

Covington Fire Department



Strategic Plan

FY2017-FY2022

(July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022)

Preserving the Past, Improving the Present, Preparing for the Future.

Message from the Fire Chief:

It is my pleasure to present to you the Strategic Plan of the Covington Fire Department on behalf of our members. This plan was designed to give direction to the Department, the City and all of the members that make up our work force. Accomplishing these initiatives will help provide an enhanced service that meets the needs of our citizens and visitors. This plan will initiate the direction for future decisions that will be made by our City Officials, which will allow our members to provide the quality service needed.

Our members have worked hard to develop seven strategic initiatives that reach a wide range of services and accomplish specific objectives. We unabashedly recommend initiatives that include community risk reduction, additional personnel, specialized response vehicle, Airport Fire station and personnel, Fitness Standards and a cultural commitment to fitness, Advanced Life Support response enhancements, and a cultural commitment to education. Each of these initiatives were developed based on current demands of our department as well as anticipation of future needs and the desire to be the most professional two station department in America.

Implementation of these initiatives over the next five years will result in our organization being a more efficient, complex, and professional department staffed by members that are committed mentally and physically to the demands of our profession.

Respectfully submitted,

Stoney Bowles

Fire Chief

Covington Fire Department

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Mission Statement

To provide quality and efficient Fire and Emergency services to residents and customers in the community.

The mission statement serves as our roadmap for the department. We exist as an organization to serve the citizens of Covington. Ultimately, our customers decide the services we deliver. Our personnel have an obligation to provide those services in the safest, most professional and efficient manner. The mission statement is a general description of why the department exists. A good mission statement is clear, concise, and easily remembered by all. The mission statement is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant to the community.

As with most fire departments, base mission is clearly the protection of life and property. It is significant that the department chooses to specifically identify quality and efficient services, which encompass public education, fire prevention and emergency response services in its mission statement. While emergency response may be the most obvious service provided by the department, we have chosen to emphasize our alignment with the City's current mission statement with an underlying focus on the residents and customers within our community who are key priorities for the department.

Vision Statement

To be recognized as a leader in being a progressive Fire and Emergency Service, dedicated to excellence in serving our community.

While the mission statement describes why the department exists, the vision statement describes how the department wishes to be viewed within the community. A good vision statement will serve as a focal point or guide for continuous self-improvement.

The vision identifies three qualifying aspects describing how we desire to be viewed within our community. The first is "being recognized as a leader." The department is active in many aspects that promote change within the fire service industry. The second aspect is "being progressive." The department strives to gain and utilize knowledge on current operational techniques and tools that will make our department more efficient and effective. This progressive pursuit allow for enhanced fire and emergency services for the community through the identification of key quality metrics for use in the development of programs. This allows the department to provide services that are second to no other. The third aspect is our "dedication to excellence." The department continually strives for excellence through meeting and exceeding the requirements of governing bodies that establish performance standards within the fire service.

Core Values

Our organizational core values determine our image. The image of the department is determined by each member's commitment to, and practice of, our core values. Our members' collective professionalism determines the image and integrity of our department. Membership within the Covington Fire Department means that each member must recognize the need to abide by the core values of the organization.

Values are powerful determinants of personality and culture, but the depth of their contribution to individual and organizational behavior can be, at time, underestimated. Strong relationships between values and performance make the understanding of values essential for organizational success. The following core values were established through a value survey conducted with all members of the department.

INTEGRITY is the adherence to high principles and professional standards. We do what we say we will do, the right thing, not the easy thing.

PROFESSIONALISM is following the highest standards of ethical conduct. It is a commitment to quality and pride in your work.

COMMITMENT to the community we serve. In all things, we do what we say we are going to do.

HONESTY is fairness, straightforwardness, sincerity, and truthfulness.

TRUST is the cornerstone of all relationships and we will continuously strive to build and earn trust both within the department and the community we serve.

RESPECT each other and those we serve.

