



ASSOCIATION OF
FIRE DISTRICTS
★ ★ CAPITAL AREA ★ ★

THE CAPITAL BULLETIN



FIRE DISTRICT NEWS

DECEMBER 3RD, 2022

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI

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*If nothing else read the articles preceded by ***

CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

2023 CAPITAL AREA MEETING & TRAINING SCHEDULE

Saturday January 7th 9:00am general membership breakfast served at 8AM

Thursday February 9th 7:00pm general membership dinner served at 6PM

Thursday March 9th 7:00pm general membership dinner served at 6PM

Saturday, March 11, 2023 6:00 PM Officer Installation Location in Saratoga Springs TBD

Thursday April 6th Board of Director's Meeting 7PM

Thursday May 11th Meeting of the General Membership

Thursday June 8th Board of Director's Meeting 7PM

Thursday July 13th Board of Director's Meeting 7PM

August, No Meeting

Thursday September 14th, General Membership Meeting 7PM

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

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

December, No Meeting

Printable Calendar – See Last Page

Mandated Commissioner Training Sanctioned by the State Comptroller's Office, \$85.00 per person

Saturday, February 11, 2023 8:00 AM 6 hour Commissioner Training Averill Park, Rensselaer Co. w/Greg Serio

Saturday, March 4, 2023 8:00 AM 6 hour Commissioner Training Clifton Park Saratoga Co. w/Greg Serio

Saturday, March 25, 2023 8:00 AM 6 hour Commissioner Training Berkshire Fire District Fulton, Co. w/Greg Serio

2023 Membership Activity Options Being Explored

Saturday, November 11, 2023 8:00 AM Fall Workshop Location and Date to be determined

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

CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

You Are Invited to Join Us!!

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>

AS WE WORK OUT ALL THE GLITCHES AND PURCHASE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT THE CAPITAL AREA WISHES TO INFORM ALL OUR MEMBERS THAT WE ANTICIPATE THAT ZOOM WILL COMMENCE AT THE JANUARY 2023 MEETING. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE.

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

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: CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM

518-407-5020

If you see ** it indicates a must-read article with educational value or leadership qualities.

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- John Meehan has announced that he will not be a candidate as the Region 1 Director for the State Association. **If anyone is interested** in being endorsed as the Regional Director please send a letter of intent to the Capital Area Association at caaofd@gmail.com. **A new Director needs to be named by the Capital Area by the end of November.** You must be an active fire district official; commissioner, treasurer or purchasing agent. Your letter needs to be into the State Association no later than December 15th.
- Anyone interested in purchasing the FASNY 150th Anniversary Commemorative Book, you can use this link: <https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FASNY-150th-Commemorative-Book-Order-Form.pdf>
- *The final Coffee with Commissioners is scheduled for December 8th a 7PM, see below.*

- *If you no longer wish to receive the Capital Bulletin you have the option to “unsubscribe” at the bottom of the introductory email.*

TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER



COFFEE WITH COMMISSIONERS LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023

[Click Here for Previously Recorded Webinars](#)

The Final Coffee with Commissioners for 2022 has moved to **Thursday December 8th at 7:00PM**

The Subject is, *Topics for the Organizational Meeting*

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_kHxRb8KjRoa6UWIKtK-yYQ

Duties & Deadlines Secretary Webinar

Duties & Deadlines Secretary Webinar Schedules

Start time 6:00pm

December 20, 2022 - Organizing for the New Year

***If you have already registered you DO NOT have to register again, you will automatically received all zoom links.**

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: https://mms.afdsny.org/members/evr/reg_event.php?orgcode=FDNY&evid=32091843

THE LATEST FROM THE NYS LEGISLATURE

Beginning of the Well-Intended Assault on Lithium-Ion Batteries

S9596 Krueger - A new article of the General Business Law is intended to prohibit the distribution, assembly, or sale of second-use lithium-ion batteries for e-bikes and e-scooters that have been assembled or reconditioned using cells removed from used batteries. A person who violated the law would be subject to a civil penalty. The civil penalty would range from \$200 for a first violation to \$1,000 for each subsequent violation within two years. (to assembly sponsor)
My Question to you is who is going to enforce this, who is going to track down the people who are using the used cells and who is going to have the jurisdiction to track down the perpetrators in the country that they are operating in. I suggest this is feel good legislation that is not practical and will be very difficult if not impossible to enforce.

S9597 Krueger - A new article of the General Business Law to prohibit the sale of batteries for mobility devices such as electric bicycles or scooters unless such batteries have been listed and labeled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory or other approved organization. A person who violated the law would be subject to a civil penalty. The civil penalty would range from no monetary penalty for a first violation to \$1,000 for each subsequent violation within two years. (no assembly sponsor)

My question again is who is going to be the “battery police”, there are already regulations dealing with the sale of listed devices by federal regulations, this would just be redundant and would require a state agency to enforce the standards. Specifically, OSHA [29 CFR 1917.157 Battery Charging and Changing](#)– This standard primarily goes over who is able to change batteries, where they can be changed, and what to look for in terms of hazards. NFPA also has Electrical Safety Standards.

In addition, everyone needs to understand that devices assembled in other countries have no qualms about slapping a counterfeit label on the products they are selling and then flood the marketplace.

When we find these products in the marketplace who is going to be fined, the seller?

We need you to pick up the phone and call the governor’s office in support of this Bill!

Call 518-474-8390 in support of bill S9131!

As you all know I have working for the last 8 months to get the NYS Legislature to pass legislation ***allowing counties*** to give tax breaks to First Responders.

After the June recess I thought the issue was dead until January when the new session would convene.

However, I made all the material (Draft of proposed legislation, Drafts of County implementation of the proposed legislation and news articles describing the need for assistance by fire companies for aid in recruitment and retention.) to the lobbyists for several of the New York State Fire Service organizations.

Well, it appears the fire service lobbyists continued the fight and the result is the bill now before the Governor for signature ***granting all 62 NYS Counties the power to enact legislation*** to grant First Responders tax breaks.

As more details become available after Governor Hochul signs the Bill, I will keep you informed.

Copy of the Bill is attached.

My thanks to Commissioner Robert Blauw for bringing the passage of this legislation to my attention. My special thanks to Rensselaer County Executive Steve McLaughlin, Past Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino and retired State Senator Kathy Marchione for their very active support in all phases of this endeavor.

Now we need to encourage the Governor to sign this bill.

LINK TO BILL:

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BILL-NUMBER-9131-10-2022-3.docx>

The 2022 Legislative Session and Fire Service Bill Status

Bills that didn’t gain any traction and were stuck in committee were amendments to the heart and lung bill making them permanent, rather than renewing them every five years or so. Hopefully this effort will be renewed next year.

