

## **Public Safety & Emergency Services**

Public safety is an essential element of community well-being and a core responsibility of municipal government. Services like fire protection, emergency medical care, law enforcement, and coordinated emergency response do more than meet our essential needs- they embody our commitment to protecting one another and reflect our shared values. As a community, we have long prioritized safety, preparedness, and mutual aid, recognizing that a strong public safety system and emergency services are vital to protecting lives, supporting residents and visitors, and maintaining a high quality of life.

For a community of our size, the Town provides an exceptional level of emergency services. These include the Stowe Police Department, Stowe Fire & Rescue, Emergency Management, and Stowe Mountain Rescue. All of these departments are co-located in the Stowe Public Safety Facility on South Main Street- a modern facility constructed in 2009 after voters approved a \$7.2 million bond. By locating all emergency services under one roof, the Town strengthened collaboration, response coordination, and operational efficiency.

Our public safety and emergency service departments serve a geographic area of approximately 72 square miles and an estimated year-round population of roughly 5,200 residents. This number significantly increases during peak tourism seasons, requiring our emergency services to remain nimble, responsive, and adaptable. These departments maintain mutual aid agreements to provide emergency medical services and fire protection in the Town of Waterbury and actively participate in regional mutual aid networks across Lamoille and Washington Counties.

The following sections provide an overview of each department and the Town's continued commitment to supporting and strengthening public safety for all.

### **Police Department.**

The Stowe Police Department is a 24-hour law enforcement agency dedicated to serving the residents and visitors of Stowe with professionalism, integrity, and respect. Grounded in a philosophy of community policing, the department emphasizes open communication, collaboration, and building trust with the people it serves. Whether patrolling quiet residential neighborhoods, the busy Mountain Road/VT-108 corridor, mountain trails, or the popular Stowe Recreation Path, the department is deeply engaged in preserving public safety and enhancing the well-being of our community.

At the core of the department is a dedicated team of fourteen full-time officers, including the Chief of Police, sergeants, corporals, a detective, patrol officers, and front desk personnel. Each member brings a unique skill set and a shared commitment to public service. Their efforts are bolstered by five part-time officers and a part-time animal control officer, who provide added flexibility and support during peak periods and special events.

This dedicated team serves as the foundation of public safety in Stowe. On any given day, officers may respond to emergencies, investigate crimes, or assist at motor vehicle accidents. Their presence is woven into every part of the community - managing traffic during busy weekends,

recovering lost property, investigating missing persons, and maintaining order at local events. Stowe's police officers provide a consistent, trusted source of protection and support for residents and visitors alike. The department also collaborates closely with neighboring agencies, including the Morristown Police Department, Lamoille County Sheriff's Department, Vermont State Police, and Vermont Fish and Wildlife. These partnerships enhance the department's capacity to respond effectively to complex incidents and regional needs, ensuring a coordinated approach to public safety.

In 2024, the Stowe Police Department responded to 4,044 incidents - a reflection of its broad responsibilities and consistent presence in the community. A significant share of those calls involved roadway safety: over 1,000 traffic stops, 237 motor vehicle complaints, and 223 crashes. The department's focus on traffic enforcement and accident response plays a key role in keeping both residents and visitors safe.

Beyond traffic, officers remained vigilant in deterring crime, responding to 251 reports of suspicious activity, 179 directed patrols, and numerous theft investigations. Emergencies took many forms - officers responded to 146 medical calls, 74 fire alarms, and 17 fire incidents, and were instrumental in coordinating the response to the year's lone motor vehicle fatality.

Supporting community well-being remains at the heart of the department's mission. Officers conducted 62 welfare checks, assisted the public and motorists in 185 cases, and responded to 120 requests from other agencies. These everyday interactions often have a quiet but meaningful impact.