Organizational Background



The Covington Fire Department was first organized in 1909 and consisted of two reel companies and one hook and ladder company. Upon the organization of the department in 1909 the citizens of Covington depended on volunteers to protect their lives and property. Since 1969 the Covington Fire Department has made a gradual change from an all-volunteer department to a full paid department. Today the department operates with two fire stations providing fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention and education, vehicle extrication and limited hazardous materials and technical rescue response to the citizens of the city of Covington. The following is an organizational chart which illustrates the structure of the department designed to meet the needs of the citizens of Covington, the mission of the department and the fulfillment of the strategic plan.

Joint Training Facility



Covington Fire Department has a joint training facility with Newton County Fire Service where we hosts classes year round. The training ground offers a multitude of different training opportunities for all aspects of the fire service. In May 2016, the first class at the training center was hosted for outside agencies as well. Firefighters from all over the metro area participated in a live fire exercise called “Flow path.” The facility accommodated roughly 50 fire service members for this three day class. In the fall of 2016, the East Metro Firefighter’s Conference presented hands-on training classes to ensure the best training possible for the firefighter’s in Georgia. Class instructors came from across the United States to provide this training at Covington Fire. This facility has been very progressive and very innovative for Covington’s firefighters.

Each year Covington Firefighter’s meet and exceed the ISO requirements for fire training. This includes 192 hours of company training, 6 hours of HAZMAT training, 18 hours of facility training and either 12 hours of Officer’s training or 12 hours of Driver’s training, depending on position. In addition, each firefighter receives the required training for their EMS level, which includes both the state certification requirements and the National requirements.

Strategic Plan Process

Strategic planning is the process by which an organization plans how it will position itself to meet current and future challenges and identifies the actions necessary to achieve those goals. The planning process starts with a discussion of the expectations, concerns and priorities expressed by the community and members of the department with a focus group of veteran fire officers. The group then evaluates and/or updates its current mission, vision and values and evaluates its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis). From this information, the most critical issues are identified and initiatives are established. All this information is then brought together to provide direction for the implementation of operating objectives that will move the department towards its strategic initiatives. The overall process is monitored, evaluated, and updated annually as needed.

The department is strongly committed to periodic and yearly on-going strategic planning efforts. Its first strategic plan was developed in 2003. Since then, the department has continued to monitor, update and operate with the guidance of the current strategic plan. The effectiveness of the department's strategic plan is dependent upon continuous review and updates and existing as a "living" document thereby remaining relevant to the challenges of the department. The department, under the guidance of the Fire Chief, continuously scans and identifies current events, watching for new threats and/or challenges so that it can respond accordingly. Adjustments to our strategic direction and plan are made through analysis of current and future needs. The adjustments may address needs that are short-term; others require long-term attention.

An assessment of the geographical, political, social, demographic environment in which the department operates is essential to the planning process because no organization operates in a vacuum. A situational analysis is the process of gathering and analyzing information necessary to make decisions about the future direction of the department. Under the direction of the Fire Chief, the department, at varying responsibility levels has conducted this exercise periodically at the monthly officers meeting and once at the beginning of each year. The goal is to obtain a good cross section of opinion and experience that provides useful information for both strategic and operational planning.

The City of Covington conducted a strategic planning process that entailed input from both internal and external stakeholders at various levels throughout the organization. A focus group was selected and discussions led to the development of strategies and strategic action items to address the needs of the city in meeting the expectations of the citizens served. The result of the strategic planning process is the 2017 – 2022 strategic plan which is now underway. Initiatives were identified for the department's strategic plan along with objectives to be completed during the five year period.

Our commitment is to anticipate, understand and meet or exceed the expectations of our internal and external customers. Through continuous environmental scanning, we analyze

trends, programs and services for all customers assuring their loyalty and satisfaction with the services received.

The department's FY17-FY22 strategic plan identifies what is necessary (input) to achieve the desired results of the six strategic initiatives (output) in ultimately reaching the desired outcome of a safer community. The strategic plan is a living document subject to on-going change based on the environment and expectations of the citizens.

