



MERIDIAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

2025 Annual Report

Compassion | Professionalism | Honesty | Ownership | Trust



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2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



It is my honor to present the Meridian Fire Department's 2025 Annual Report, which reflects the dedication, professionalism, and service-minded culture our members bring to this community every day. Guided by our values—Compassion, Professionalism, Honesty, Ownership, and Trust—our team remained focused on delivering reliable emergency services while strengthening the systems that keep Meridian safe and resilient.

In 2025, Meridian Fire operated from eight fire stations with a team of 124 firefighters and 22 administrative staff, working together to meet growing service demands while maintaining the high standards our residents expect. As our city and region continue to expand, that demand is evident: we responded to 9,452 incidents within Meridian (up 6.7%) and 10,740 total incidents when including mutual aid and out-of-area responses (up 7.7%). Even with increased workload, our total response time decreased by 10 seconds, the lowest level we've seen since 2019, reflecting ongoing improvements in readiness and performance.

This report also highlights meaningful progress beyond emergency response. Our Community Risk Reduction efforts demonstrate how proactive work reduces harm and improves sustainability: through data-informed fall prevention initiatives, falls and lift assists declined from 24.5% of incidents (Q3 2024) to 18.4% (Q3 2025). In Fire Prevention, we strengthened local capability by implementing an On-Call Fire Investigation Program providing 24/7/365 coverage, supporting both community expectations and accreditation standards.

Internally, we advanced strategic and operational foundations—launching a three-year Strategic Plan, preparing for the national transition from NFIRS to NERIS effective January 2026, and initiating long-range station planning through a Capital Facilities Plan for Stations 1–5. We also adopted a new Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and implemented regional pre-assignments to improve cross-boundary response to residential structure fires.

The Meridian Fire Department's strength is rooted in a values-driven, mission-focused team and reinforced through our partnership with the Meridian Rural Fire Protection District and the leadership of the City of Meridian, our Mayor, and City Council.

This progress is only possible because of exceptional people. To our firefighters, officers, civilian staff, and community partners: thank you for your professionalism and unwavering commitment to service. To our Mayor, City Council, and the citizens of Meridian: thank you for your continued trust and support as we work every day to protect lives, property, and the future of our community.


