



Meridian Fire Department Strategic Plan 2025 – 2028

Report Prepared on behalf of the Meridian Fire Department
by Interaction International, Inc.

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Chief's Message

As we look ahead to the future, it's clear that our community is growing at an unprecedented pace. With this growth comes new challenges, particularly the rising call volumes and the need to expand our services to meet the evolving needs of our residents and businesses.

Meridian Fire Department is committed to adapting to the increasing demands brought on by this growth. We are focused on enhancing our infrastructure, including expanding our facilities and adding more fire stations in key areas. Additionally, we are investing in state-of-the-art equipment and technology to improve response times and efficiency.

As call volumes continue to rise, we are implementing strategies to ensure we maintain the high standard of service our community expects. This includes optimizing staffing models, providing ongoing training for our teams, and exploring innovative solutions like data-driven resource allocation to better manage the demand.

In response to the diverse needs of our growing community, we will also be expanding our range of services. Beyond fire suppression, our department is developing capabilities in emergency medical response, disaster preparedness, special operations, and enhancing community risk reduction. We are also deepening partnerships with local healthcare providers and emergency services to offer more comprehensive support in times of crisis.

At the core of our strategic plan is a commitment to exceptional service. We will continue to listen to the needs of our community, work with city leaders, and proactively seek feedback to ensure we are always improving. Our goal is to not just meet but exceed the expectations placed on us as your fire and emergency services provider.

Together, we will build a safer, stronger community. Thank you for your continued support and trust in your Meridian Fire Department.

Sincerely,

Kris Blume
Fire Chief

Introduction

Department History

In early 1908, the City of Meridian formed its first Fire Department when a group of volunteers successfully tested a newly purchased Champion double-cylinder chemical fire extinguisher. With LeRoy Adams as the first Fire Chief, the department started out fairly small, serving only 600 residents at the time. Jacob Eames, a local blacksmith followed Chief Adams as the second Meridian Fire Chief and in approximately 1924 Amos Whiteley, another local blacksmith and skilled mechanic took the job.

As the City and Department continued to grow, Roger Welker took over the Fire Chief position in 1945. Chief Welker remained Chief until 1983, dedicating 38 years to our Department. In the early 1950's, during Welker's time as Chief, a partnership was formed with the Rural Fire Protection District to better serve and protect citizens in the City limits and the Rural area. This partnership proved to be very beneficial to the City and the Rural Fire District and continues today.

In late 1983, Kenny Bowers became Meridian Fire's fifth Fire Chief. Kenny served in this capacity part-time until 1992 when he moved into the position full-time. Chief Anderson accepted the position of Fire Chief for the City of Meridian in April of 2005 and Chief Bowers moved to Assistant Chief. Chief Anderson retired in April of 2010 and the Department's Deputy Chief of EMS, Mark Niemeyer, was promoted to Fire Chief. In 2020, Chief Niemeyer departed from Meridian Fire, and the Department's Deputy Chief of Operations Charlie Butterfield was named Interim Fire Chief, until the position was filled by MFD's current Fire Chief, Kris Blume, in February of 2021.

Today the department runs on a 31.5-million-dollar budget. There are eight fire stations and a shared Public Safety Training Facility within the District. The Department employs a total of 142 employees. Meridian Fire currently responds to over 11,300 calls per year.

Department Facts

Types of Incidents	2022	2023
Fires	272	251
False Alarm Calls	727	749
Rescue and EMS (including motor vehicle accidents)	5,760	5,677
Unclassified Emergency Incidents	30	30
Service Class (assist public w/ non-emergent situations)	1,294	1,267
Good Intent Calls (dispatched and canceled in route)	1,180	1,199
Hazardous Conditions (combustible/flammable spills/leaks)	168	233
TOTAL	9,431	9,406

Milestones

1908 Meridian formed their first fire department serving 600 residents

1950 Meridian Rural Fire Protection District was formed

1961 New Fire Station built on at the corner of N. Meridian Road and Broadway Ave.

1977 First full-time employee was hired

1998 Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Meridian and the Meridian Rural Fire Protection District began

2000 Opened Fire Station 1 on E. Franklin Road - population 45,000 and 2,069 calls for Service

2001 Opened Fire Station 2 on N. Ten Mile Road

2003 Opened Fire Station 3 on N. Locust Grove Road

2006 Opened Fire Station 4 on S. Eagle Road

2007 Training Tower opened at Fire Station 1

2008 Opened Fire Station 5 on N. Linder Road

2012 Started Project SAFE, Smoke Alarms for Everyone, with FEMA grant

2013 Entered in the EMS JPA, Emergency Medical Joint Power Agreement

2016 Formed the first MFD EMT Bike Patrol Team

2017 Meridian Fire's first Honor Guard was formed

2018 Association of Idaho Cities City Achievement Award – Public Safety – Heart Safe Meridian

2019 Champion of Child Passenger Safety Award

2020 Received the Association of Idaho Cities City Achievement Award – Public Safety – Idaho Standard Command Responses for Schools