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative 1: Create and implement a cultural commitment to health and fitness

- Purchase Fitness Equipment
- Create Fitness Standard
- Develop and implement Annual Fitness Testing
- Develop and implement Policies for Fitness and Fitness Testing

Strategic Initiative 2: Continue to reduce risk for our community members and visitors through various programs and events

- CPR Saturday
- Family Fun Day
- Citizens Fire Academy
- Fire Safety Blitz Events

Strategic Initiative 3: Promote leadership, formal education and member development at all levels of the Covington Fire Department

- Advertise Tuition City Reimbursement Plan
- Develop Officer Development Program/Curriculum
- Expand External Training Opportunities (Conferences, Consortiums, and other training opportunities)

Strategic Initiative 4: Begin a feasibility study and implement findings on establishing a fire station and ARFF trained firefighters at the Covington Airport

- Evaluate emergency call demand for today and future
- Establish response plan according to demands
- Hire additional personnel for staffing the apparatus

Strategic Initiative 5: Have one apparatus, Rescue 21, respond as an ALS, non-transport, first responder

- Evaluate demand/need for ALS non-transport service to be provided by CFD
- Ensure minimum number of qualified/certified personnel are available for ALS responses
- Purchase needed ALS equipment
- Develop/Implement ALS protocols

Strategic Initiative 6: Increase staffing at Station 22 to five personnel

Due to future growth and the complexity of the structures in this territory, we are requesting an increase in staffing from four to five personnel

Ensure minimum personnel of three members during times of crisis, but four as a standard

Provide additional staffing during automatic aide responses

Strategic Initiative 7: Include Squad 21 as a permanent fully staffed apparatus

Staff Squad 21 with one Lieutenant, one Engineer, and three Firefighters

Collaborative staffing with Newton County Fire Department

Added staffing on complex rescue type incidents is mission critical

Developing specialized operations personnel to help mitigate complex incidents

Strategic Initiative Objectives

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| Strategic Initiative 1: Create and Implement a Cultural Commitment to Health and Fitness | | |
| <p>A health and wellness plan is essential for acquiring top candidates for employment, maintaining employees who are fit for duty, and providing structure to ensure health and wellness are a top priority for the duration of the firefighter’s career. A health and wellness program will include entry-level testing for employment, quarterly incumbent evaluation, annual extensive physical exams, and firefighter post-injury rehabilitation. The Covington Fire Department will continue to influence the culture change and positive improvements for all employees’ health and fitness throughout their career.</p> | | |
| Objective 1A | Purchase Fitness Equipment for both fire stations in order to meet the goals set forth in this strategic goal | |
| Time Frame | 12 months – On going | |
| Critical Tasks | Identify and purchase needed fitness equipment for both fire stations that allow firefighters safely develop their level of fitness in order to meet fitness standards | |
| Objective 1B | Create a fitness standard for all members of the Covington Fire Department | |
| Time Frame | 12 months – On going | |
| Critical Tasks | Evaluate all members’ fitness by using our pre-hire abilities test. This evaluation should be completed over a three year period with mandatory testing of all personnel each year. Times will be recorded during this three year period for each member and used to determine the standard for each member based on age. | |
| Objective 1C | Develop and implement Annual Fitness Testing | |
| Time Frame | 12 months – 3 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Same tasks as objective 1B | |
| Objective 1D | Develop and implement Policies for Fitness and Fitness Testing | |
| Time Frame | 12 months – On going | |
| Critical Tasks | Gather fitness policies and practices from around the region and evaluate which elements work best for CFD personnel. Work with committee of CFD members to determine the goals and objectives of the policy. | |
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Strategic Initiative 2: Continue to reduce risk for our community members and visitors through various programs and events.

A critical mission of our organization is to ensure our citizens and visitors of a safe community through our risk reduction programs. We strive to provide quality programs that educate, train and prepare our community so in the event of an emergency, they will be prepared to assist if needed. Through the efforts of our Fire Safety Education, Fire Inspections and Operations Personnel, we are able to reduce risk and prepare for unavoidable emergencies.

