



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

AUGUST 19TH, 2023

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI

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Information to make you think and to learn from others!!

THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address

should be directed to: AFDCA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

EMAIL: CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM

August, No Meeting

Thursday September 14th, General Membership Meeting 7PM, All are invited or to zoom in

Thursday October 12th General Membership/Nominations for Officers & Directors

Thursday November 9th, 7:00pm General Membership, dinner served at 6PM/Elections

December, No Meeting

Saturday, January 6th General Membership Breakfast Meeting 9am, 2024 Organizational Meeting

[Printable Calendar with much more – See End of Bulletin](#)

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOC. NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[Membership Audit](#)

CAFDA, currently has **79-member Fire Districts** in Albany, Schenectady, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington and Saratoga Counties.

We currently have **21 fire districts that are NOT currently members**, they are: Berne, Delmar, Elsmere and McKownville in Albany County; West Charlton in Saratoga County; Glenville #2, Rotterdam #4 and Duanesburg in Schenectady County; Northville Joint in Fulton County; Bolton, Luzern-Hadley, North Creek and Pottersville in Warren County; and Best Luther, East Schodack, Schodack Center, Schodack Landing, Eastern Pittstown, Nassau #1 and Stephentown in Rensselaer County.

Are we missing anyone? Sometimes there is confusion between the State Association and regional associations such as CAFDA. CAFDA is not a branch or subsidiary of the State Association, we are not in each other reporting chain or organizational structure. **We exist solely as a not for profit for the benefit of the member fire districts.**

[**Just When You Think All is Right With the World](#)

Terry Briscoe has resigned her position with CAFDA, not because she didn't like us, she just needed a break from the fire service, and we can certainly understand that.

Terry's departure has left an opening for a Secretary to the Capital Area Association.

As a result, Tony Hill will pitch in as Secretary and we are looking for someone qualified to take that position. They will be hanging out with a great group of people. Contact Tony Hill or any of the Officers or Directors if you are interested.

Tony Hill has resumed is position as Secretary/Treasurer and can be reached at : cafdatreasurer@gmail.com or caaofd@gmail.com , our mailing address is CAFDA PO Box **242, East Schodack, NY 12063**

[Long Way to Travel Zoom into the General Membership Meetings!](#)

It's our desire that every member fire district have the opportunity to attend Capital Area meetings. We know we cover a large area, in 8 counties and beyond, and wish to give all of our members a chance to participate in the general membership meetings. You have a voice, and we would like to hear it. Join us at our next meeting either in person or via Zoom. The link will be sent via constant contact prior to each general membership meeting. Thank you for being a member and we hope you will join us.

CAFDA FALL WORKSHOP: Put it on your calendar

Saturday, **November 4th**, 2023 8:00 AM Fall Workshop Verdooy Fire Department

SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED:

- Harassment Challenges – Discipline as a result of Harassment Charges
- How to SHOP for insurance, What Coverage Should We Have?
- Removal of Fire Company Members
- Ask the experts: CPA, VFBL, Attorney, Insurance, Candle Stick Maker

Training for Fire District Officials Being Held Locally. Both Members and Non-Members are Welcome.- Mark Your Calendars-Watch for Details to Follow

****PESH vs. NFPA Seminar, Law vs. Standard See Flyer Last Page**

Presenter: Jennifer Puerner – NYS Department of Labor PESH Compliance Assistance Specialist
What you need to know. Join us at the DeCrescente Distributing Conference Center at 200 N. Main Street, Mechanicville (opposite the Price Chopper Plaza). FREE to all fire district officials and fire service officers.

- ❖ **Tuesday September 12th from 6PM to 9PM Limited to 100 attendees, we currently have approximately 75 signed up.**
- ❖ Register now with Secretary Hill at caaofd@gmail.com

We Apologize for the Confusion but the PO Box numbers to return payment to the Treasurer were transposed, the correct number is PO Box 242. If it helps payment can be made at the door the night of the class.

****Fire District Secretary Training See Flyer Last Page**

Join Joyce Petkus as she navigates the duties and responsibilities of a Fire District Secretary...Commissioners invited who wish to better understand what duties and responsibilities Commissioners are ultimately responsible for. What you and your fire district Secretary needs to know to do their job correctly. Join us at the DeCrescente Distributing Conference Center at 200 N. Main Street, Mechanicville (opposite the Price Chopper Plaza).

- **Tuesday September 19th from 6PM to 9PM Limited to 100 attendees we currently have approximately 20 signed up.**
- COST: members \$10, non-members \$20 checks can be mailed to Tony Hill at Box **242**, East Schodack, NY 12063, or pay at the door. Reserve a seat at caaofd@gmail.com

LOCAL CAFDA Conference, Late April 2024, Location and details being developed, to be released when they are available.

We want to thank the Clifton Park – Halfmoon Fire District for allowing us to use their facility for the Capital Area meetings.

The Capital Area has logo ware available, long and short sleeve polo shirts. Contact Secretary/Treasurer Tony Hill to purchase shirts.

IF NOTHING ELSE READ THE ARTICLES PRECEDED BY**

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- The Day at the Races was very successful and at the end of the day everyone was saying let's do it again next year. It was a perfect day, and everyone enjoyed themselves. Let's put it on the Calendar for 2024 on Friday, August 9th.
- [Fire District Election Schedule and Budget Schedule on Last Page of Bulletin and is posted to our current website at afdca.org!](#)
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STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDNYS.ORG

State Fire Districts Announces a move back to a Fall Annual Meeting

Another change of venue, the Fall Conference for 2024 will be held at Turning Stone on a Sunday - Wednesday time frame October 20 – 23 in 2024.

- The September Board of Director's meeting is being held at the Desmond-Crown Plaza on September 14th – 16th.

LOCAL CAFDA TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER

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CAFDA Annual Fall Workshop

Mark your calendar for Saturday, **November 4th 2023 for the Capital Area Fall Leadership Workshop**, being held at the Verdoy Fire Station on Troy-Schenectady Road. Subjects to be covered are:

- Harassment in the Fire Service and Applying Discipline Correctly
- How to SHOP insurance for your fire district, Do We Have Correct Coverage?
- Expert's Panel, Attorneys, CPA, General Insurance, VFBL – What is your burning question?

The First CAFDA Conference Spring 2024

Coming in April 2024 the CAFDA Conference, a *local* three-day conference chocked full of information for Fire District Commissioners, Secretary's, Treasurers and Chiefs. An affordable conference at a local destination in the Capital Area. Watch for more Information as planning progresses.



Upcoming Coffee with Commissioners

Thursday, August 31st @ 7:00pm Fire District Budget Process

Saturday, September 23rd @9:00am Current Trends and Concerns

Click on Each Announced Date to Register

THE LATEST FROM ALBANY

The 2023 legislative session ended in early June, our friends in government didn't do much for the fire service this session. The only bone we were thrown was the funding in the budget for infrastructure and to pay out stipends, otherwise they couldn't even pass legislation on lithium ion batteries, although the bills were defective. Remember that bills introduced for the 2023 session will carry over to the 2024 session when it begins in January.

Consult the Score Card for the status of other fire service related legislation.

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON D.C.

****Ask Congress to Adequately Fund and Reauthorize AFG and SAFER**

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs provide direct assistance to local fire and EMS agencies to help them purchase equipment, training, and apparatus, as well as recruit and retain career and volunteer personnel. AFG and SAFER were funded at \$360 million in FY 2023. The House FY 2024 Homeland Security appropriations bill would fund these programs at \$360 million and the Senate bill would fund these programs at \$338 million. This decrease in funding is unacceptable.

Additionally, the AFG and SAFER programs' authorizations expire at the end of FY 2023 and these programs are scheduled to sunset at the end of FY2024. In April, the Senate passed S. 870 to reauthorize these programs and the U.S. Fire Administration through 2030 by a vote of 95 to 2. Please use this action alert to tell your Senators and Representatives to fund AFG and SAFER at a minimum of the \$360 million contained within the House's FY 2024 Homeland Security appropriations bill and reauthorize these programs as soon as possible.

