

**U.S. FIRE DEPARTMENT PROFILE  
THROUGH 2006**

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## **Abstract**

NFPA estimates that there were approximately 1,140,900 firefighters in the U.S. in 2006. Of the total number of firefighters 316,950 or 28% were career firefighters and 823,950 (72%) were volunteer firefighters. Most of the career firefighters (76%) are in communities that protect 25,000 or more people. Most of the volunteer firefighters (95%) are in departments that protect fewer than 2,500 people. There are an estimated 30,635 fire departments in the U.S. Of these, 2,321 departments are all career, 1,731 mostly career, 5,134 are mostly volunteer and 21,449 are all volunteer. In the U.S., 13,370 or 44% of departments provide EMS service, 4,430 departments or 14% provide EMS service and advance life support, while 12,835 departments or 42% provide no EMS support.

Keywords: fire departments, firefighters, career, volunteer, EMS, statistics.

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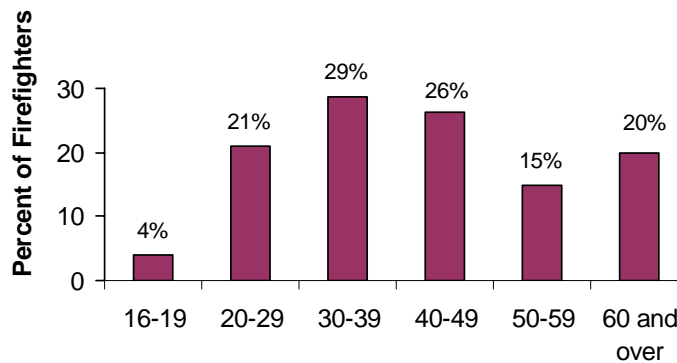


## The U.S. Fire Department Profile

There are **1,140,900** firefighters in the United States

- **28%** (316,950) are career firefighters.
- **72%** (823,950) are volunteer firefighters.
- Firefighters in smaller communities are more likely to be volunteers.
- Departments protecting larger communities tend to have a higher proportion of firefighters in the age groups 30-39 and 40-49 than smaller communities.

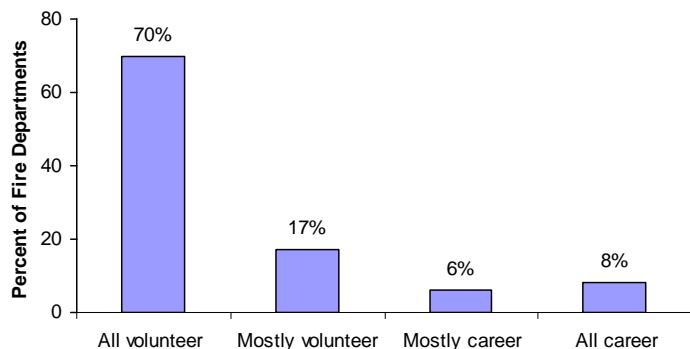
**Number of Firefighters in the U.S. by Age Group, 2006**



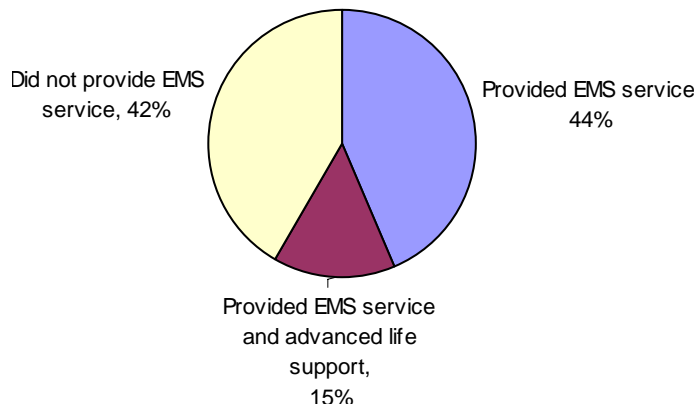
**30,635** fire departments protected the United States in 2006

- All career 2,321
- Mostly career 1,731
- Mostly volunteer 5,134
- All volunteer 21,449

**Fire Departments by Type, 2006**



**Fire Department Provision of Emergency Medical Service, 2004-2006 Annual Averages**



## **Firefighters**

There were approximately 1,140,900 firefighters in the U.S. in 2006, according to estimates based on NFPA's 2006 National Fire Experience Survey (see Table 1). This is an increase of 0.4% from a year ago, or virtually no change from a year ago.

Career firefighters include full-time (career) uniformed firefighters regardless of assignments, e.g., suppression, prevention/inspection, administrative. Career firefighters included here work for a public municipal fire department; they do not include career firefighters who work for state or federal government or in private fire brigades.

