



Wisconsin Veterans Home at King Security Department Study

The Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, (WVH-King) Wisconsin is situated on 320 acres in rural Waupaca County, Wisconsin, and provides a home for 671 (as of 11/30/10) elderly members who sleep in multi-story buildings. The Home has a customized Security Department to handle the unique needs of the facility. The Security Department at the WVH-King successfully handles responsibilities most other long-term care facilities never encounter. Eliminating the Security Officers at King will result in negative outcomes for both the members and the facility.

Safety and Security

The primary role of the Security Officers is safety and security. The WVH-King is an open campus, meaning the public and our members are allowed to enter and leave our grounds 24/7. The Officers patrol the grounds throughout the day and night. They use the highly visible Security vehicle to make their presence known and to discourage vandalism. They also patrol on foot and bicycle. They cover the cemetery, the grounds, and the tunnels on an ongoing basis. They are responsible for locking doors at the Marden Center, Central Services, Burns Clemens Hall, etc., at the end of the day and also check offices and other areas, ensuring they are locked, as they perform their rounds.

Security Officers are key staff on the PM and night shifts when there is only one nursing supervisor responsible for the entire facility. The Security Officer will respond in minutes to whatever issues arise. The nursing supervisor may be tied up with a fallen member or sending a member out to the hospital in one building when another situation arises at the opposite end of camp. The only staff available to respond across camp are the Security Officers. They are especially critical on the night shift when there is one registered nurse (RN) covering 2 floors (1 RN per 100 beds) and just 2 certified nursing assistants (CNAs) per floor (1 CNA per 25 beds). These staff are unable to safely leave their units to respond to an incident. The Security Officers are immediately contacted on all shifts whenever a member is missing. The Security staff know the members and their habits quite well and are often able to locate the member very quickly.

Security Officers are crucial to the safety of members and staff as well as the property of the WVH-King. The WVH-King is located in a highly visible location in a busy tourist destination. The WVH-King has four bars within walking (and wheelchair) distance. This creates a potentially hazardous situation for members. Members will sometimes fall

when travelling between the bars and their residence hall. Security Officers patrol the grounds on a constant basis and respond to any “downed” member or tipped over scooter or wheelchair. They are often the first to arrive on the scene. They assess the situation and call an RN or an ambulance, depending on the need. The local establishments will often call Security if they have a member who is getting into trouble so Security can assist the member in getting home. The local bars will often call Security when members leave the bar so Security can watch for them to arrive safely. The busy nightlife in the area also creates issues with trespassers and disorderly persons.

The Security Officers are always ready to respond to a variety of situations. For example, they may get a call from the Sheriff’s office informing them there is a report of a member potentially broke down with their scooter along Hwy QQ. They respond to nursing staff when we have members in conflict or when they become abusive toward staff. They will frequently be called if a member (who is a supervised smoker) has cigarettes or lighters in their possession they may have gotten from another member or purchased themselves. The Security Officers are usually successful in sitting down with and talking to the member, defusing the situation and convincing them to surrender the smoking materials. Members respect the uniform and the Security Officers have developed the skills to calmly work with members who are confused, delirious, struggling with dementia or who are simply angry. Without our Security Officers we would be calling the Sheriff’s Department much more frequently. The Sheriff’s officers do not have the experience or understanding of the best way to work with the members to gain their trust and cooperation. Generally, the only time the Sheriff’s Department is called is when a member is a danger to himself or others and needs a 72-hour hold for a mental health evaluation.

Most nursing homes are within the city limits and can call the city police when issues arise. We are outside the city limits and must rely on the Sheriff’s Department for any incidents, i.e., member-related, drunk and disorderly public, or vandals. The Sheriff’s officers may be in any part of Waupaca County and are not always able to respond quickly when there is a need.

Now that members have to go outside to smoke, having a Security Officer patrolling the grounds is more important than ever. Members go outside to smoke all throughout the night. Once we experience cold and icy conditions, there will be a much greater chance of members falling or being exposed to the elements. Constant patrolling of the smoking areas and the walkways will be essential to keep our members safe.