CONTACT YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVE: <https://www.votervoice.net/NVFC/Campaigns/98446/Respond>

JUST FILL IN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AND HIT SEND MESSAGE AT THE BOTTOM, EASY!!

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

POLICIES FOR ANNUAL INSPECTION DINNERS AND REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED AT DISTRICT EXPENSE

Fire District Affairs

The Board of Fire Commissioners is authorized to permit the expenditure of district funds for an annual inspection dinner for the fire companies of the fire district. It is also permitted to provide refreshments at certain other events when the provision of the refreshments serves an important business purpose.

However, as with all proposed expenditures of fire district funds, it is preferred that the district have a written policy or procedure in place to guide the Board and personnel with regard to these expenditures. Development of a policy permits

the Board to set goals and objectives and a plan to guide the Board and staff. It enables the Board to place cost-saving measures in place. It allows consideration of internal financial controls for these expenditures.

It is suggested that the District develop two model policies, one for Inspection Dinners and one for non-travel related refreshments.

The Fire District Annual Firefighters' Inspection Dinner Policy and Procedure sets parameters for approving contracts for each aspect of the event. The Fire District Non- Travel Related Refreshment and Meal Expenditure Policy and Procedure sets up guidelines for when the Board will approve refreshments at district expense at certain fire district, department and company events. These model policies are not "one size fits all" policies. No Board of Fire Commissioners should simply insert the district name onto the form and approve it so that it has a policy. Each fire district has its own priorities, limitations created by its budget, and history with regard to these types of expenditures. These policies are an opportunity to memorialize local practice into a written policy so that a proper approval process is followed and documented. If the Board has not approved the expenditure of district funds on some of the events mentioned, it can simply delete those events from its version of the policy.

Policy Templates will be posted to the CAFDA Web Site at AFDCA.org

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STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE:

****What Makes A Great Fire Service Leader?**

Paul Beamon

Throughout my career in the fire service, I have had the privilege of working with a wide variety of leaders, some of whom were exceptional and innovative, while others were more challenging. My years of experience have shown me that while there are many ways to lead, service, strong character and compassion are necessary no matter what style of leadership you adopt and regardless of the arena in which you serve.

LEADERSHIP EVOLUTIONS AND EXAMPLES

Early in my career, the fire service was very much organized in a paramilitary fashion with strong authoritative and autocratic leadership styles. There was strict adherence to rules, regulations, training and the chain of command.

As a recruit, I was eager to learn all that I could, and when assigned to my first captain, I knew they would keep me on track. I had many great mentors, whom I consider my family and who assisted me in growing as a firefighter/paramedic. Both my first captain and chief, while tough at times, were strong role models for me. I considered that first captain a great leader and one who truly cared about our personal and professional development. He had high standards and strictly adhered to policies and procedures, but it was clear that his ultimate goal was to help me become the best firefighter I could be.

I recall one hectic shift on the medic unit when my me and my partner (also new) got back to the station at midnight. We were exhausted and just wanted some rest, but my captain was there to check in on us. He woke up my partner in a concerned and caring manner, asking if he was OK. My partner, still half asleep, was confused, but the captain calmly explained that he wanted him to take advantage of the opportunity to do some street study since he was already awake. I couldn't help but chuckle, and when the captain heard me laugh, he said, "Beamon, since you're also awake, why don't you go with him?" My laughter halted.

Albeit this example leans more to the humorous side, the captain's dedication to our growth and development was evident. Even though it wasn't always enjoyable at the time, his strict adherence to routine and training helped us become better firefighters. To this day, I still admire his leadership and its positive impact on my fire service career.

I have also worked with leaders who adopted more progressive styles, such as democratic, transformational, coach-style leadership and, growing in popularity over the years, servant leadership. ***These leadership styles focus on involving team***

members in decision-making, promoting teamwork and collaboration, and fostering personal and professional growth. These methods are particularly effective, as they focus on achieving the department's goals but also on the development and growth of the team members.

PROBLEMATIC LEADERS AND THE 'PETER PRINCIPLE'

So, what about those dreadful leaders? If you have yet to have the misfortune of working with an unhealthy leader, consider yourself lucky.

An *unpleasant leader* tends to be unapproachable and unwilling to listen to the concerns of their team, as they feel they are the smartest ones in the room – perhaps hiding behind their own inability. *Toxic leaders* create toxic environments where team members are afraid to speak up and share their ideas or concerns for fear of being belittled or dismissed. *Poor leaders* criticize or ignore their team's suggestions, causing morale to suffer and leading to a lack of trust among the team. This ultimately compromises the team's ability to work effectively together and perform their duties safely.

Other potential poor leaders may be those individuals who believe they naturally deserve to take the next step into a leadership role due to their skill at their current position or due to a long tenure in a department. However, research suggests that these individuals do not always make strong leaders and often succumb to the "Peter Principle."

The Peter Principle is a management theory proposed by Dr. Laurence J. Peter in his 1969 book ["The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong."](#) This theory states that employees tend to rise to their level of incompetence, resulting in poor performance and inefficiency in the organization due to promotion based on current performance rather than future role abilities. It is often used to describe the phenomenon of employees being promoted to management positions despite lacking the necessary skills or qualifications.

COMMON LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Strong leadership comes in many forms. While some may possess natural leadership instincts, others may need to develop their skills over time through experience and dedicated study. A great fire service leader may be a tenured firefighter with years of service or someone who has a reputation for being skilled in firefighting and medical calls, but then again, they may not. Ultimately, the most important factor in becoming a successful leader is a commitment to learning and understanding the trade, department policies and procedures, and how to lead by example, not title or self-image.

So, what makes a great leader in the fire service? Great fire service leaders possess natural mentoring abilities and are dedicated to continuously developing their leadership skills. They take initiative to mentor and guide new recruits, teach essential skills, and are always willing to learn from mistakes. They view all functions as ways to better the community rather than themselves. These individuals are the future leaders of the agency. Those who are dedicated to becoming effective leaders will be well prepared for the promotional process.

Leadership styles in the fire service are constantly evolving, and it is vital for leaders to be open to feedback and development to lead their teams in the most effective way possible. Each leadership style has its advantages and disadvantages, depending on the situation, and one style may be more appropriate for one leader than another.

However, certain traits and behaviors are common among successful firefighter leaders:

1. **Successful leaders stay calm:** A good leader should be able to communicate effectively with their team without becoming overwhelmed by the situation. We can only get a great deal accomplished if we keep our faculties about us.
2. **Successful leaders practice accountability on the job:** This means they are direct and clear in their communication and hold their team members accountable for their actions without being overbearing or overly punitive. It is essential that a leader first ask questions and see whether the incident or situation in question can be used as a teaching lesson, and then proceed accordingly.
3. **Successful leaders develop interpersonal skills:** Leaders must find common ground among team members, create a safe and comfortable workplace, and foster an open and constructive dialogue between their members. As any leader will tell you, at times, this is much easier stated than done. The fire service is steeped in tradition, and some firefighters are less open to change than others. Finding common ground can be exhausting but worth the effort.

4. **Successful leaders communicate well:** Leaders must effectively exchange information and directives with their team, remain open to feedback, and listen to each team member's input.
5. **Successful leaders are willing to go above and beyond:** Fire department leaders must be willing to put in the extra effort to ensure the team's success, even if it means they work more hours or put more energy into their job than others.
6. **Successful leaders must always strive for excellence:** They set high standards for themselves and their team to ensure that tasks are done safely, effectively and efficiently. Embracing excellence is the hallmark of successful firefighter leaders.

