



Town of
Normal

Fire Station Relocation

History/Background on the Plan

The Town began a long-term planning process in 2013 when the Council authorized a phased plan to relocate fire stations to serve the community more effectively. Through each phase of its plans, the Town has considered the most current and relevant data available.

Following 2013 direction from Council, Town began a multi-phase process to best serve the community's needs:

Phase 1: In 2017, the Town

- Vacated Fire Station #2, on Gregory at Adelaide. Vacating that station did not risk life or safety of our west side residents or responses to the various west side properties (nursing home, Normal West, Maxwell Park, etc).
- Opened Fire Station Headquarters on Main Street.

Phase 2: The Town

- Spent significant funds to equip all engines and trucks with advanced lifesaving (ALS) equipment so they can respond and provide paramedic-level emergency medical services (EMS) care until an ambulance arrives to transport a patient.
- Worked with Metcom to implement Automatic Vehicle Locate (AVL), a tool that allows dispatch to see where vehicles are in real-time and dispatch the vehicle closest to the call.
- Installed automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in police squad cars, which offer prompt service to certain emergency EMS calls.

Phase 3: In 2025, the Town constructed new Fire Station #2 at Shepard/Hershey to respond to northeast Normal within acceptable response times.

Phase 4: An analysis of appropriate location for future new Station #3 will be completed. Through each phase, the Town has considered the most current and relevant data available.

Should the Town keep the College Avenue/Blair Drive Fire Station open after opening new Station #2?

While the Town could pursue this level of expansion, it is not currently necessary. Keeping the College/Blair station open would require adding 18 firefighters, a new engine and an additional ambulance. Relocating Station #2 to Hershey/Shepard Roads will more evenly distribute emergency response coverage, allowing most properties to be served within four to six minutes, compared to the current range of approximately 30 seconds to 12 minutes.

Relocating Station #2 reduces disparities between areas with very fast response times near College/Blair and longer response times in northeast Normal. Before expanding the department as proposed by the International Association of Firefighters Union, the Town would first pursue other strategies—such as dispatching the closest unit, traffic signal preemption, or placing ambulances in high-call areas, among other options.

Does the Town’s plan to relocate Fire Station #2 decrease coverage or put members of the community at risk?

No. Relocating Fire Station #2 better balances coverage and response times across the community.

Town of Normal modeling shows the area near Blair & College Avenues from which Station #2 is moving can expect response times of four to six minutes.

Relocating Fire Station #2 more evenly distributes services so all of Normal can be served within the standard response time.

How many calls does the Normal Fire Department respond to and what are typical call response times?

The Town of Normal has tracked response time data for many years and publicly reports the data in its annual report which is published online.

In 2024, Normal Fire Department (NFD) responded to 8,061 calls. The following table shares information about response times. Data for 2025 will be available soon.

# of Calls	Average Response Time	% of response times under four minutes	% of response times under six minutes
8061	Four minutes and Twenty-eight seconds	61%	82%

As an example of call volume in relation to service, Fire Station Headquarters (HQ) has the greatest call volume and operates with excellent times. HQ responds to an annual average of nine calls per 24-hour shift.

What type of data does the Town review?

When reviewing data, the Town looks beyond the total number of calls for service. Data reviewed includes:

- **Response times** – This is how long it takes to get to calls and includes:
 - 1) **Alert time** (the time from a 911 call to when emergency responders are notified)
 - 2) **Dress time** (the time from dispatch notification to vehicle departure)
 - 3) **Drive time** (the time from vehicle departure to arrival at incident)
- **Staff availability** – The amount of time crews spend on a call.

What are the response times by each station?

In 2024, the overall average response time from NFD was 4 minutes and 28 seconds. Data for 2025 will be available soon.

Station:	Average # of calls/day	Average response time:
Headquarters	9	4 minutes and 18 seconds
Station #2	7	4 minutes and 14 seconds
Station #3	6	4 minutes and 55 seconds

How long each day are staff out of station?

