



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE
FEBRUARY 18TH, 2023
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THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

2023 CAPITAL AREA MEETING & TRAINING SCHEDULE

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

Saturday, March 11, 2023 6:00 PM Officer Installation Embassy Suites Hotel 86 Congress Street, Saratoga Springs, NY –

Taking Reservations Now

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

Long Way to Travel to Meetings? Zoom In!

It's our desire that every member 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.

Commissioner Training, Register Now and pay at the door!

Clifton Park is filling up. There are seats available at Berkshire Fire District, 320 Steele Ave Extension, Gloversville, NY for any of the Commissioners in the Western portion of the Capital Area or adjacent counties. Whatever is convenient for you!

You are going to like the new format of this presentation.

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

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 320 Steele Ave Ext, Gloversville, NY 12078

Email caaofd@gmail.com

2023 Membership Activity Options Being Explored

IF NOTHING ELSE READ THE ARTICLES PRECEDED BY **

CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

You Are Invited to 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

The Capital Area has logo ware available, 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:

- The Wilton Fire District is looking for policies regarding Driver Certification, send to Megan Washburn, District Administrator at mwashburn@wiltonfiredept.org. Thank you.
- Are you interested in becoming a Director to represent our region, Region 1 for the next two years, please contact Tom Rinaldi or any of the Capital Area officers? Directors can still assume the position at the Annual Meeting in May.
- A rural town of 6,000 people in Chillicothe (IL) decided last year to donate one of its fire engines to Ukraine. It arrived in January 2023 in Mykolaiv, making it the first American fire engine in the war-torn country.
- Saratoga Springs Fire Chief Joseph Dolan remains on paid leave as the city continues investigating a complaint alleging he is employed by two fire departments. "All I can say at this time is that the investigation is ongoing," said Public Safety Commissioner James Montagnino Wednesday. "Our attorney needs to obtain some additional documentation."

If you no longer wish to receive the Capital Bulletin you have the option to "unsubscribe" at the bottom of the introductory email.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER:

By Chaplain F. S. Richards

It is with deep sadness that the officers and members of the Capital Area Association of Fire Districts convey to you the passing of former Fire Commissioner Benjamin Hertzendorf (age 84) on Saturday February 11th, 2023. During his 50 years in the Scotia-Glenville community Ben served in many capacities in the Thomas Corners Fire District and TCFD. During his 49 years in the volunteer fire department, he was a dedicated firefighter, educator, firefighting instructor and medical trainer. Among the many rolls he fulfilled while in the department two terms were as Chief and represented the citizens many years as Commissioner. Ben also served as Chaplain and was active with the Capital Area Association.

What his family and friends considered most important, when speaking of Ben's life, was his ability to bestow great love to them. Always being thoughtful, caring and kind. We express to Ben Hertzendorf's family, his many friends and the members of the Thomas Corners Fire Department, Glenville Fire District #7 our condolences for your loss. Ben's obituary can be found at www.levinememorialchapel.com and donations in honor of Ben may be made to the Thomas Corners Fire Department or Congregation Agudat Achim.

STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDNYS.ORG

[2023 Annual Meeting & Leadership Summit Expo](#)

Wednesday, May 17 - Saturday, May 20

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

5218 Patrick Road

Verona, Ne 13478

Annual Meeting & Leadership Summit Expo

[Click Here to Register](#)

A link to reserve your hotel room at the Turning Stone Resort & Casino will be included on your confirmation page and in your confirmation email. No call in reservations will be accepted. 1 room per person

Anyone with hotel reservations in the AFDSNY block that is NOT registered for this event will be subject to your reservation being canceled by the host. Prior notice will be given when possible but is not guaranteed.

The Capital Area Association officers and directors are urging all fire districts who are members of the State Association to at least travel to Turning Stone on Friday Afternoon May 5th no later than 4PM to VOTE in favor of the By-law change which will allow future voting either in person or by Proxy. This would empower all of the members who pay dues to vote on the future of the State Association without having to travel, pay for and attend the annual conference. If you pay dues to this not for profit Association, you should be enfranchised to vote!

TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER



[COFFEE WITH COMMISSIONERS FOR 2023](#)

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_-RyApNLJQrK-v3xBiNtnAA

Log on To Previously Recorded Sessions

https://www.afdsny.org/coffee_with_commissioners.php

You Must Log on to the State AFDSNY web site to access!

THE LATEST FROM ALBANY

[2023 Fire Service Lobby Day February 28](#)

FASNY will host the Fire Service Lobby Day on Tuesday, February 28 at 8:30 am at FASNY Headquarters, 107 Washington Ave., Albany, NY. The day is an opportunity to gather, find out what our legislative representatives are doing for the fire service and voice concerns about these issues. Fire service members who wish to attend should complete the registration form by Tuesday, February 21. The day will start with a welcome and briefing session. Those attending will then head over to legislative offices to support the Fire Service Alliance's legislative agenda. Please wear "Class A" uniforms. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

[Register Now](#)

From the 2024 Executive Budget Briefing Book

Improve Statewide Emergency Response Services.

- **Allow for Compensation Volunteer Firefighters.** The Executive Budget proposes legislation to allow municipalities and fire companies to pay volunteer firefighters modest compensation based on call response and still retain their volunteer status.
- **Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend.** The Executive Budget includes \$6.5 million to provide a State-funded stipend to volunteer firefighters who complete foundational training as well as funds for DHSES to administer the program and enhance their training capacity.
- **Create NY Emergency Services IP Network.** The Executive Budget includes \$20 million to assist counties in transitioning to Next Generation 911 via a fiberoptic cable network that would connect to a single Public Service Answering Point in each county
- **Amend Emergency Medical Services** This part would require the State Emergency Medical Services Council to advise the Commissioner of Health on issues related to EMS; establish a statewide comprehensive emergency medical services plan; establish mobile integrated healthcare program for ESM agencies; and establish a new process for the approval of EMS applications.
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** The Executive proposes \$7.6 million to increase the EMS special revenue fund in addition to providing capital equipment resources to enhance the statewide fleet of EMS vehicles including ambulances and non-transport treatment vehicles.
- **Create the Transit-Oriented Development Act of 2023** This part would require local governments to authorize the construction of residential dwelling units within proximity to any non-seasonal rail station.
- **Authorize a Property Tax Exemption for Accessory Dwelling Units** This part would authorize municipalities to adopt a property tax exemption program for residential property owners to create one or more additional residential units on their property.
- **Prohibit Installation of Fossil Fuel Equipment and Building Systems** This part would prohibit the installation of fossil-fuel equipment and building systems in new building construction and establish building benchmarking requirements

The executive budget will be presented to the legislature; they will review it, come up with their budget and then the negotiations begin. The budget is supposed to be in place by April 1st. We'll see.

N.Y. Governor To Invest \$10M In Volunteer Fire Departments

Chris Bragg, The Buffalo News

During her state budget presentation on Wednesday, Gov. Kathy Hochul rolled out a plan to invest \$10 million to support the training, recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Nine million New Yorkers live in communities served by volunteer fire departments. But the COVID-19 pandemic decreased participation in the programs, and municipalities have struggled to recruit and retain people to provide the critical services.

The new funding proposed by Hochul includes \$6.5 million to provide stipends to volunteer firefighters who complete core training. The other \$3.5 million would go to the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to administer the program and enhance training capacity.

In addition, Hochul's budget also includes legislation that would allow municipalities and fire companies to pay volunteer firefighters compensation for response to calls and completion of training. ***(If this passes the devil will be in the details and the fire departments will have to enact rules and regulations related to compliance)***

"Volunteer first responders put their lives on the line to support their fellow New Yorkers, and we are forever indebted to them for their heroism," Hochul said in a prepared statement. "Many communities across the state rely on services provided by volunteer firefighters but need further support to recruit and retain people willing to serve their neighbors. With this proposal, we are recognizing that it takes time, commitment and dedication to be a volunteer firefighter and that we must provide resources to support those crucial, life-saving efforts."

Volunteer fire departments provide coverage to approximately 46% of the population, but 76% have reported a decrease in volunteer service in recent years, according to Hochul's office.

Between 1997 and 2020, according to Hochul's office, there was a 29% increase in fire incidents in the state. This combined with the volunteer shortage has led to an increase in "mutual aid calls" in which the local "home" department must call on a neighboring department to help. According to Hochul's office, this has strained the resources of not only volunteer departments but also professional, career fire departments.