KRIS BLUME

8

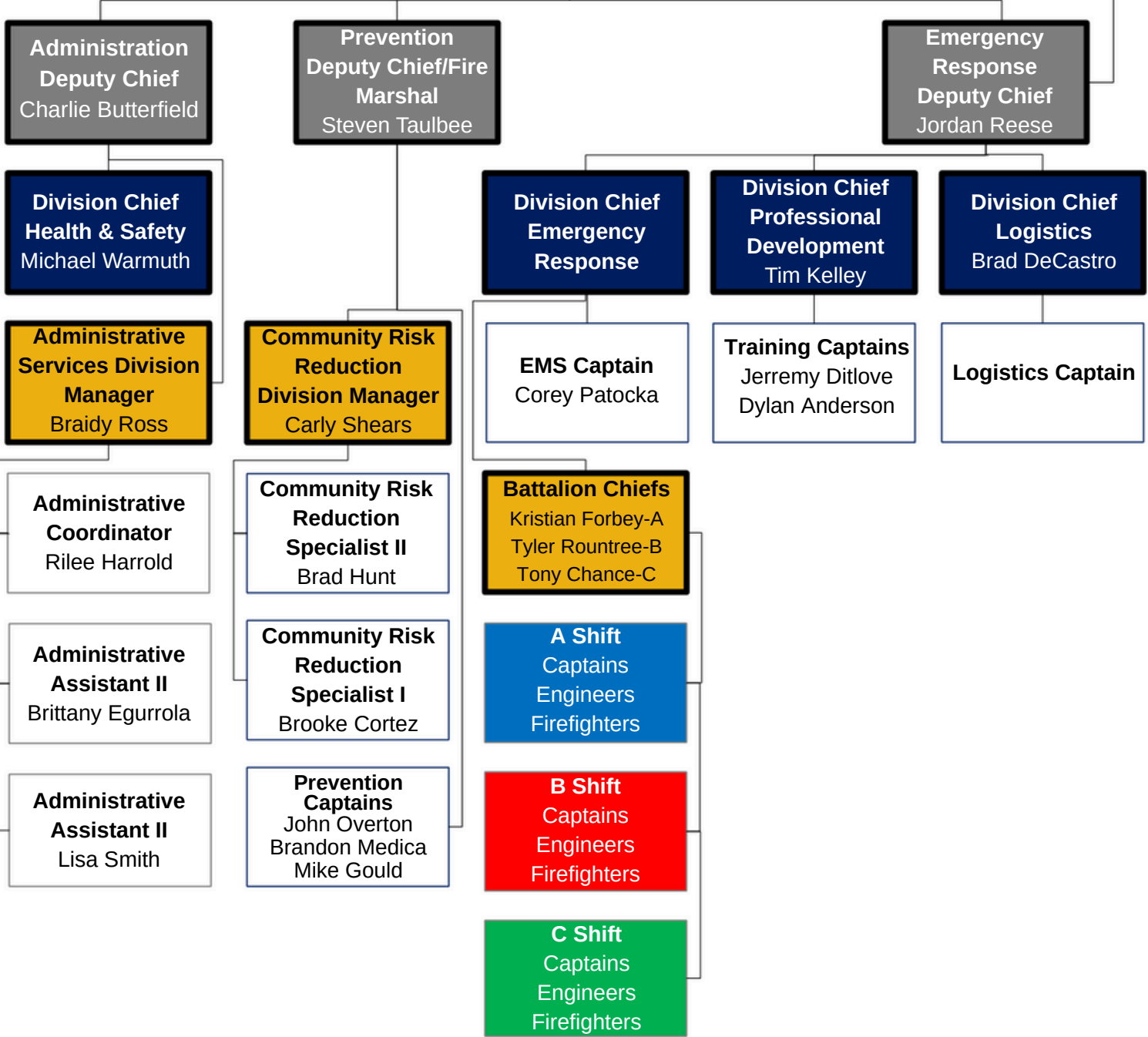
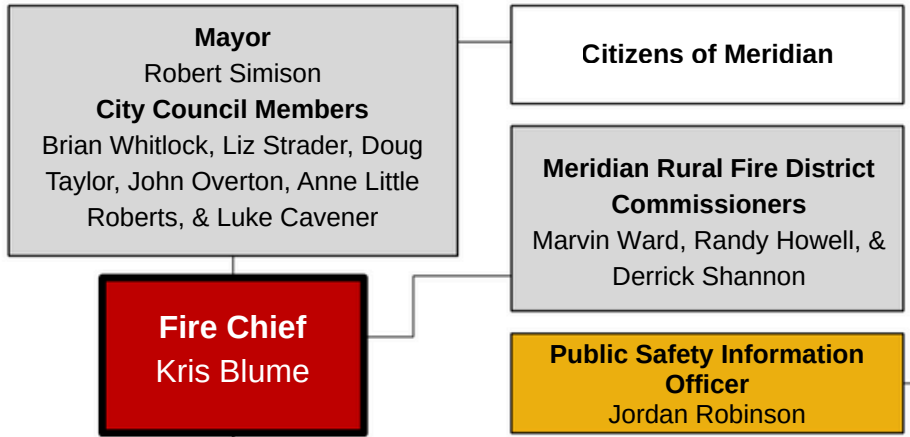
FIRE STATIONS

