Fire protection in BR is first class

Advocate staff report

East Baton Rouge Parish fire protection is provided by 11 fire departments, most of them volunteer.

The Baton Rouge Fire Department fights fires and responds to other emergency calls inside city limits. The department is one of only a few in the country with a Class 1 rating from the Property Insurance Association, which grades fire departments on their ability to protect an area from fire.

A Class 1 rating is the best and results in the lowest possible fire insurance premiums. For fire, medical or police emergencies, call 911. The operators can help dispatch the appropriate authorities nearest to the emergency.

The Baker Volunteer Fire Department (775-3712) and the Zachary Fire Department (654-0026) each respond to calls within their own cities and just outside their city limits, officials said.

Zachary Fire Chief Doug Gleason said if a call comes from just outside his jurisdiction, Zachary firefighters often go because they can sometimes get there faster than the appropriate volunteer department.

Fire district maps divide the rest of the parish among eight volunteer fire departments:

- The Chateau-Galle Volunteer Fire Department (654-9571) covers the north central part of the parish up to the border with East Feliciana Parish.
- The Chaneysville Volunteer Fire Department (654-2156) covers the northeastern part of the parish that is not covered by Chateau-Galle or Central.
- The Fire Protection District 6 (355-4878) covers the area from the intersection of Hooper and Plank roads along Hooper Road to the Comite River. Its eastern border is the Comite River and its western border is Airline Highway. The district runs south to Greenwell Springs Road between Lanier Drive and Sherwood Forest Boulevard.
- The Brownsville Volunteer Fire Department (654-3636) covers the area that runs from the intersection of Plank and Charlton roads to the north and runs along Baker’s southern city limits. Its western boundary is Gibbens Road and its eastern boundary is the Comite River.
- The Asland-Irma Lee Volunteer Fire Department (774-3473) covers the area bordered by the Baker Canal to the north, La. 19 to the east, Thomas Road to the south and the Mississippi River to the west.
- The St. George Volunteer Fire Department (355-0000) covers the southern part of the parish. It includes everything from the city limits south to the parish line.
- The East Side Volunteer Fire Department (227-7779) covers the southeastern part of the parish not covered by Baton Rouge Central or the St. George Volunteer Fire departments.

In the city limits, the arson investigation group (354-1419) investigates the causes of fires and arrests arson suspects. Outside the city, the East Baton Rouge Parish Arson Task Force (389-5239) performs similar duties.

District Fire Department Captain Bryan Gros said fire department boundaries are irregular and sometimes arbitrary, so it’s not crucial that people remember which fire district they’re in.

“When you dial 911, a map shows where your house is, so whatever fire department is in your area, that’s the one that will be contacted,” Gros said. “You don’t have to worry about what fire department is nearest you because they will get it if you dial 911.”