The department also managed some of the most challenging calls, including 31 reports of sexual assault, 15 mental health incidents, and cases involving custodial disputes and abuse prevention orders. Their compassionate and professional response reflects the department's deep commitment to protecting Stowe's most vulnerable residents.

From handling noise complaints and juvenile concerns to responding to trespassing and missing persons, every call - no matter the size or complexity - is approached with the same care and commitment to community. As Stowe continues to grow and evolve - both as a cherished destination and as a year-round home - the Police Department remains steadfast in its mission and committed to protecting the safety, values, and spirit of the community the department proudly serves.

## **Stowe Fire & Rescue**

Like many communities throughout Vermont and across the country, Stowe has experienced a decline in local firefighting volunteers, along with challenges related to their availability and the recruitment and retention of new members. Contributing factors include increasingly intensive training requirements, the substantial time commitment expected of volunteers, and the continuing issue of housing affordability. In response to these challenges, the Town took a significant step in 2024 by merging its separate fire and emergency medical services into a unified municipal department - Stowe Fire & Rescue. This transition was guided by the recommendations of a professional staffing and operations analysis and included the establishment of a full-time Fire & EMS Chief to lead the department.

A key aspect of this new model is the cross-training of full-time employees, which has helped maximize coverage and improve response capabilities. Part-time employees, who are not required to be cross-trained, also play a vital role - particularly during major emergency incidents such as structure fires - and help ensure consistent coverage. Both full- and part-time staff are compensated for their service. This consolidation has strengthened the Town's ability to meet growing service demands, enhanced operational flexibility, and positioned Stowe Fire & Rescue to better serve the community now and into the future.

Stowe Fire & Rescue operates year-round, delivering emergency services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The department is supported by a committed team of approximately 38 members, including 10 full-time, cross-trained fire and rescue personnel, along with roughly 12 part-time members who provide essential support across both fire and EMS functions. The department responds to a wide range of emergencies - from residential and commercial fires to motor vehicle crashes, medical emergencies, and technical rescues. It also plays a key role in public education and fire prevention, engaging with the community through safety programs, school visits, and emergency preparedness outreach.

The well-equipped firefighting and EMS fleet consists of:

- Three engines
- Two 1,800-gallon tankers
- A 95-foot tower truck
- A rescue truck
- An air trailer
- Two fully equipped ambulances (purchased in 2002 and 2012)
- A 4-wheel drive First Response Vehicle (replaced in 2015), used for difficult terrain access, special events, and supplemental coverage when both ambulances are in use

The replacement cycle for fire and rescue equipment and vehicles varies depending on the type of equipment. The department is funded through a combination of Town general funds, service fees, and fundraising by the non-profit Stowe Rescue Squad, Inc., which supports community outreach, training, and supplemental equipment.

In 2024, Stowe Fire & Rescue's responded to 506 fire calls and 729 emergency medical responses - a reflection of the department's dedication and service to the community. 2024 brought an increase in fire-related incidents, rising from 468 the previous year to 506. Most of those calls, 309 in total, were alarms, often the first indication of potential danger. Carbon monoxide calls followed closely behind with 54, along with 33 accident responses and a range of others, from fires and hazard checks to elevator rescues and medical assists. These calls came in at all hours - 359 during weekdays, 147 on weekends, and with an almost even split between daytime and nighttime, a testament to the department's readiness around the clock.

Throughout 2024, the department also responded to 729 emergency medical calls, each representing a moment when someone needed help fast. While 98 of these calls originated from Stowe Mountain Resort, most of these calls - 612 - came from other areas throughout our community. Nineteen times, the department extended its reach through mutual aid, offering support to neighboring communities when they needed it most.

Of those emergency medical calls, 392 patients were transported to Copley Hospital, the area's primary care facility. Others required longer trips - 15 patients were taken to the University of Vermont Medical Center, and three to Central Vermont Medical Center. In 319 cases, no transport was necessary, but the department stood by, canceled when appropriate, or provided critical paramedic support.