Staff has reviewed the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) data from 2017 – 2024. The following provides the average time spent responding to calls **per 24-hour shift**. Data for 2025 will be available soon.

Station:	Average time spent responding to calls
Headquarters	6 hours and 27 minutes
Station #2	4 hours and 22 minutes
Station #3	4 hours and 28 minutes

How often are all available vehicles deployed on calls at once?

In 2024, the number of hours when all NFD vehicles/apparatus were out of service and unable to respond to a call equated to 14 hours in 365 days (14 hours out of 8,784 hours in 2024 = 0.16%). It's rare for NFD to have no crews/vehicles/apparatus available to respond. Data for 2025 will be available soon.

What standards does the Normal Fire Department meet?

The Normal Fire Department currently maintains an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 2.0.

- The Town's 2019 ISO rating review included a detailed deployment analysis involving equipment and response times on which NFD scored 9.99 out of 10.
- The Town aligns with ISO benchmarks to ensure our equipment, as well as response times, meet expectations.

What is the Town's standard for response times?

The Town's standard service goal is to respond to emergency calls within four to six minutes, 90% of the time. This response goal aligns with local policy determined by the McLean County Area EMS system.

Per the McLean County Area EMS System Policy Manual:

"All transport agency members of McLean County Area EMS System that provide ambulance response to 911 calls are required to have an enroute time <6 minutes from time of dispatch. All EMS transport agency members of McLean County Area EMS System that provide emergency ambulance response to their respective service area has committed to an optimum response time of four to six minutes in their primary coverage area." Version 4.2 (8/2023)

How do the Town and the Firefighter Union work together?

The Town prioritizes the health, safety and well-being of its public safety personnel, as well as protecting the community through reliable fire and emergency services.

Likewise, the Town is committed to a positive working relationship with the Union (IAFF Local 2442) and regularly supports requests for additional resources.

Town and IAFF voluntarily agreed to a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in July 2025. The CBA includes language on staffing of apparatus. The Town is unaware of any issues that have changed between July and November on this issue.

The Town suggests if IAFF wants to reopen the CBA to bargain over something they didn't address earlier this year in the union negotiation process, the State of Illinois Department of Labor offers a process for them to seek to reopen and renegotiate the contract.

What is the cost of Firefighter Union Local 2442 requests?

The requests made by the Firefighter Union study total more than \$100 million over 10 years (including cost of new station and apparatus).

Only two current revenue streams could generate enough money to support this expense:

1. Property Tax
2. Sales Tax

Other revenue streams would be unable to generate enough income to cover the cost.

To cover \$100 million over 10 years, one of the following rate increases, or a combination of property tax and sales tax increases, would be required to generate enough revenue to cover the cost of the service:

- Property Tax – a 134% increase in the rate; from \$0.756 to \$1.77, or
- Sales Tax – a 70% increase in the local sales tax rate; from 2.5% to 4.25%

Does the Town have a problem related to service response times?

No. Town of Normal data shows responses from new Station #2 will fall into a four- to six-minute response time.

If a problem related to service response times existed, the Town would consider several options, including but not limited to:

- **Positioning ambulances in hotspot areas:** The Town would use call data and information to identify “hotspots” and use data analysis to determine the days/times with highest call volumes and then position ambulances and apparatus appropriately. Other communities are currently doing this to reduce call response times.
- **Implementing traffic signal preemption services:** Such technology controls traffic signals so emergency vehicles can move through intersections more quickly and safely. This technology keeps traffic moving and out of the way of emergency vehicles and speeds up response times by keeping traffic delays at a minimum.
- **Adding an ambulance:** The Town could consider an additional ambulance (which requires eight new staff members) to pick up additional calls and improve response times. When call volumes, response times and operational needs justify an additional ambulance, Fire Department Administration will seek Council support through the budget process.