

Winston-Salem Fire Police, The First Four Months, 1958

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In the March 1958 issue of *Hose & Nozzle* magazine, Winston-Salem Fire Department Asst. Chief Harold Gibson provided a report on the first four months of city's new partially integrated fire-police program. We've [blogged about this before](#), with a six-month report on the program from 1958. Here's the precursor to that report, provided at the four-month mark.

Report Details

Since September 1957, personnel at Station 8 have been assigned both fire and police duties. To help the firemen cope with the technical aspects of both vocations, a twelve-week training program was conducted by the city's fire and police chiefs, along with each department's training supervisors. A total of 7,127 man-hours of training was conducted from April 15 to December 31.

Equipment in service at Station 8 consists of a new Mack pumper, equipped with a 1,000 GPM pump, and a Chevrolet station wagon. The latter is used to conduct around-the-clock patrols and is equipped with fire and police radios, small tools, and hand fire suppression equipment.

Six firemen consist of a Captain, Lieutenant, two Sergeants, and two Drivers. Eight fire-police Patrolmen and one rotating Police Officer completes company. One Fire-Policeman rotates at the police department.

The company officers and firemen draw regular firemen's pay, while the fire-policemen are paid \$30 more per month than regular firemen. All of the fire-policemen volunteered for their assignment.

The firemen and fire-policemen work together as a single unit. When a fire call is received in the Station 8 territory, the engine and fire car are dispatched separately. If the car is patrolling, its personnel join the engine upon arrival, and work together as one fire company. The company can also be transferred to other parts of the city, for multiple alarm fires or to fill-in at other fire stations.

Thirty-seven alarms were answered during the four-month period. The unit (firemen and fire-policemen) also performed their share of additional activities. They completed 445 fire prevention inspections, and 277 fire hydrant checks during the four-month period.

Police Patrol

During the four-month period, 5,032 man-hours were spent by the eight fire-policemen patrolling an assigned area of four and three-quarter square miles. Two men rode together in the fire car. They performed such regular police duties as catching speeders, checking licenses, citing parking violations, noting street lights out, checking building permits, and performing away-from-home checks.

In the event the fire-policemen are making an arrest and a fire call is transmitted over the radio, the fire call comes first. The fire-policemen also assisted with fire prevention. During the four months, they located nine fires that were extinguished before serious damage occurred.

Technical Details

From September 1957 to February 1958, the Fire-Police Patrol is being conducted on an experimental basis. It will be evaluated upon completion of the six-month period. Decisions will be made at that time to continue, expand, or discontinue the program.

Fire Company 8 responds to fires on first alarms within a six and three-quarter square mile territory. The fire-police patrol patrols an area of four and three-quarter square-miles. They remain in this territory unless responding to a fire with the rest of the company. Their territory includes residences of medium and high value, a college, a hospital, places of public assembly, suburban trading areas, and a few small industries.

Timeline

April 15, 1957 - Began four-week basic police training program for fire-police patrol.

May 13, 1957 - Began four-week refresher fire training program for fire-police patrolmen, other personnel from Company 8, and three volunteers from police.

June 1, 1957 - Began four-week periods of on-the-job police training of fire-police patrolmen, under immediate supervision of experienced

police patrolmen.

September 2, 1957 - Company 8 activated at Station 7, pending completion of Station 8. Company inspected and tested hydrants and familiarized itself with its territory.

September 9, 1957 - Activated fire-police patrol in assigned territory.

October 17, 1957 - Company 8 moves to Station 8.

Apparent Gains

After four-months, the Fire-Police experiment has produced gains for the city, including:

1. Usually arriving first at a fire, the fire-policemen accomplish considerable firefighting prior to the arrival of the engine.
2. Arriving first, the fire-policemen can advise the engine's officer on conditions ahead of the engine's arrival.
3. Of the 22 fires dispatched, 11 were controlled by the patrol unit. This freed the engine to answer other calls.
4. On one occasion, the patrol car and engine extinguished two simultaneous fires at separate locations in their territory.
5. The patrol car located nine fires visually.
6. The intensive police protection provided by the patrol unit in its territory has become a strong deterrent to traffic violations and other criminal activity.
7. There's a public relations value for the fire department in having a "red car" constantly in evidence at work, in its territory.
8. The combined fire-police organization requires five fewer men than the traditional, separate fire and police organizations. This saves the city \$22,250 per year.

Fire Inspections - Semi-Annual Type

Buildings inspected - 34

Violations found - 16

Violations corrected - 12

Referred to Fire Prevention Bureau - 4

Fire Inspections - Residential

Buildings inspected - 411

Violations found - 69

Violations corrected - 63

Referred to Fire Prevention Bureau - 6

Fire Hydrant Activity

Inspections and tests - 277

Defects reported to Water and Sewer - 5

Police Work

Arrests - 259

Parking Tickets - 2

Traffic Lights Reported Out - 2

Street Lights Reported Out - 246

Witnesses Subpoenaed - 6

Away-from-home Checks - 938

Value of Recovered Property - \$650

Doors and Windows Found Open - 6

Police Calls Answered - 99

Building Permits Checked - 36
Man Hours Spent
Police Patrol - 5032
Radar Speed Check - 212
License or Auto Check - 7
Municipal Court - 34
Superior Court - 3

Fire Department Work

Man Hours Spent
Firefighting - 16
Fire classroom training - 7
Fire prevention inspections - 70
Clean-up detail - 9
Special duty - 100

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What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

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Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.