The Security Officers respond to whatever incidents arise. In addition to member issues, they respond to staff emergencies, visitor injuries, broken pipes, people stuck in elevators, bats in the residence halls, parking concerns, kids skateboarding in the tunnel, and also place calls to maintenance, housekeeping or snow removal crews to respond to emergencies. In addition, they also watch all of the smoke alarms and run the telephone switchboard.

Fire Safety

WVH-King maintains a small fire department as a first response unit and a security patrol (the patrol does not carry firearms and does not have any arrest powers). The Commandant of the WVH-King and their deputies pursuant to VA 6.02(5) have the powers of constables to enforce the laws of the state of Wisconsin and the rules of the Home. However, the duties of constables are very specific under Chapter 61.29, Wis. Stats.

Maintaining a “Fire Department” at the WVH-King is just one aspect of the Security Officers’ job. The Home maintains a security function of typically, two people. Even if they did not perform fire prevention and response services, the WVH-King would still require the Security Officers to perform security, safety, and emergency medical functions. The additional cost of resources to provide fire prevention/response functions is minimal, consisting of the fire truck and fire gear for the Officers. Having fire protection available on-site is essential due to the unique nature of WVH-King.

The Security Officers at WVH-King protect its members, employees, and visitors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. These services are provided at a cost per patient day of just \$2.59. Of the \$300 per day which members pay for their care, \$2.59 per day is a small price to pay for member safety. (See [1st Excel spreadsheet](#)). While the Officers’ job duties are quite diverse, we can break them down into 5 major components. (See [1st graph on 2nd Excel spreadsheet](#)).

About 40% of their time is spent in providing fire-related services. These include alarm testing, building inspections, and actual responses to alarms. Even if the Home did not provide fire suppression services, the Officers would still need to provide required alarm testing and building inspections.

About 40% of their time is spent in Emergency Medical Service and Security. King’s security staff patrol the grounds and is available for a wide range of services, which we will discuss shortly.

About 10% of their time is spent in Staff Education, another 5% in Record Keeping, and 5% in Related Work (vehicle maintenances, fire house maintenance, etc).

If we look at the Supply Budget for the King Security Department, we find that 22% was spent on fire-related items in Fiscal Year 2010, which amounts to just \$8,546.97. (See [2nd graph on 2nd Excel spreadsheet](#)). This minimal expenditure helps to ensure continued maintenance of fire suppression equipment, including WVH-King’s own fire truck.

Security Officers at the WVH-King provide a wide range of services. (See [3rd graph on 2nd Excel spreadsheet](#)). The graph shows the number of calls responded to in fiscal year 2010, broken down by category. Of the almost 6,000 responses, 56 were fire alarm related. You can see the diverse type of calls to which the Security Officers respond. They wear many different hats, so to speak, through their shifts. Some are very serious situations, such as fire, violence responses, suicide issues, security alarms, and such.

Others are more mundane, such as animal control, though even that can at times pose a dangerous situation to members if not dealt with promptly.

When evaluating the cost and benefit of having the capability to respond to fires, we must also look at safety issues. One such issue is response time for a fire incident. The Security Officers at King have an average response time of 4 minutes to a fire incident. This includes arriving in full gear, with fire truck and equipment on the scene. Now let's look at the closest fire department in our geographical area which would be the Waupaca Area Volunteer Fire Department. The Waupaca fire department is a volunteer type fire department. They do **not** have firefighters waiting at their firehouse, ready to respond to a call. Instead, when the call goes out, volunteers must get the alarm, leave work or home, drive to the fire department, wait for enough manpower to arrive to minimally man their equipment, and then drive to the scene. The WVH-King has asked the Waupaca fire department what their response time would be if it utilized their services. Answers have varied from 13 minutes to 20 minutes. (See 4th graph on 2nd Excel spreadsheet). The 4th graph pictorially shows the comparison in response time. The best case scenario of 13 minutes was used for the Waupaca fire department. The 20 minute response would be much worse. Those extra minutes can mean the difference between a saved building and members, or disaster. The closest full-time staffed fire department is located in Stevens Point, which is over 30 minutes away.