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| Objective 2A | Conduct CPR training on the first Saturday of every month to community members that wish to attend. | |
| Time Frame | On going | |
| Critical Tasks | The first Saturday of every month we hold CPR training for members of our community for \$25 per student. We hold the training at Fire Station 22 and limit the training to 25 students per Saturday. This training is performed mostly by our on duty personnel. | |
| Objective 2B | Provide annual Fire Safety Education and Public Safety Education event for community in a large gathering event. | |
| Time Frame | Annually On-Going | |
| Critical Tasks | We provide a community wide annual event that educates the public about Fire Safety as well as Public Safety. This is a joint effort between Fire, Police, Utilities, and other partners. | |
| Objective 2C | Provide an annual Citizens Fire Academy to educate community members about the mission of our Department and the service we provide. | |
| Time Frame | 12 months – On-Going | |
| Critical Tasks | Conduct a 4-6 week Citizens Fire Academy to educate our community about the mission of our Department and the service we provide. Program would include activities of our Fire Marshal’s Office, Operations Division, EMS, Special Operations, tour of facilities including a night at our training grounds. | |
| Objective 2D | Conduct annual/semiannual Fire Safety Blitz events. | |
| Time Frame | 12 months – On going | |
| Critical Tasks | Conduct on annual or semiannual schedule Fire Safety Blitz events that would include touring our Fire Safety House, Smoke Detector installations, | |
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Strategic Initiative 3: Promote leadership, formal education and member development at all levels of the Covington Fire Department.

Promoting leadership values and training as well as formal education and member development is essential to all members of the Covington Fire Department. Investing in our members today will pay dividends during tomorrow. It is a clear objective of our department to invest in the development of every level of member in our department.

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| Objective 3A | Advertise and promote our City's College Tuition reimbursement program. | |
| Time Frame | On going | |
| Critical Tasks | Encourage all level of members to apply for college admission so they can take advantage of the tuition reimbursement program offered to our employees. | |
| Objective 3B | Develop Officer Development Program/Curriculum | |
| Time Frame | 2-5 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Execute a comprehensive evaluation of leadership topics and categories to develop all levels of our membership. Once the evaluation is complete, an eight to sixteen hour officer development course shall be developed and implemented. | |
| Objective 3C | Expand External Training Opportunities (Conferences, Consortiums, and other training opportunities) | |
| Time Frame | 2-5 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Research opportunities for our members to obtain relevant, needed training for all ranks. Some of this would include opportunities in State and out of State so that our members can learn from a wide variety of instructors and their perspectives. | |

Strategic Initiative 4: Begin a feasibility study and implement findings on establishing a fire station and ARFF trained firefighters at the Covington Airport

The City of Covington’s Airport is becoming more popular with recreation and business travelers. In order to meet the needs of the airport and its customers, it is necessary to implement a feasibility study to see if there is a need for added fire protection

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| Objective 4A | Evaluate emergency call demand for today and future | |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 5 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Begin to analyze data for call volume and potential call volume for areas in and around Covington Airport. This would include past call volume and future predictions of call demand in the area. | |
| Objective 4B | Establish Response plans according to demands | |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 5 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Ensure appropriate apparatus and staffing as it relates to type and severity of call dispatched to. | |
| Objective 4C | Hire needed staffing for apparatus | |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 5 years | |
| | Advertise hiring process with a secure timeline. Evaluate applicants through application, background, ore-hire abilities test, and interviews. | |
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Strategic Initiative 5: Have one apparatus, Rescue 21, respond as an ALS, non-transport, first responder

In order to meet the growing need of Emergency Medical Services, it is incumbent upon our department to explore the process to begin an Advance Cardiac Life Support unit for response. Our citizen population in our first due territory as well as our automatic aid area are at times in need of this type of service. This process will be goal that cannot be reached for several years as we must have adequately trained personnel to execute this type of service, however, planning should be explored now.