The deadline for Hochul and the Legislature to strike an agreement for an on-time budget is April 1.

Tentative Date for Fire Service Alliance Lobby Day, Tuesday February 28th, more details are pending.

****Some Notes on the Vol FF Tax Incentive Law – hold over to clear up much confusion!**

- If they are still operating under the previous law, jurisdictions have until 2025 to adopt new legislation by resolution.
- What is an “enrolled” member, likely an active member who able to be covered by VFBL coverage. Not social, honorary members. Those who respond to calls, fire police etc.
- How many years you need to be active is up to the AHJ or the taxing district giving the tax break.
- The tax break is only for the primary residence and it must be residential. If any part of your residence is used for commercial purposes that portion cannot be covered.
- The tax exemption must be certified by the AHJ. District, village, Town etc.
- It appears that the person seeking the exemption must apply annually with a certification from the AHJ. You should discuss with Assessor how they are implementing the law.
- After 20 years the exemption becomes a lifetime exemption, the spouse of a deceased qualified member may also apply for the exemption.
- The governing body seeking to implement the exemption must hold a public hearing to start the process, the second step is to adopt a local law.
- Up to 10% deduction is the norm.
- There should be a written procedure/policy for certification of members.
- To obtain tax exemption for school tax a form RP—466a must be submitted to the assessor by March 1st.
- FASNY is going to have model forms, resolution, entire package on their website for universal use.
- One a jurisdiction opts in to the exemption forms must be submitted.
- FASNY will have in the near future the savings realized by having volunteers within County, Assembly and Senate Districts.
- This will not have any effect on local tax rates or levies, the jurisdiction will collect the same amount of tax money, no fiscal impact.
- If you live in a different jurisdiction from where you volunteer, the jurisdiction that adopts the exemption is where you apply.
- If both husband and wife in same household are volunteers you can combine that exemption. For example 10% for each.
- ****You cannot collect on the property tax exemption and the income tax exemption of \$200, that prohibition is in the income tax law. Its one or the other!!**
- The notice of public hearing has to occur 20 days in advance of adoption of the exemption.
- Its 10% off of the assessed valuation of the residence.
- Just a quick reminder volunteers save the residents of the state \$3.2B annually and that number has gone up since the previous study was done. If the volunteers went away you would need 32,000 paid staff!!
- Look for more good information on the FASNY web site FASNY.com

If you didn't get a chance to attend the webinar on Real Property Tax Law § 466-a, it is now available [here](#). In addition to the recording, you'll have a chance to download the PowerPoint presentation, an Application for Volunteer Firefighters/Ambulance Workers Exemption (RP-466-a-vol), as well as tax exemption resources. These resources are for FASNY members only. Please [email](#) to receive the login details or for any additional questions.

2023 Issues of United Concern – NYS Fire Service Alliance Legislative Initiatives

- **ENSURE VFBL PARITY WITH WORKERS COMPENSATION**
Bring the volunteer firefighters benefit law pay equal to worker's compensation/what career firefighters receive when injured in the line of duty.
Corresponding legislation: S.1340 (Brooks) / A.3597 (McMahon) (2021-2022 Session)
- **S4120 MAYER/A3992 OTIS---DESIGNATE EMS AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE AND EXPAND THE BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO EMS PERSONNEL AND SET STANDARDS FOR EMS**
Recognizes EMS as an essential service, establishes a special district for the financing and operation of general ambulance services, expands access to health insurance and retirement benefits available to EMS providers.
- **ANALYZE FINDINGS FROM THE NYS DHSES RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE**

IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE ON:

(1) RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

(2) RETENTION EFFORTS

PUBLIC SAFETY AND BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE ISSUES

- **S3458 SKOFUS/A2776 ZEBROWSKI---AMEND PENAL CODE TO ADD ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF OCCUPANTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS**

Ensure state funds collected through dedicated fees on each fire policy written in the state go to support local code enforcement activities and not continue to be swept into State General Fund.

Corresponding legislation: S.6970-A (Kavanagh) / A.8802-A (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)

- **S3531 SKOFUS---TIMELY ADOPTION OF UPDATED STATE FIRE AND BUILDING PREVENTION CODE**

Would require that a new building code as published by ICC would be adopted by the NYS Codes Council within specified time frame.