22

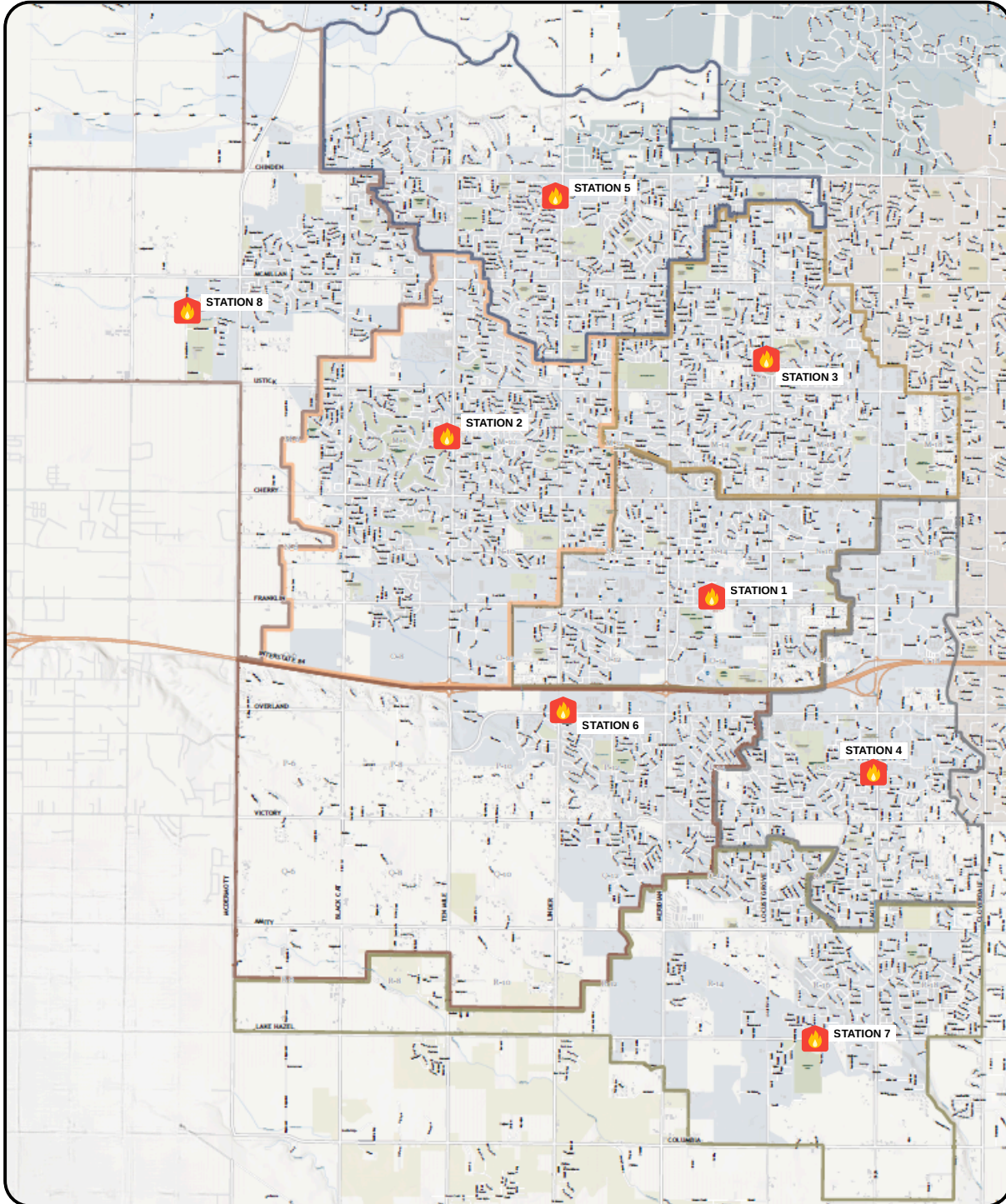
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

124

FIREFIGHTERS



FIRE STATIONS



Station #1
540 E Franklin Rd.
Meridian, ID 83642

Station #2
2401 N Ten Mile Rd.
Meridian, ID 83646

Station #3
3545 N Locust Grove
Rd.
Meridian, ID 83646

Station #4
2515 S Eagle Rd.
Meridian, ID 83642

Station #5
6001 N Linder Rd.
Meridian, ID 83646

Station #6
1435 W Overland Rd.
Meridian, ID 83642

Station #7
6343 S Recreation Ave.
Meridian, ID 83642

Station #8
4250 N Owyhee Storm
Ave.
Meridian, ID 83646

FINANCIAL REPORT

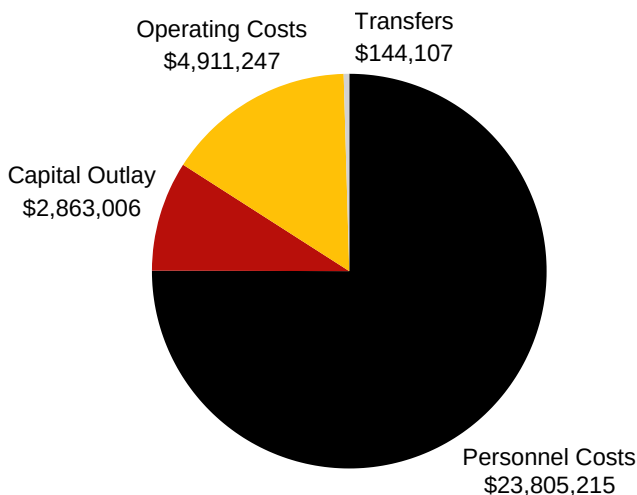
For Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, the Fire Department budget demonstrates a continued commitment to investing in personnel, strengthening operational capacity, and advancing strategic priorities, while also responding to shifts in revenues and expenditures.