Behind each of these numbers is a story: a smoke detector triggering in the night, a skier injured on the slopes, a resident experiencing a medical emergency, a neighbor lending a hand across town lines. Day after day, night after night, Stowe Fire & Rescue stands as a vital pillar of public safety, responding with professionalism, compassion, and calm under pressure. Their work reflects more than statistics, it represents lives protected, fears eased, and a community made stronger. Now and into the future, the presence of a trusted, capable emergency response team remains not just important - it's essential.

### **Stowe Mountain Rescue**

Rooted in the values of service, preparedness, and care for both people and place, Stowe Mountain Rescue has been a vital part of the Stowe community since its founding in 1980. What began as a small team focused on climbing rescues in the rugged cliffs of Smugglers' Notch has grown into one of the most respected technical rescue teams in the Northeast - providing critical support not only to Stowe but across Vermont.

Today, Stowe Mountain Rescue responds to approximately 45 to 55 calls each year, many of which occur in the remote backcountry areas that define Stowe's outdoor identity. Whether locating a lost hiker, rescuing an injured skier, navigating swiftwater during a flood, or conducting rope-based cliff extractions, the team brings professionalism, precision, and deep compassion to every mission. And when other towns and regions need help, the rescue team extends its hand, offering mutual aid and technical support far beyond town lines.

The team is proud to be an accredited member of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) - a national recognition earned through rigorous safety and performance standards - and is certified by the Vermont Department of Health - EMS Division as an Advanced Life Support First Responder Agency. Stowe Mountain Rescue operates in close partnership with Stowe Fire & Rescue, who provide patient transport, and is also designated a Mobile Support Unit by the Vermont Department of Public Safety, allowing them to respond to specialized rescue incidents statewide.

Currently, the team is made up of fifteen active members, each highly trained in:

- Backcountry search and rescue
- High-angle rope operations
- Swiftwater and flood rescue
- Wilderness medical response

Members maintain readiness through monthly scenario-based trainings, regular protocol reviews, and joint exercises with regional and state partners such as Vermont State Police Search and Rescue, Colchester Technical Rescue, and New York State Police Rangers (Helicopter Operations).

No two calls are the same - some rescues take under an hour, while others stretch across multiple days. Each mission demands resilience, skill, and teamwork as members respond to emergencies involving hikers, skiers, snowmobilers, and other outdoor enthusiasts who find themselves in harm's way.

The team operates with:

- Two fully equipped response vehicles
- A snowmobile and trailer for winter access
- A wide range of specialized technical rescue gear

What sets Stowe Mountain Rescue apart is not only its technical capability but its unwavering commitment to public service. The team does not charge for rescue services. Operations are primarily funded by the Town of Stowe, with additional support from community donations that help fund training, equipment, and outreach.

In every mission, Stowe Mountain Rescue reflects the spirit of the community it serves - ready, reliable, and rooted in a deep respect for the outdoors and genuine love for Stowe. Their work protects lives, supports outdoor access, and ensures that those who explore our rugged outdoor landscapes can do so with a little more confidence, knowing that help is always close at hand.

## **Emergency Management**

Nestled between mountains and rivers - where natural beauty is matched by a strong sense of community – our approach to emergency management is rooted in preparation, care, and collaboration. Though often working behind the scenes, the Department of Emergency Management plays a critical role in protecting the town from both natural and human-caused emergencies.

Appointed by the Town Manager under 20 V.S.A. §6, the Emergency Management Director (EMD) is responsible for organizing, administering, and coordinating the town's emergency response. As the local leader for emergency readiness, the EMD connects Stowe's operations with state and federal partners and guides the community through every phase of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Whether responding to severe weather or large-scale incidents, the EMD works to ensure that Stowe is not only equipped to respond - but prepared to recover and come back stronger.