By taking on these traits and behaviors, firefighters can become successful leaders and effective team players.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A leader who is caring, empathetic and inclusive, who is always looking for ways to develop and empower the team, is the one that creates a positive work environment for the team and ultimately leads to a safer and more efficient department. Strong leadership in the fire service is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community and the firefighting team.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE -CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

Unfortunately NONE

CHALLENGES:

Expansion of Robotaxis Approved in San Francisco Despite Chief's Concerns

Russ Mitchell – LA Times

Get ready, San Francisco: The state government on Thursday approved a major expansion of [driverless robotaxi](#) service throughout the city.

And get ready, Los Angeles: The industry is planning to push for driverless rides here as soon as it gets permits to do so. The state's green light, on a 3-1 vote by the California Public Utilities Commission, signals a historic turning point for the robotaxi business as it evolves from fascinating experiment to commercial reality. **It also marks the beginning of a grand experiment in public safety as thousands of multi-ton vehicles operated via artificial intelligence attempt to safely negotiate the hills and narrow streets of San Francisco.**

It highlights California's messy multiagency regulation of new automobile technology: Two agencies are in charge of the robotaxi business, the CPUC and the California Department of Motor Vehicles. **And it shines a spotlight on Silicon Valley's influence on California government.**

Although the approval delights the industry and proponents of rapid technological innovation and economic growth, it's provoked anxiety among automotive safety advocates and local public officials, who have little regulatory power over the vehicles.

San Francisco's robotaxis have become notorious for "bricking"— or coming to a dead stop — in traffic, clogging lanes for emergency vehicles, blocking firetrucks from exiting stations, stopping on fire hoses and driving directly into emergency scenes where Police and Fire Department lights are flashing, rather than going another way.

"They're not ready for prime time," San Francisco Fire Chief Jeanine Nicholson told the Los Angeles Times recently.

The Fire Department made public reports of 55 such incidents over the last year and a half, most of them occurring just in the last several months.

The CPUC, which approved the measure, regulates rides for hire. The CPUC also regulates ride-hailing services Uber and Lyft. Both companies plan over time to replace their human drivers with robot cars.

The approval allows robotaxi companies Waymo and Cruise to charge fares and expand operations to all parts of the city, 24 hours a day. Each has deployed several hundred vehicles in the first phase of the commercial rollout. With the expansion, that will grow to thousands of vehicles, Cruise Chief Executive Kyle Vogt recently said on an earnings call.

The sole no vote was cast by Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma, who said the commission shouldn't allow rapid expansion before Waymo and Cruise are required to explain why their vehicles keep interfering with emergency responders and what they're going to do about it. "The commission lacks at present sufficient information ... to evaluate the safety aspect of this," she said. "It is premature to approve these resolutions today."

Voting in favor were Commissioners John Reynolds and Darcie Houck, and commission Chair Alice Reynolds. Commissioner Karen Douglas was absent. All five commissioners were appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

John Reynolds, who came to the CPUC after serving as top lawyer at Cruise, said safety is the DMV's concern. He called the dozens of Fire Department incidents "anecdotal data analysis lacking sufficient rigor." He added that earlier deployment rules passed by the CPUC are set in stone and can't be changed without a lengthy rulemaking process.

Shiroma took issue with describing the emergency responder data as "anecdotal" and asked how those pushing for an immediate vote would feel if "a member of your family was trapped in a burning building."

She made clear she wasn't opposed to robotaxi deployment, but more time was needed for the industry to explain why its software gets confused in emergency scenes, and how it'll be fixed. "Given their financial backing" it's reasonable to ask Cruise and Waymo to take the time to get things right before a major expansion.

The driverless industry has a reputation as a bunch of scrappy startups, but the key companies are all owned by corporations with deep pockets. Cruise, by General Motors; Waymo, by Google's Alphabet; Motional, by Hyundai; and Zoox, by Amazon.

City officials fought hard to delay an expansion until the companies could figure out how to program their vehicles to prevent interference with first responders. They won a two-month delay, but on Thursday the CPUC made its decision. Opponents, meanwhile, won an acknowledgment that their concerns are real.

In its lengthy resolution, the official document approving the expansion, the commission said it "acknowledges continuing and emerging challenges related to passenger and public safety." It said "we remain concerned about potential risks, known and unknown, to passenger and public safety as driverless (automated vehicles) scale up."

No concrete plans to address those issues were mentioned. The commission did say that it "will engage with stakeholders" and that "we see the need for continued development in our approach to AV regulation and policy."

The resolution also addressed city officials' concerns about lack of local control over safety and traffic flow not only in San Francisco but also in Los Angeles and Santa Monica. The commission noted that cities are allowed to issue traffic tickets.

The CPUC did signal an intention to review California government's spotty rules around safety data collection and address the driverless industry's propensity to keep stats out of public view sometimes with the help of the state's own regulators. In 2021, after the DMV received a public records request for Waymo crash data, the agency invited the company to seek a court injunction to prevent the DMV from releasing full crash reports.

After the injunction was granted, the DMV and Waymo cut a deal to keep the basic crash information concealed on the grounds of protecting company trade secrets. ***California Attorney General Rob Bonta helped the DMV and Waymo craft the deal, which was approved by a state court.***

The robotaxi expansion was supported by state and local chambers of commerce, merchants' associations, advocates for the disabled, and California Assemblyman Evan Low, who represents Silicon Valley. A large number of individuals spoke in favor or against the move before the CPUC vote. Several blind people testified in favor. Several others in wheelchairs were opposed, noting that current robotaxis cannot accommodate them, and that human taxi drivers are able to help them in and out of their vehicles.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS WHOLE DEAL STINKS TO HIGH HEAVEN AND THERE ARE TOO MANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, WHERE DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE NEXT?]

[US Probing Virginia Fatal Crash Involving Tesla Suspected Of Running On Automated Driving System](#)

U.S. auto safety regulators have sent a team to investigate a fatal crash in Virginia involving a Tesla suspected of running on a partially automated driving system. ***The latest crash, which occurred in July, brings to 35 the number of Tesla crashes under investigation*** by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration since June of 2016. In all the cases,

the agency suspects the Teslas were operating on a partially automated driving system such as Autopilot. **At least 17 people have died.** The safety agency said in documents Thursday that the Tesla ran beneath a heavy truck, but gave no further details. The Fauquier County Sheriff's office in Virginia said in a statement that on July 19, a Tesla ran underneath the side of a tractor-trailer pulling out of a truck stop, killing the Tesla driver. The department says the truck driver was charged with reckless driving. **[WHERE IS THE 21ST CENTURY RALPH NADER?]**

******Chaumont (NY) Battery Fire Tested Firefighters**

Jonathon Wheeler-Watertown Daily Times

It was just another muggy summer afternoon, with scattered showers and a promise to clear off for a nice sunset on July 27 when a call came into Jefferson County Dispatch about a small structure fire near a solar farm off Route 179.

Volunteer firefighters from around Jefferson County were working their regular jobs, just carrying on with their lives at 1:12 p.m. when inside a trailer something caused a lithium battery, installed there to store electricity generated from the sun, combusted. And while seeing the growth of sprawling solar panels has been a common occurrence throughout the north country, it didn't occur to nearly anyone at first that the response would turn out to be different from any seen before.

By the time it was over, six days, three hours and thirty minutes had passed — nearly a week. And two words, lithium battery, were on everyone's mind.

Chaumont Chief Will Lipczynski said he was at a Veterans Administration appointment when he heard the call. He recalled seeing construction equipment in the area of the reported fire, so thought it must be an equipment fire. He did not know it was a part of the solar plant itself that was ablaze until firefighters from Three Mile Bay arrived first.

"I knew it was going to be a big deal, but I didn't realize it was going to be a big deal like this," the chief said. **"Things went from not so good to real bad real quick out there."**

Now that the fire has been out for more than a week, Lipczynski took time to reflect on the initial response, and the days that followed as lithium batteries burned away in four trailers.

