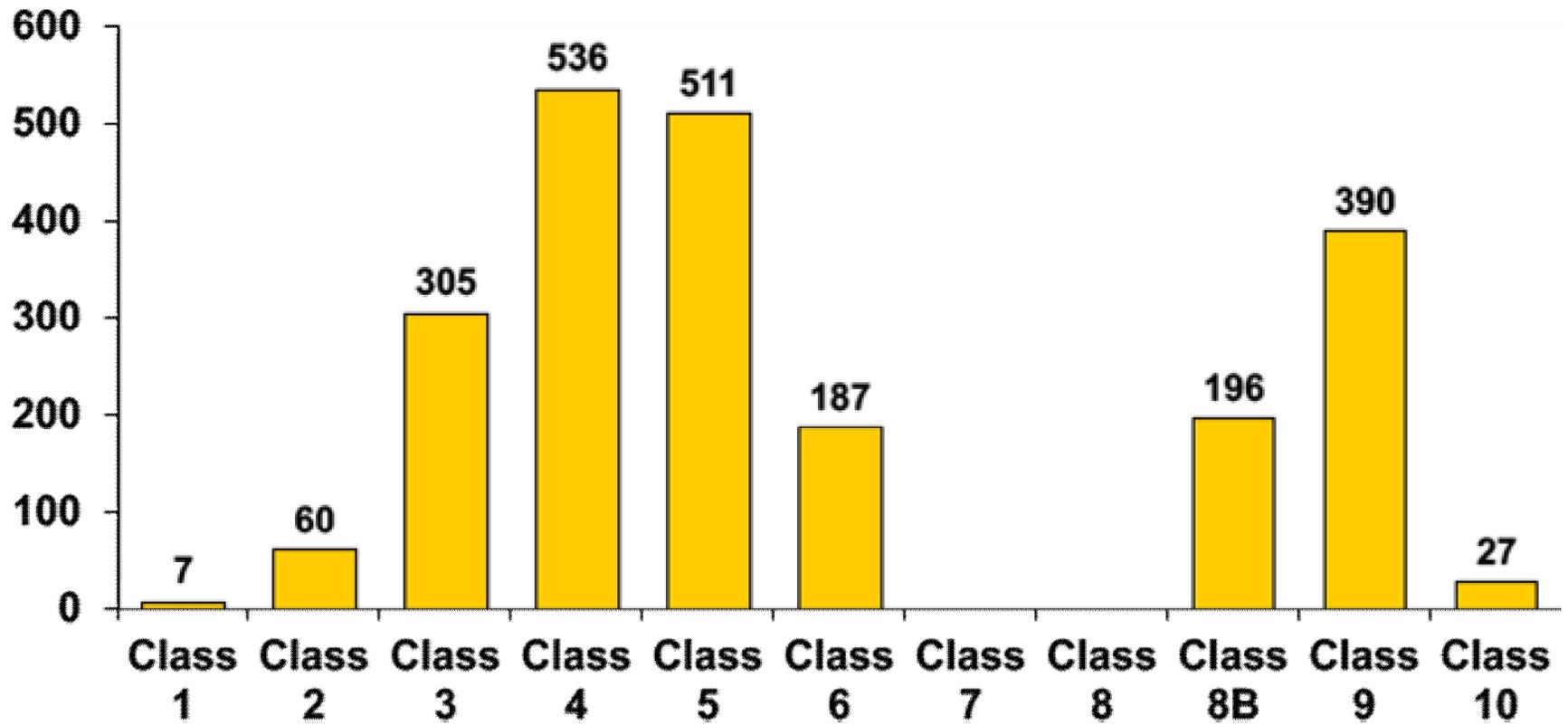
- What is the Insurance Service Organization (ISO) Rating?
 - Fire Operations
 - Dispatch
 - Water Supply
- How does the department compare to the NFPA 1710/1720 Standard?
- How likely are you to get 15 firefighters on scene in 8 minutes of a structure fire alarm?
- Do you consistently follow a two in/two out rule when fighting a fire?
- Where does mutual aid come from? When is it used?
- How often is automatic aid used?
- What is the plan for maintaining equipment?
- What is your plan for capital investment?

ISO Overview

FSRS Feature	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Emergency Communications		
414. Credit for Emergency Reporting	1.50	3
422. Credit for Telecommunicators	2.78	4
432. Credit for Dispatch Circuits	2.76	3
440. Credit for Receiving and Handling Fire Alarms	7.04	10
Fire Department		
513. Credit for Engine Companies	4.57	6
523. Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.00	0.50
532. Credit for Pump Capacity	3.00	3
549. Credit for Ladder Service	1.73	4
553. Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks	0.00	0.50
561. Credit for Deployment Analysis	5.98	10
571. Credit for Company Personnel	3.96	15
581. Credit for Training	1.43	9
730. Credit for Operational Considerations	2.00	2
590. Credit for Fire Department	22.67	50
Water Supply		
616. Credit for Supply System	17.22	30
621. Credit for Hydrants	2.98	3
631. Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing	4.00	7
640. Credit for Water Supply	24.20	40
Divergence		
1050. Community Risk Reduction	-3.03	--
	2.63	5.50
Total Credit	53.51	105.50

ISO Ratings in New York

New York



Ideas to ensure quality fire services

- Encourage rational sharing of resources
- Support exploration of consolidation
- Discuss appropriate cost sharing
- Support volunteers to the extent possible
 - NYS Income Tax Credit eligibility
 - Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP)
 - Recruit new members
 - Release time to respond to calls
- Planning for capital costs
- Objectively evaluate need for career staff
- Community wide fire prevention initiatives

Ideas to support volunteers

- Support recruitment drives
- Tuition support to local colleges
- Bunk In program
- Recruit from existing social groups
- Community benefit programs
 - Gym memberships
 - Discounts at local retailers
- Provide educational opportunities
- Participate in recognition weeks
- Thank, Thank, Thank

Questions

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