At the core of this work is the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) - a living, evolving blueprint that outlines how the Town prepares for, responds to, and recovers from a wide range of emergencies. From blizzards and flooding to infrastructure failures and public health events, the LEMP guides coordinated action among those tasked with protecting lives, property, and essential services.

When emergencies occur, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) - located in the Stowe Public Safety Building - the central hub for the town's emergency response. It's where local officials, first responders, and partner agencies gather to monitor unfolding events, coordinate efforts, allocate

resources, and provide timely information to the public. While supporting field operations, the EOC also plays a critical role in:

- Maintaining situational awareness for town leadership
- Managing requests for personnel, equipment, and logistical support
- Coordinating communication between departments and outside agencies
- Ensuring the public receives clear, timely, and accurate updates

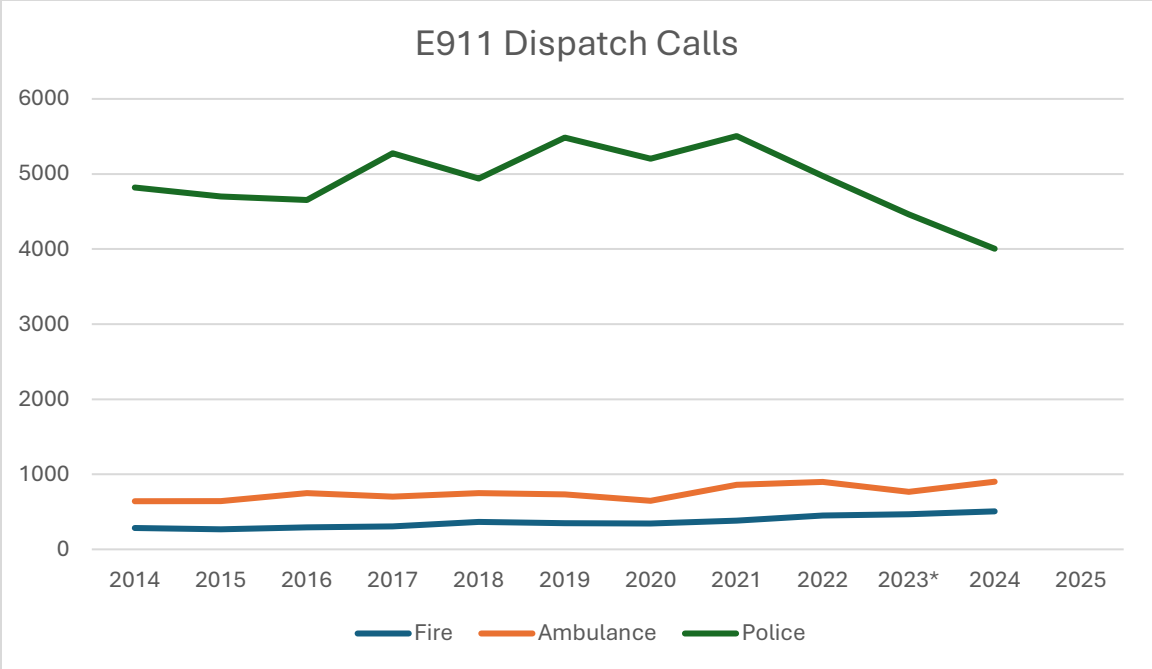
Recognizing the urgency and unpredictability of crisis situations, the Town of Stowe's Purchasing Policy allows for flexibility in true emergencies - such as threats to life, municipal property, or critical services, as well as major permit violations or environmental hazards - so that immediate action can be taken without delay.

Emergency management goes beyond responding to crises - it is a long-term investment in building community resilience. It relies on active collaboration among the Police Department, Fire & Rescue, Stowe Mountain Rescue, public works, utilities, health officials, and private-sector partners to create a comprehensive support network. This whole-community approach ensures that when challenges arise, we can respond effectively and recover more quickly. At its core, emergency management reflects the values of preparedness, trust, and shared responsibility. It embodies what makes our community strong: a commitment to each other, a dedication to safety, and the belief that with careful coordination and compassionate leadership, we can face any storm and emerge stronger together.