Total expenditures are projected at \$31.6 million, an increase of \$775,442 (2.5%) compared to FY 2024. Key drivers of this increase include:

- **Personnel Costs:** Budgeted at \$23.8 million, up \$714,671 (3.1%) from FY 2024. The increase reflects contractual wage obligations, benefits, and staffing expenses necessary to sustain full operational readiness. Personnel continues to represent the largest share of the budget, accounting for nearly 75% of total expenditures.
- **Operating Costs:** Budgeted at \$4.9 million, an increase of \$1.36 million (38.5%) from FY 2024. This growth is driven by higher costs for equipment, training, and service-related needs that directly support fire suppression, emergency medical response, and other essential public safety services.
- **Capital Costs:** Budgeted at \$2.9 million, a decrease of \$1.3 million (-31.3%) compared to FY 2024. The reduction reflects the completion of major projects or scaling back of planned capital investments relative to the prior year's higher funding levels.

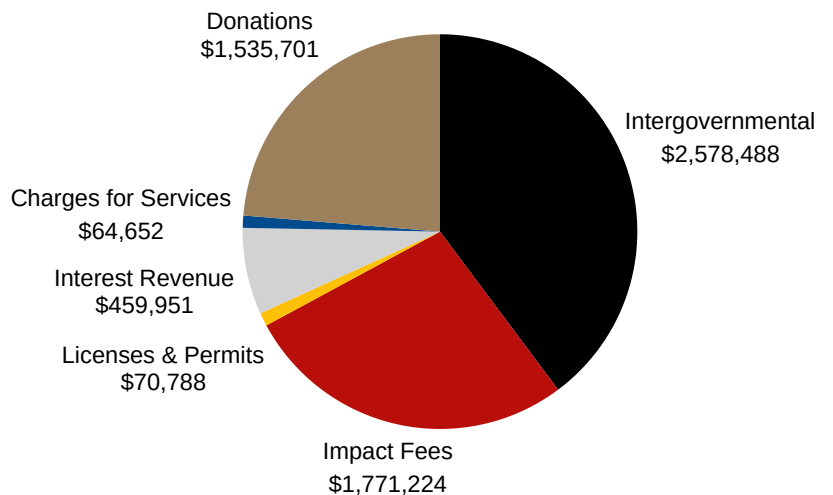
FY25 EXPENSES

\$31,579,468



FY25 REVENUES

\$6,597,963



DEPARTMENT STATS

In 2025, the Meridian Fire Department experienced measurable growth in both call volume and operational workload, reflecting continued population growth, increased service demand, and expanded regional responsibilities.

Within the City of Meridian, the department responded to 9,452 incidents, an increase of 6.7% representing a rise in in-city emergency activity. When including mutual aid and out-of-area responses, total incident volume reached 10,740, an increase of 7.7%, over the previous year. This growth highlights the department's expanding role as both a municipal and regional emergency response provider.

Unit activity rose at a similar rate. 11,229 unit responses occurred within the city, an increase of 6.1% from 2024. Total unit responses, including those outside of Meridian, increased to 12,748, up 7.1%. These figures reflect not only higher call volume but also the increased use of multiple companies on medical, fire, rescue, and special operations incidents.




This sustained growth in both incidents and unit responses reinforces the need for data-driven deployment models, staffing analysis, and resource planning. By maintaining accurate and timely reporting, the Meridian Fire Department ensures that operational decisions are aligned with community risk, response demand, and the department's commitment to delivering high-quality, reliable emergency services to the residents of Meridian and our regional partners.

Total Incident Count & Unit Responses

Metric	2025	Change from 2024
Incidents (Meridian Only)	9,452	597 (+6.7%)
Incidents (All Responses)	10,740	766 (+7.7%)
Unit Responses (Meridian Only)	11,229	648 (+6.1%)
Unit Responses (All Responses)	12,748	841 (+7.1%)

DEPARTMENT STATS

Response Time Improvement

		2024	2025
Alarm Handling		3:15	3:09
Turnout Time		2:39	2:14
Travel Time		6:56	7:09
Total Response		11:00	10:50

Total response time has decreased in 2025 by 10 seconds.
This is the lowest it has been since 2019.