Several other bills that affect fire service business operations are the following, many have not been signed by the Governor yet, she is probably too busy running for re-election:

- (S7623AGAUGHRAN/A8591 THIELE) EXTENDS PROVISIONS OF LAW AUTHORIZING POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS TO PERMIT ANY PUBLIC BODY TO HOLD MEETINGS REMOTELY AND WITHOUT IN-PERSON ACCESS DURING THE COVID-19 STATE DISASTER EMERGENCY, UNTIL THE EMERGENCY IS DECLARED TO BE OVER. **SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR 1/14/22**

- (S7718) AN ACT TO AMEND A CHAPTER OF THE LAWS OF 2021 ESTABLISHING THE NEW YORK STATE RURAL AMBULANCE SERVICES TASK FORCE IN RELATION TO MODIFYING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE. **SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR 2/24/22**
- (S7144) PROVIDES CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM TRAINING, MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID, IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING AND NALOXONE TRAINING TO FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL BY THE COMMISSIONER OF MENTAL HEALTH. **SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR 5/6/22**
- (S9405) THE NYS ENERGY CODE PRODUCT AND APPLIANCE STANDARDS WILL DELIVER A PROJECTED \$15 BILLION OF TOTAL UTILITY BILL SAVINGS (SUPPOSEDLY) BY 2035 FOR NEW YORK CONSUMERS, INCLUDING AN ESTIMATED \$6 BILLION IN TOTAL UTILITY BILL SAVINGS FOR LOW-TO MODERATE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS. THIS LEGISLATION ALSO PROVIDES DOS WITH ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY OVER ANY STATE STANDARDS. **SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR**
- (S3532) AUTHORIZES STATE AND MUNICIPALLY OWNED VEHICLES TO AFFIX GREEN OR ALTERNATING GREEN AND AMBER LIGHTS TO MOTOR VEHICLES ENGAGED IN SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCREASING VISIBILITY DURING WINTER WEATHER EVENTS. **SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR**
- (S7399A) AN AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW, IN RELATION TO AUTHORIZING A MUNICIPALITY TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF YEARS OF SERVICE THAT **A VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SERVICE** PARTICIPANT IN A DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PLAN SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM OR A DEFINED BENEFIT PLAN SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM MAY RECEIVE A CONTRIBUTION. **SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR ON 11/23/22 [PERTAINS TO AMBULANCE VOLUNTEERS ENROLLED IN A LOSAP PROGRAM NOT FIREFIGHTERS]**
- ((S9131) A BILL TO ALLOW ANY COUNTY TO ADOPT A LOCAL LAW THAT WILL PROVIDE AN EXEMPTION ON REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY AN ENROLLED MEMBER OF AN INCORPORATED VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, DEPARTMENT, OR VOLUNTARY AMBULANCE SERVICE. THE BILL WOULD EXEMPT UP TO 10% OF THE ASSESSED VALUE FOR MEMBERS WHO SERVED A MINIMUM OF TWO YEARS. THE BILL WOULD REQUIRE LOCALITIES THAT CURRENTLY PROVIDE THE EXEMPTION ADOPT A LOCAL LAW TO CONFORM TO THIS PROVISION. **DELIVERED TO GOVERNOR 12/2/22**
- (S7863A) THE GENERAL BUSINESS LAW IS AMENDED TO PROVIDE THAT NO ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS MAY BE SOLD IN NEW YORK STATE BY A PERSON, FIRM, PARTNERSHIP ASSOCIATION OR CORPORATION REGULARLY ENGAGED IN THE BUSINESS OF ASSEMBLING, MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTING, OR RETAIL SALE OF SPACE HEATERS UNLESS THEY: CONTAIN A THERMOSTAT; HAVE AN AUTOMATIC SHUTOFF; AND HAVE BEEN CERTIFIED BY AN APPROVED BODY. **DELIVERED TO GOVERNOR ON 12/2/22** My Question is, who is going to enforce this. Suspect only action will be on complaints or as a result of lawsuits.
- S926B) REQUIRES ELECTRIC CORPORATIONS TO PRIORITIZE RESTORING SERVICES TO POLICE DEPARTMENTS, FIRE DEPARTMENTS, AND AMBULANCE SERVICES, WHEN SUCH SERVICES ARE INTERRUPTED. **NOT YET SIGNED**
- (S6093A) THIS BILL IS INTENDED TO CLARIFY THE INTENT OF THE LEGISLATURE REGARDING EXISTING STATUTORY PRESUMPTIONS PERTAINING TO HEART-RELATED DISABILITIES SUFFERED BY MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK STATE LOCAL POLICE, FIRE RETIREMENT SYSTEM AND THE NEW YORK STATE AND LOCAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM. CLARIFICATION IS NECESSARY BECAUSE A SERIES OF NARROW JUDICIAL INTERPRETATIONS HAS PREVENTED THE STATUTORY PRESUMPTIONS FROM ACHIEVING THEIR INTENDED PURPOSES. **NOT YET SIGNED**
- (S953A) REQUIRES BUSINESSES THAT MAKE PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES TO PROVIDE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH NOTICE OF THEIR INTENTION TO CHANGE ASSESSMENT. **NOT YET SIGNED**
- (S8524B) ALLOWS FOR THE USE OF GREEN LIGHTS ON THE VEHICLES OF MOBILE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONDERS. **NOT YET SIGNED**
- (S7582A) TO REQUIRE THAT THE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL COMPOSITION INCLUDE PERSONS WITH KNOWLEDGE OF FLOODING HAZARDS AND THAT THE BUILDING CODE BE REVISED TO INCORPORATE MEASURES FOR FLOOD MITIGATION AND FLOOD SAFETY. **NOT YET SIGNED**

It's recommended that the fire service start to think about legislation it would like to present for 2023, bills will begin to be introduced on the first week of the legislative session starting January 2nd. If you have legislation you would like to suggest, contact your local representatives or a member of the legislative committee of one of the fire service organizations in the State.

NEWS FROM THE NYS VOL. FF R&R TASK FORCE

Updated Link for the Recruitment and Retention Task Force:

<https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/volunteer-firefighter-recruitment-and-retention-task-force>

The task force in their most recent meeting has broken into sub committees.

Open Meetings and Webcasts are located at: <https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/open-meetings-and-webcasts>

LET YOUR MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY!



Posted to our web site at this LINK: <https://afdca.org/vfis-training-opportunities-a-wealth-of-information/>

You will find:

[2022 VFISU-Flyer](#)

[2022 VFISU Course Catalog](#)

[2022 ETC-Resource-Catalog-VFIS](#)

[2022 VFIS-Responder Help Flyer](#)

[NY - Flyer EVDT-EMSVO-I Depew Nov 5-6, 2022](#)

[NY - Flyer UTV ATV-I TRL-I Neversink FD Nov 19-20 2022](#)



Safe AND Happy Holidays ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

Join our Risk Management team as we review and discuss the things, we need to consider ensuring a safe season for ourselves and our communities.

December 7th, at 7:00PM

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_FWY5LxOgShijdRZXkGze_Q?utm_source=ESIP+Risk+Management+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=a5e4662e14-

EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_21_04_23_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f653b3c566-a5e4662e14-278064383

New Course! Leadership for the Fire & Emergency Services

The NVFC has released a new course in the Virtual Classroom on “Leadership in the Fire & Emergency Services.” This on-demand course provides an overview of leadership roles, how anyone can be a leader regardless of rank, and tips to help in succeeding as an emergency service leader. Virtual Classroom courses are always free to **NVFC members**, but this course is free for a limited time to all members of the fire and emergency services. **Register now:**

<https://virtualclassroom.nvfc.org/products/leadership-for-the-fire-emergency-services>

Innovative Recruitment Ideas for Volunteer Fire, EMS, and Rescue Departments

Recruitment is a challenge for many volunteer and combination emergency service departments. The NVFC has released a new one-pager featuring 10 ideas to help jump-start your recruitment initiatives. Download it [here](#). You can find more tools and resources to help with recruitment – including customizable outreach materials and PSAs – from the NVFC’s [Make Me A Firefighter campaign](#).