'Life Safety Code' and NFPA 1720 provide the Standard of allowable response times for a fire department. For volunteer fire departments, it allows up to 9 minutes 90% of the time. Waupaca fire department's best estimate doesn't even come close to meeting that standard. The Waupaca fire department is, therefore, not adequately equipped to be the primary fire response to the Home. [Please reference the Adobe scan of a summary of NFPA 1720](#). This standard applies to volunteer fire departments, not specifically nursing homes, residences, or business. It states the department must have a response time of 9 minutes or less for 90% of its calls. While not technically a legal requirement, the standards are usually given great weight in lawsuits, thereby in essence, making them a requirement.

(See 5th graph on 2nd Excel spreadsheet). By looking at the 5th graph, you notice that 53% of the fire alarms in fiscal year 2010 were false alarms. This is the 'nature of the beast' in a large long-term care facility. The Security Department knows to respond each time with vigilance and haste, realizing that while half will be false alarms, **half are NOT**. What would be the consequences of over half of the alarms being false for a volunteer fire department? Forcing volunteers out of work, bed, etc., driving to the fire house, donning their gear, and driving to the scene could become a frustrating experience for a volunteer force. Would response times possibly become even slower over time from a volunteer fire department weary of all the effort to respond to what may be another false alarm? As previously mentioned, even their best response estimate does not meet Standard.

It is important to note that although all four of the nursing care buildings have sprinkler systems, there are many more buildings which do not. Buildings that do not have sprinkler systems include:

- Two dozen registered historic wooden buildings ranging from 80 to 120 years old
- Central Services building which houses the commissary, laundry, and central kitchen
- Marden Center which houses the museum, library, gift shop, activity area, theater, tavern, bowling alley, ceramics kiln, and woodworking shop
- 2-story, 19-bedroom staff housing dormitory
- Icehouse, which is now used as a Member fishing shop
- Water treatment plant
- Security building
- Physical plant buildings
- Greenhouse, which is now a wheelchair repair shop
- Bus garages

While the danger of unsprinklered buildings explains the importance of having fire prevention and response services, **even our sprinklered buildings have a need for support**. The unique nature of our ‘high rise’ residence halls warrants the specialized and unique training of the WVH-King Fire Department. In each of our licensed buildings the sprinkler system works the same—the initial pressure is provided by our large water tower. That might be sufficient, alone, if only a few sprinkler heads went off, or if only sprinkler heads on a lower floor went off. But the water tower is not sufficient to push enough pressure if the heads on an upper floor (3rd or higher) went off. Typically, a sprinkler head will put out between 25 and 40 gallons of water a minute, if there is enough pressure to overcome the gravity involved. If there is not enough pressure, the heads may only dribble. So, each building over 3 stories has a large fire pump built-in, but it is not acceptable to have only the building fire pump to feed the system. Each building has an outside fire department connection (FDC). The FDC must have enough inlets to allow a fire truck to connect and pump into the system at the required rate in case the building fire pump fails. We have to get a fire truck connected to the FDC whenever we have a working fire. This means we need a truck supporting fire attack staged at the FDC ensuring adequate water pressure and flow to the building sprinkler system. The FDC also feeds the standpipe system in the building, which is essential to provide water to the attack teams. The attack teams carry ‘high rise hose packs’ into the building and connect these to the standpipes near the affected area. Again, if there is not sufficient pressure and flow to feed these attack lines, the teams won't be able to control a fire. So, the FDC has two jobs which count on a fire truck and fire fighters: feeding the sprinkler system and feeding the standpipes. The WVH-King’s pumper truck is able to pump 1500 gallons per minute which meets the requirements for each of the residence halls (the previous truck did not meet the requirements for Ainsworth Hall).