2020 Opened Fire Station 6 on W. Overland Road

2023 Awarded a SAFER grant to onboard 18 new firefighters to achieve and NFPA1710 recommended staffing model

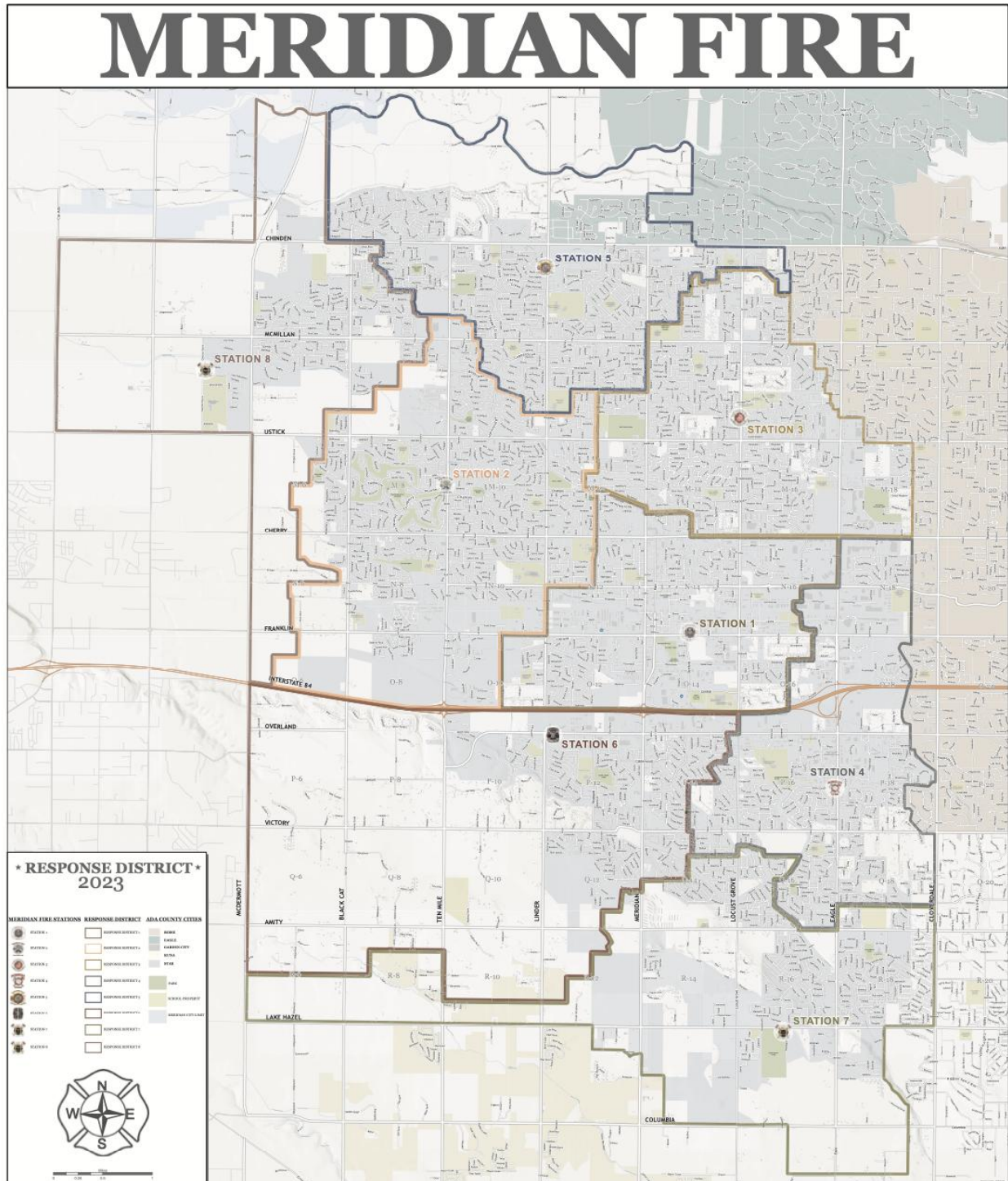
2023 Added a second Truck to our fleet/response model - T-35 runs out of Station 5

2023 Opened Fire Station 7 on S. Recreation Avenue and Fire Station 8 on N. Owyhee Storm Avenue

2024 Became an Internationally Accredited Fire Department by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). First, and currently only, accredited fire agency in the state of Idaho.

