

In 1968, the State of Illinois purchased the unincorporated area of DuPage County known as Weston, IL. This purchase also included farmland to the North, West and South of Weston to encompass a total area of 6800 acres. This land was donated by the State to the Federal Government and construction soon started on what was to become the world's largest particle accelerator to be used for scientific research.

Known at first as the National Accelerator Laboratory, the name was then changed to Fermi National Laboratory. "Fermilab" which is what the Laboratory is more commonly referred to is named for Enrico Fermi (1901-1954), a renowned Italian Physicist who created and sustained the first atomic chain reaction at Stagg Field on the campus of the University of Chicago, in Chicago.

Brigade personnel handled fire protection, in the early days of construction. As the Laboratory grew, the Atomic Energy Commission, A.E.C. (predecessor to the present Department of Energy, D.O.E.) saw the need for a full time department, and on November 16, 1970, the first of three (3), three (3) man shifts began providing around the clock protection on a 24 hour on-48 hour off basis. Today, there are nineteen, (19) personnel employed by the department, eighteen (18) are on three (3) shifts of six (6) each, plus the Chief.

Five Chiefs have served the department over the years. John Dinkel, an Electrical Engineer with the Laboratory, served as the first Chief during the brigade years. The first full time Chief was Leonard Grimstead. Other Chiefs up to the present were Ralph Kramp and Fred Clod. Chief John "Jack" Steinhoff, the present Chief, began his duties in the latter part of 1994.

In 2004, the department responded to 362 calls, including medical emergencies. The department provides Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance service and the Tri-Cities Ambulance Service under contract provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) service.

In order to provide the best service possible, the Laboratory is a member of M.A.B.A.S. Division 12 & 13, comprised of fire departments in DuPage and Kane Counties, which provides additional equipment and personnel through a systematic call-up procedure in times when our resources are not able to handle an emergency. The department also participates in Auto-Aid Response with Batavia & Warrenville Fire Departments.

Apparatus presently in use by the Fermilab Fire Department consists of the following:

Engine 702	1989	Emergency One	1500 GPM - 500 GBT
Engine 703	1999	Emergency One	1250 GPM - 500 GBT
Engine 704	2001	Pierce	1500 GPM 1000 GBT
Grass Unit 705	2001	Ford/FD equipped	300 GPM - 200 GBT
Command Vehicle 707	2000	Ford/Expedition	
Chief's Car 710	1998	Chevrolet/Lumina	
Ambulance 751	2002	Ford Wheel Coach	

In addition, there is a [Spill Control trailer](#), which carries a wide variety of equipment to provide a "first aid" approach to containing hazardous materials spills/leaks.

The fire service is in an ever-changing mode especially here at the Laboratory and we strive to keep up with these many changes. Training in all fields of the fire service is constant, with the continued upgrading in all areas, including hazardous materials, confined space, and mine rescue.