Some further building specific concerns:

- MacArthur Hall (MH), which houses 116 elderly residents, does not have a building fire pump, it has only a FDC. Because it is only 3 stories high, it does not require

anything more. That means we have only the pressure provided by our water tower, until we can get a fire truck connected to the FDC. Also, MH does not have standpipes in the building, so there is nowhere to connect our attack lines. We have to throw them out a window and have someone on the ground attach them to our fire truck.

- Burns Clemens (BC) has neither a building fire pump nor a FDC but sits on a “hill” where the water tower pressure is reduced. There is no way to augment the sprinkler system and we have to drag fire attack hoses from the truck into the building. It's a good thing no one resides or sleeps in BC any more.
- Ove Center is another concern. There are no standpipes but it does have a FDC which can feed the sprinkler system. The Veterans Assistance Program (VAP) has residents who live in the Ove Center. They also have an evening security officer to watch the one building when staff is not present.

This helps to reinforce the necessity of a quick response time, which can only be met by the WVH-King's own Security Department.

The nature of WVH-King's 'high rise' licensed nursing care buildings requires different response techniques than the usual house or barn fire typically responded to by the local volunteer fire department. The WVH-King Security Officers receive specialized training to respond to a fire in a multi-story building with elderly members who cannot be quickly evacuated from the building.

The minimal cost of maintaining a Fire Department at King is more than offset by the additional safety to lives and property. Since we already own the truck and firefighting equipment, the maintenance and testing of the truck and some additional staff training expenses are really the only extra cost to have certified fire fighters and a pumper truck ready to respond in just minutes.

Utilization of Waupaca Volunteer Fire Department

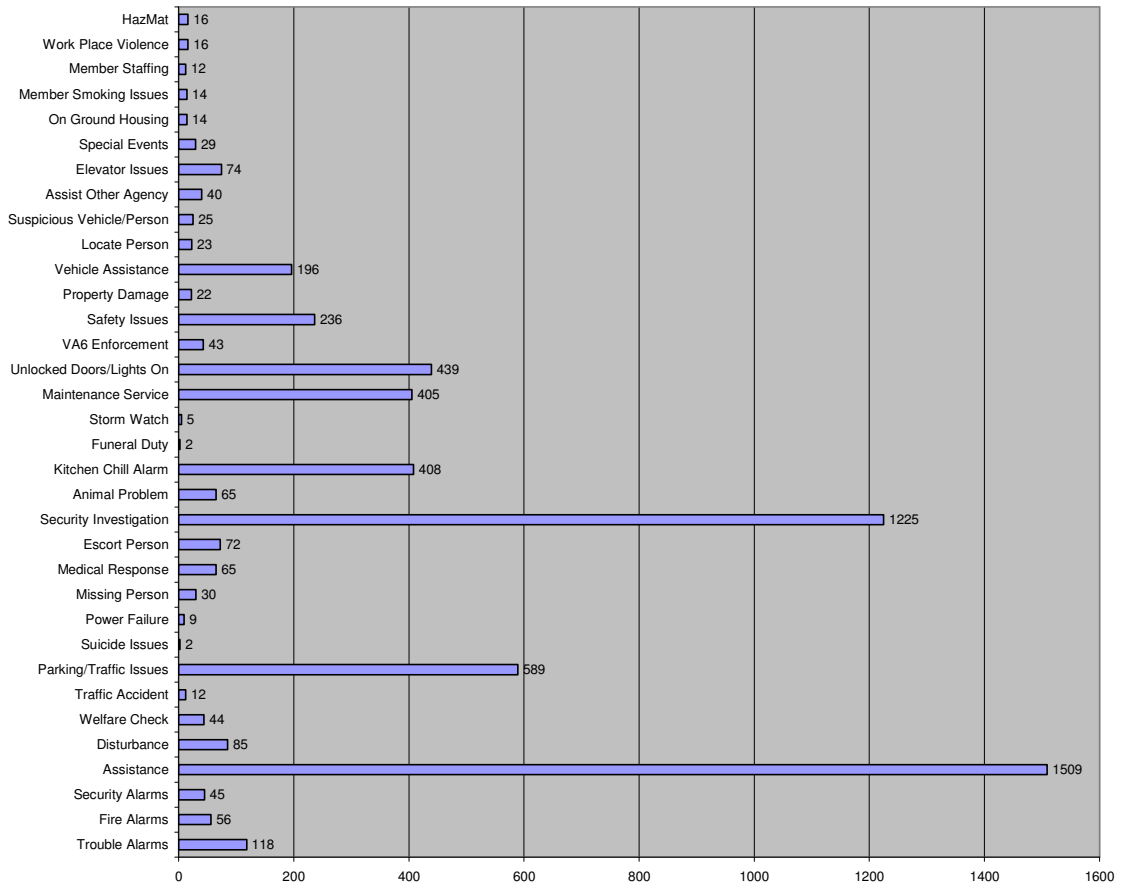
Lance Penney (chairperson of the Waupaca Volunteer Fire Department) stated that the department would be available to perform various inspections for the WVH-King. These could include sprinkler system, alarms, extinguishers, etc. They could work out with the Home the required monthly and annual inspections. This would be on a fee basis. Costs would need to be negotiated.