29

Working Structure Fires

19

Cooking Fires
(contained)

Incidents in Meridian

Call Type	Count	% of Total
EMS	7,418	78%
Fire	1,236	13%
Other	380	4%
HazMat	257	3%
Wildland	69	<1%
Technical Rescue	2	<1%
Water Rescue	1	<1%

CRR Impact on Public Safety Calls

As we continue working to address public service-related calls in a proactive measure through the CRR division (smoke alarm servicing, lift assists, etc.) we have seen a decrease in CAD Incident Type "Other" go from 463 in 2024 to 380 in 2025.

While the total incident count of fall and lift assist related calls has increased slightly (as the total call volume continues to increase) we are seeing a decrease in the total % of these types of calls.

26.17%

2024

24.4%

2025

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION



In 2025, the City of Meridian contracted with Cole Architects to develop a comprehensive Capital Facilities Plan focused on Fire Stations 1 through 5. This plan evaluates the existing conditions of all five stations and identifies recommended upgrades and improvements. A key component of the assessment emphasizes industry best practices in fire station design, particularly those that support firefighter health, safety, and operational efficiency. The Capital Facilities Plan will also include preliminary construction cost estimates to support future fire station remodels and long-term capital planning.

In preparation for a nationwide transition effective January 2026, the Meridian Fire Department began migrating from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). NFIRS has served as the federal repository for fire incident reporting since 1975 and has undergone limited modernization during its tenure. Throughout 2025, the department took proactive steps to support a successful transition, including implementing new reporting software, conducting department-wide training on updated reporting standards, collaborating with regional and state partners to ensure consistency, and establishing processes to preserve and maintain historical incident data.

The Meridian Fire Department also launched a three-year Strategic Plan in 2025. Throughout the year, designated stakeholders worked within their areas of responsibility to advance the plan's action items. Multiple goals and objectives reached key implementation milestones, laying the foundation for continued progress. Work on remaining objectives will continue over the next several years to ensure sustained organizational growth and alignment with departmental priorities.

HEALTH & SAFETY DIVISION

The Meridian Fire Department continues its commitment to firefighter health, wellness, and safety. The Division of Health and Safety works to protect the well-being of all personnel by reducing risks, strengthening prevention practices, and supporting the physical and mental health of members and their families.

The Division advanced firefighter health and wellness through enhancements to the respiratory protection program, expanded Peer Fitness Team support, and improved medical, fitness, and rehabilitative evaluation processes. Behavioral health initiatives, including multiple Struggle Well training sessions and presentations led by Dr. Brooke Bartlett, reinforced mental wellness, reduced stigma, and strengthened organizational resilience.

In collaboration with Operations and Logistics, the Division launched the Station Readiness and Facility Safety Program, establishing a standardized process for identifying and correcting facility hazards through routine reviews and biannual inspections. Safety systems were further modernized by transitioning to an online SDS repository, removing fluorinated foam to reduce PFAS exposure, and implementing a company-level incident rehabilitation program to support firefighter recovery during emergency operations.

The department continued its participation in the Fire Fighter Cancer Cohort Study with the University of Arizona, contributing to national research on firefighter cancer and PFAS exposure. Equipment safety and compliance were strengthened through the introduction of a mobile NFPA 1851-compliant turnout cleaning and inspection service, a station-wear evaluation, participation in a turnout technology seminar, and completion of preventive maintenance assessments for all station fitness equipment.

The Division developed a Serious Injury and Line of Duty Death planning guide and conducted a full tabletop exercise to enhance preparedness for critical incidents. The department also hosted the national Taking Care of Our Own program, strengthening coordination and support systems for firefighters, families, and partner agencies.

The Division will continue advancing firefighter safety and wellness by strengthening the Annual Critical Test Program, reviewing exposure reduction strategies, expanding mental health resources, developing an Incident Safety Officer program, and enhancing safety oversight through the Joint Labor-Management Health and Safety Committee.



PREVENTION DIVISION



1,634
Fire Inspections



981
Re-Inspections



33
Fire
Investigations

In 2025, the Fire Prevention Division implemented an On-Call Fire Investigation Program to address limitations in the previous response model, which was neither effective nor sustainable due to reliance on neighboring agencies for fire investigation services within the City of Meridian. Recognizing the need for timely, consistent, and locally controlled investigations, the Meridian Fire Department established an internal program to meet operational demands and community expectations.