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

New Jersey Lawmakers Want To Require Training To Help First Responders Fight Electric Vehicle Fires

When a veteran correctional officer crashed his electric car in May, it took firefighters an hour and a half and 30,000 gallons of water to douse the blaze. That was too late for Daniel Sincavage, who died when he got trapped in his burning Tesla after it veered off the road and hit trees as he drove between facilities at Southern State Correctional Facility in Cumberland County. Now, several state lawmakers want to make sure firefighters and other first responders are better armed to fight fires that ignite in electric vehicles, which require specialized training and gear to extinguish because their lithium-ion batteries burn hotter and longer than gasoline engines. One bill would require firefighters and emergency medical technicians in New Jersey to be trained on the risks of electric vehicle fires and how to safely and effectively put them out.

[Part of that is having the dispatchers ASK if the crash or fire involves a Hybrid or EV on the initial call! So Sufficient equipment can be dispatched.]

CHALLENGES:

Electric Vehicles And Storage Systems: Critical Challenges Facing The Fire Service

Dalan Zartman

You get called out to an interstate accident with a vehicle on fire. You arrive on scene to find the vehicle fully involved. During your 360, you identify that the vehicle is a Tesla, and you quickly start trying to formulate a game plan. Here's the problem: What you've seen in the media and most training guidelines advises you to have access to tens of thousands of gallons of water, and your "Spidey-senses" are telling you the vehicle is a small substation that could electrocute your entire crew. It's going to block traffic forever, and you're going to be standing in front of the TV cameras in three hours when this thing is still a raging inferno.

Let's take this opportunity to address the real-world information you need to know about these systems and how to handle them. We'll focus primarily on the fire side of this topic. Why do these systems catch on fire and how do we manage it? The energy concerns are another topic that we will discuss in a follow-up article.

YEARS OF PERSONAL ENERGY EXPERIENCE

Let's first start by qualifying my perspective. I lead a group that is part of a collaborative energy safety team. Over the last decade, we have destructively tested more large-scale lithium-ion battery systems than anyone in the world. Some of our testing is certification-based, and some of it is purely research-based. But every test involves suppression, ventilation, gas analysis, and comprehensive battery assessment. We also conduct in-depth forensics analysis post-test. We have tested everything from vehicle batteries to full containerized rack systems, including maritime batteries for oceanic vessels. We crush them, puncture them, expose them to external fire, overcharge them and overheat them. We even do ballistic testing and shoot them.

If there is anything to learn from these battery systems, we attempt to learn it. Much of what we do is highly sensitive and non-disclosable; however, the findings can be characterized and communicated without compromising specific information about specific clients. What we'll cover here is based on my personal experience damaging, suppressing and extinguishing hundreds of systems that are all different, yet respond with predictable results to common practices.

A SIGNIFICANT – AND GROWING – PROBLEM

Now, let's justify the significance of this problem. Electric vehicles (EVs) and fixed electric storage systems are advancing in the market at an obscene rate. We will be hard-pressed to find a standard combustion vehicle on the roadway in 10 years, and residential and commercial buildings as well as utility installations and manufacturing plants are already converting to battery storage systems.

If you haven't dealt with one of these systems yet, you will – soon. To understand the challenges you are going to face, we must first understand what the systems do and what problems can arise.

EVS AND STORAGE SYSTEMS: HOW THEY WORK

The high-voltage batteries that are present in EVs are basically the same as the high-voltage vehicles in the fixed systems. Imagine a shipping container that is full of boxes with a bunch of small trinkets in the boxes. That is your battery system. It's either a rack or a container that has smaller containers in it that are comprised of even smaller batteries. The batteries

can be pouches or prismatics. This means they are either flat metallic envelopes or they are cylinders that don't look very different from your standard AA batteries.

These batteries receive energy from a source. For fixed sites, it can be solar panels or wind turbines, or it can be direct feed from the grid. These batteries can both collect and distribute energy and convert it to usable AC or DC. Vehicles that are hybrids will additionally have regenerative braking applications that will create energy and send it to the high-voltage batteries for storage. Plug-in vehicles are charging the high-voltage batteries through a charging station, which is pulling energy from the grid.

In either case, it is important to understand that you are dealing with both AC and DC with these systems. AC will be in play for your low-voltage systems that power your creature comforts and safety systems or control systems.

The high-voltage system will be used for the electric motors that power the vehicles or the buildings. It is not advisable to attempt to interact with the high-voltage systems without proper training and equipment. You will almost always have stranded energy in these systems that creates the potential for electric shock and arc/flash hazards. We have conducted dismantling operations post-fire incident where piles of molten plastic produced arcs up to two feet when a hand tool was in proximity.

DEALING WITH BATTERIES

There are a few primary things that batteries don't like – electrical damage, excessive heat or mechanical damage:

- Electrical damage can be caused by shorts or improper energy coming to the battery or leaving the battery.
- Excessive heat can occur internally when cooling mechanisms fail or externally through extreme environmental conditions or external fire exposure.
- Mechanical damage occurs when the batteries are traumatized or physically damaged.

In all three of these, the responsive process is the same; it just varies in significance and speed. Let's break that down. When the batteries have undesirable conditions – electrically, mechanically or thermally – they begin to heat and swell and off-gas. The off-gas is comprised of full-blown hazmat stuff – VOCs, carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen, etc.

The gas that you can realistically interpret in the field is CO. Once the batteries build up enough pressure, they rupture, spewing pressurized gas that, when combined with heat and the right air mixture, ignite. One battery affects the next battery, which affects the next battery, and so on until you develop "thermal runaway." This is now a situation where the batteries are cascading through one another, building heat chemically and thermally and producing their own oxygen to support combustion – all the while arcing, sparking and posing significant electrical hazards.

Sounds pretty terrifying.

Even worse, the speed factor that I mentioned can create very difficult scenarios for first responders, tow and recovery specialists, and site managers. If the exposure to one of the damaging elements is sudden and volatile, then the reaction typically mimics that. In other words, a vehicle that runs head on into a semi-tractor at 120 mph has the potential to have a very rapid and violent progression into thermal runaway. Conversely, a moderately damaged vehicle that has compressed the high-voltage casing and caused two small batteries to start overheating may have a very delayed reaction. This vehicle may not reveal thermal runaway for days or weeks after it has been sitting in the salvage yard.

HOW FIREFIGHTERS SHOULD HANDLE ENERGY SYSTEMS

Now that we have laid the foundation for the problem and the general science and characteristics behind these systems, lets get to the good stuff. How do we handle them?

First and foremost, **SEEK EXPERT GUIDANCE!** There are new federal standards available from [NFPA](#), [NTSB](#), [NHTSA](#) and [SAE](#) that promote safe interaction and handling of these systems and events. Compliance with these standards is paramount to the safety of your crews and the communities you serve.

There are two outstanding resources available to help you comply with the standards and safely operate: The Energy Security Agency and the Energy Safety Response Group.

1. The ESA (855-ESA-SAFE) is a 24/7 call center that provides free consultation to responders dealing with vehicle based electric and hybrid/electric vehicles. They also provide training and resources for interacting with these vehicles. Once you are on scene, hopefully you have the ESA on the phone to help you.
2. ESRG is a more hands on group designed to assist with large-scale fixed site emergency management, training, site design and safety planning.