Volunteer firefighters include any active part-time (call or volunteer) firefighters. Active volunteers are defined as being involved in fire fighting. Of the total number of firefighters, 316,950 or 28% were career firefighters, while 823,950 or 72% were volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the career firefighters (74%) are in communities that protect 25,000 or more people. Most of the volunteers (95%) are in departments that protect fewer than 25,000 people and more than half are located in the small, rural departments that protect fewer than 2,500 people (see Table 1).

Since 1983, there has been a generally upward trend in career firefighters (see Table 2). This did not quite hold up in 2006, for the number of career firefighters, up 1.1% or virtually no change in 2006, while the number of volunteers changed little, up 0.1% or no change from a year ago.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these results are based on a sample survey, and as a result there is a confidence interval associated with each estimate. Based on data reported by fire departments responding to the 2006 National Fire Experience Survey, the NFPA is confident that the actual number of career firefighters falls within the range of 308,950 to 327,950, and the actual number of volunteer firefighters falls within the range of 806,350 to 841,550.

**Table 1**  
**Career and Volunteer Firefighters**  
**in the U.S., by Population Protected, 2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>	<b>Total</b>
1,000,000 or more	39,800	500	40,300
500,000 to 999,999	30,850	6,400	37,250
250,000 to 499,999	24,850	3,950	28,800
100,000 to 249,999	46,500	2,350	48,850
50,000 to 99,999	44,800	7,100	51,900
25,000 to 49,999	49,100	21,950	71,050
10,000 to 24,999	46,150	84,950	131,100
5,000 to 9,999	17,750	112,400	130,150
2,500 to 4,999	10,300	159,200	169,500
Under 2,500	6,850	425,150	432,000
	316,950	823,950	1,140,900

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006

Note the number of volunteer firefighters for communities of 25,000 or more and the number of career firefighters for communities of less than 10,000 may change considerably from year to year because of their small size and sample variability.

**Table 2**  
**Number of Firefighters in the U.S., 1983-2006**

Year	Total		Career		Volunteer	
	Number	Rate per 1,000 People	Number	Rate per 1,000 People	Number	Rate per 1,000 People
1983	1,111,200	4.75	226,600	0.97	884,600	3.78
1984	1,129,100	4.78	231,600	0.98	897,750	3.80
1985	1,077,950	4.52	238,500	1.00	839,450	3.52
1986	1,045,950	4.35	237,750	0.99	808,200	3.36
1987	1,060,000	4.36	243,200	1.00	816,800	3.36
1988	1,040,750	4.25	252,500	1.03	788,250	3.22
1989	1,020,700	4.12	250,600	1.01	770,100	3.11
1990	1,025,650	4.11	253,000	1.01	772,650	3.10
1991	1,033,600	4.09	261,800	1.04	771,800	3.05
1992	1,058,300	4.14	253,000	0.99	805,300	3.15
1993	1,055,050	4.09	259,650	1.01	795,400	3.08
1994	1,073,600	4.12	265,700	1.02	807,900	3.10
1995	1,098,850	4.18	260,850	0.99	838,000	3.19
1996	1,081,800	4.07	266,300	1.00	815,500	3.07
1997	1,079,050	4.03	275,700	1.03	803,350	3.00
1998	1,082,500	4.00	278,300	1.03	804,200	2.97
1999	1,065,150	3.90	279,900	1.03	785,250	2.87
2000	1,064,150	3.86	286,800	1.04	777,350	2.82
2001	1,078,300	3.85	293,600	1.05	784,700	2.81
2002	1,108,250	3.89	291,650	1.02	816,600	2.87
2003	1,096,900	3.77	296,850	1.02	800,050	2.75
2004	1,100,750	3.76	305,150	1.04	795,600	2.72
2005	1,136,650	3.82	313,300	1.05	823,650	2.77
2006	1,140,900	3.81	316,950	1.06	823,950	2.75

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience (1983-2006).

**The rates listed above are based on data reported to the NFPA, and do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for the 2002-2006 period, there were on average 25,400 African-American career firefighters including fire inspectors or 9% of the total and 11,600 female career firefighters including fire inspectors, or 4% of the total.<sup>2</sup>

A good way to develop a sense of the size of departments relative to the population they protect is to examine the rate of firefighters per 1,000 people. Tables 3 and 4 provide the range of rates for career firefighters in departments protecting at least 25,000 people and for volunteer firefighters in departments protecting fewer than 25,000 people. **It is important to note that the rates are based on data reported to the NFPA and do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

Fire departments protecting communities of 25,000 people or more had median rates of career firefighters per 1,000 people of 1.20 to 1.35 (Table 3). However, ranges for departments by community size varied considerably within stratum and particularly for communities of 100,000 to 249,999, 50,000 to 99,999, and 25,000 to 49,999. Note that the rates for a particular size of community varied considerably, because departments face great variation in their specific circumstances and policies, including length of work week, unusual hazards, geographical dispersion of the community, and scope of services provided (e.g., whether the department handles emergency medical calls).

