

# Town of Newton Fire Department

Incorporated on April 11, 1864, Newton is located in the northwest corner of New Jersey in Sussex County. It encompasses 3.1 square miles and has a population of 8,167, according to the 2010 census. The Newton Fire Department celebrated its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary on September 24, 2011.

Newton has three fire stations. The largest station is Station #1, which is located at 70 Mill Street. This station houses Engine 803, a 1999 Seagrave; Tower 804, a 2011 Pierce Arrow XT mid-mount platform; and Rescue 805, a 1999 Spartan/Saulsbury. Station #2 is located at 24 Lawnwood Avenue and houses Engine 801, a 2002 Pierce Dash with a Snuzzle device. It also houses Engine 801, a 2008 Pierce Arrow XT 2500-gallon pumper-tanker. The smallest station is #3 at 23 Stuart Street. This station houses a brush truck.

The earliest recorded efforts to organize a fire company were found in an advertisement from August 20, 1827. At the time, the only fire protection in Newton was provided by 14 leather buckets, which were stored in the courthouse. On December 8, 1835 the Newton Fire Engine Company was organized. The company performed its first drill on December 19, 1935 using a crank engine referred to as Phoenix No. 1. To operate the crank engine, water was pored into the engine's tub. Its wheels were set into wooden crates and staked to the ground to steady the pumper while it was in operation. Firemen cranked iron arms on the sides in order to produce a stream of water.

On January 23, 1847, old Phoenix No. 1 was hauled out to respond to a fire at the courthouse. It was unable to contain the blaze. Following the fire, the citizens of Newton met to attempt to organize a better response to fires. An inspection team was formed to examine each building in town for fire hazards, and a committee was formed to raise money for a more effective engine, hose, hooks and ladders. In May of 1849, the townspeople paid \$600 for a gooseneck engine. The engine was named Neptune No. 3.

Fire swept through several stables and storehouses on Spring Street on March 9, 1863. Once again, Phoenix No. 1 was ineffective, but thanks to the efforts of Neptune No. 3 and a bucket brigade the fire was contained. On April 14, 1863, the fire department had a meeting that resulted in the approval of \$1000 to be spent on new equipment and the construction of new cisterns. The fire department purchased a piano-engine that had previously been used in Jersey City for \$400 on June 19, 1863. They named the engine Hercules No. 4. In the fall of 1863, two new fire companies were formed: Neptune Company No. 3 and Hercules Engine Company No. 4.

Following a series of misunderstandings, Neptune Company No. 3 disbanded on July 22, 1867. A few weeks later, Hercules Engine Company No. 4 also disbanded leaving Newton with no organized fire protection.

As a result of the fire that destroyed much of Main Street in September 1873, the town committee met to discuss the acquisition of a new engine. The decision was made to purchase a steamer, 900 feet of rubber hose, 15 feet of suction hose, a basket, and 100 feet of rope at a cost of \$5000. The new steamer could shoot a stream of water 210 feet through 100 feet of hose with an 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" nozzle. The apparatus was named Newton Steamer No. 1. The town committee chartered Newton Steamer Company No. 1, and its complement, the Kittatinny Hose Company, on September 30, 1873.

In the summer of 1890, the Newton Town Committee purchased a lot on Spring Street with the intention of building a new engine house. Work began in May of 1891, and the new firehouse was formally opened on March 15, 1892. Sussex Engine Company No. 2 was organized on June 11, 1892, and housed in the two story Italianate building. The first floor consisted of two large rooms for the storage of fire apparatus, a washroom, and cloakroom. The second floor contained two parlors, which could be opened into one large room for fire company or town committee meetings. On June 30, 1923, Newton Steamer Company No. 1 received a new truck at the Spring Street station. The Stutz Fire Engine Company manufactured the 100 horsepower pumper. When it arrived, the firemen realized that the doorway was not large enough to accommodate the vehicle, so one of the doors had to be increased in height and width.

Twenty men from East Newton organized the Merriam Hose Company in December of 1900. This company became known as Newton Hose Company No. 3. In September of 1902, the town adopted a resolution authorizing the construction of a brick firehouse for Newton Hose Company No. 3 on Diller Avenue. This building was utilized from 1903 until 1971, when Newton Hose Company No. 3 and Chemical Company No. 2 moved into the newly constructed Station #2 on Lawnwood Avenue.

The Spring Street Engine house was closed in 1978 following the completion of Station #1 on Mill Street; it now houses the Newton Fire Museum. The museum includes firefighting equipment dating back to when horses pulled equipment. It is staffed by Newton Fire Department firefighters and depends solely on donations to continue operating. It is open from May to October on Friday and Saturday from 12:00 pm until 8:00 pm. Group tours are available year round by appointment.

Source: [newtonfiredepartment.org](http://newtonfiredepartment.org)