Be as prepared as possible and seek help from these two agencies.

TASK FORCE CALLS FOR UNIFIED COMMAND CENTER IN WAKE OF ASTROWORLD TRAGEDY

[Mind you the incident command system was established in the 1970s, why won't people use it?]

After last year's deadly Astroworld music festival in Houston, questions were raised about whether there was sufficient coordination and communication among officials, public safety agencies and promoters in planning the event and implementing an emergency response when it turned tragic.

A task force this week unveiled a new agreement its members said will clearly outline responsibilities between all parties involved in such events to ensure they are safe. The group's members said it will also improve communication, the development of safety plans and permitting procedures for large events like the Astroworld festival, which was attended by some 50,000 people.

Some of the changes in the new agreement, which updates one from 2018, include requiring all relevant safety stakeholders to be together at one location during an event to better monitor any possible problems; creating an internal calendar of events so agencies, officials and departments know about and plan for upcoming events; having a streamlined event permitting process and creating an event safety planning checklist.

"It's not to say those things were absent so to speak. They weren't as aligned as they needed to be," Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said on Monday. "And when there's not alignment, there's confusion. And when there's confusion, there's hesitancy and when there's hesitancy, bad things can happen."

Questions were raised about a possible lack of coordination between officials who work for the city of Houston and surrounding Harris County, and festival promoter Live Nation over several issues before the Nov. 5, 2021, concert. Among the questions were whether there was sufficient coordinated planning for responding to emergency situations like the massive crowd surge that led to 10 deaths at the festival, which was headlined by rapper Travis Scott.

There was also confusion about which agencies and officials ultimately had authority over the event. The festival was held on a parking lot that is part of NRG Park, a complex that consists of stadiums, an arena and a convention center that's owned by Harris County but sits within Houston city limits.

Houston Police Chief Troy Finner said he's grateful the new agreement between the city and county requires there be a unified command center where all public safety agencies will be located in one location for better communication. During the Astroworld festival, for example, Houston firefighters were not given radios to be in direct contact with festival organizers.

Finner said as police chief he will now have the authority to reject any security plan for such an event.

Houston Fire Chief Samuel Peña said while the previous agreement already required the creation of an emergency action plan, the updated agreement requires that all public safety agencies and other officials take part in that process from the beginning and not simply review it at the end.

Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia said the new agreement will help also the city and county better prepare for upcoming events with large crowds that are set to be held at NRG Park, including next year's NCAA Final Four and the World Cup in 2026.

"When it comes to safety, this is commitment," Garcia said.

But Andrea Luoma, who runs the entertainment management program at the University of Montana College of Business, said she was concerned the new agreement did not offer specific guidelines for dealing with crowd sizes.

"Crowd management is a well-established science. If the authorities in Houston did not do their due diligence to understand the nuances of crowds, then crowd crush or crowd collapse could easily happen again," Luoma said.

Those killed during the Astroworld festival died from compression asphyxia. They ranged in age from 9 to 27 years old. Roughly 300 people were injured and treated at the scene, and 25 were taken to hospitals. More than 500 lawsuits were filed after the deadly concert. The families of two people who died have settled wrongful death lawsuits they filed.

HEALTH – SAFETY & LODDS – TAKING CARE OF YOUR MEMBERS!

IN 2022 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED 88 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com

Mayday: Train To Use The Portable Radio Emergency Alert Button

A recent safety advisory from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health stresses the importance of understanding and training on the portable radio emergency alert button during a Mayday. **The alert was prompted by several line-of-duty death investigations where a Mayday was called and the emergency alert button was not used.**

An essential life safety device that must be properly used in a Mayday situation, the EAB on fire service portable radios can be activated to give the firefighter priority and uninterrupted transmission capability. Firefighters should regularly train on Mayday procedures so that they know how to:

- Recognize when they need help during an incident.
- Call for help using their department's communications equipment.
- Initiate self-rescue procedures.

At this time, there are no national Mayday standards for firefighters to be trained to and most states do not have Mayday standards. It is up to each authority having jurisdiction to develop rules and performance standards for a firefighter to call a Mayday.

Available training and guidance to help fire departments develop and teach Mayday procedures includes:

- The U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy self-study course, [Firefighter Safety: Calling the Mayday \(Q0133\)](#), provides specific parameters for when a firefighter must call a Mayday.
- [Project Mayday](#) provides an exhaustive list of Mayday scenarios and the kinds of training that should be conducted to prepare for each in its 2021 Annual Project Mayday General Report. Included are problems related to air supply, falling through a roof or floor, becoming trapped or unable to move, explosions, no communications, and more.

YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!!

- Penn Hills PA paramedic dies while returning from a call while driving the ambulance.
- Fire Marshal has medical emergency and crashes into Ohio fire station, firefighters rendered aid and he is recovering at a local hospital.
- Saddle Brook NJ volunteer, Fire Capt. has a heart attack and dies one day before his 50th birthday.
- A 17 year veteran of the Kern County CA, Fire Department has died after a long battle with cancer.
- at: <https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/>

Reference Material for Use in a Line of Duty Death

- [VFBL Firefighters Guide to Benefits](http://wcb.ny.gov/content/main/vf-vaw/injured-in-lin-of-duty.pdf), wcb.ny.gov/content/main/vf-vaw/injured-in-lin-of-duty.pdf
- [Survivors Benefit Guide](http://www.firehero.org), www.firehero.org
- [National Fallen Firefighters Foundation](https://www.firehero.org) https://www.firehero.org

BUILDING & FIRE CODE ISSUES – WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT TO YOU?

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.

80th Anniversary Of Cocanut Grove Fire In Boston, Deadliest Nightclub Fire In US History

VIDEOS: In the blink of an eye the Cocanut Grove, one of Boston's swankiest nightclubs, became an unimaginable inferno — trapping hundreds of panicked victims as they jammed the club's exits. In less than 15 minutes, 492 people

were dead and another 166 injured, making the blaze the deadliest nightclub fire in U.S. history. While no one knows exactly how the fire started 80 years ago on Nov. 28, 1942, its influence on fire and safety codes and on the medical treatment of burn victims still resonates. The fire started at about 10:15 p.m. as revelers packed the club near the city's South End on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, hoping to forget about the early days of World War II for a few hours. The first flames broke out in a basement portion of the club, known as the Melody Lounge.

WEEKLY FIRE FATALITY DATA AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	71+2=73(Exceeded 2021)
Latest fire death Village of Kingston, Ulster Co., elderly male	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	121+6=127
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	1159 + 55=1214
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 PA -- 104
	2 OH -- 80
	3 TX & NY 73
There has been a total of 1995 civilian home fire fatalities in 2022	
There were a total of 2248 residential fire fatalities reported in 2021 in the US media.	
Both the states of Maryland and California require sprinklers in residential dwellings	

In 2021 in New York State 68 residents perished in fires in 1 & 2 family occupancies.

THE STUFF WE BUY!

Why It's So Difficult To Change Gear Service Life Requirements

Jeffrey and Grace Stull

One of the more unpopular NFPA requirements related to PPE is the 10-year mandatory retirement for turnout clothing and equipment as found in [NFPA 1851: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting](#). The requirement states that protective elements manufactured and certified to [NFPA 1971](#) for structural firefighting, which include garments, helmets, gloves, footwear and hoods, must be taken out a service once the item reaches 10 years from the manufacturing date placed on the product label.