### **Dispatch Services (E-911)**

The Lamoille County Sheriff's Department's Communications Center is a vital component of the region's public safety network, operating around the clock to support emergency response efforts throughout Lamoille County. The center manages all 911 calls and provides dispatch services for police, fire, and rescue departments across multiple jurisdictions. The Town has contracted with Lamoille County Sheriff's Department's since the mid-1970s for these services.

Staffed by skilled and professional dispatchers, the center handles a wide range of calls - from routine incidents to critical emergencies - ensuring rapid response and clear coordination among agencies. Dispatchers are trained to prioritize calls, coordinate resources, and offer pre-arrival guidance to those in need. These dispatch services are provided to participating municipalities under an annual agreement with the Sheriff's Department, reinforcing a coordinated and reliable system of public safety communication.



\*2023-Data from the Lamoille County Sherrif's office was not available in the Annual Town Report. Totals were pulled from EMS, Fire, and Police reporting documents within the 2023 Town Report.

## Public Safety & Emergency Services

*Goal: Ensure a safe, resilient, and thriving community by providing professional, coordinated, and cost-effective police, fire, rescue, and emergency management services that protect public safety and enhance quality of life for all residents and visitors.*

### Policies

1. Emergency services will be provided at appropriate levels of service, as determined by locally defined needs and generally accepted standards for communities comparable to Stowe.
2. The Town will plan for anticipated future demand for services and facilities to accommodate future [development and](#) population growth.
3. Efficiencies will be maximized through greater coordination and integration of local emergency services, and ongoing coordination with regional service providers.
4. [Stowe High School will serve as the Town's primary emergency shelter during major emergency events, providing safe refuge and essential services for residents and visitors when needed.](#)

Public Safety Tasks	Responsibility	Priority
1. Continue to participate in cooperative dispatch services with the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department.	Police Department Selectboard	Ongoing
2. Continue to provide mutual aid service with the Morristown and Waterbury fire departments.	Fire & Rescue Department	Ongoing
3. Maintain a replacement schedule for emergency response vehicles and equipment.	Selectboard Town Manager	Ongoing
4. Continue to replace undersized water mains when possible to improve firefighting capabilities.	Fire & Rescue Department Public Works Director	Ongoing
5. Monitor <a href="#">Fire &amp; Rescue Department</a> staffing <del>and volunteer levels for both the Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services</del> to identify <a href="#">and anticipate</a> possible shortages <del>of volunteers</del> in future years. <a href="#">Develop strategies for recruiting additional staff as necessary.</a>	Fire & Rescue Department <a href="#">Emergency Medical Services</a>	Ongoing



7. Work with the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) to coordinate emergency planning with neighboring communities.	Planning Commission <a href="#">Planning Director</a> Public Works Director Fire & Rescue Department Police Department <a href="#">Emergency Medical Services</a> Emergency Management Director LCPC*	Ongoing
<del>Develop strategies for recruiting additional volunteers for the Stowe Fire Department and the Emergency Services Department.</del>	<del>Fire Chief EMS Chief Town Manager Selectboard</del>	<del>Short-term</del>
<a href="#">Work with Fire &amp; Rescue to Integrate the Stowe Fire Department Recommended Construction Standards into the Town's adopted Zoning Regulations.</a>	<a href="#">Fire &amp; Rescue Department Planning Commission</a>	
<a href="#">Continue to Annually Adopt a Local Emergency Management Plan.</a>	<a href="#">EMD Selectboard</a>	<a href="#">Ongoing</a>
<a href="#">Annually review and identify required equipment and building upgrades to ensure the emergency shelter remains fully prepared to protect public safety during disaster events.</a>	<a href="#">EMD Selectboard</a>	<a href="#">Ongoing</a>