- **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS** – Ensure the Executive and Legislative prioritization of provision of affordable housing stock through legalization of more residential space is executed in a manner that prioritizes occupant safety and the safety of first responders in emergencies. Ensure a focus on legalizing existing units as well as create new units; advocate for increasing access to housing for first responders as a recruitment and retention tool.

Corresponding legislation: To be determined.

- **LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY STANDARDS**

Ensure proper registration/permitting, research and standard development, repairing and regulation of products containing lithium-ion batteries, work with stakeholders to raise public awareness around best fire safety practices, and examine solutions proposed from decision makers and opine as a trusted public safety voice.

- **S324 OBERACKER---CONTINUE TO IMPROVE TAX BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

Push to allow volunteer firefighters to receive both real property tax exemptions and income tax credit, while continuing to advocate for an income tax credit increase (has been at \$200 since its inception in 2006.) This credit would step increase tied to qualifying years of service up to \$2,500 for 10 or more consecutive qualifying years of service.

ALSO: A165 WOERNER AND S324 OBERACKER

- **A1999 HAWLEY---CANCER COVERAGE COST RELIEF**

Pursue data collection to enable establishment of a funding stream to alleviate fiscal burden on districts/departments providing the coverage.

- *occupational, and other information from firefighters on an ongoing basis to enable public health researchers to learn more about the causes of firefighter cancer in order to better treat and prevent it.*
- **The SIREN Grant**, which is run through the Department of Health and Human Services and helps public and private nonprofit EMS agencies that serve rural areas pay for equipment, training, and staffing.
- Housing Guaranteed Loan Program assists approved lenders in providing loans to low- and moderate- income households to build, rehabilitate, or improve a home in eligible rural areas. **This bill will allow volunteer firefighters to participate in the loan program even if their income exceeds the maximum allowable income level by up to \$18,000.** The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program *gives law enforcement officers, teachers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians a 50-percent discount from the list price of a home located in a revitalization area.*

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

[Updated Link for the Recruitment and Retention Task Force:](https://www.dhss.ny.gov/volunteer-firefighter-recruitment-and-retention-task-force)

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

It’s recommended that the Task Force continue for 2023, but will take legislation to make that happen.

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

View the final report of the NYS VFF Task Force HERE:

<https://afdca.org/view-the-final-report-of-the-nys-vff-task-force/>



The report can also be downloaded from the Association’s website at [AFDCA.org](https://afdca.org)

LET YOUR MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY!

UL FSRI Fire Safety Academy – 1 Hour Web Based Course on Lithium Ion Batteries

This course focuses on foundational research about lithium-ion batteries, thermal runaway and how fire and explosion hazards can develop. The knowledge you gain in this course can help you identify the risks associated with lithium-ion battery products in your personal and professional life.

COURSE ACCESS AT THIS LINK: <https://training.fsri.org/course/035-science-lib>

Available at any time for your members.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE NYS AFC 117TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & FIRE 2023 EXPO!

June 14-17 • The Oncenter • Syracuse, NY With exhibits, fire and EMS classes, Hands-On Training, and networking events for personnel of all ranks, there's something for everyone at the premier fire industry, rescue, and EMS conference and expo in the Northeast!

CLASSROOM EDUCATION

More than **35 classes** will be presented by some of the most respected leaders in the industry from Wednesday – Saturday for Conference Full Term registrants. **EMS CME** classes will be delivered, and special training for **codes** personnel and **commissioners** will be available. The schedule of classes is coming soon!

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION

REGISTER IN ADVANCE or at the door! **New** – online registration is available for single registrants! Those registering groups must use the PDF form.

ONE DAY TICKETS (EXPO ONLY)

Pre-Registration: \$25 (per person, includes three tickets)

On-Site: \$10 (per person, per day)

FULL TERM REGISTRATION (EXPO & CLASSES)

NYS AFC Individual Member: \$100 (per person)

Non-Member: \$175 (per person)

NYS AFC 2023 Seminar Series, “Truck Skills Beyond the Textbooks” *Local Date Coming Up*

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 – NYS AFC members

\$50 – non-members

Pre-registration encouraged.

