# Using Data to Optimize Operations and Assist in Accreditation

## Automated workflows improve patient care

### Background

Situated just off the coast of Lake Michigan, North Shore Fire/Rescue (NSFR) is a public fire and EMS service providing fire/rescue and advanced life support (ALS) transport in a suburb of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. NSFR's jurisdiction covers about 25 square miles, serving a population of 68,000 people. Last year, the department's 105 employees responded to about 12,000 calls.

### The Need

NSFR first employed FirstWatch in 2014 when Fire Chief Robert Whitaker was in the middle of a fire accreditation process through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. His software vendor went out of business overnight and because the vendor's data was stored virtually, Chief Whitaker lost access to all of his department's information. Panic set in, and he needed to find a solution quickly. About 20 minutes after requesting a consultation with FirstWatch, Todd Stout, the company's owner, called Chief Whitaker promising they would help NSFR. "If it's an emergency for you, it's an emergency for FirstWatch," Chief Whitaker recalls Stout saying.

### Solution

The FirstWatch team expedited NSFR's system deployment and walked Chief Whitaker through the whole process. He says the implementation of tools to aid in the accreditation process was very easy and the FirstWatch team scheduled regular meetings to ensure they were both on the same page. While the FirstWatch framework is an iterative solution, they work with their clients to understand their challenges to create technological solutions, allowing the people to continue the work only humans can do.

Marc Baker, vice president and partner at FirstWatch, reflects fondly on the company's collaborative relationship with North Shore Fire/Rescue since then. He says Chief Whitaker helped inspire the development and evolution of FOAM (Fire Operations and Accreditation/Analytics Module (FOAM) and other FirstWatch tools.

"We really appreciate that we have gotten as much from our relationship with North Shore as they've probably gotten from us," says Baker. "We help with their data and Chief Whitaker has challenged us to evolve our tools and visualization to make the accreditation process more programmatic and automatic rather than manual. It's the perfect win-win for both of our teams."

Chief Robert Whitaker
North Shore Fire/Rescue

## Results

As a department with a non-punitive, positive culture, NSFR is able to identify and address performance issues early on, using FirstWatch analytics. Chief Whitaker says he rests easy knowing they're providing the best care to their community, as he observed improvements in the providers' quality of care and attention to detail through weekly performance benchmark reviews. FirstWatch's reporting and data-driven approach has also enabled NSFR to request and receive funding from elected officials, who typically need to see evidence before opening the purse strings.

Answering questions like "Are we serving the customer correctly? Are we getting there on time? Are we sending the right resources?" used to be a time-consuming process for Chief Whitaker. But FirstWatch "allowed us to have that data at our fingertips versus going back to my desk, running a report, waiting for it to print, understanding how I can move it to Excel, and then review it," says Chief Whitaker. "This is a product I can look at on my phone, 24/7, to see the data and know what's going on."

## Conclusion

Chief Whitaker says he is not only impressed with the quality and customizability of FirstWatch's products but the customer service is unrivaled, too. He notes that while most companies charge you for a product or service and leave you to figure it out alone, FirstWatch supports you and their product all along the way, and are flexible, changing with the needs of your organization.

> "I have one hundred percent faith and trust in them," says Chief Whitaker. "FirstWatch has done everything they said they were going to do. I feel like they are a friend of mine versus a customer service associate who doesn't know my name. They have a group of people who really believe in the product."

*To view other case studies and watch related interviews, visit: **firstwatch.net/case-studies***

## FOAM Interactive Displays
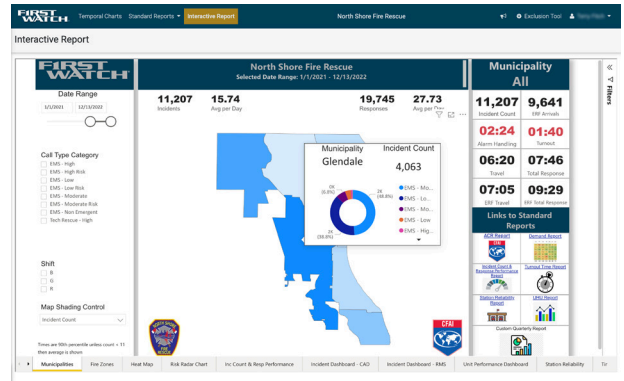


The FOAM Interactive Display provides quick and easy access to data pertaining to fire zones or geographic areas in near real-time.
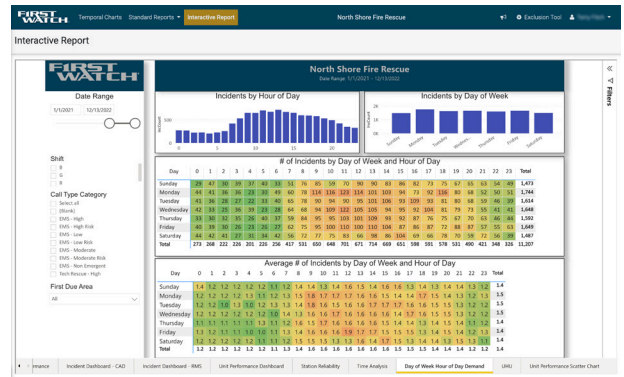


The FOAM Demand report provides snapshot information of call volume demand in near real-time.



FOAM provides quick operational visualizations breaking down data into call type categories and by shift.

FirstWatch is proud to partner with innovative agencies like North Shore Fire/Rescue to help their team and the communities they serve.
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