Fire departments protecting less than 25,000 people had median rates of volunteer firefighters per 1,000 persons in the range of 1.70 to 19.38 (Table 4). This wide range in median rates for smaller communities reflects the fact that it takes a minimum number of firefighters to staff a department regardless of community size. Also volunteer firefighters are usually available on a part-time basis only, so it takes more of them to ensure an adequate response to each alarm.

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<sup>2</sup> Figures are from the *Annual Averages Tables Employment and Earnings*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C. These numbers can change considerably from year to year because of their small size and sample variability.

**Table 3  
Career Firefighter Rates  
By Population Protected, 2006**

Population Protected	Career Firefighters Per 1,000 People		
	Low	Median	High
1,000,000 or more	0.68	1.35	1.87
500,000 to 999,999	0.45	1.29	2.68
250,000 to 499,999	0.58	1.20	2.09
100,000 to 249,999	0.50	1.29	3.16
50,000 to 99,999	0.00	1.30	3.79
25,000 to 49,999	0.00	1.31	3.14

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006.

**The rates listed above are based on data reported to the NFPA, and do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

The rates of a particular size of community may vary widely because departments face great variation in their specific circumstances and policies including length of work week, unusual structural conditions, types of service provided to the community, geographical dispersion of the community, and other factors.

Career rates are shown only for communities over 25,000, where departments are comprised of all career or mostly career firefighters. Also some of these departments have some volunteers, who are not reflected in these figures.

The low and high values are the lowest and highest values by size of community. The median value is chosen so that half the departments had higher values, and half had lower.



**Table 4**  
**Volunteer Firefighter Rates**  
**By Population Protected, 2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Volunteer Firefighters Per 1,000 People</b>		
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>High</b>
10,000 to 24,999	0.00	1.70	9.67
5,000 to 9,999	0.00	3.88	10.48
2,500 to 4,999	1.33	7.25	22.67
Under 2,500	4.33	19.38	*

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006.

**The rates listed above are based on data reported to the NFPA, and do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

The rates of a particular size of community may vary widely because departments face great variation in their specific circumstances and policies including unusual structural conditions, types of service provided to the community, geographic dispersion of the community, and other factors.

Volunteer rates are shown only for communities under 25,000, where departments are comprised of all volunteer or mostly volunteers. Also, some of these departments, particularly those with population protected of 5,000 or more, have some career firefighters, who are not reflected in these figures.

The low and high values are the lowest and the highest values by size of community. The median value is chosen so that half of the departments had higher values, and half had lower.

\*Because there are a minimum number of firefighters to form even a single company, smaller communities of under 100 people can have very high rates.

Length of work week and its effect on rate of career firefighters per 1,000 population by size of community can be seen in Table 5. Tables 6 and 7 provide median rates for career and volunteer firefighters by region and size of community.

Of the 1,140,900 firefighters, the age group accounting for the largest share of firefighters was the 30-39 group, which accounted for 327,550 or 28.7% of all firefighters (Table 8 and Figure 1). Many firefighters fell in the 20-29 age group (21.1%) and the 40-49 age group (26.4%). Firefighters age 50-59 accounted for a smaller share (14.9%), but still more than one-seventh of all firefighters. Few firefighters fell outside this combined range of 20 to 59 years old. Only 3.9% of firefighters were age 16 to 19, and another 19.9% were age 60 and over.

Age group patterns did vary somewhat by population of community protected (Table 9). Departments that protect less than 25,000 people tended to have higher proportions of firefighters in the under 30 age group, while departments that protect 25,000 people or more had higher proportions of firefighters in the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups.

**Table 5**  
**Career Firefighters per 1,000 People For All Career Departments**  
**By Work Week and Population Protected, 2004-2006**

	<b>Career Firefighters Per 1,000 People</b>		
	<b>40-45 hour</b>	<b>46-51 hour</b>	<b>52-60 hour</b>
<b>Population Protected</b>			
1,000,000 or more	1.67	1.35	1.02
500,000 to 999,999	2.29	1.88	1.32
250,000 to 499,999	2.25	1.79	1.32
100,000 to 249,999	2.06	1.54	1.37
50,000 to 99,999	2.18	1.55	1.38
25,000 to 49,999	2.11	1.63	1.66

Source: NFPA Fire Service Survey, 2004-006.

