

2025 HEAVY URBAN RESCUE TEAM (HURT)

The Heavy Urban Rescue Team (HURT) of the Milwaukee Fire Department continues to serve as a critical asset for the city, specializing in technical rescues, structural collapse response, confined space operations, trench and high-angle rescues, and other complex emergency situations. Over the past year, the team has demonstrated professionalism, rapid response capability, and adaptability in both routine and high-risk operations.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- **High-Risk Rescues:** Rescue 1 or 2 responded and successfully operated at 603 structure fires and 540 vehicle/machinery extrications in Milwaukee.
- **Mutual Aid Assistance:** Rescue 1 or 2 supported neighboring municipalities at 2 structure fires and 1 vehicle extrication emergency.

Key operational moments included:

- High-angle rope patient pick-off, one victim on Wells Street overpass
- High-angle rope rescue, one victim on 30th and Lisbon
- Removal of one victim trapped in a salt spreader
- Low-angle rescue of one victim in the city of Cudahy
- Underride extrication on North 76th Street and Brown Deer Road
- Assist Milwaukee County Zoo in lifting a sick elephant

TRAINING AND PREPAREDNESS

The HURT maintains rigorous training standards to ensure readiness for the most challenging rescue scenarios. In 2025, HURT's leadership acted as a training facilitator to send members of the MFD to a variety of classes both within the department and externally. The HURT makes up just under half of the MFD's training committee, which develops and instructs all department-wide hands-on firefighter training. The HURT leaders oversaw all designing and implementation of practical training scenarios for the MFD's Cornerstone Class for the ranks of Lieutenant and Captain.

- **Training Hours Logged:** 240 collectively for HURT-specific in-city training.
- **Specialized Certifications Earned:**
 - 74 members to RIT Under Fire or RIT Under Fire Chief at the Illinois Fire Service Institute (included both HURT and non-HURT members)
 - 9 members completed Structural Collapse(SCT) Awareness, Operations, and Technician at REACT
 - 14 members completed Rope Awareness and Operations at REACT
 - 8 members complete Trench Awareness, Operations, and Technician at REACT
 - 17 members completed Rope Awareness, Operations, and Technician at REACT
 - 30 members attended HURT Orientation at the MFD Training Academy
 - 3 members attended Heavy Rigging Operations Class at American Towman Academy
- **Joint Exercises:**
 - Worked with Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management physicians to successfully train on field amputations and suspension trauma scenarios

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Milwaukee Fire Department 150 Years of Service celebrations:

- Hosted 2 open house events at Stations 23 and 24 which focused on public safety and HURT demonstrations.
- Two MFD-featured fire station historical videos filmed for online publication.
- Performed auto extrication and high angle rope rescue demonstrations at the community-wide celebration at the Summerfest grounds in September.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing urban development presents new structural complexities, requiring continuous adaptation in training and tactics.
- Resource management and adequate staffing for incidents remain areas for strategic focus.

ROADMAP LOOKING AHEAD – 2026

- Continue enhancing specialized technical rescue training and certifications.
- Integrate new techniques for firefighting and special rescue operations.
- Strengthen community engagement initiatives to increase awareness of urban rescue safety and preparedness.
- Maintain readiness for city disaster response and mutual aid support.

The Milwaukee Fire Department's Heavy Urban Rescue Team demonstrated exceptional dedication, skill, and resilience in 2025. Through operational excellence, rigorous training, and commitment to community safety, the team remains a vital pillar in Milwaukee's emergency response capabilities.