2024 Established community partnerships with Faces of Hope, American Red Cross and West Ada School District to support and advance Community Risk Reduction Programs in the community

Service Area Map



Process/Methodology

“The greater danger for most of us lies
not in setting our aim too high and falling short,
but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark.”

- Michelangelo

A strategic plan provides a roadmap to align and navigate organizational activities in pursuit of an impactful and inspiring future vision. MFD was ready to develop a new strategic plan to chart its next level of impact. A group of twenty members from across MFD convened to create a comprehensive, evidence-informed plan. Key to guiding plan development were several sources of intelligence, including the results of comprehensive employee and partner/vendor surveys specifically designed to inform this process.

The planning group began the process by envisioning the ideal future impact and functioning of MFD and, considering everyone’s input, creating an exciting three-year vision to serve as the point of alignment for the rest of the plan. All MFD stakeholders were considered in this process, including MFD staff, the citizens they serve, and key partners.

The group also conducted an environmental assessment: an analysis of all factors that have the potential to either help or hinder MFD in achieving its vision. The sources of key intelligence were integrated into the analysis. The results of the environmental assessment were synthesized into critical success factors, identifying the most important areas of focus to cultivate future success. SMART Goals were developed to address each of the critical success factors. Strategies were created to define how each goal would be attained. Action plans were developed, detailing the steps and responsibilities in carrying out each strategy; they will serve as the primary implementation tool for the strategic plan. Finally, performance measures were established to guide assessment of progress toward reaching the outcomes defined in the goals. An accompanying performance measurement plan was created to define the timeframe, responsibilities, and audience for each measure. The action plans and performance measurement plan are contained in a separate “Implementation Guide” document.

This strategic plan defines MFD’s direction for the next three years. Moreover, it expresses MFD’s commitment to continuing to provide exceptional service that meets the city’s evolving and expanding needs. It is intended to be a flexible guide: a living document that will be updated as needed throughout implementation.

Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

The vision describes an organization's desired future state and impact. It is the guiding force that inspires internal and external stakeholders to engage with the organization and provides a point of alignment for all organizational activities. The mission describes an organization's purpose for existence. The guiding principles describe the values that guide all members in carrying out their work.

MFD Mission

To protect and enhance our community through professionalism and compassion.

MFD Vision

Meridian Fire Department 2028:
*An exceptional fire department,
optimally investing in our people and our capability to
meet the expanding needs of the community.*

MFD Guiding Principles

COMPASSION

We will provide friendly and compassionate service to each other and the public we serve.

PROFESSIONALISM

We will dedicate ourselves to be an educated workforce striving to meet the community's and our employees' changing needs.

HONESTY

We will conduct ourselves in an honest manner and be transparent in our interactions.

OWNERSHIP

Ownership of our department will be expressed through tradition, loyalty, and dedication.

TRUST

We will earn and maintain trust through integrity, our actions, and holding to commitments.

Goals, Strategies, and Performance Measures

This section outlines the goals (focus areas and statements), strategies, and performance measures of the MFD strategic plan. Goals articulate the outcomes MFD will achieve to accomplish its three-year vision. Strategies define how each goal will be achieved. Performance measures are designed to assess the impact of plan activities, particularly the outcomes of each goal. Measurement data will be translated into intelligence that informs progress toward achieving the goals and guides any adjustments needed to maximize success at achieving the vision.

GOAL 1: CULTIVATING ADVANCEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

By January 2028, MFD will provide members a clear and consistent path to support movement within all levels of the Department, to produce capable and qualified leaders that maintain the culture and institutional knowledge.

Strategies:

1. Identify, develop, and implement position-specific standardized promotional process components and provide training for each.
2. Develop and implement a successful working out-of-class program.
3. Develop and integrate focused presentations into each developmental process designed to capture and maintain organizational knowledge.
4. Identify minimum qualifications for each position within the organization.
5. Develop and implement a successful acting-in-charge/swing-up program.

Performance Measures:

- A. Engagement of Eligible Candidates
- B. Candidate Success Rate
- C. Engagement of Eligible Candidates for Executive and Administrative Positions
- D. Feedback from Qualified Candidates Who Choose Not to Test

GOAL 2: SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

By January 2028, support all members in performing at their best while achieving positive physical and mental health and work-life balance.

Strategies:

1. Develop and implement a new staffing model to address task saturation while ensuring cross-training to preserve knowledge within the department.
2. Study and gather data on leave usage.
3. Develop a communication strategy to meet internal communication needs to foster connectivity and cultivate a strong culture within the department.
4. Identify and implement health and wellness initiatives to support our members' physical and mental health.

Performance Measures:

- A. Utilization of Communication Channels and Feedback Loops
- B. Number of Days Short-Staffed
- C. Implementation of New Wellness Programs
- D. Utilization of Programs Supporting Physical and Mental Health

GOAL 3: KEY STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

By January 2028, secure the understanding and support of key stakeholders about current and future needs to fulfill the strategic objectives and meet community expectations/needs.