**The rates listed above are based on data reported to the NFPA, and do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

The rates of a particular size of community may vary widely because departments face great variation in their specific circumstances and policies including unusual structural conditions, type of service provided to the community, geographic dispersion of the community and other factors.

Career rates are shown only for communities over 25,000, where departments are comprised mostly of career firefighters.

**Table 6**  
**Median Rates of Career Firefighters per 1,000 People**  
**By Region and Population Protected, 2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Northcentral</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
250,000 or more	1.82	1.62	1.36	0.86
100,000 to 249,999	2.08	1.30	1.55	0.86
50,000 to 99,999	2.09	1.25	1.48	0.91
25,000 to 49,999	1.33	1.07	1.60	1.00

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006.

**The rates listed above are based on data reported to the NFPA, and do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

The rates of a particular size of community may vary widely because departments face great variation in their specific circumstances and policies including unusual structural conditions, types of service provided to the community, geographic dispersion of the community, and other factors.

Career rates are shown only for communities over 25,000, where departments are comprised mostly of career firefighters.

**Table 7**  
**Median Rates of Volunteer Firefighters per 1,000 People**  
**By Region and Population Protected, 2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Northcentral</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
10,000 to 24,999	2.67	1.91	1.14	1.55
5,000 to 9,999	4.81	4.00	3.26	3.84
2,500 to 4,999	8.73	7.32	6.67	6.33
under 2,500	19.51	20.91	16.67	18.80

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006.

**The rates listed above are based on data reported to the NFPA, and do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

The rates of a particular size of community department may vary widely because departments face great variation in their specific circumstances and policies including unusual structural conditions, types of service provided to the community, geographic dispersion of the community, and other factors.

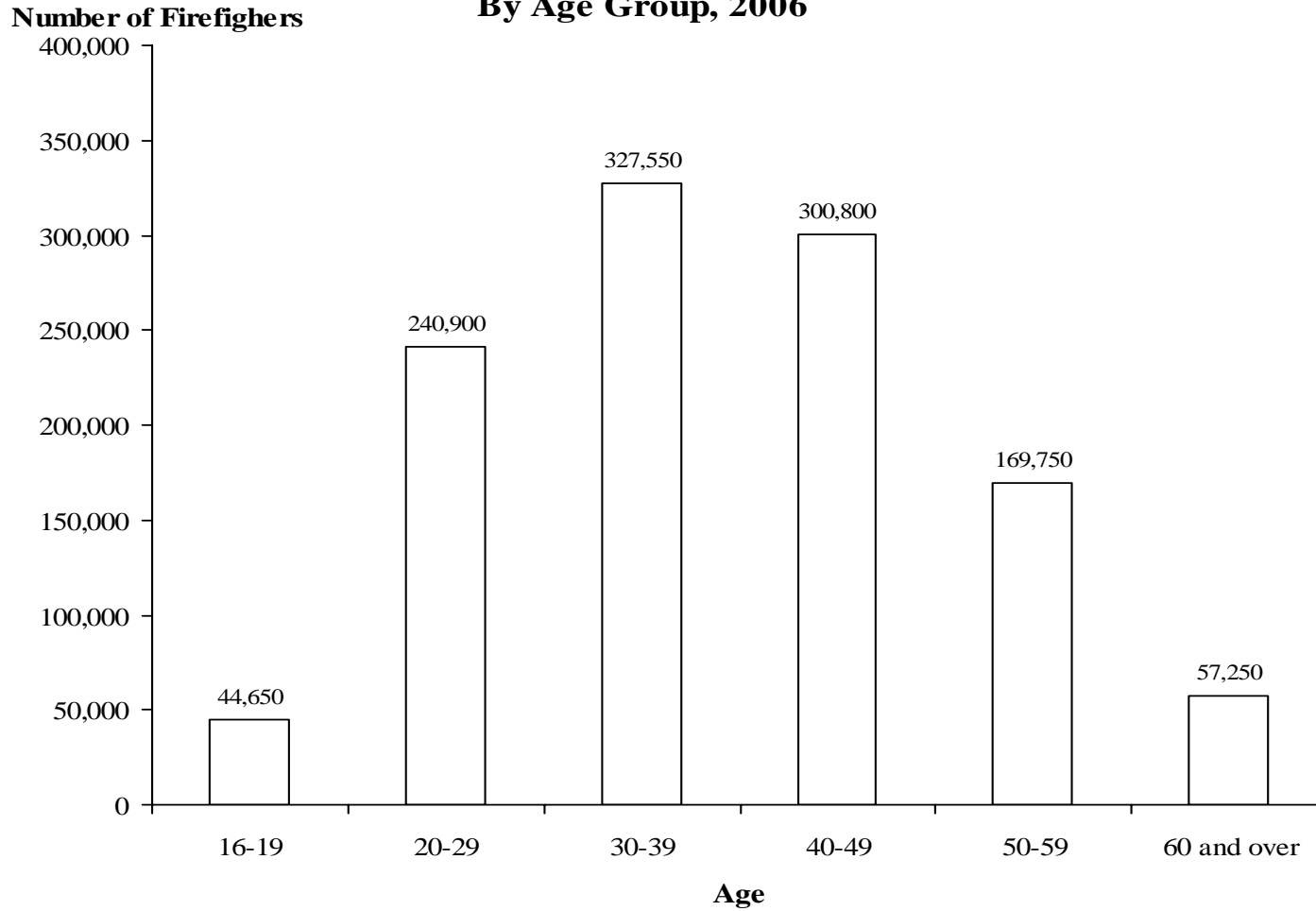
Volunteer rates are shown only for communities under 25,000, where departments are comprised of mostly volunteers.