The Fire Investigation Program is staffed by all members of the Fire Prevention Division, including three Captain Fire Inspector/Fire Investigators, with oversight provided by the Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal. This structure ensures accountability, consistency, and professional expertise in the investigation of fire incidents.

The program provides 24-hour-a-day, 365-days-a-year fire investigation coverage for the City of Meridian. Timely and accurate fire investigations, coupled with post-fire incident analysis, support enhanced fire prevention strategies and strengthen Community Risk Reduction efforts throughout the city.

This program also aligns with CFAI accreditation requirements, ensuring the department operates an adequate, effective, and efficient fire investigation system focused on determining origin and cause, as well as the proper classification of fires and explosions.

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION

Our CRR team is an essential extension of our emergency response, working to not only prevent emergencies in our community, but to lessen the impact for when those unavoidable incidents do occur. Work in this division is data informed and strategic in program implementation.

Fall prevention has been a primary focus in this division throughout 2025. Last year, in Q3 of 2024, calls for falls and lift assists accounted for 24.5% of our total incidents. This being nearly 1 in every 4 calls for service, and higher than the national average. With the support of our community partners, the implementation of home safety assessments, our staff providing education and outreach, we have been able to continually reduce this particular call type down to 18.4% in Q3 of 2025. This measurable decline highlights the meaningful impact data-informed prevention can have on reducing 911 call volume and improving overall community safety.

In addition to fall prevention, the CRR Division continues to strengthen support for vulnerable residents through our smoke and CO alarm program. We have recently partnered with Idaho HealthCorps to bring on a part-time volunteer to assist with this highly requested service. Beyond increasing home safety, this program has also contributed to a reduction in non-emergent service-related calls placed through the 911 system. By proactively identifying and resolving alarm issues before they escalate into requests for service, we ensure better utilization of emergency resources and allow crews to remain available for true emergencies.

The division also maintains a robust suite of community programs, including home safety assessments, CPR/AED and Stop the Bleed training, car seat checks and installations, and fire and life safety education in Meridian's elementary schools. Each of these initiatives contributes to a more resilient, informed, and prepared community.

As we look ahead, the work of the CRR Division demonstrates that prevention is not a parallel effort to emergency response—it is an essential extension of it. By reducing call volume, improving safety outcomes, and empowering our residents with tools and knowledge, we strengthen the entire emergency services system. This division continues to represent our commitment to proactive service and strategic innovation. The impact this division has is measurable, their approach is intentional, and their efforts are helping shape a safer and more sustainable future for Meridian.



OPERATIONS DIVISION

In 2025, the Meridian Fire Department made significant strides in strengthening both our operational readiness and our leadership framework, ensuring the City is better prepared to respond to emergencies of all types and scales.

A major milestone was the successful development and adoption of a new Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for the City of Meridian. This comprehensive plan establishes a clear framework for how the City coordinates, communicates, and manages resources during large-scale emergencies and disasters. The updated EOP enhances interdepartmental and regional coordination, ensuring that Meridian can respond quickly, efficiently, and in alignment with best practices in emergency management.

The department also experienced important leadership growth with the promotion of Chief Kelley and Chief DeCastro. Their promotions reflect both their demonstrated professionalism and the department's commitment to developing experienced leaders who can guide the organization through complex emergency response and strategic initiatives.

To further strengthen emergency response capabilities, the department created and implemented the new position of Division Chief of Emergency Response. This role provides dedicated oversight of daily operations, training, and incident readiness, improving command continuity and ensuring that response resources are aligned with the evolving needs of the community. The establishment of this position enhances operational consistency and provides a stronger command structure during both routine incidents and large-scale emergencies.

Additionally, the Meridian Fire Department implemented regional pre-assignments for single-family residential structure fires as part of a collaborative effort with our regional fire service partners. These pre-assignments were designed to streamline known fireground functions, improve operational consistency, and reduce unnecessary radio traffic during the critical early moments of an incident. By clearly defining roles and expectations prior to dispatch, crews were able to focus on task execution, situational awareness, and firefighter safety. This initiative represents an important step toward enhanced regional coordination, and the department remains committed to expanding pre-assignments in the future to include additional building types and incident profiles.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate Meridian Fire Department's continued focus on leadership development, regional collaboration, and proactive planning ensuring the department remains prepared to protect the community today and into the future.



