

## LUDLOW FIRE DEPARTMENT TODAY

The Ludlow Fire Department takes great pride in providing professional fire protection and advanced level emergency medical services to the town of Ludlow. The department is ready for such emergencies twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. The department operates out of one fire headquarters located at 574 Center Street at the intersection of Center and Chapin Streets at the Ludlow Safety Complex. The department is a full-time department and is lead by Chief Chaconas who was appointed as Chief in 1999. The department operates with one fire inspector / investigator, four shift officers and 23 privates.

The Ludlow Fire Department is capable of handling all incidents it is called upon through our department or in cooperation with outside agencies, for large scale incidents. The department operates with three engines, one ladder, two forestry units, a chemical truck and two advanced life support ambulances. The Ludlow Fire Department receives emergency calls through our Enhanced 911 emergency system giving the dispatcher the location of the caller immediately, this is crucial in language barrier situations and medical problems when the caller cannot speak. The department also receives calls through private monitoring services for fire / medical problems. The Town of Ludlow has 82 fire boxes, when pulled this summons a response, these are located inside public buildings and on certain street corners. Once an emergency comes into the department it is determined what equipment shall respond due to the nature of the emergency, the appropriate equipment is then dispatched immediately. The initial response of the on duty crew will reach any scene in the town within minutes, if it is determined more resources are needed off duty personnel are summoned via pager and surrounding communities are available for dispatch. When incidents occur that tie up the on duty crew, off duty members are called to cover the station for any other emergencies. The importance of this is when there is an emergency, the Ludlow Fire Department will always be available to respond immediately with the personnel and equipment needed. The department responds to many types of emergency calls, therefore the department must be ready to handle these emergencies.

The unique challenges the Ludlow Fire Department encounters vary throughout the town. The Town of Ludlow has both a dense downtown residential and business area and a large amount of

agricultural land. This layout not only requires the need for aggressive urban firefighting but also the challenges of rural firefighting. The urban sections are protected by fire hydrants and in the rural areas the department must supply its own water. Water supply is accomplished in these areas through 3,000 gallons being brought immediately to the scene then drafting and shuttling of water may be needed. In the town there are also many large and small bodies of water including a sizable river, these create the need for occasional water and ice rescue. The department is equipped with a boat, four cold water suits, two ice sleds and a variety of rescue ropes. The Town also is home to many businesses that handle hazardous material and store large volumes of flammable liquids. The Massachusetts Turnpike stretches approximately five miles through town with two rest areas and an interchange. The town also borders Westover Air Reserve Base which supports a great deal of large aircraft traffic. These are just a few of the many challenges that are encountered by the Ludlow Fire Department.

Handling of these emergencies is done through equipment and training. All members of the Ludlow Fire Department are fire academy trained, trained in all aspects of suppression of fire and rescue. The department recently purchased state of the art personal protective equipment including gear, helmets, radios and flashlights. The department also had two thermal imagers donated thanks to the generosity of the Smoke is Not A Problem committee (SNAP). These devices allow firefighters to execute faster rescues and help in suppression. Other specialized equipment is listed under apparatus and equipment.