While this has not been an issue for some of the more commonly replaced items, such as gloves, hoods and boots, it has been a point of contention related to garments and helmets. Some argue that this maximum service life is problematic for a variety of reasons:

- Department resources simply are not available to replace gear;
- The gear may be seldom used and, therefore, is in good shape for continued use; and
- Some firefighters simply don't want to replace their gear for miscellaneous, sometimes personal, reasons, like having a favorite helmet.

CHALLENGES FOR REQUIRING RETIREMENT

The NFPA's periodic [Needs Assessment of the U.S. Fire Service](#), most recently compiled in 2020, reports the following statistics:

"Overall, nearly two-thirds of departments have firefighters wearing personal protective clothing that is 10 years old or older. This unmet need can be found in departments serving communities of all sizes, including one-third of the large departments (which protect a population of half a million people or more). Among the smallest departments, more than three-quarters (76 percent) have at least some personal protective clothing that is 10 years of age or older."

This data clearly shows that it is difficult for a significant number of departments to provide turnout gear with a service life less than 10 years to meet the NFPA 1851 requirement.

Departments and individual firefighters also have a difficult time inspecting their gear and determining when gear is unusable, except for the obvious damage that often occurs as the result of extreme fire exposures. According to the same NFPA report, "One-fifth (21 percent) of departments neither test nor inspect their personal protective ensembles each year, and only 13 percent both inspect and test their ensembles."

This means that some departments are struggling to monitor the condition of their gear and may be either unaware or incapable of determining if their gear is no longer providing minimum levels of protection. While NFPA 1851 has extensive procedures and criteria for how to inspect gear, it is ambiguous for telling the fire service when gear should be retired. That decision is left to the fire department, which may, in turn, have to rely on manufacturers, independent service providers (ISPs), institutional knowledge among personnel, or outside experts to provide advice for PPE retirement.

OTHER FACTORS THAT IMPACT GEAR SERVICE LIFE

Firefighter protective coats and pants represent a relatively complex type of PPE. Turnout gear is multi-layered and contains a large variety of features, both in the components that make up the gear and in the overall product design, which affects its functionality. While this type of PPE is extremely rugged, the different types of materials can wear or degrade differently over time as a result of both use and the type of care provided. For example, reflective trim on the exterior of the garment shell is going to be affected differently than the outer shell material on which it is placed. Other materials – the thermal barrier, moisture barrier, reinforcements, padding, labels, wristlets, closures and other hardware – have different characteristics with varied responses to fireground exposures that affect gear service life. Other than distinct physical, thermal or chemical damage, ordinary wear and tear is subtle and hard to assess. Some signs may be easy to miss, such as slight changes in color, thinning of materials, loose stitches or loss of function. For instance, "function" here could be trim remaining sufficiently bright for nighttime visibility, moisture barriers keeping liquids from penetrating, and Velcro remaining secure in retaining flaps and parts of closures. The ability to notice these changes can be difficult unless the individual performing the inspection has experience in recognizing degraded gear. The ability to skillfully detect these potential problems often only comes from repeatedly examining different gear, which is not often the case for individual firefighters.

The types of non-destructive tests that can be performed are limited. For example, coat and pant liners can be turned inside out and hydrostatic testing can be performed on parts of the moisture barrier where observed leaks can indicate an otherwise unobservable pinhole. Holding the thermal barrier up to a bright light may permit seeing the breakdown of the insulating fibers in that important layer of the gear. Shining a flashlight on the gear trim in a dark room and comparing that to new garment can give a sense for retained trim brightness. Nevertheless, the ability to see weakening of an outer shell that has been exposed to much UV light or is otherwise damaged is generally not possible unless other signs of gear breakdown are obvious or the changes are so great that the layer seems threadbare and lighter than it should. In all these cases, observations may be made, but the question remains as to whether the level of damage is acceptable for keeping the gear in service.

OTHER INDUSTRY IMPACTS

Specific product developments in the firefighter protective clothing industry may be increasing gear wear and tear. Some fire departments and the ISPs that commercially clean and inspect firefighter gear have been noting that some clothing has been wearing out more quickly than expected. Generally, gear that lasts 5 to 7 years based on expected usage may be showing early signs of degradation or other damage much sooner than would be anticipated, often where principal materials show evidence of

weakening and thinning in seemingly premature ways. It is not known if this early wear and tear is due to greater use, worse exposure conditions, or changes in material technology, but regardless of the cause, the possible trend warrants investigation.

The gear's complexity required to provide broad protection against a variety of different hazards is partly to blame, along with new pressures to maintain gear in safe and clean condition. The fire service desires gear with greater protection as exposures become multi-hazardous, but at the same time does not want the gear to have an adverse impact on the wearer physiologically or functionally. Striking this balance is very difficult. Consequently, when trying to address new or existing hazards more effectively, there can be tradeoffs that can sometimes shift this balance, with one result being less durable gear. In particular, making gear more lightweight, flexible and ergonomic in both material selection and design may come with sacrificing other features or attributes. Some of these tradeoffs are thought to have the effect of reducing clothing service life.

If the direction of new material and gear development are potentially making it more challenging for gear to last 10 years, and these products are still certifiable, then it follows that the minimum requirements in the governing NFPA 1971 standard are not fully discerning gear durability consistent with end-user expectations. This points to an important gap where it is left to the firefighter marketplace to figure it out. We do not believe that this is where that decision should be solely relegated. Rather, the standards should properly distinguish the durability among products.

NEW HOPES FOR IMPROVED SERVICE LIFE

In terms of proposed ways that the fire service can address the issue of potentially declining durability, we suggest the following medium- and long-term approaches:

- Limit the use of structural turnout clothing to those missions that warrant turnout clothing. This approach is already being advocated by the IAFF and IAFC, though for different reasons, but offers the additional benefit of extending use life of the gear since it is used less. Of course, this approach then begs the question: If not turnout clothing, then what do I wear? The answer is multi-functional gear, which is simpler, lighter, less stressful and less expensive. We realize that simply buying alternative protective gear does not solve this problem. This approach comes with the onus of properly managing clothing for operational responses and further still requires a commitment of resources from the department.
- Use emerging cleaning technologies that create less impacts on the clothing performance properties, which can have the effect of extending the clothing life. Some of this technology relies on the use of specialized carbon dioxide-based cleaning capabilities has been shown to have fewer effects on the gear and its performance properties. But as with any new solution, it is not without its shortcomings. In this case, the technology is relatively new and expensive, and, consequently, just not as accessible as it could be to make a large difference.
- Even if those solutions could be considered short term, the more comprehensive path is to create material and product requirements that better address product durability for maximizing structural turnout clothing life and make these part of the soon-to-be-revised NFPA 1971 requirements. This approach can only be supported by new test methods and criteria that are applied to the certification process for new products going forward. It will require a commitment of the manufacturing industry and material suppliers to evolve some of their protection technology accordingly.

ADAPTING TO EVER-CHANGING PPE NEEDS

Ironically, it may turn out that under today's changing fireground conditions, current gear does not even get close to providing a 10-year service life for moderately or very busy departments. Yet, whatever the situation, it remains clear that further clothing changes are needed to meet the ever-expanding capabilities and expectation for fire service PPE.

HUMAN RESOURCES....