**Table 8**  
**Number of Firefighters in the U.S., by Age Group, 2006**

<b>Firefighters</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
16-19	44,650	3.9
20-29	240,900	21.1
30-39	327,550	28.7
40-49	300,800	26.4
50-59	169,750	14.9
60 and over	57,250	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,140,900</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006.

**Figure 1.**  
**Number of Firefighters in the U.S.**  
**By Age Group, 2006**



Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006

**Table 9**  
**Age Profile of Firefighters**  
**By Size of Community, 2006**

<b>Size of Community</b>	<b>Percent Firefighters under Age 30</b>	<b>Percent Firefighters Age 30-39</b>	<b>Percent Firefighters Age 40-49</b>	<b>Percent Firefighters Age 50 and up</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mostly Career Firefighters</b>					
1,000,000 or more	16.5%	36.7%	32.2%	14.6%	100.0%
500,000 to 999,999	11.4	33.8	35.5	19.4	100.0
250,000 to 499,999	13.7	34.3	36.1	16.0	100.0
100,000 to 249,999	14.8	33.9	34.9	16.5	100.0
50,000 to 99,999	18.5	33.5	31.9	16.1	100.0
25,000 to 49,999	21.4	33.2	29.0	16.4	100.0
<b>Mostly Volunteer Firefighters</b>					
10,000 to 24,999	29.8%	30.5%	24.0%	15.7%	100.0%
5,000 to 9,999	31.4	27.8	23.0	17.8	100.0
2,500 to 4,999	31.1	27.7	21.8	19.4	100.0
Under 2,500	24.5	25.5	25.9	24.1	100.0

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006.



## Fire Departments

There are an estimated 30,635 fire departments<sup>3</sup> in the United States. Of these, 2,321 departments or 7.6% are all career<sup>4</sup>; that is, they are comprised solely of career firefighters. An estimated 1,731 departments (5.6%) are mostly career, while 5,134 (16.8%) are mostly volunteer. An estimated 21,449 departments (70.0%) are all volunteer (Table 10).

Another way to put this is that 13% of all departments are all career or mostly career but protect 62% of the U.S. population, while 87% of the departments are mostly volunteer or all volunteer and protect 38% of the population (Table 10).

The number of fire departments by size of community is displayed in Table 11. Department type did vary considerably by population protected. For community sizes above 25,000, the percentage of departments classified as all career or mostly career ranged from 73 to 100%, while for community sizes less than 25,000, the percentage of departments classified as all volunteer or mostly volunteer ranged from 64 to 99% (Table 12).

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<sup>3</sup> A fire department is a public or private organization that provides fire prevention, fire suppression and associated emergency and non-emergency services to a jurisdiction such as a county, municipality, or organized fire district.

<sup>4</sup> Department type is broken into four categories. All career departments are comprised 100% of career firefighters. Mostly career is comprised of 51 to 99% career firefighters, while mostly volunteer is comprised of 1 to 50% career firefighters. All volunteer departments are comprised 100% of volunteer firefighters.

**Table 10**  
**Number of Departments and Percent of U.S. Population Protected**  
**By Type of Department, 2006**

<b>Type of Department</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent of U.S. Population Protected</b>
All Career	2,321	7.6%	44.5%
Mostly Career	1,731	5.6%	17.2%
Mostly Volunteer	5,134	16.8%	17.1%
All Volunteer	21,449	70.0%	21.2%
Total	30,635	100.0%	100.0%

Source: NFPA Fire Service Inventory, and 2006 NFPA Survey of Fire Departments.