Strategies:

1. Identify and meet with key internal and external stakeholders.
2. Research effective delivery of and presentation to identified stakeholders.
3. Develop an informational and educational campaign.
4. Provide educational and informational support to external stakeholders to assist with advocacy campaigns.

Performance Measures:

- A. Key Stakeholder Understanding of MFD Operations and Needs
- B. Key Stakeholder Support for MFD Strategic Objectives

GOAL 4: OPTIMIZING FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

By January 2028, modify current facilities, construct new facilities, and acquire equipment to provide for the community's expanding service needs.

Strategies:

1. Conduct an assessment of fire stations 1 – 5 and training facility for modifications to increased service demand and health and safety.
2. Conduct assessment of Fire Admin to assess privacy of workspace.

Performance Measures:

- A. Progress on Required Remodels, New Facilities, and Equipment, as Scheduled

GOAL 5: SECURING OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

By January 2028, implement programs and personnel to ensure operational capacity to meet the City's evolving needs.

Strategies:

1. Utilize data collection technologies to develop a measure of operational capacity to ensure optimal performance.
2. Complete and implement the operational doctrine.
3. Develop comprehensive Special Operations Plan.
4. Utilize data collection and analysis to evaluate the need to expand EMS services.
5. Integrate Community Risk Reduction at all levels of the department.
6. Review staffing models to determine the need to expand command response capabilities.

Performance Measures:

- A. Performance on Annual Compliance Reports and Program Appraisals

GOAL 6: MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

Through 2028, the Meridian Fire Department will maintain accreditation status with the CFAI (Commission on Fire Accreditation International).

Strategies:

1. Reassess and restructure the accreditation team to ensure clear roles, ownership, and accountability.
2. Ensure continuous communication, education, and training on the accreditation process at all levels of the organization. Promote department-wide involvement and awareness through regular updates, training sessions, and progress check-ins.
3. Work to address the 15 current recommendations identified by the CFAI.
4. Create a living digital accreditation dashboard or tracker that monitors progress, deadlines, assigned responsibilities, and documentation updates in real time.

Performance Measures:

- A. Successful submission and acceptance of Annual Compliance Reports (ACRs) in 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028
- B. Accreditation team and supporting documentation are prepared for the 2029 re-accreditation site visit and peer assessment.

GOAL 7: PROMOTE SAFETY & RESILIENCY

By January 2028, enhance community safety and resiliency by implementing best practices in Community Risk Reduction, using the 5 E's - Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Economic Incentive and Emergency Response - as a strategic framework.

Strategies:

1. Collaborate with Prevention to identify and document target hazards, high-risk occupancies, and community-specific risks to guide focused CRR efforts.
2. Develop and incorporate a root cause analysis for identified risks within the community, framing the solutions through the 5 E's of Community Risk Reduction.
3. Expand data collection and evaluation to include near-miss incidents, fall-related injuries, and high-frequency non-emergency calls.
4. Assess youth fire-setter intervention needs and referral resources in partnership with regional agencies.
5. Update the Meridian Fire Department's CRA/SOC to include the addition of stations 7 and 8, ensuring alignment with re-accreditation (2028/2029) and the 2029 Strategic Plan.
6. Develop and implement a sustainable Community Risk Reduction Plan based on findings from the updated CRA/SOC, aligning it with both operational needs and community engagement.

Performance Measures:

- A. Update CRA/SOC completed by Q1 of 2027, with station growth and risk profiles incorporated.
- B. Community Risk Reduction Plan finalized, adopted, and implemented by Q2 of 2027, with annual review and reporting mechanisms in place.

GOAL 8: INSPECTION PROGRAMS

By January 2028, establish and operationalize a comprehensive Fire Inspection Management Program aligned with NFPA standards and accreditation requirements.

Strategies:

1. Develop and formalize policies and procedures that guide the Fire Inspection Management Program in compliance with applicable codes and standards.
2. Evaluate and select a new inspection management software platform that integrates with the City's GIS system to support streamlined data sharing and location-based analytics.
3. Implement a Business License Program that automatically notifies the Fire Prevention Division when an inspection is required for a new or renewing business.
4. Launch an Annual Operational Permit Program to ensure regulated occupancies receive consistent and compliant fire safety oversight.
5. Collaborate with CRR to identify and categorize target hazards based on occupancy type and associated risk, with prioritization informed by the Community Risk Assessment (CRA) and Standards of Cover (SOC).

Performance Measures:

- A. Complete and established hazard classification system
- B. Create and adopt Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) or Procedures (SOPs)
- C. Measure and evaluate fire incident data and inspection frequency.