'It's Time To Allow The Hungry, Smart Wave Of Today's Firefighters To Do The Job'

James Pribyl

Our department is currently in the process of trying to purchase a new engine. We are in the plenary stages, and the apparatus committee has been knee-deep in discussions, making sure we balance our needs versus wants while also keeping it within our budget. They are going through the entire truck, nuts to engine, diamond plate to lights.

The question was posed: Why are we getting a new truck? Sure, it's old, but it works just fine. The answer: It's pushing 30 years old, has logged a lot of miles and hours, and just doesn't fit the needs of our community anymore. Bottom line: We need to bring our apparatus up to speed for what we need now.

This seems logical enough. Considering recent technological advancements, the apparatus simply can't grow, can't expand, can't become what we need. The engine works, as does the pump, it carries the hose we need, but anything more than that is just not what we need to best serve our community.

This begins the arduous task of determining what we do *need*, with a few *wants* thrown in the mix. And, naturally, the "should it be's" began, as did the "what abouts?" And there was a healthy dose of "what I would do's" thrown out there, too. The committee is comprised of very smart, experienced and nuanced firefighters. They have experience in both paid and volunteer departments, small towns and a big city. I have no doubt that they will find and create exactly what we need. I just hope they make room for a coffee pot.

I have wondered, though, this fire truck was the *crème de la crème* of its time. It was advanced and had everything other departments dreamed they could have. The lights, the tank, the pump, the chassis, the space. So what happened?

Why, at 30 years old, in good working condition, is this piece of apparatus going to the boneyard? Do we think we are too good for it? Are we trying to keep up with the Joneses? Are we entranced by what else is out there and simply want something new? After all, do we take a firefighter of 30 years and simply show them the door? They are the salty handlebar-mustache gods. We lean on them for their experience, their guidance, mentorship, wisdom. We include them on all decisions – and exclude them from TikTok.

Sometimes, we do need to move on from what's now or even what's good enough so that we can adopt and embrace what's better for the greater good, whether that's a fire apparatus or an organizational structure or even leadership.

We forget that as time marches on, we become set in our ways and miss opportunities to grow. We become comfortable and think we know it all. New ideas are dismissed as change for change's sake. This couldn't be further from the truth. Change happens, and it makes us better, more informed and ready for today's challenges, with a leg up on tomorrow's challenges.

CONSTANT EVOLUTION

Normally when asked "Who invented the fire service?" we are quick to credit Ben Franklin, which would be correct if the question was who brought the fire service to the United States. In reality, the fire service dates back to Augustus Caesar some 2,000 years ago – and the fire service has been evolving ever since.

Centuries ago, shopkeepers could pay to have their stores extinguished in the event of fire, and buckets would be brought through town to put the fire out. Horse-drawn manual pumps were actually introduced throughout Europe in the 1600s, and as time went on, smart men and women developed brass couplings and invented leather fire hoses to aid in the distance water could be projected onto a fire.

As the protection service became more common, so too did insurance companies complementing fire brigades with funds for protecting these structures. The buildings were marked and the fire brigade was able to identify that the owner paid for protection. In short order, wood and wool was replaced by metals and synthetic materials, forcing the service into action and develop better solutions for firefighting and protecting its citizens. Horizontal construction went vertical

and new, more complex emergencies emerged as new challenges for responders. And in recent years, the merging of EMS and handling issues of short staffing have required a new type of firefighter from years past.

As the service becomes more advanced, so does our equipment. Not only do we need more equipment, we need (or should at least try) to obtain the latest and greatest equipment. That's not to say everything on the market is beneficial, but through the understanding of our response area, our personnel, our capabilities and community requirements, we should be equipped to provide the protection that is expected.

Of course, we also need to train on this equipment. We need to study reports, after-action reviews (AARs), NFPA guidelines, hazmat guides, the newest electric vehicle obstacles – the list seems to be endless. In the absence of experience, training is the most important aspect of our job. We need to be current. Gone are the days of, "We have always done it this way," perhaps the most dangerous mindset in the fire service.

DRIVING CHANGE

There is no doubt that staying current is difficult. The pace at which the world is evolving never seems to slow down. As soon as we understand one building type, a new type of material is introduced. Each vehicle on the road is built with the latest technology and materials. It can feel like information overload.

Our leadership should be driving the effort to finding the latest and greatest training materials for us. They should utilize all their available resources. Their connections at the local, state and federal level must be complemented by today's relevant and vetted internet and social media platforms to maximize reach. There are many legitimate and informative sites with useful content readily available to us. All of this can be accessed within our training halls or classrooms with the simple click of a button. Utilizing our local community colleges or county academies helps ensure that we are not only training to meet our standards but also to ensure we are all on the same page as things change.

THE NEXT CROP OF LEADERS

I have never been a New England Patriots or Tampa Bay Buccaneers fan, but Tom Brady is arguably the greatest quarterback of all time. You can say it was the system or credit something else. That's fine, and it will be debated for a long time. However, there is something to be said that a person who is 40 years old, playing the game for his entire adult life and makes millions of dollars, still trains and works to improve himself. He makes sure that his team knows he is prepared, he has studied the newest defensive schemes, the best defenders, the fastest corners and edge-rushers. At the same time, his coaches, the rookies and seasoned veterans all try to keep pace. They all try to better, never resting on their laurels.

By bragging "I have seen it all" and not helping share that knowledge, by telling the group "I have done it all before" and not demonstrating your skills so your junior firefighters can see what right looks like, by stating "I learned that 30 years ago" and not seeing how cutting a new electric vehicle is different than a '72 cutlas, we are putting lives in danger. You must stay current, you must continue to sharpen your skills, you must accept that things are changing, and you must appreciate the learning that is occurring, and see that maybe your time has come to step aside. Allow the young members to step up and run the show while you assist, teach, mentor and impart your wisdom when they need it. It's time to allow the hungry, smart wave of today's firefighters to do the job. You are not wrong, you are not irrelevant. However, for many, your passion has gone from action to inaction. Today's younger firefighters are different. Their reasons for volunteering are different. Do we really need to be hung up on the reasons? No. Who cares? They are there and want to do it. Embrace them and thank them, then get on the ball and teach them.

Thirty years ago, the old-timers at your department thought *you* were different. Today's firefighters need to see it, feel it and understand it. Gone are the days of writing in cursive and memorizing your multiplication tables. You don't have to agree with it, you don't have to like it. Nobody cares. They care if you show up to an emergency on their worst day with the proper equipment, training, education and mindset. Please do not leave, we need you. We want you. We just need you to be open minded and understand that change is happening whether you like it or not. Allow us the opportunities that were given to you. We will make you proud and carry on the proud traditions and work ethic you instilled in us.

FIRE APPARATUS!

Blocking Apparatus: Are Attenuating Units The Next Must-Have Apparatus Type?

Chief Marc Bashoor

“Necessity is the mother of invention.” And thank goodness for that, as firefighters are at their most creative when they need something to work.

Firefighters have always been a creative bunch. Over the years, I’ve seen the magic of that imagination manifest at many events and while addressing many issues, especially in the area of specialty apparatus. From boats to all-terrain vehicles to dump trucks and buses, we have seen apparatus adaptations to answer the needs of firefighters around the world, typically spurred by our “field needs” amid a lack of funding for the *exact* thing we needed.

While every one of these apparatus adaptations has had impact on the industry in one way or the other, few, if any, have been built to *take* the impact we’re talking about today.