The chief said his first indicator that a prolonged response would be required was when he spoke with solar company officials on the phone, and they asked if Chaumont had a hazmat team. The chief responded affirmative, and the solar officials said to get them to the fire quickly.

He then asked if they need to do a shelter in place, and that's when the shelter in place started as smoke wafted through the area. Residents were told to stay inside, and traffic was diverted from miles around.

Nick Birchenough, a Chaumont Fire Department captain was working construction on an island in Clayton when the call came in. After a few hours went by his cousin who works for Fort Drum's fire department asked Birchenough if he knew why they were on standby with their hazmat team.

He ended up contacting a member of the Chaumont Fire Department who described to him what was going on and he left the island and went to the site.

"It wasn't anything that I was expecting, personally, it was kind of one of those fires that you never really hear much of," he said.

When he arrived, his role was to make sure firefighters had water supply. The main water supply had washed up from the town's water so they ended up at the Chaumont Boat Launch and pumping from there with Adams Center Fire Department. **He was there for about six or seven hours filling two tankers at a time about every two minutes.**

Tom Donovan, firefighter with the Chaumont Fire Department said he pulled up to the fire with a tanker and he immediately knew then that they were going to be there for a while. He said his job was to bring the tankers back and forth from the fill sites.

Assistant Fire Chief Heather Lipczynski was coming from work in Pillar Point where she says she could see the smoke and at one point the flames.

She said her role was to assist the fire chief including establishing a new water supply after **the village's water system was drained. Lipczynski also directed traffic at Case Road for four to six hours.**

She then assisted in picking up hoses from the scene, and then the next morning assisted the ambulance and Chief Lipczynski.

Chief Lipczynski said his job was to ensure everyone was safe, and that everyone went home, which they accomplished. He also worked to keep all of the moving parts going for 24 hours a day.

With the help of County Car 2 we were able to keep everything constantly moving," he said. This includes fresh bodies and ensuring the firefighters got enough rest. He said that some of the chiefs and County Car 2 probably could've gotten some more sleep.

"At the end of the day, that's what our job is as a white helmet per se is to just to make sure everything is going smooth and to make sure that the firefighters are being taken care of and that they're safe," he said.

When the shelter in place took effect, the fire chief said they knew which way the wind was going so they knew that the firefighters were in a safe area because the smoke was blowing the other way.

He said there was no sign of any pollutants in the air upwind.

The chief said Convergent Energy & Power, the owners of the battery storage units, told first responders not to do anything until their officials arrived. That was the plan of attack, he said, and they awaited a handoff. **But an hour and a half later, plans changed.**

Chief Lipczynski said a phone call from the solar company stated that Convergent had spoken with another agency involved with the solar farm, and the company that controls the batteries stated they wanted the department to start flowing water. That's when operations changed and they began calling ladder trucks and tankers.

The company was able to remotely shut off the solar panels so they weren't energizing the batteries. National Grid also cut the connection to utility poles to stop the power from back feeding. Then pumping water started.

After a battery exploded, they changed from the ladder trucks and pumpers being about 100 feet in, to about 600 feet out and went to ground monitors and kept an eye on those in order to keep everybody safe.

Being a volunteer department, Birchenough said he got off work and was texting Chief Lipczynski if they needed any extra help to make sure they had enough people there.

Chief Lipczynski is retired military so he said he is able to move his schedule around easier than the rest of the crew.

"The rest of the crew though they did a bang-up job trying to rearrange their schedules and being out there with myself and the apparatus helping day in and day out," he said.

The Assistant Chief Lipczynski said she runs a small cleaning business so she said she was able to rearrange her schedule. "Even though it's volunteer, this comes first in a situation like this," she said.

Donovan said he works a full-time job and two part-time jobs, and added that when he's working he's allowed to go to fire calls.

The county is broken up into six zones, and the fire chief said at one point they had a department from each of the six zones at the fire.

"Every department that we reached out to was more than willing to come down and help, some of them were there multiple days helping," he said. "The community was absolutely awesome, they stepped up no matter what it was whether it was from just ice to help us keep our drinks cool, to bottled water to keep the guys hydrated."

One of the local business that helped out was Wise Guys and they gave 20 pizzas to the department and owner Amy G. Williams said that there was no charge for them. "We definitely wanted to take care of them," she said. Williams said that this is how its supposed to be with people helping out and taking care of each other. "That's what Chaumont is all about," she said. "It's a team effort, everybody's got to help each other to get through this world... Thank you to (the fire department) for all that they do." "We can't thank the community enough for everything that they've done for us," Chief Lipczynski said.

The chief also thanked the surrounding departments that assisted.

"The departments were just gracious, we'd call and they're be like 'Yup we're on our way,'" he said.

In the first two days between 200 and 300 firefighters were there, after that, it's not known how many firefighters showed up.

As part of the mutual aid, the FDNY showed up, in order to get a first-hand look at what was going on as they said it was the first fire like that in the country. They came up because they'd never seen anything like it, Assistant Chief Lipczynski said.

Chief Lipczynski said that Convergent has been great to work with. "They didn't have to support the fire department, it's not up to the solar company to support our guys," he said. "I know it is their place on fire, but at the end of the day it wasn't up to them though and they were making sure 'Are you guys fed? Do you guys need this?' and they were also making sure too that everyone that was there around the clock was being taken care of... They've been absolutely phenomenal to our fire department and to the firefighters."

The solar panels are still generating electricity, but it's not connected to the grid, the chief said, as the whole site is offline.

The Volunteer Fire crews were on the scene for well over 1,400 hours, Assistant Chief Lipczynski said. The fire chief said just for the call alone they were there for six days, three hours and 30 minutes.

The first 36 hours were the most tiring, the chief said because Chaumont crews were working "full-blast." After that, in conjunction with the emergency management coordinators, the departments took shifts so people could go home and rest. Chief Lipczynski said he turned command over to a county coordinator at night for a few hours.

"We just made it all work," he said. ***One shift would be from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. and the next shift would be from 8 p.m. until 8 a.m.***

The cleanup efforts include repairs to trucks, cleaning hoses and fire gear, cleaning tents, etc. It is unclear how long cleanup and repairs will take. **The chief said that the fire taxed their budget for what they normally would spend in the entire year between fuel, and equipment repairs.** "It's a lot of equipment repairs on this and really it's going to hurt our budget this year," he said.

When the fire was finally contained, the firefighters said they all felt relief so that their apparatus was back in the service. The fire chief said his five-year-old son had asked him at one point "Daddy, why don't you just put water on it and come home," and he explained to him that it's not that easy.

Lipczynski at 2 p.m. the day after the fire started, said that firefighting crews were "exhausted." **Fighting a lithium-ion battery fire is "a beast of their own."** "You just can't control it," he said.

Friday afternoon, the fire chief said crews were putting water down near the fire in order to keep converters and transformers cool, keeping oils inside cool. The water also dissipates some of the smoke coming off the batteries.

Pops could be heard at the scene Thursday, and Lipczynski said that was from batteries "off-gassing."

It was unclear how long the fire could burn. "We're at the mercy of the batteries," he said.

The chief said his son had asked him if they were done yet after coming home from the fire around 1 a.m.

"I came home one night, it was like one o'clock in the morning and I heard him stirring a little bit so I went in and saw him and he just grabbed me and gave me the biggest bear hug and told me how much he loved me and he missed me and he goes 'are you done?' and I go 'Not yet' and he goes 'Are you coming home?' and I'm like 'soon,'" Chief Lipczynski said. "It was heart wrenching especially for the kids."

If another emergency were to have happened, other departments would have helped.

Chief Lipczynski said he is hoping they will be able to develop a better plan with the solar and battery companies that are working together so that the firefighters are well trained, and they want to have the right equipment.

"This is very eye-opening that we don't have some of the tools that we need to be able to fight one of these, if we had to do it on our own for the first 30 minutes to an hour before we can get a mutual aid in there," Assistant Chief Lipczynski. Eventually, the fire went out on Wednesday by simply burning out and fire crews were on scene through Friday, Aug. 11 to assist with Convergent's hazmat team along with an ambulance for precaution, the chief said.