Some legal reference:

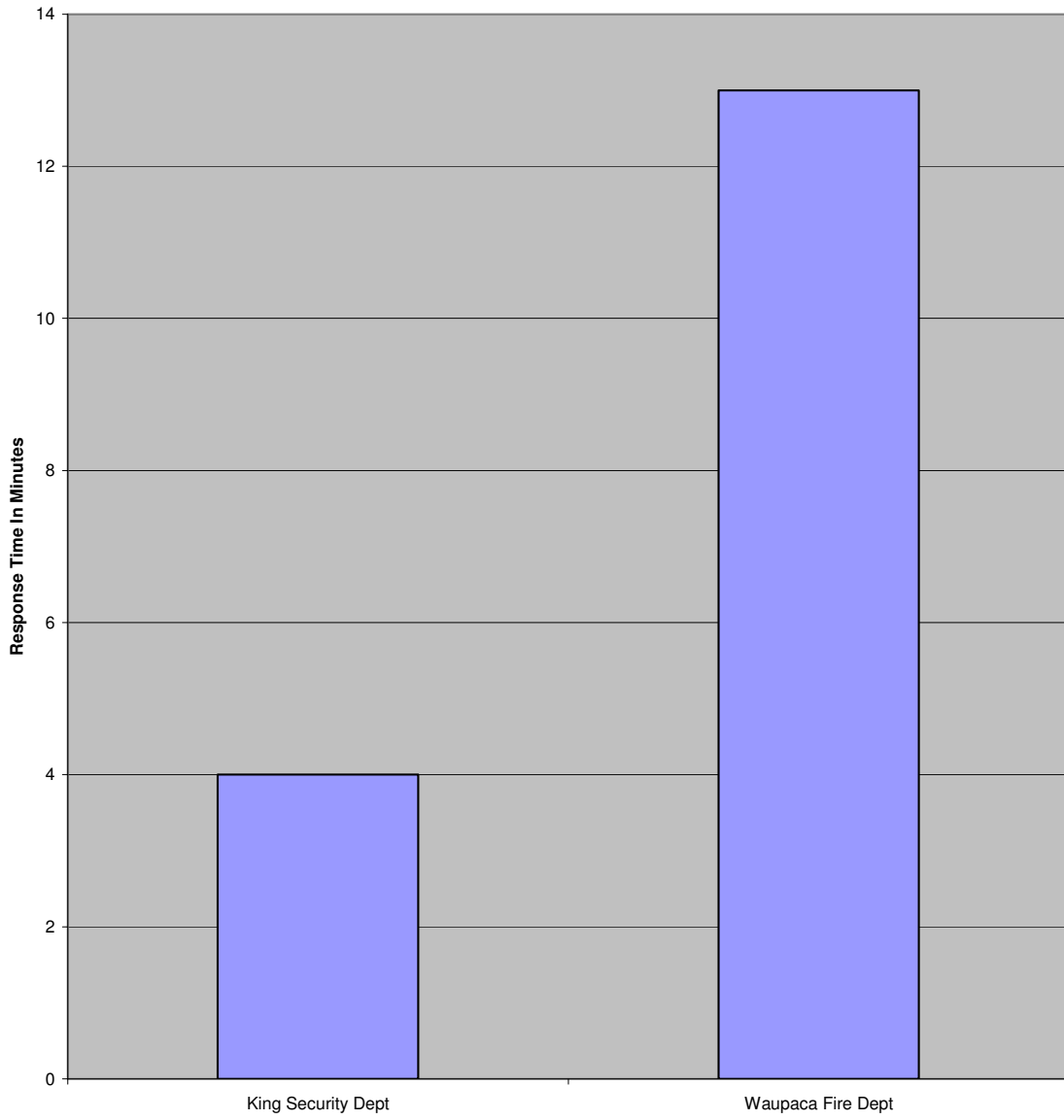
- **Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 45, Subchapter V, Veterans Homes**
(7) A Commandant and employees designated by the commandant may summarily arrest all persons within or upon the grounds of veterans homes who are guilty of any offense against the laws of this state or the rules governing veterans homes. For this purpose, a commandant and deputies have the power of constables.
(8) A fire department at a veteran home in response to emergency fire calls may make runs and render fire fighting service beyond the confines of a veterans home.