Type of department is broken into four categories. All career departments are comprised of 100% career firefighters. Mostly career is comprised of 51 to 99% career firefighters, while mostly volunteer is comprised of 1 to 50% career firefighters. All volunteer departments are comprised of 100% volunteer firefighters.

**Table 11**  
**Number of Fire Departments in the U.S.,**  
**By Population Protected, 2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Number of Fire Departments</b>
1,000,000 or more	17
500,000 to 999,999	37
250,000 to 499,999	64
100,000 to 249,999	250
50,000 to 99,999	557
25,000 to 49,999	1,306
10,000 to 24,999	3,560
5,000 to 9,999	4,386
2,500 to 4,999	5,791
under 2,500	14,667
 Total	 30,635

Source: NFPA Fire Service Inventory

**Table 12**  
**Department Type by Population Protected, 2006**

Population Protected	Type of Department (Percent)				Total
	All Career	Mostly Career	Mostly Volunteer	All Volunteer	
1,000,000 or more	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
500,000 to 999,999	63.3	26.7	10.0	0.0	100.0
250,000 to 499,999	70.0	23.3	6.7	0.0	100.0
100,000 to 249,999	82.6	16.5	0.8	0.0	100.0
50,000 to 99,999	69.3	20.6	8.8	1.3	100.0
25,000 to 49,999	48.5	24.2	19.2	8.1	100.0
10,000 to 24,999	15.2	21.2	41.9	21.7	100.0
5,000 to 9,999	4.7	5.5	40.8	49.0	100.0
2,500 to 4,999	2.4	2.2	18.5	76.9	100.0
Under 2,500	0.9	0.7	3.2	95.2	100.0
All Departments	7.6	5.6	16.8	70.0	100.0

Source: NFPA Survey of Fire Departments for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006.

Type of department is broken into four categories. All career departments are comprised of 100% career firefighters. Mostly career is comprised of 51 to 99% career firefighters, while mostly volunteer is comprised of 1 to 50% career firefighters. All volunteer departments are comprised of 100% volunteer firefighters.

## **Fire Department Apparatus and Stations**

Estimates of the number of apparatus and stations in the United States for the 2004-2006 period indicate that there were 69,300 pumpers, 6,700 aerial apparatus, and 53,200 stations. Table 13 provides a breakdown by community size.

**It is worth emphasizing what the rates in Table 13 really mean. The numbers reflect averages of apparatus and station rates per 1,000 people by population protected reported to the NFPA. They do *not* represent recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

The rates are higher for departments protecting smaller communities (under 25,000). This is because it takes a minimum number of apparatus and stations to operate a fire department regardless of the number of people protected. For instance, for a department protecting 1,000 people, you would expect according to Table 13 on the average 1.162 pumpers, .032 aerial apparatus, and .944 stations. The .944 stations per 1,000 people is the highest rate shown in Table 13, but for this community size it is equivalent to one station per department. Another way to put this is that for every 100 departments reporting 1,000 people, you would expect approximately 116 pumpers, 3 aerial apparatus, and 94 stations. For communities of 25,000 to 999,999, the rates tend to be quite similar: .059-.112 pumpers per 1,000 people; .016-.021 aerial apparatus per 1,000 people, and .055-.095 stations per 1,000 people.

Tables 14, 15, and 16 display the frequency of occurrence of the number of pumpers, aerial apparatus, and stations by size of community.

**Table 13**  
**Average Apparatus and Station Rates per 1,000 People**  
**By Community Size, 2004-2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Pumpers per 1,000 People</b>	<b>Aerial Apparatus per 1,000 People</b>	<b>Stations per 1,000 People</b>
1,000,000 or more	.030	.011	.037
500,000 to 999,999	.059	.015	.055
250,000 to 499,999	.059	.016	.059
100,000 to 249,999	.070	.014	.071
50,000 to 99,999	.084	.016	.082
25,000 to 49,999	.112	.021	.095
10,000 to 24,999	.186	.033	.127
5,000 to 9,999	.323	.036	.202
2,500 to 4,999	.538	.027	.343
Under 2,500	1.162	.032	.944
National Average	.231	.022	.177

Source: NFPA Fire Service Survey, 2004-2006.

**These results reflect average apparatus and station rates per 1,000 people by population protected reported to the NFPA. They do not reflect recommended rates or some defined fire protection standard.**

Note that pumpers reported above had a capability of 1,000 gpm or greater. Many departments reported other suppression vehicles including apparatus with pumps less than 1,000 gpm, hose wagons, brush fire vehicles, tankers, etc.