Convergent is handling the investigation into the cause of the fire and there is no timetable for when their investigation could be completed.

The hope was that Friday would've been the last time they will need to be on scene and that the recovery process for Convergent can begin.

There is still no indication of pollutants in the air, Chief Lipczynski said, and there is still no word on water contamination. He said everything that has been done has been out of an abundance of caution to "keep the checks and balances."

Chaumont Fire Department did a fire watch on Sunday out of an abundance of caution due to an active fire alarm. Firefighters stood by as the facility's electrical crews addressed the issue. Chief Lipczynski said they were on scene for about 10 hours again on Sunday.

The call on Sunday saw Three Mile Bay, and Brownville fire departments dispatched and released, and the department was further assisted by Jefferson County Emergency Management, State Fire, and Cape Vincent Ambulance.

[Over 1.5 Million Dehumidifiers Are Under Recall After Fire Reports](#)

More than 1.5 million dehumidifiers are under recall following reports of nearly two dozen fires, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The recall impacts 42 models of dehumidifiers sold under five brand names: Kenmore, GE, SoleusAir, Norpole and Seabreeze. **These products, all manufactured by the Zhuhai, China-based Gree Electric Appliances**, were sold from January 2011 to February 2014 at major retailers nationwide — including Walmart, Home Depot and Sam's Club, among others.

TRAINING FOR YOUR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS: PASS IT FORWARD!!

[NYS AFC 2023 Seminar Series, "Truck Skills Beyond the Textbooks"](#)

Early in our firefighting orientation, we're taught basic skills and tactics from textbooks. In addition, we'll drill and be tested on many of these skills at fire academy buildings to attain our firefighting certifications. It's a good process, but our learning shouldn't stop there because we haven't been exposed to many of the situations we'll encounter at fires and emergencies. Plus, the buildings in the academy aren't conducive to allowing us to operate with tools to open the walls and ceilings, pull suspended ceilings, remove baseboard and window trim, or even cut open tongue and groove sheathed roofs. This [interactive lecture](#) strives to go beyond textbook learning and bring alive street skills, tips, and tactics of truck work in: portable ladders, overhaul, forcible entry, roof ventilation, tool use, and more.

Registration (per person):

\$35 – NYSAFC members

\$50 – non-members

Pre-registration encouraged.

- Albany Co. October/23/23,
- Fulton Co. September/7/23,
- Saratoga Co. October/24/23

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2023seminarseries>

[Bring NYSAFC Training to Your Area](#)

Fire departments and county agencies or associations that are interested in hosting classroom-based programs or Regional Hands-On Training are invited to submit host request forms. The forms outline the specific host responsibilities and logistical considerations for each NYSAFC program. Sites are now being considered for programs in 2024.

[University Provides a Wealth of Training Opportunities UPDATED FOR 2023](#)

[VFIS TRAINING AND RESOURCE CATALOG 2023](#)

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-ETC-Resource-Catalog-VFIS.pdf>

[VFIS UNIVERSITY – USERS GUIDE](#)

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/VFIS-University-User-Guide-3.pdf>

[VFIS TRAINING OFFICER USERS GUIDE](#)

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/VFISU-Training-Officer-User-Guide.pdf>

[VFIS RESPONDER HELP FLYER](#)

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-VFIS-Responder-Help-Flyer.pdf>



3 Cancer prevention resources for firefighters

Cancer is gaining nationwide recognition as one of the most dangerous health and safety threats to firefighters—and for good reason. Your fire department's leadership team and members each play an important role in helping reduce the chance of cancer—and everyone can make a meaningful difference by continually evaluating best practices and instituting needed changes.

The latest + trending cancer prevention resources

on RESPONDER+HELP

- **How clean is clean?** Two major research efforts are addressing just that, including PPE cleaning procedures and the possible effects of cross-contamination. [Learn more>>>](#)
- **All U.S. firefighters are encouraged to join the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer**, including those with and without cancer and those who are active or retired, so that researchers can continue to learn about cancer and how to help prevent it. [Learn more>>>](#)
- **This sample SOG** can help your fire department implement cancer prevention best practices, including on-scene decontamination, respiratory protection, healthy habits and more. [Learn more>>>](#)

DOWNLOAD SAMPLE SOG AT THIS LINK: <https://www.responderhelp.com/media/2330/sog-sample-carcinogen-preventive-practices.docx>

THE SAFETY OFFICER – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

IN 2023 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED 50 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!

You Just Never Know!

- A Mt. Juliet Tennessee firefighter is in critical but stable condition after being injured in a collapse during an apartment fire. During the fire, three firefighters were caught in a collapse. Two firefighters were able to safely escape but a third was injured and was transported to a local medical center in critical condition.
- The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced the on-duty death of Chief Edward Steines of the West Milford Fire Department on Aug. 16. On Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2023, at 2:32 p.m., Chief Edward “Eddie” J. Steines responded to a train fire in Hardyston Township. All units cleared the scene at 4:58 p.m. and Chief Edward Steines returned home. The next morning at approximately 6:00 a.m., Chief Edward Steines collapsed at his home from an apparent heart attack. He was transported to Chilton Medical Center where he was pronounced deceased at approximately 7:30 a.m.

DISTRICT FINANCES

AUDIT LEGAL NOTICE AND RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Joe Frank, AFDSNY Legal Counsel

By this time of year many fire districts have received their audit reports prepared by their external auditors. These audit reports are due to be delivered and filed by the end of June for the audit of the finances of the prior (2022) fiscal year. ***Under General Municipal Law §35 fire districts in receipt of a report of external audit must publish a legal notice to inform the public when an external auditor conducts an audit of the financial books and records of the fire district and submits a written report.*** It also requires the fire district to publish the legal notice when the audit is done by the Office of the State Comptroller and a report is filed with the fire district. Such reports are filed with the Fire District Secretary, and it becomes the duty of the Secretary to arrange for publication of the legal notice and to provide the Board of Fire

Commissioners with a copy of the report. The notice must be published within 10 days of the filing of the report. The format for the Audit Report Legal Notice can be found on our website under Sample Forms and Policies listed as form/policy number 36 [https://www.afdsny.org/sample_forms_and_policies.php]. It is best practice to obtain an affidavit of publication when the notice is published as proof of publication. When the report is issued by the Office of the State Comptroller it may be for a time period other than a prior fiscal year and the notice must specify the period stated in the audit report. A copy of the actual report of external audit is also filed with the Office of the State Comptroller, and the town clerk of each town in which the district is situated. As noted in the legal notice the Board must prepare a response and corrective action plan to address the findings of the auditor. The fire district must also implement the corrective action plan. One objective of the Board in the audit process should always be to implement corrective action so that the same criticism is not made in subsequent annual audits.

Did You Know? AFG Has a Cost Share Requirement

Recipient cost sharing is generally required as described below and pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §2229(k)(1). In general, eligible applicants shall agree to make available non-federal funds to carry out an AFG Program award in an amount equal to not less than 15% of the federal funds awarded.

Exceptions to this general requirement apply to entities serving smaller communities as follows:

- When serving a jurisdiction of 20,000 residents or fewer, the applicant shall agree to make available non-federal funds in an amount equal to not less than 5% of the grant awarded;
- When serving a jurisdiction of more than 20,000 residents but not more than 1 million residents, the applicant shall agree to make available non-federal funds in an amount equal to not less than 10% of the grant awarded;
- When serving a jurisdiction of more than 1 million residents, the applicant shall agree to make available non-federal funds in an amount equal to not less than 15% of the grant awarded.

The cost share for SFTAs will apply the requirements above based on the total population of the state. The cost share for a Regional application will apply the requirements above based on the aggregate population of the primary first due response areas of the host and participating partner organizations that execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as described in Appendix B: Regional Applications FEMA has developed a cost share calculator tool to assist applicants with determining their cost share. The cost share tool is available at:

<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/assistance-grants>.