Albany Co. 10/23/23, Fulton Co. 9/7/23, Rensselaer Co. 4/3/23, Saratoga Co. 10/24/23, Schenectady Co. 3/6/23

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



VFIS Instructor-Level Program Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) EMS Vehicle Operation (EMSVO)

Description This program is a train-the-trainer program which is designed to teach the necessary instructional methodology in order to successfully deliver the following programs. Upon completion, an instructor kit will be provided.

[VFIS TRAINING AND RESOURCE CATALOG 2023](https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-ETC-Resource-Catalog-VFIS.pdf)

<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)

<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)

<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)

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

[Hands-On Training at FIRE 2023 in Syracuse Announced](https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2023hot)

Registration is open for Hands-On Training at the NYS AFC 117th Annual Conference & FIRE 2023 Expo! HOT will be delivered from Wednesday, June 14 – Friday, June 16 at the Syracuse Fire Department Training Center. Seven courses led by some of the nation’s most knowledgeable and experienced instructors will be available: "Advanced Thermal Imaging Camera Ops," "Advanced Vehicle Extrication," "Aggressive Interior Fire Attack," "Fire Behavior On the Inside," "First-In Officers’ Responsibilities," "Hoarder Fires," and "Truck Company Essentials."

[Learn More and Register At This Link... https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2023hot](https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2023hot)

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

[Apply Now for New Turnout Gear and Helmets Through MSA and DuPont’s 2023 Globe Gear Giveaway](#)

13 departments will each receive four new sets of turnouts and four helmets.

The ability, or lack thereof, to purchase adequate personal protective equipment is a well-known struggle for many volunteer fire departments across the U.S. To help combat this problem and keep first responders safe while they protect our communities, MSA Safety, DuPont Personal Protection, and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) have partnered for the 12th year to award volunteer fire departments in need with state-of-the-art turnout gear and helmets through MSA and DuPont’s 2023 Globe Gear Giveaway.

“Year after year, I’ve seen this program change lives,” said NVFC chair Steve Hirsch. “At the end of the day, volunteer firefighters want, and deserve, to have the adequate protection to keep them safe and healthy. We are honored to partner with MSA and DuPont for over a decade to provide this critical equipment to our nation’s first responders.”

“Partnerships such as these are important because our mission is to help keep people safe at work,” said Bob Apel, chief operating officer of Globe Manufacturing Company. “This program allows us to support our valuable volunteer firefighters so they can help keep their communities safe and be there when their neighbors are in need.”

Applications are now being accepted. To be eligible to apply, departments must be over 50% volunteer, serve a population of 25,000 or less, be located in the U.S. or Canada, demonstrate a need for new gear, and the person applying or the department chief must be a member of the NVFC. MSA will provide complimentary NVFC memberships to the first 500 applicants to help departments meet the membership requirement.

Learn more and apply by June 1 at www.nvfc.org/gear. Winners will be announced monthly between July and December. Stay tuned to the [NVFC web site](#), [Dispatch newsletter](#), and [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, as well as the [Globe Facebook page](#), for details.

[Apply Now for a \\$1500 College Scholarship!](#)

FASNY wants to help you retain your young members and one of the ways we do that is with the Gerard J. Buckenmeyer Memorial FASNY Volunteer Scholarship Program. Each year we provide 25 deserving high school seniors with a \$1500 scholarship to continue their post-secondary education. We're asking you to help spread the word about these scholarships. [Applications are being accepted online](#). **The submission deadline is March 15.**

[CHALLENGES:](#)

[Turnout Gear, Hoses Ruined by Chemical Exposure at OH Train Wreck](#)

Some Ohio fire departments are throwing out turnout gear and hoses that were exposed to toxic chemicals spilled and burned off from a train derailment. When the Wellsville Fire Department asked manufacturers what to do to decontaminate turnout gear used at the scene, they were told by two companies to throw it out. A third offered to clean it, but would not guarantee its safety. The department estimates it will cost more than \$35,000 to replace damaged equipment, which includes seven sets of turnout gear. East Palestine firefighters also will be discarding ppe and replacing it. The department's trucks are undergoing decontamination, as well. Wellsville Fire station is looking at an estimated \$100,000 worth of gear to replace if not more, according to Fire Chief Barry Podwell. He has seven sets of turn-out gear (protective garment worn by firefighters) to replace at an estimated cost of \$5,000 a set. This includes helmet, coat, pants, boots, gloves and Nomex hood. Firefighters do not have spare sets of turn-out gear and are now wearing old sets of gear originally replaced due to reaching life expectancy — meaning reduced protection.

