

# The History of the Raleigh Fire Department

Volunteer Era

- 1792 - Raleigh created.
- 1816 - First major fire on record.
- 1818 - First attempt at municipal water system.
- 1819 - First hand engine delivered.  
First fire company organized.
- 1831 - State Capitol destroyed by fire.
- 1843 - Second hand engine delivered.  
Second fire company organized.
- 1851 - Last major fire on Fayetteville Street.
- 1852 - Volunteer fire department reorganized,  
with two engines and one hook & ladder  
company.  
First Fire Chief appointed.  
First fire cisterns ordered built.
- 1853 - Two new hand engines delivered.  
First engine house constructed.
- 1869 - First black fire company organized.
- 1870 - First steam fire engine delivered.  
Metropolitan Hall opens on Fayetteville  
Street. Has fire alarm bell in clock tower,  
fireman's hall on third floor, and engine  
rooms on first floor.
- 1878 - First chemical fire engine delivered.
- 1879 - First fire horses.
- 1887 - First fire hydrants.  
First hose companies.
- 1888 - First fire boxes, connected to electric  
telegraph fire alarm system.
- 1896 - Headquarters fire station opens on  
Morgan Street.
- 1905 - Second steam fire engine delivered.
- 1912 - First full-time Fire Chief  
Career fire department created.  
Volunteer companies disbanded.
- 1913 - First motor fire apparatus delivered.
- 1914 - First motor pumper delivered.
- 1915 - Last horse retired.

Career  
Era Begins

- 1916 - First aerial ladder delivered.
- 1924 - Two-platoon system created.
- 1928 - Yarborough House fire on Fayetteville Street.
- 1935 - Firefighters receive Civil Service protection.  
Practice of hiring based on political patronage  
ended.
- 1938 - International Association of Fire Fighters  
Local 548 organized.
- 1942 - Volunteer auxiliary fire companies organized.
- 1944 - First squad truck delivered.
- 1949 - Fire Prevention Bureau formed.  
First city retirement.
- 1950 - First fire helmets.  
Work hours changed to 24-hour shifts.
- 1951 - Ladies Auxiliary formed.
- 1953 - Headquarters fire station opens on Dawson Street.  
Raleigh Emergency Rescue Squad  
organized.
- 1954 - First drill tower erected.
- 1955 - First two-way radios.
- 1956 - First line-of-duty death.
- 1960 - Two tankers placed in service.
- 1963 - First black firefighters hired.
- 1965 - First foam unit placed in service.
- 1968 - Raleigh Fireman's Club organized.
- 1969 - First maintenance shop constructed.
- 1970 - Third platoon created.
- 1971 - Administration reorganization, including assistant  
chiefs moved to day duty and seven district chiefs  
created.
- 1972 - Fire department switchboard and dispatch center  
ceases operation.
- 1973 - Last box alarm received.
- 1975 - Third battalion created.
- 1976 - EMT training started.

Rescue

First Responder

- 1977 - First aerial platform delivered.
- 1978 - First female firefighters hired.
- 1980 - First responder program expanded city-wide.
- 1981 - Mangel Building fire on Fayetteville Street.
- 1982 - Keeter Training Center opens.
- 1984 - Hazardous materials team placed in service.  
Honor guard organized.
- 1985 - Explorer post created.
- 1986 - First uniform patches.
- 1988 - First mobile air unit delivered.
- 1990 - First fully-enclosed apparatus delivered.
- 1992 - First Fire Protection Engineer hired.
- 1993 - EMT-D program implemented.  
Confined space and trench rescue training  
started.
- 1995 - High-level rescue training started.
- 1997 - Rapid Intervention Teams (RIT) added.
- 1999 - Fire alarm system plans review program  
expanded, false alarms drop sharply.
- 2003 - North Carolina Urban Search and Rescue  
Task Force 8 created.
- 2004 - Fourth battalion created.  
North Carolina Hazardous Materials Regional  
Response Team 4 moves to Raleigh.
- 2006 - Construction plans review team added from  
city inspections department.  
Bicycle team created for special events.
- 2007 - Pine Knoll Townes fire in north Raleigh.  
Full-time fire investigators added.
- 2008 - Raleigh Fire Department Historical Society  
organized.
- 2011 - Raleigh Fire Museum opens.
- 2012 - Raleigh Fire Department celebrates centennial.
- 2013 - Fifth Battalion created.  
Squad companies created.  
Heavy rescue company created.

Haz-Mat

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