

EARLY INL FIRE DEPARTMENT HISTORY

Abby Cardenas | Idaho State University | CRMO | Austin Schulz

First Fire Department Established in 1949



The Fire Department was established when the new AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) made plans to build a reactor (EBR-1). The commission felt the Arco and Blackfoot Fire Departments were too far away, so one was established at the CFA Complex.

1950 Cadillac Ambulance Replaced the Station Wagons

This ambulance that was used during the emergency response to the SL-1 accident. Afterwards, it was decontaminated and donated to the Blackfoot Fire Department (who were in need of a working ambulance) where it still resides today.



New CFA Fire Station



Built in 1951, this new 4 bay fire station included a day room, shop, lunch room, and an alarm monitoring office. As the desert site grew, it was eventually expanded to 8 bays before it was finally replaced in the 2000's.

New ANL-West Fire Station

Built in 1958, the first ANL-West (MFC) fire station was a two bay station with quarters for six personnel. It was built to provide emergency response services during and after the construction of EBR-II.



INL Fire Department Log Books



Log books were kept by each fire station to document their emergency response activities around the site. These covers were hand painted by firefighter L. Horman.

First Child Born at ANL-West (Present Day MFC)



INL Archives and Special Collections, CFA-2024-001, INL Fire Department Photographs

www.inl.gov

Battelle Energy Alliance manages INL for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy

INL Idaho National Laboratory

1941

Fire Brigade Established in 1941



The Fire Brigade was a first response to site wide fires. Men comprised of different organizations, that were willing and able, qualified as "firefighters". These men had other jobs on the site but responded as firefighters when needed. Today there are still industrial companies that have fire brigade systems.

1949

1950s

New fire station built in the late 50s, in between CPP (INTEC) and NRF



To protect CPP from fire damage, AEC built a one stall wood building that housed a standby, two-man engine. The ambulance was stationed out at CFA or STR (now TRA).

Training tower (mock up for SL-1 reactor)

The wooden training tower, north of CFA, was three stories tall. The tower was used as a mock up for the SL-1 reactor, to train re-entry personnel, because of its height. Later, the tower was removed after a new tower was constructed at the new fire drill field.



1961

First Off Road Brush Fire Apparatus



A 1950s Jeep one ton 4-wheel drive was acquired, as excess from another government installation, for use in fighting brush fires. It was later replaced by two larger army trucks that were converted into fire service. The town of Ucon, ID got the 1950s Jeep after it was excessed. Currently, the location of the Jeep is unknown.

1973-1976

1983

Air Ambulance

INEL firemen Dean Donnley, Doyle Crossley, Paul Martindale, and Ron Savage viewing the Air Ambulance equipment.



1993

A pregnant woman in flight by Air Ambulance, from Arco, ID to Idaho Falls, ID when the flight encountered a severe snow storm and was forced to land at ANL-West. Luckily, the MFC firemen (Bottom Right John Tomchak and Top Right Garth Barrow) and Air Idaho Pilots responded quickly and ended up delivering the baby (nicknamed "Baby Argonne") in the MFC Cafeteria (MFC-752). One year later "Baby Argonne" was brought out to the MFC cafeteria to celebrate his first birthday with the firemen that responded to the call the previous year.