TYPES OF COST SHARE

- Cash (Hard Match): Cost share of non-federal cash is the only allowable recipient contribution for AFG Program activity (Vehicle Acquisition, Operations and Safety, and Regional).
- Trade-In Allowance/Credit: On a case-by-case basis, FEMA may allow recipients already owning assets acquired with non-federal cash to use the trade-in allowance/credit value of those assets as cash for the purpose of meeting their cost share obligation. For FEMA to consider a trade-in allowance/credit value as cash, the allowance amount must be reasonable, and the allowance amount must be a separate entry clearly identified in the acquisition documents.
- In-kind (Soft Match): **In-kind cost share is not allowed for the AFG Program.**

The award budget will not account for any voluntary committed cost sharing or overmatch. The use of an overmatch is not given additional consideration when scoring applications.

Mayville (NY) Rejects New \$1.2M Fire Truck Purchase

Village leaders decided that a new fire truck is simply too expensive for local taxpayers.

At a recent meeting, Mayville Village Board (Chautauqua County) members would not introduce a resolution to purchase a new fire truck from Four Guys Fire Trucks, which would have cost \$1,209,963, the report said. The truck would have taken three years to be built.

The Mayville Fire Department has three trucks — a ladder truck, a rescue and an engine. The 1996 truck has multiple issues, according to the report. A fire official said the department has been looking for used ones but hasn't found anything suitable, the report said.

One city official said his concern is that the truck purchase would use up all of the fire department's reserves for future needs, the report said. At the meeting, the mayor asked if any trustees backed the resolution, to introduce it for a vote. No one would, so the resolution died, the report said.

A city official said that there will be more used equipment going up for sale in the future, which may be suitable for Mayville's fire department, according to the report.

LIVING WITH NEW GREEN TECHNOLOGY - - HOT TOPIC!

FDNY: 2 Separate Fires Caused By Lithium-Ion Batteries In 1 Day, 1 Dead

We've now learned two fires in New York City on Friday were caused by lithium-ion batteries, and one of those fires turned deadly. Video shows flames in between two multi-family homes on Tinton Street in Morrisania section of the Bronx on Friday. Each sustained serious damage, but fire officials say thankfully, there were no reported injuries. Luis Garcia owns one of the houses and is now living in a hotel. "There was one guy that had just moved in from a shelter, that I rented him a room, just yesterday. I've never seen something like this," he told CBS New York on Saturday. Fire officials say the home where the fire started was vacant. The cause was determined to be a lithium-ion battery. The FDNY said as of July, there have been 87 lithium-ion battery fires causing injuries so far this year and 13 deaths.

Fire broke out on 101st Street in Ozone Park, Queens. This fire was fatal, killing 93-year-old Kam Mei Koo, the mother of the building's landlord. The city's Department of Buildings issued a violation for illegal e-bike repairs in the basement.

Battery Storage Safety Incidents Guide For First Responders Published By American Clean Power Association

The American Clean Power Association (ACP) has launched a new guide aimed at helping first responders understand and deal with battery storage safety incidents. Including **recommendations for pre-incident planning and incident response, the guide addresses potential hazards such as fire, explosions, arc flash, shock and toxic chemicals**. It is written with lithium-ion (Li-ion) battery energy storage system (BESS) technologies in mind, but the trade group said some elements of the guide may apply to other technologies. The importance of engaging with first responders on topics of safety has been a major talking point in the industry for some time, particularly since the 2017 fire and explosion in Arizona which injured four firefighters.

While all of the affected fire crew were heard to have recovered and returned to active duty, confidence in the industry was shaken. In the aftermath of the incident, investigations and reports found that closer engagement with local first responders would have put fire crews and authorities in a much better position to deal with a then-unfamiliar set of risks. Although today fires remain extremely rare [**IT'S NEW AND THE NUMBERS ARE STILL SMALL BUT GROWING**] at grid-scale BESS installations, the handful that do occur continue to raise concerns that the risks of this relatively still new technology require the continuing development of best practices and education for stakeholders, including working directly on training first responders.

New York's governor Kathy Hochul has just convened a working group made up of different state-level agencies including the fire department to investigate and evaluate the safety of BESS projects, in the wake of three high-profile fires since May.

The ACP guide assumes a BESS installation to be subject to the most up to date safety standard, the 2023 revision of [NFPA 855](#) from the US National Fire Protection Association.

It also assumes relevant projects to comprise outdoor battery enclosures with 600kWh or more capacity, which means they require hazard mitigation analysis (HMA), as well as fire and explosion testing in accordance with the UL9540A standard on thermal runaway propagation, and emergency planning with corresponding annual training.

NFPA 855 requires project stakeholders to submit the HMA, UL9540A testing results and emergency response plan (ERP) to authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs), to be made available to the developer of a pre-incident plan.

ACP noted that access to battery management system (BMS) data is also a vital part of making informed choices regarding emergency response. The BMS can make it possible to observe current conditions of the batteries, including their temperature. During incident response, an appropriate incident command individual should have access to that BMS data, the guide recommended.

The guide then has short sections on how each risk of fire, explosion, arc flash and electric shock, and toxic chemicals should be assessed and treated.

It also includes a discussion of those hazards, including the current debate about fires. That includes the different strategies being considered by manufacturers that include BESS designs that ‘make it burn’ to allow systems to burn out when the lower flammable limit (LFL) is reached but before a lower explosive limit (LEL) is reached.

ACP noted however that ‘make it burn’ is more effective for systems using Li-ion cells based on transition metal oxides, such as nickel-manganese-cobalt oxide (NMC), which release oxygen during thermal runaway events. For other chemistries like lithium iron phosphate (LFP), which releases no oxygen during thermal runaway, it is suggested that venting of gases by automatic opening of doors or panels could help prevent explosions.

Download and read the American Clean Power Association’s [‘First responders guide to lithium-ion battery energy storage safety incidents’ here](#)

LINK TO 1ST RESPONDER’S GUIDE: <https://cleanpower.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ACP-ES-Product-7-First-Responders-Guide-to-BESS-Incidents-6.28.23.pdf>

Apple Issues Warning For People Who Leave Their Iphone On Charge While They Sleep

In the digital age, where smartphones have become an indispensable part of our lives, the practice of charging our devices overnight has become a norm. It offers the convenience of starting the day with a full battery, ready to tackle the challenges ahead. However, a recent warning from Apple sheds light on the potential dangers associated with charging your iPhone overnight. While the convenience of waking up to a charged phone is undeniable, the risks of fire and injury should not be underestimated. Apple's cautionary message highlights a less-obvious consequence of overnight charging – the risk of overheating. ***Leaving your iPhone underneath a pillow or buried beneath blankets might seem cozy, but it could lead to hazardous consequences.*** The company emphasizes that when your phone is obstructed and unable to properly ventilate, the risk of overheating becomes substantial. ***Overheating not only endangers the functionality of your device, but it could also lead to a potentially catastrophic outcome: fire.*** Apple’s safety information underscores the importance of avoiding situations where your skin is in prolonged contact with the charging cable and connector. The memo explains that prolonged contact with warm surfaces can lead to discomfort or injury. Such scenarios are not limited to simply sleeping on the charging cable but extend to placing the device, power adapter, or wireless charger under blankets, pillows, or even your own body when they are connected to a power source.

Apple’s recommendations revolve around maintaining a well-ventilated charging environment to prevent overheating. The company cautions against placing your iPhone, power adapter, or wireless charger under a blanket, pillow, or your body while connected to a power source. These precautions are particularly crucial if you have a physical condition that might hinder your ability to sense heat.

