



LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lakeland Receives New Fire Protection Rating; the Highest Achievable Level

Lakeland, FL - The Lakeland Fire Department (LFD) is proud to announce that its Insurance Service Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) score has improved by an entire rating level from its previous score of a 2, awarded in January 2014, to the highest possible score of a 1. This increased score to the highest possible rating available may have an influence in reducing insurance rates for Lakeland residents and businesses. The score plays a role in how insurance companies - including the largest in the nation - figure rates and decision making in regards to who they underwrite for insurance. It also impacts economic development.

The score, based on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the highest level of fire suppression standards and 10 indicating no recognized fire protection, is produced by ISO through an extensive evaluation process. The department's services, response times, equipment, personnel, training efforts, community risk reduction, and more were evaluated to develop a final score. That score in turn provides both insurers and the fire department a comprehensive measure to rate the quality of the fire protection they provide. In Lakeland's case, it's new PPC score of a 1 indicates that the Lakeland Fire Department provides the highest level of service.

The improvements in the score were determined in a reevaluation audit that took place earlier in the year. Evaluators took into account LFD's addition of an Engine Company, Truck Company, and additional personnel added with the opening of Fire Station 7 in January 2015. The new station which was opened to better serve the southwest neighborhoods of Lakeland in turn helped benefit the entire City of Lakeland through the improved ISO PPC score. Additionally, gains that led to a PPC score of 1 were made in the evaluated categories of emergency communications and community outreach.

"The men and women of the Lakeland Fire Department worked very hard to achieve this accomplishment even in times of fiscal limitations where the department has been asked to do more with less. This is the first time in the history of the department, in the ISO era, that we have accomplished to reach the highest level of public protection classification. This translates to very real and positive outcomes for the citizens of Lakeland." said Training Chief John Almskog, who was instrumental in coordinating the review along with Assistant Chief of Operations Doug Riley and Battalion Chief Mike Williams.

ISO auditors visited in October 2015, during which Lakeland's Fire Department, Water Department, and Emergency Communications Center were evaluated to come up with the final determination. The official announcement of the new rating was made Monday, November 16, 2015 and the new score will be effective February 1, 2016.

Of the 614 ISO rated communities in Florida, only 19 have a level 1 classification placing Lakeland in the top 3rd percentile in regards to quality and fire protection of fire departments in the state. Nationwide, there are only 132 of 48,754 rated communities which have a score of 1, which the Lakeland Fire Department now has.

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Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

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