- **Wisconsin Administrative Code VA 6**
 VA 6.02 Duties and responsibilities of the commandant
 VA 6.02(5)
(5) Designate as deputies such employees as may be necessary to assist in enforcing upon the grounds of the home the laws of the state of Wisconsin and the rules and regulations governing the home, and for such purposes, the commandant and the deputies shall have all the power of constables.
- **Wisconsin Administrative Code Admin 1.04(1)**
(1) Parking on the grounds of the state office buildings and at other state facilities may be regulated by means of official traffic signs, markers of parking meters in the same manner as the stopping, standing or parking of vehicles is regulated pursuant to ss. 349.13 and 349.14, Stats. Failure to comply with requirements of such signs, markers, or parking meters shall constitute a violation of this chapter.
- **Wisconsin Administrative Code Admin 1.10**
 Admin 1.10 Towing.
Whenever any police officer or security officer finds a motor vehicle in violation of these rules, the officer is authorized to move the vehicle, have a wrecker service tow the vehicle, or to require the operator to remove the vehicle from state property. The operator or owner of the vehicle removed shall pay all charges for moving or towing or any storage involved.
- **Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 61.29**
 61.29 Constable
(1) A constable shall (a) execute and file an official bond, (b) serve within his or her county any writ, process, order or notice, and execute any order, warrant or execution lawfully directed to or required by any court or officer to be executed by the constable, (c) attend any session of the circuit court in his or her county when required by the sheriff, (d) inform the district attorney of all trespasses on public lands of which the constable has knowledge or information, (e) impound cattle, horses, sheep, swine and other animals at large on the highways in violation of a village ordinance, (f) cause to be prosecuted all violation of law of which the constable has knowledge or information, (g) perform all other duties required by law, (h) keep his or her office in the village. No constable who keeps his or her office outside the limits of the village may receive fees for any service performed during the period the outside office is maintained
- **NFPA 1720**
 National Fire Protection Association Standard 1720 applies to volunteer fire departments. For an urban area (>1000 people/ml², which we are due our campus population), the requirement is a response time of 9 minutes 90% of the time

Numbers & Types of Responses by Security Dept in FY2010



Comparison of Response Times For A Fire Incident



53% Of Fire Alarm Responses Were False Alarms (30 of 56)