BUILDING & FIRE CODE ISSUES – WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT TO YOU? WEEKLY FIRE FATALITY DATA AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA

Home builders and realtors already “drive” legislation with a history of disregard for life safety and a disgusting misinformation campaign about the cost of residential fire sprinklers, deaths are an awfully expensive price to pay to save money. Stop the carnage, install residential sprinklers. Residential sprinklers are a component of the plumbing system, with approximately 1 head per room. The purpose of residential sprinklers is to allow time for the occupants to escape. Residential sprinklers are designed for quick response and only one at the most two heads may be

triggered. With residential sprinklers present, the civilian death rate is 89% LOWER. Residential sprinklers will assist responding firefighters to do their jobs and save firefighters lives also, especially since everyone is short staffed!!
CHIEFS NEED TO SPEAK UP: This fire would not have been as bad if there were residential sprinklers!!

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	52+0 = 52
Last fire death 8/2 Bronx, Bronx Co	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	103+2 = 105
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	841 + 18 = 859
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NY = 52
	2 PA = 56
	3 OH = 47
There has been a total of 1386 civilian home fire fatalities in 2023	
There were a total of 2251 residential fire fatalities reported in 2022 in the US media.	
Both the states of Maryland and California require sprinklers in residential dwellings	

In 2022 in New York State 77 residents perished in fires in 1 & 2 family occupancies.

APPARATUS PURCHASING...IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT

****Apparatus Purchasing: Deceptive Specification Writing**

Bill Adams

Depending on a department's size, the chief's office could be an administrative staff, a formal planning committee, a gaggle of white coats, or just the chief. After receiving their directions, the APC held numerous meetings with apparatus manufacturers (OEMs) and their vendors, inspected new apparatus deliveries, attended trade shows, and visited several OEMs' facilities. After reporting their findings to the chief's office, the committee was given instructions for writing the purchasing specifications for the new rig. An oft-repeated quote misattributed to an infamous former world leader is, "Those who vote decide nothing. Those who count the votes decide everything." When writing purchasing specifications, that quote could be revised to "***The APC decides nothing. Who writes the specifications decides everything.***"

PUTTING PEN TO PAPER

Writing misleading purchasing specifications can be accidental or intentional. There is no accusation of either. Fire department personnel, vendors, OEMs, and professional specification writers alike can write a disingenuous document. No one is singled out. No one is accused. Ambiguous and misleading wording can be found in the boilerplate as well as in the technical specifications. Also known as the front sheets, boilerplate is that part of the document that defines the rules and regulations bidders must follow. In political subdivisions, it's called the legalese. ***APCs don't always pay close attention to the front sheets. They should.*** It is unfortunate if responsible bidders are rejected because of noncompliance with a minor nonfirematic requirement in the front sheets. An APC can develop a brief yet comprehensive specification for a proposed apparatus only to see it neutered—either accidentally or purposely—during the final writing process. The person physically writing the document has first dibs at altering it. Many times, an APC only briefly—if at all—has the opportunity to examine and possibly edit the spec writer's final product. ***More often than not, APCs blindly accept whatever document the writer produces.*** That is an injustice to the system. It borderlines being remiss. The intent of the APC's work and its decisions could be distorted prior to the document heading through the formal chain of command for approval.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Purchasing specifications often pass through multiple hands before being published for public bid. The aforementioned fire chief's office normally reviews the document. In some political subdivisions, the document must pass through a purchasing department's bidding formalities. There's always the possibility of the mayor's office (politicians) dipping into it. And, last but not least, attorneys along the line might add their two cents to the document. Not everyone in the purchasing approval process speaks "fire truck" language. Some overseers whose intentions may be honorable might feel obligated to add or change verbiage just because they can or think they should. Verbiage can be defined as a bunch of unnecessary words (gobbledygook) similar to undefinable verbs and adjectives. Buyers, beware: Some of that superfluous wording can grievously alter the document and the resulting purchase. There is no accusation it is done on purpose. But, it could be. Someone in the chief's office might want a Maxim. The head of the purchasing department might prefer a Hahn. The attorney's brother-in-law might sell Crown Coach. The specification writer could have an affinity for Peter Pirsch. There might be a personal preference for or against a particular body material or a local vendor or a genuine animosity against the fire department itself. Again, there is no insinuation. Just be aware. Be cognizant of the fact that in political subdivisions there could be a multitude of agencies vying for a share of available appropriations. During the purchasing process, the parks and recreation department, the library, the schools, department of public works, and law enforcement may have more friends and influence in city hall than the fire department. Tread carefully

TRUST BUT VERIFY

It is irrelevant if purchasing specifications are proprietary, generic, open, or performance-based. It doesn't matter if they are subtly intended to favor a particular vendor. It's also irrelevant if they're intended to eliminate a certain vendor or product—as unethical and possibly illegal as both might be in the public bidding arena. Anywhere during the approval process, wording may have been purposely inserted or modified to change the intent of the document. **Purchasers should be aware that vendors always read between a specification's lines to interpret any hidden objective of the purchaser.** Skepticism weighs heavily in a vendor's decision to bid. Although unfathomable to some purchasers, slanted verbiage in a specification can be interpreted by a vendor as, "Go away—we don't want your fire truck." The APC should look for any changes in wording made during the approval process. If changes are questionable, ask why. That is the APC's obligation. After a document has been finalized and put to bid, the APC should still review it. An addendum to the specifications might be in order. Hopefully, foxes are not guarding the henhouse. Deceptive starts with the letter "D" as well as a number of its meanings. Some examples follow: Distraction means to confuse or not tell all the facts. The APC's specifications read, "The compartment shall be 25 × 30 × 30 inches." What if someone changed the requirement to "... no less than about 22,500 cubic inches" or to "... no less than approximately 13 cubic feet of space" and added, "The purchaser reserves the right to choose the compartment dimensions that best suit its purposes." The fire department could end up with any size compartment. Hope everything fits as intended. Degrading means humiliating or unbecoming. The specifications read, "Bidders that do not have a full-service center within 50 miles of the purchaser's location shall be deemed incapable of providing the level of service expected." Do vendors 51 miles away have inferior service? Disparaging means judgmental and unfavorable. The APC's specifications read, "The successful bidder shall be capable of providing 24/7/365 on-the-road emergency service." If someone adds "... with no less than four service trucks," would many vendors be disqualified? What's wrong with only two or three? By chance, does the preferred vendor have four? Deception means a ruse or a trick. Based on valid and documented issues with various body materials, the APC agreed to a specific material for the body construction. Someone added in the boilerplate: "Exceptions to the body material will be allowed providing they are listed and explained to the satisfaction of the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ)." Note that it specifically says the AHJ accepts or rejects the exceptions. The APC, fire chief, or fire department might get to make recommendations but, in most cases, the AHJ signs the check and gets the final say. Hope you like its choice. Demeaning means belittling or condescending. The specs read: "After careful and extensive research, the purchaser believes extruded aluminum construction is the most superior method for fire apparatus bodies. Formed aluminum construction as well as other metallic and nonmetallic materials will not be acceptable." That vilifies a lot of manufacturers. Delusional means not being realistic. The specifications read, "All custom apparatus builders can break, form, shear, and weld metal. Therefore, there shall be NO exceptions allowed for the exact dimensions specified herein." If you believe that, go into a Cadillac dealership and ask them to build you a Ford. Disingenuous means misleading or dishonest. The APC's specs read, "Bidder shall provide a list of no fewer than 12 fire departments with similar apparatus."

It might be overly restrictive if someone changed it to "... no fewer than 12 fire departments within 50 miles." How were the quantity and mileage decided? Does the 50 miles favor a particular manufacturer?

REALITY

Every APC has the obligation to specify the apparatus with components that will best serve the fire department. And, if doing so justifies using some of the examples shown above, so be it. Do what you have to do to ensure quality, design, engineering, and workmanship. The intent is to illustrate how the APC's work might be accidentally or nefariously altered during the final specification writing and approval process. Good luck.

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

I discovered that answering the door naked on Halloween helps deter trick-or-treaters. Oh, here we go again, here's two dressed as police officers and they look real!!!!