Blocking apparatus, while not designed to be destroyed, are intended to protect the first responders and other emergency vehicles on the incident scene. They are design to take the impact of a vehicle, maintaining the integrity of the emergency scene even in case of a secondary crash.

WHO OWNS THE R

ROADWAY?

I recall a time when we just blocked a part of the lane we needed at roadway-based emergency scenes. Maybe we found a cone on the side of the road and let the police handle the traffic. It seemed there were fewer secondary wrecks or incidents back then. Most of the secondary wrecks involved passenger vehicles rear-ending another passenger vehicle as drivers crawled past the scene, gawking at the movement of emergency crews. Aside for dealing with minor injuries or fluid leaks, most of those incidents “weren’t *our* problem.” Law enforcement officers made it abundantly clear that the roads were their territory.

While many (including yours truly) have previously opined that traffic management is not the fire department’s responsibility, it is undeniable that the safety of our personnel IS one of our primary responsibilities. No other agency has demonstrated the consistent ability to provide a high quantity/quality of site protection as quickly as the fire department, especially during rapidly evolving emergency incidents. Road service/safety patrols and highway departments do everything they can, and are great at the long-duration events, but in most cases, the fire department responds with the “big stuff” faster than the others.

Over the years, roadways have expanded, congestion has increased, and speed limits have fluctuated, all while populations have skyrocketed in many of our response areas. Of course, fire departments rarely grow at a similar rate, thus adding volume to an already busy business.

Add to that the vehicle features that put the driver more at ease, some almost literally on auto-pilot – cruise control, seatbelts and air bags, warmed and heated seats, and any number of safety-minded alerts – *plus* the distractions we didn’t used to have (mainly smartphones), and a significantly more dangerous roadway environment now confronts our firefighters.

I’m pretty sure I speak for every fire chief out there when I say that I’d like the highway department and police to provide the traffic control and blocking we need at incident scenes. In fact, depending on your state’s laws, it might be their statutory responsibility. Unfortunately, what I’d *like* to see doesn’t always align with state statutes, and the reality is that those entities have been unable to provide any better coverage than us to keep our folks safe. Agencies **MUST** work together!

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT BLOCKING APPARATUS EVOLUTION BEGINS

The [Emergency Responder Safety Institute \(ERSI\)](#) was born out of the need the fire service saw for improved roadway safety on the busy interstates around the country. In 2019, ERSI – a committee of the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firefighters Association – produced a [white paper that addresses the hardening of fire department vehicles for roadway blocking](#). The report summarizes a workshop convened during the 2018 National Traffic Incident Response Awareness Week on how to harden blocking vehicles to protect responders and the public. ERSI also published important resources for fire departments looking to better protect emergency scenes:

- [Blocking Procedures at Roadway Incidents](#)
- [Fire Department-Based Vehicles for Traffic Control](#)

The paper, along with these training resources, are essential tools departments can use to prepare for both roadway blocking and vehicle hardening.

TAKING ACTION TO PROTECT FIRST RESPONDERS

Many of the adaptations we've seen in equipment and apparatus have risen out of a particular incident that was challenging or a need that was unmet by available industry equipment. The need for this service is evidenced by the growing number of struck-by incidents we see in our news feeds daily. At the time of this writing, 40 responders, including tow operators, have been killed in roadway incidents in the United States in 2022.

Fire departments across the country are doing what they can to address this growing problem.

Some states have employed fire-police divisions/units/teams, either affiliated with a sheriff's office or similar and a fire department, that have several levels of traffic control units with various capabilities and responsibilities. Pennsylvania has what is regarded as one of the most robust fire-police units in the country, with the primary responsibility of traffic control at incident scenes and special events. These units employ various response vehicles (pickup/utility trucks or similar) loaded with traffic cones, signage and sometimes arrow boards that will at least provide some advance warning. Most of them are *not* equipped with impact attenuators, but at least one department below is paving the way in that realm.

There are also various pickup truck or utility-type units across the country that provide some level of fire department traffic control service, either ad hoc or in full-time deploy.

Below is a listing of some departments that have purchased a new or retrofitted a blocking unit for fire department responses. There are likely additional departments with similar equipment or other types of attenuating systems. I encourage you to share those with us at editor@firerescue1.com.

Michigan

Grand Rapids was the first fire department in the United States that I am aware of to employ a blocking attenuator as part of the fire department fleet. [The fire department converted an older city water department dump truck converted to a blocker.](#)

Pennsylvania

The Alpha Fire Company in Pennsylvania took delivery of a demo attenuator vehicle in August. Staff is training on the vehicle, which is being outfitted with equipment for its intended use.

South Dakota

Sioux Falls, South Dakota, has deployed a tow-behind attenuating device to protect its emergency vehicles and personnel. A trailered unit reduces may reduce the number of drivers needed to get the equipment there, but trailering also results in limited positioning and other uses for that vehicle.

exas

Several departments have some form of attenuating system:

- Travis County ESD No. 2 – an older fire engine converted to a blocker:

Irving – Multiple older fire engines converted to blockers:

- Denton – A custom built emergency response vehicle blocker:

Grand Prairie – Two reserve-engines outfitted as blocking vehicles:

Spring – Double-duty high-water rescue units outfitted with arrow boards and traffic control equipment:

- Carrollton Fire Rescue – A mobile barrier trailer that [recently proved its worth](#):

We sometimes wince at the thought of spending money on apparatus or equipment that doesn't meet the core fire-focused mission. But when it pays off, it really pays off.

Within days of being placed in service a little over a month ago, the return-on-investment for the Carrollton unit was realized. The vehicle, which had just been positioned on a vehicle wreck scene, was struck by another vehicle, protecting the crews and apparatus working the original incident.

WHAT MATTERS MOST

Making sure that "everyone goes home" applies to every type of incident we respond to. When it comes to protecting our responders and our front-line apparatus, it really doesn't matter who owns the roads or how much it costs!

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

NYS VFF Enhanced Cancer Disability Benefit Program Reporting Dates-REPORTS ARE OVERDUE!

Dear Members,

As we all know, cancer prevention in the fire service is more important now than ever. Studies have shown that our firefighters have a greater risk of being diagnosed with cancer than the general public. We remind all our members that the NYS Volunteer Firefighter Enhanced Cancer Disability Benefits Law (NYS General Municipal Law 205-cc), **requires** annual reporting by fire districts. **Annual reports are due to OFPC on December 1st, 2022.**

Please see the letter from James Cable, State Fire Administrator, on the upcoming due dates and requirements. It is important to continue increasing cancer awareness and prevention to assure our firefighters' health and wellness. NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control provides excellent Firefighter Health and Wellness Presentations. Please contact Fire Protection Specialist, Timothy Graves at timothy.graves@dhs.ny.gov or (518)-292-2355 for more information. Remember to complete the required reports and submit them by their due dates.

Due by December 1, 2022, Fire District, department or company annual claims report EOSB-210.8C. Your insurance company is able to provide a report that includes this information.

Due by December 1, 2022 Annual Roster of Interior Fire Fighters EOSB-210.8R. This should include the list of a department's interior firefighters from 2022 or if you have purchased an enhanced plan, all firefighters covered by your insurance plan.

Due by January 1, 2023, Volunteer Firefighter Enhanced Cancer Disability Benefits Program Attestation/Proof of Benefits EOSB-210.5 along with a copy of the cover sheet of the insurance policy.