TRAINING DIVISION



The Fire Training Division experienced a year of significant transition marked by both challenge and accomplishment. In May, Meridian Fire recognized the retirement of veteran firefighter and the department's longest-tenured Training Captain, Lance Smith, whose leadership and dedication left a lasting impact on the division. During this period, the department also went through a broader organizational transition that placed additional demands on the Training Division. Despite these challenges, Meridian Fire once again demonstrated its resilience and commitment to mission.

During this period of transition, Chief Reese stepped in to provide interim leadership, ensuring continuity and stability within the Training Division. Captain Ditlove carried an extraordinary workload throughout the year, and his work ethic, professionalism, and dedication to the department were instrumental in maintaining training operations and advancing key initiatives. His efforts resulted in significant accomplishments that strengthened the department's readiness and future leadership.

Over the course of the year, ten probationary firefighters from the 24-1 Academy successfully completed their probationary period, while ten recruits graduated from the 25-1 Academy and are currently progressing through their probationary year. The division also successfully facilitated multiple promotional processes, including the promotion of five Engineer candidates, the completion of the Captain promotional process by six candidates with one promoted and others available to serve as acting Captains, and one Battalion Chief candidate completing the process and remaining available to swing.



TRAINING DIVISION

In addition to personnel development, the division made meaningful improvements to training infrastructure and resources. The department was awarded an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to support advanced technical rescue training for its members. Through this grant, four technical rescue courses: Confined Space Entry, Rope Rescue, Structural Collapse, and Trench Rescue, were delivered and hosted by the Boise Fire Department, significantly enhancing member proficiency and strengthening regional interoperability.

We strengthened our wildland fire response capabilities through targeted training conducted during the summer, resulting in multiple members achieving Red Card certification. This focused effort enhanced operational readiness for wildland incidents and positioned the department to support local and statewide responses.

Towards the end of 2025 Tim Kelley was promoted to the position of Division Chief of Training for the Meridian Fire Department. Chief Kelley was previously a suppression captain with the department and brings over 20 years of valuable experience to the Division. After taking this promotion late in the year, he has already conducted promotional testing at each rank, delivered a captains level officer development process, built a yearly training plan to be implemented in 2026, overseen multiple blocks of training and helped to coordinate training at every level in the department. One of his top priorities was to fill a vacancy in one of the training captain positions which he successfully did with Captain Dylan Anderson. Captain Anderson brings many years of experience into this role and will be a great addition to the training division. The training division has set up the department to have a great year of training and development in 2026.



21

Promotional Testing
Participants



19

Members Trained in
Technical Rescue



20

Probationary
Firefighters

LOGISTICS DIVISION



In 2025, the Logistics Division played a critical role in advancing the Meridian Fire Department's operational readiness, firefighter safety, and long-term sustainability through strategic equipment upgrades, evaluative studies, and leadership development.

One of the most visible initiatives in 2025 was the department's transition to a brand-new specification for our turnout gear. Our new spec was tested and vetted by the Academy Cadre of Recruit Class 24-1. This reflects a growing department emphasis on firefighter safety, durability, fit, and member buy-in. The change also supports enhanced cancer risk reduction efforts, a calculated balance between protection and heat stress, and provides a consistent, modern look across the department. We were able to outfit all line personnel with our new spec within one calendar year.



The Logistics Division also conducted a comprehensive helmet evaluation study during the year. This study involved running multiple helmet models through a series of realistic drills designed to simulate operational conditions encountered on the fireground. Firefighters evaluated performance factors such as comfort, visibility, weight, balance, and overall functionality. Feedback gathered during these drills provided valuable insight to ensure future helmet selections align with both safety standards and the practical needs of line personnel, reinforcing the department's commitment to evidence-based equipment decisions.

In support of fleet modernization and operational capability, the department completed the purchase and delivery of a new fire truck in 2025. Fire trucks remain a vital component of urban fire protection, serving as critical platforms for elevated master streams, aerial access, and firefighter rescue in multi-story and commercial structures. As Meridian continues to grow, maintaining a reliable and modern truck fleet ensures the department can effectively respond to complex incidents, support interior and exterior fire suppression operations, and provide rapid access and ventilation capabilities essential to life safety and property conservation.