OFFICERS OF THE CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS

2023 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President: Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner Stillwater/Saratoga

1st VP: John Meehan, Commissioner West Crescent/Saratoga

2nd VP: Art Hunsinger, Commissioner Clifton Park Halfmoon/Saratoga

Board of Directors: Les Bonesteel Commissioner Burnt Hills/Saratoga, Tom Wood Commissioner Northumberland/Saratoga, Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga, Ed Woehrl Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady and Mike Podolec Commissioner West Glenville/Schenectady

Secretary: Vacancy

Treasurer: Tony Hill

Sargent at Arms: Tom Wood

Chaplain: Fred Richards

Legal Council: Greg Serio

The Capital Area Association represents fire district officials from the fire districts in Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Fulton and Montgomery Counties

Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers

Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to participate!

The Capital Area Association wants to take this opportunity to thank all the Fire Districts who continue to support the local Capital Area Association as members for 2023.

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence go to the Capital Area Association Mailing Address at:

AFDCA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

[EMAIL TREASURER: CFDATREASURER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CFDATREASURER@GMAIL.COM)

[518-407-5020](tel:518-407-5020)

FIRE DISTRICT RESOURCES - -THE BACK PAGE - - FOR YOU TO FOLLOW UP!

What are the duties and responsibilities of a Commissioner?

The Answer is posted on our web site at www.AFDCA.org

Vital Statistics on the State Association Regions – the break out is on our web site.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.AFDCA.ORG

We invite our business partners to submit educational information to be included in this Bulletin for district commissioners and chief officers

Write me at tom@rinaldi1.com

Please Support Those Who Support Us!!

If you have information on new products you wish to showcase or is educational and informative for fire districts, please submit it and we will use it in this Bulletin under the appropriate heading.

LEGAL SERVICES

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Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
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The Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 400+ fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. Since the Capital Area Association covers an area the size of Connecticut it is difficult to meet in person to exchange information and ideas.

This is a service of the Capital Area Association through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments or content contributions are always welcome.

You Can Become a Member of the Capital Area Association!

The Capital Area Association has voted to amend its By-laws to allow both individual and regional or county Fire District Associations to join. The updated By-laws are posted to the AFDCA.org website.

Individual membership fee will be \$50 annually, fire district association fees will be \$300 annually.

Download THE APPLICATION HERE: <https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-Application.doc>

Benefits of membership include meeting attendance, receiving the Bulletin, access to legal advice

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

Would you like to join Capital Area Fire Districts Association along with 75 members in 8 counties? Individuals, fire district associations, fire protection districts and Village departments are all eligible for membership.

Annual dues (January 1st to December 31st) shall be as follows and shall be based on the annual budget of the Fire District/Organization;

\$0 to \$200,000: \$50

\$200,001 to \$400,000: \$100

\$400,001 to \$600,000: \$200

\$600,001 plus: \$300

Individuals \$50.00 and Other Associations \$300 annually.

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee

CAFDA UPCOMING TRAINING AND MEETING CALENDAR NEXT PAGE



The following calendar, while tentative, provides our members and participants some insight into the planned activities to be provided locally to our membership and other fire district participants for '23, '24 and '25. We hope you will join us on this journey to provide reasonably priced, quality training in a local setting for your convenience.



For General Membership meetings food is served 1 hour prior to the start time of the meeting, at 6pm, meetings begin promptly at 7PM

Capital Area Meetings/Seminars/Trainings/Conference Dates (Subject to Change & Updated 7/14/2023)				
Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
2023				
AUGUST	NO MEETING			
Tuesday, September 12, 2023	6:00 PM	PESH vs. NFPA Seminar	DeCrescente	Mechanicville
Thursday, September 14, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Tuesday, September 19, 2023	6:00 PM	Secretary Training	DeCrescente	Mechanicville
Thursday, October 12, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	Verdoy FD	
Thursday, November 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER	NO MEETING			
2024				
Saturday, January 6, 2024	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting
Monday, January 22, 2024	6:00 PM	Secretary Training	TBD	Snowdate - Tuesday, January 23, 2023
Saturday, February 3, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Averill Park	Snowdate - Sunday, February 4, 2024
Thursday, February 8, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, February 29, 2024	8:00 AM	It's Not YOUR Money! Financial Trng. w/OSC	Halfmoon Fire District	
Friday, March 1, 2024	8:00 AM			
Saturday, March 2, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Halfmoon FD	Snowdate - Sunday, March 3, 2024
Thursday, March 7, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Saturday, March 9, 2024	6:00 PM	Officer Installation	TBD	
Saturday, March 23, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Berkshire FD	Snowdate - Sunday, March 24, 2024
Saturday, April 6, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Warrensburg FD	Snowdate - Sunday, April 7, 2024
Thursday, April 11, 2024	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
Thur- Sat April 24,25,26/2024		CAFDA Conference	Lake George, NY	
Thursday, May 9, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, June 6, 2024	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
JULY	NO MEETING			
AUGUST	NO MEETING			
Friday, August 9, 2024	11:00 AM	DAY AT THE RACES	Saratoga Race Course	Officers, Directors, Vendors
SEPTEMBER				
Thursday, September 12, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 10, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 2, 2024	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	TBD	
Thursday, November 7, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER	NO MEETING			
2025				
Saturday, January 4, 2025	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting

[CLICK ON PDF TO OPEN FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET SCHEDULE](#)

There was previous difficulty in opening this document, it should be corrected.

Click on this link, or go to our website at afdca.org

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Fire-District-Budget-Schedule.pdf>

[CLICK ON PDF TO OPEN FIRE DISTRICT ELECTION SCHEDULE](#)

There was previous difficulty in opening this document, it should be corrected.

Click on this link, or go to our website at afdca.org

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Fire-District-Elections-Schedule-2023.pdf>

Also Both are Available on the legacy CAFDA Web Site at:

<https://afdca.org/fire-district-budget-schedule-and-fire-district-election-schedule/>

Capital Area Fire Districts Association

CAFDA

Presents

PESH vs NFPA Myth vs Fact



Date: Tuesday, September 12 th

Time: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location:

**DeCrescente Distributing Co.
211 North Main Street
Mechanicville, NY
(across from Price Chopper)**

Speaker: Jennifer Puerner

NYS Public Employees
Safety and Health Bureau

There is NO CHARGE for this event!

Seating is **LIMITED**

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How many times in the Fire Service have you heard the phrase;

“Because we’ve always done it that way”

Join us as Jennifer Puerner of the NYS Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau, will shed light on:

- What Training is required?
- What standards apply?
- What needs to be done annually, or not?
- What mandates are actually real?
- What records do we need to keep and for how long?
- How long is turn out gear good for?
- Bailout system requirements
- And everything else that sometimes become the rules



**NOTE THE PO BOX SHOULD BE 242 NOT 424 PAY AT THE DOOR IF
NECESSARY**



CAFDA Training Seminar for Fire District Secretaries

Whether you are a seasoned Fire District Secretary or new to the job, there is something for everyone in this seminar. Join Joyce as she takes you through the life of the Fire District Secretary, and let's share information, ideas, tips and tricks on how to make our jobs easier.

This class is not just for Fire District Secretaries...Commissioners are also encourage to attend to get a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of your secretaries!

Date: Tuesday, September 19th

Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location: DeCrescente Distributing Ctr.
211 N. Main Street
Mechanicville NY
(across from Price Chopper)

Presenter: Joyce Petkus, Director,
Capital Area Fire Districts Association,
District Administrator, Secretary, and
Treasurer Greenfield Fire District,
Saratoga County.

Fee: CAFDA Members \$10

Non Members \$20

Please make checks payable to
CAFDA
PO Box 242
East Schodack, NY 12063

Limited Seating: reserve your seat by
emailing us at CAAOFD@gmail.com
Reserve by **September 12, 2023**

Capital Area Fire Districts Association