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| Objective 5A | Evaluate the demand/need for Advanced Life Support (ALS) medical services to be provided by our department | |
| Time Frame | 3 years to 5 years | |
| Critical Tasks | This process will require data analysis for type and severity of call for a 24 -36 month period. This information will be weighed against the shelf life of medication to determine cost benefit analysis | |
| Objective 5B | Ensure minimum number of qualified/certified personnel are available for ALS responses | |
| Time Frame | 3 years to 5 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Training and hiring trained personnel will require an extensive effort. It requires a significant financial commitment to train paramedics and it is difficult to hire paramedic firefighters, so this process will take some time | |
| Objective 5C | Purchase needed ALS equipment | |
| Time Frame | 3 years to 5 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Our department currently operates as a Basic Life Support First Responder. We would need to purchase all of the needed ALS equipment and medications and therefore commit a significant financial resource to the project. This would require support from Mayor and Council | |
| Objective 5D | Develop and Implement ALS protocols/procedures | |
| Time Frame | 12 months to 18 months | |
| Critical Tasks | Protocols, policies and procedures will need to be developed to implement this type of service. I will be critical to the success of the service to ensure our members the proper protocol for their success as well as the service we provide. | |

Strategic Initiative 6: Request one (1) additional firefighter per shift for staffing at Station 22

Most of the growth for our city is in the northern region. It is essential to our response to stay ahead of this growth by anticipating staffing needs to meet future emergency needs of our citizens and visitors by adding additional staffing to this station. Adding one additional firefighter per shift will provide needed staffing to handle the complex structures, added population, and automatic aide needs of this region.

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| Objective 6A | Due to future growth and the complexity of the structures in this territory, we are requesting an increase in staffing from four to five personnel | |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 3 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Hiring an additional person per shift will be critical to our success with emergency responses. This could be done at our next hiring opportunity | |
| Objective 6B | Ensure minimum personnel of three members during times of crisis, but four as a standard | |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 4 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Ensuring four members each day for Station 22 would be a giant step toward more firefighter safety and more efficient operations at emergency scenes | |
| Objective 6C | Provide additional staffing during automatic aide responses | |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 4 years | |
| Critical Tasks | Many times our members respond to automatic aide calls where the agency that we are responding with has no more than two members on a unit. This puts all members at risk due to the pace of most emergency incidents upon fire department arrival. | |
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Strategic Initiative 7: Include Squad 21 as a permanent fully staffed apparatus

We have a need to have a special operations technical rescue apparatus that would respond to any rescue, structure fire, or technical rescue and serve as subject matter experts and a staffing resource to mitigate emergencies within our region. This vehicle would be staffed with three Covington FD firefighters and two Newton FD firefighters. The additional staffing resources and expertise would enhance our abilities to mitigate complex emergencies.

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| Objective 7A | Staff Squad 21 with one Lieutenant, one Engineer, and three Firefighters |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 4 years |
| Critical Tasks | Hiring an additional person per shift will be critical to our success with emergency responses. This could be done at our next hiring opportunity |
| Objective 7B | Collaborative staffing with Newton County Fire Department |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 4 years |
| Critical Tasks | Ensure Newton County has a commitment in this endeavor by requiring them to provide two (2) firefighters per shift for staffing this apparatus |
| Objective 7C | Added staffing on complex rescue type incidents is mission critical |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 4 years |
| Critical Tasks | This apparatus will be a county wide special operations unit. It will respond to all rescue, fire, and special operations emergencies within Newton County. |
| Objective 7D | Developing specialized operations personnel to help mitigate complex incidents |
| Time Frame | 2 years to 4 years |
| Critical Tasks | Essential to the success of this apparatus will be to train its members in multiple disciplines of technical rescue as well as having at least two Paramedic members for each shift. This added training will be supplemented with a pay increase as the responsibilities of these members will be far greater than our other firefighters |