Additionally, 2025 marked a significant leadership milestone within the Logistics Division with the promotion of the Logistics Captain, Brad DeCastro to Division Chief of Logistics. This promotion strengthens the department's organizational structure and enhances oversight of equipment procurement, fleet management, PPE programs, and logistical planning. Establishing this leadership position ensures a focused and strategic approach to supporting operations, improving accountability, and aligning logistics functions with the department's long-term goals.

AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS

Medal of Courage - The Medal of Courage is awarded to any member of the Meridian Fire Department who intelligently in the line of duty, or off duty, performs a selfless and/or courageous act taken at a risk of personal injury with full awareness of the danger involved or for those who distinguish themselves in the performance of duty by acts of personnel bravery above and beyond the call of duty.

- **Jordan Williams (2024)**

Citizens Award - For a business or individuals that have made contributions to the department that either enhance the department's mission and service delivery capabilities and/or improves the safety and quality of life for the citizens of Meridian of the members of the Meridian Fire Department.

- **Karina Peterson (2024)**

Distinguished Service Award - The Distinguished Service Award may be presented to any member of the Meridian Fire Department who performance or more of the following: an act of valuable service that goes above and beyond the individual's duties; highly credible acts of fire service over an extended period of time; continuous professionalism as indicated by superiors, peers, and the public; submission of a device or program that increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the Fire Department; or special dedication in the service of the member of IAFF Local 2311.

- **Chris Verkerk and Jerremy Ditlove (2025)**

Unit Citation Award - The Unit Citation Ribbon shall be awarded to a unit or group that has demonstrated outstanding performance of their duties for the Meridian Fire Department. These duties may include responses, assigned work or special tasks that make a significant impact on the Meridian Fire Department or the outcome of the response.

2024

- 24-1 EMT Course Training Cadre
- E36, BC31, E32, T31: B-Shift
- T35: A-Shift

2025

- Tyler Rountree, Grant Hamilton, Anja Sundali, Nick Piccono, and Matt Caldwell

Chief's Award of Excellence - The Chief's Award of Excellence shall be awarded at the discretion of the Fire Chief of the Meridian Fire Department to any member who has shown distinguished and/or exemplary service to the Meridian Fire Department.

- **Mike Gould, John Overton and Brandon Medica (2024)**
- **Sean Stear (2025)**

Suppression Employee of the Year - The Suppression Employee of the Year Ribbon shall be awarded to the suppression employee who best represents the suppression line (Firefighter, Engineer, Captain, Battalion Chief) of the Meridian Fire Department.

- **Jay Mentzer (2024)**
- **Luke Smillie (2025)**

Non-Suppression Employee of the Year - The Non-Suppressions Employee of the Year shall be awarded to a fire department non-suppression employee who best represents the Meridian Fire Department.

- **Carly Shears (2024)**
- **Brad DeCastro (2025)**



AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS



Promotions

Division Chief of Training - Tim Kelley

Division Chief of Logistics - Brad DeCastro

Battalion Chief - Tony Chance

Suppression Captain - Brennon Maloney, Andrew Taghdiri, Christopher Goodnight, Paul Schepper, and Tim Walstad

Training Captain - Dylan Anderson

Engineer - Nick Vernon, Scott Mansell, Aaron Huismann, Jared Alvord, Chad Beatty, and Joe Dagen

25 Years of Service

Mike Zumwalt

20 Years of Service

Grant Hamilton, Steve Hayes, Adam Johnston, Trevor Palmer, Chris Verkerk, Scott Warren, and Glenn Wilson

15 Years of Service

Jerin Jones, James Moriarty, and Randy Platt

10 Years of Service

Michael Bayless and Nick Piccono

5 Years of Service

Benjamin Sletmoe

New Firefighters

Luke Bingham, Joshua Hildreth, Theodore Kirkbride, Grace Moloney, Parker Ramey, Parker Rosebrock, Tomas Sholl, Maverick Stevens, Cody Stattner, Viktor Thorbjornson

New Admin

Lisa Smith - Admin Assistant

Brooke Cortez - CRR Specialist

Aiden Howell - AmeriCorps Volunteer

Retirements

Lance Smith - 30 years of service

Brian Zimmerman - 36 years of service

Darby Hill - 22 years of service

Ken Welborn - 25 years of service