**Table 14**  
**Pumpers (750 gpm or greater) by Community Size, 2004-2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Percentage of U.S. Fire Departments With</b>					<b>Total</b>
	<b>1-5 Pumpers</b>	<b>6-9 Pumpers</b>	<b>10-19 Pumpers</b>	<b>20-39 Pumpers</b>	<b>40 or More Pumpers</b>	
1,000,000 or more	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	6.7%	86.7%	100.0%
500,000 to 999,999	0.0	0.0	10.8	59.5	29.7	100.0%
250,000 to 499,999	0.0	0.0	45.6	50.9	3.5	100.0%
100,000 to 249,999	15.0	38.3	38.3	7.5	0.9	100.0%

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Percentage of U.S. Fire Departments With</b>					<b>Total</b>
	<b>No Pumpers</b>	<b>1 Pumper</b>	<b>2 Pumpers</b>	<b>3-4 Pumpers</b>	<b>5 or More Pumpers</b>	
50,000 to 999,999	1.1%	1.5%	6.1%	31.9%	59.3%	100.0%
25,000 to 49,999	1.1	4.0	19.9	48.1	26.8	100.0%
10,000 to 24,999	0.9	7.6	32.0	49.5	9.9	100.0%
5,000 to 9,999	1.6	13.5	44.0	37.5	3.4	100.0%
2,500 to 4,999	2.8	24.0	48.8	23.4	0.9	100.0%
Under 2,500	12.3	43.2	36.3	7.9	0.3	100.0%

Source: 2004-2006 NFPA Fire Service Survey

Note that pumpers reported above had a capability of 1,000 gpm or greater. Note that many departments reported other fire suppression vehicles including apparatus with pumps less than 1,000 gpm, hose wagons, brush fire vehicles, tankers, etc.

**Table 15  
Aerial Apparatus by Community Size, 2004-2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Percentage of U.S. Fire Departments With</b>					<b>Total</b>
	<b>No Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>1-5 Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>6-9 Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>10-19 Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>20 or More Aerial Apparatus</b>	
1,000,000 or more	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	35.7%	50.5%	100.0%
500,000 to 999,999	8.1	18.9	24.3	40.5	8.1	100.0%
250,000 to 499,999	10.2	52.5	20.3	16.9	0.0	100.0%

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>Percentage of U.S. Fire Departments With</b>					<b>Total</b>
	<b>No Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>1 Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>2 Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>3-4 Aerial Apparatus</b>	<b>5 or More Aerial Apparatus</b>	
100,000 to 249,999	20.1%	21.4%	29.3%	20.1%	9.2%	100.0%
50,000 to 99,999	29.8	38.9	23.9	6.8	0.7	100.0%
25,000 to 49,999	38.1	50.1	10.8	0.9	0.1	100.0%
10,000 to 24,999	50.3	45.5	3.9	0.2	0.0	100.0%
5,000 to 9,999	73.9	25.4	0.6	0.1	0.0	100.0%
2,500 to 4,999	90.3	9.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	100.0%
Under 2,500	96.5	3.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	100.0%

Source: 2004-2006 NFPA Fire Service Survey.



**Table 16**  
**Fire Stations by Community Size, 2004-2006**

**Percentage of U.S. Fire Departments With**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>1-5 Stations</b>	<b>6-9 Stations</b>	<b>10-19 Stations</b>	<b>20-29 Stations</b>	<b>30 or More Stations</b>	<b>Total</b>
1,000,000 or more	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
500,000 to 999,999	0.0	0.0	10.8	13.5	75.7	100.0%
250,000 to 499,999	0.0	0.0	47.5	39.0	13.6	100.0%
100,000 to 249,999	10.9	39.7	42.8	4.4	2.2	100.0%

**Percentage of U.S. Fire Departments With**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>No Stations</b>	<b>1 Station</b>	<b>2 Stations</b>	<b>3 Stations</b>	<b>4 or More Stations</b>	<b>Total</b>
50,000 to 99,999	0.0	1.1	4.1	14.6	80.1	100.0%
25,000 to 49,999	0.0	14.8	23.2	26.8	35.2	100.0%
10,000 to 24,999	0.0	46.2	30.2	13.1	10.5	100.0%
5,000 to 9,999	0.0	69.3	20.8	6.5	3.4	100.0%
2,500 to 4,999	0.0	79.6	15.0	3.6	1.6	100.0%
Under 2,500	0.5	87.2	10.0	1.5	0.7	100.0%

Source: 2004-2006 NFPA Fire Service Survey

## **Emergency Medical Services**

The level of emergency medical service (EMS) provided by fire departments by size of community for the 2004-2006 period can be seen in Table 17. The larger the community, the more likely EMS service was provided. Overall for the country, 13,370 or 43.6% of departments provided EMS service, 4,430 departments or 14.5% provided EMS service and advanced life support, while 12,835 departments or 41.9% provided no EMS service.