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STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE:

The Driver And The Officer: Teamwork In The Front Seat

Jon Dorman

As the saying goes, "Teamwork makes the dream work." While firefighters are used to working in teams on the emergency scene, teamwork in the front seat of the apparatus is often overlooked. And that can have dire consequences. There's a lot of magic that happens in the front of the cab. Response routes are chosen. Critical pre-arrival decisions are made. And the overall safety and wellbeing of the apparatus, its occupants and the public we encounter between the firehouse and the scene are firmly in the hands of the two people sitting in the front. In the event of an apparatus mishap, neither the driver nor the officer has the luxury of giving the classic, noncommittal answer, "I was in a seated position, with my seatbelt fastened, facing the rear of the apparatus when the alleged incident took place."

Occupying the front seats of the rig comes with a lot of responsibility. That's why those positions are often achieved through promotions in the career fire service and elections on the volunteer side.

UPON ARRIVAL

The first five minutes of nearly every fire-related operation will often dictate what happens for the next five hours. Those critical first few minutes are frequently determined by the decisions and actions of the personnel occupying the front seats of the apparatus. This is where the officer/driver dynamic comes into play. An officer and driver who have formed a solid teamwork relationship can be worth their weight in gold.

Does the officer want to see three sides of the scene while pulling up, if at all possible? Does the officer want to hit a hydrant on the way in? Are attack lines set up with different lengths and different nozzles? The driver needs to know when the answer to any of these questions is "yes"—and preferably in advance. The only way for that to happen is by building a team relationship.

Observing a first-arriving engine on the scene can reveal a lot about the team relationship between the driver and the officer. As the officer is performing the 360-degree size-up of the scene, is the driver pulling a cross-lay with a smooth bore or a combination nozzle to the front door? Does the driver automatically pull a 2½" line for exposure protection? Or does the driver get out of the rig, put down a chock block, and wait until the officer returns from the sojourn around

the scene to do anything else? A driver who has a well-established team relationship with the officer will know exactly what the officer wants and will set things in motion without needing express orders.

Note: There is a difference between anticipating the officer's needs and freelancing. Consider the common practice of establishing standing orders in EMS. These orders take the guesswork out of treatment options for the medics. Establishing a solid team environment between the officer and the driver of the fire apparatus can accomplish the same goal.

THE OFFICER'S ROLE

But it's not all about the officer. The driver may need the officer to look up a street or spot a hydrant. If there is information about the scene coming across the computer, such as hazardous materials, trapped civilians or even the order in which the apparatus is due to arrive, the driver needs to know so appropriate apparatus placement decisions can be made. If one of the other assigned units is replaced en route or responding from somewhere other than the station, the driver needs to know so they can anticipate intersections where the apparatus may cross paths.

A tight-lipped officer can cause poor apparatus placement at best and can cost lives at worst. Imagine the driver anticipating the apparatus will be the third unit to arrive and knowing the second-due engine has the water supply assignment. But the normally second-due unit is out-of-service and not responding. If the officer doesn't relay the information to let the driver know they'll be second-due, the driver may miss the hydrant on the way in, thus delaying a positive water supply. But an officer who recognizes the team atmosphere in the front of the cab will make sure the driver knows they will be second-due and will probably help spot the closest hydrant to achieve the mission.

The driver and officer are also responsible for the safe operation of the apparatus. That means two sets of eyes to look out for issues at intersections, judge clearances and ensure the rest of the crew is seat-belted at all times. My first officer had a set of hand signals he used when the apparatus approached an intersection visible to him but blind to the driver. It was a fist to "stop" and a wave of the index finger to "go." His theory: Words could be mistaken, but signals could not. That was all fine when the promoted driver/engineer was driving. It was even OK when one of the senior firefighters was acting as the apparatus operator. They all understood how the officer wanted the team to work in those situations. But when the rookie (me) was learning to drive the engine, nobody told me about this system. That is, nobody told me until I pulled up to an intersection that was blind to my right side and the officer gave the waving index finger when I asked him how it looked his way. This was before the days of headsets, so I just thought he didn't hear me. So, I asked again. Then again. As I started to creep forward to catch a glimpse of his side of the intersection, he looked at me and told me to stop. That's when he explained his hand signal system. He and I hadn't built that teamwork relationship yet, and it showed.

BEYOND THE APPARATUS

The benefits of a solid team relationship between the officer and the driver extend beyond the apparatus, too. In many cases, the driver is the liaison between the officer and crew within the firehouse. It's the driver who will probably be the first to hear grumblings from the other crew members. When there is a team relationship between the driver and the officer, the driver is much more likely to head off small issues before they get to the officer and make the officer aware of problems before they grow. A well-paired team in the front seats of the apparatus will usually help produce a much more cohesive crew within the firehouse and on the emergency scene.

If the officer and driver don't operate as a team, the firehouse will still function, and the apparatus will still go up and down the road. But operations will be much more efficient, effective and safer for the entire crew – and the community they serve – if the people occupying those prized front seats have cultivated a culture of teamwork.

CLASSIFIED

Opening for Greenfield Houseman!

The Greenfield Fire District is looking for a professional and highly-motivated person to perform custodial services and maintenance of fire district buildings, grounds and equipment. Must have good communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, and be flexible with work hours when necessary. Prior experience preferred and all candidates must have clean driver's license. Employment application and job description can be found on the district website at www.greenfieldfd.org.

Please send application, cover letter & resume to Joyce Petkus, District Administrator via email at jpetkus@greenfieldfd.org or regular mail to Greenfield Fire District, P.O. Box 103 Greenfield Center, NY 12833 **no later than Sunday, December 11, 2022.**

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

My 6th grade teacher pointed at me with his ruler and said, “at the end of this ruler is an idiot!”

I got detention after asking “which end?”

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 Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady and Mike Podolec Commissioner West Glensville/Schenectady

Secretary/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, Secretaries and Chief

All are invited to participate in all of the Capital Area Activities

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.

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.

Get a copy of the 2022 ELECTION SCHEDULE HERE: <https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-Election-Schedule-1.pdf>

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[Welcome Back all of our Business Partners for 2022](#)

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.

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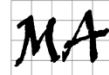
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The Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 400+ fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. Since the Capital Area Association covers an area the size of Connecticut it is difficult to meet in person to exchange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

MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE CAPITAL AREA

Would you like to join the Association of Fire Districts of the Capital Area and join 75 members in 8 counties? Both fire protection districts and Village departments are eligible for membership.

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

To take effect January 2023:

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

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

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

\$600,001 plus: \$300

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee



association of fire districts
OF THE
CAPITAL AREA, INC.

2023 Events Calendar

Date	Time	Type	Location
Saturday, January 7, 2023	9:00 AM	Organizational Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, February 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, February 11, 2023	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Averill Park
Saturday, March 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Clifton Park
Thursday, March 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, March 11, 2023	6:00 PM	Officer Installation & Reception Dinner	Embassy Suites, Saratoga
Saturday, March 25, 2023	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Berkshire
Thursday, April 6, 2023	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, May 11, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Thursday, June 8, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Thursday, July 13, 2023	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, September 14, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
October 2023	NO MEETING		
Thursday, October 12, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, November 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	TBD
Thursday, November 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
December 2023	NO MEETING		
Saturday, January 6, 2024	9:00 AM	Organizational Meeting	TBD