## **U.S. Expenditures on Local Fire Protection**

Table 18 shows expenditures on local fire protection by governments, with and without adjustment for inflation. Note that these expenditures adjusted for inflation, have risen 119% from 1980 to 2004. Other municipal service costs like police protection have risen in a similar manner.

Fire protection costs rose 90% from 1983 to 2005 after adjusting for inflation, while the number of career firefighters was increasing 40%. Since chiefs of fire departments serving larger communities report problems with shrinking budgets or with level budgets combined with increasing responsibilities, this clear pattern of increasing fire department resources nationwide is difficult to interpret. Some of the factors possibly contributing to this increase in costs are (1) shrinkage of the work week<sup>5</sup> for some departments, which results in a need to increase staffing and apparatus or to pay firefighters at overtime rates; (2) increased EMS responsibilities requiring increased staffing and, in some communities, a more frequent replacement of apparatus; and (3) costs of retirement and health benefits continuing to rise as they do for the general population.

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<sup>5</sup> This is the result at least to some extent of the Fair Labor Standards Act being applied to municipal fire departments.

**Table 17**  
**Departments Providing Emergency Medical Service**  
**By Community Size (Percent), 2004-2006**

<b>Population Protected</b>	<b>No EMS</b>	<b>EMS</b>	<b>EMS and ALS</b>	<b>Total</b>
1,000,000 or more	0%	13%	87%	100%
500,000 to 999,999	0	30	70	100%
250,000 to 499,999	0	30	70	100%
100,000 to 249,999	5	35	60	100%
50,000 to 99,999	10	39	51	100%
25,000 to 49,999	18	39	43	100%
10,000 to 24,999	30	41	29	100%
5,000 to 9,999	42	41	18	100%
2,500 to 4,999	44	45	11	100%
under 2,500	48	46	6	100%
Total	42	44	14	100%

Source: NFPA Fire Service Survey, 2004-2006

ALS refers to fire departments providing advanced life support.

**Table 18**  
**Direct Expenditures on Local Fire Protection**

Year	Expenditures (in Billions)	Expenditures (in Billions) Adjusted for Inflation*
1980	\$5.7	\$5.7
1981	\$6.3	\$5.7
1982	\$7.0	\$6.0
1983	\$7.6	\$6.3
1984	\$8.2	\$6.5
1985	\$8.5	\$6.5
1986	\$9.6	\$7.2
1987	\$10.5	\$7.9
1988	\$11.8	\$8.2
1989	\$11.9	\$7.9
1990	\$13.2	\$8.3
1991	\$13.8	\$8.3
1992	\$14.4	\$8.5
1993	\$15.4	\$9.0
1994	\$16.1	\$9.0
1995	\$17.0	\$9.2
1996	\$17.7	\$9.3
1997	\$19.4	\$10.0
1998	\$20.3	\$10.3
1999	\$21.3	\$10.5
2000	\$23.1	\$11.1
2001	\$25.0	\$11.6
2002	\$26.0	\$11.9
2003	\$27.9	\$12.1
2004	\$28.4	\$12.0
2005	\$30.7	\$12.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Governments Division*

\*Adjustments were made to 1980 dollars using the Consumer Price Index.

## **Data Sources**

The report is based on two data sources: the annual NFPA Survey for U.S. Fire Experience, 2006, and the NFPA Fire Service Survey, 2004-2006.

The annual fire experience survey is a sample survey of fire departments in the United States, which serves as the basis for making national estimates of the fire problem. The sample is stratified by the size of the community protected by the fire department. All U.S. fire departments that protect communities of 100,000 or more are included in the sample, because they constitute a small number of departments with a large share of the total population protected. For departments that protect less than 100,000 population, a sample was selected stratified by size of community protected. Survey returns in recent years have ranged from 2,500 to 3,500 departments annually. The survey also includes questions on the number of career and volunteer firefighters. The national projections are made by weighing sample results according to the proportion of total U.S. population accounted for by communities of each size.

The NFPA Fire Service Survey is a three year cycle survey which attempts to survey about one third of the states in the country each year. The survey includes questions on the number of career firefighters, the number of volunteer firefighters, length of work week, number of apparatus and stations, etc. In recent years the survey has had a response rate of about 30% from departments.