The spare hose the department had is now on the trucks. Hose used at the derailment scene sits bagged up, leaving Wellsville with no spare hosing.

The department is also looking at possibly having to replace the radios used by the firefighters during the derailment at a cost of \$850 and \$900 each depending on which radios were used. The manufacturer of the radios advised them for now to wash the radios and let them dry. It is uncertain if radios were need replaced yet or not.

It is expected that covering the cost of it all will come out of the department's general fund portion with the hope to be reimbursed. Also, a claim will be filed through the department's insurance company, likely resulting in a premium increase. The department does not have the funds to pay to replace everything and risk not getting reimbursed, according to Podwell. He said the station is being instructed to file an insurance claim so the cost will be covered and then the insurance provider will go after Norfolk Southern to for reimbursement.

Other incurred expenses include the cost of fuel to get trucks to East Palestine and New Waterford and run the trucks while on scene. Air filters in the three trucks will also need to be replaced.

Additionally, the fire department still has gear from a truck at the derailment scene. The gear was left when according to Podwell, Norfolk Southern instructed everyone to drop everything and pull back from the scene to the evacuation area. Podwell noted that Wellsville is not the only station facing this problem and that many other local fire departments who responded to the derailment will probably also be facing the issue of replacing equipment and gear.

LIVING WITH LI-ION TECHNOLOGY

[New York City Fire Boss Asks Federal Government To Crack Down On Substandard Lithium-Ion Batteries And E-Bikes After Fatal Fires](#)

New York City's top fire official has asked the federal government to do more to keep substandard lithium-ion batteries out of the United States and regulate chargers and electric bikes, **after hundreds of battery fires and six fatalities in the city in 2022**. Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh penned a letter to the head of the Consumer Product Safety Commission thanking the agency for its work in issuing multiple recalls of flawed e-bikes, but **urging it to seize more substandard**

batteries at ports, ban "universal" battery chargers, and push e-bike and scooter companies to make their devices work only with approved batteries. "The FDNY is on the front lines of this fight against deadly fires involving batteries ... and we are grateful for every tool available to help," Kavanagh wrote.

VIDEO: 2 Injured, 1 Critically In New York Fire

An overnight fire in Brooklyn may have been caused by a lithium-ion battery. It left two people injured. The fire broke out on Goodwin Place in Bushwick just after 1:30 a.m. A 3-story attached home was filled with flames. The fire moved through all the floors, according to the FDNY. 138 firefighters were at the scene. Two people who were in the building were injured. One was rushed to Wyckoff Hospital in critical condition. The other was also taken to Wyckoff with what were described as minor injuries. Fire Marshals were investigating whether a battery may have caught fire.

Update: Lithium-ion battery eyed in Brooklyn fire that critically injured woman

VIDEO: Investigators discovered 50 lithium ion batteries after a fire that left a person critically injured in Bushwick. Heavy flames shot from the second floor of the building on Goodwin Place just after 1:45 a.m. Tuesday. A 67-year-old woman was rushed to the hospital with injuries described as critical. At least one other person was also injured. Fire marshals say the culprit was a lithium ion battery. It is believed a resident of the building was running a makeshift E-bike repair shop. "When these catch on fire, they burst into flames and there is almost no way out of your room or your apartment," said FDNY Commissioner Laura Kavanagh. Witnesses said the fire sounded like an explosion. "We did find several batteries in there, approximately 50 inside, we believe that one of the occupants was repairing the batteries in the home," said Chief fire Marshall Dan Flynn.

First Responder Training For Luxury EV Emergency Response

As the electric vehicle (EV) market continues to expand at a rapid rate, the fire service is left playing catch-up to understand best practices for interacting with these vehicles in emergencies.

EV manufacturers are required to develop Emergency Response Guides (ERGs) and Quick Response Guides (QRGs) to provide first responders with basic information about the vehicles. And some manufacturers are strongly committed to providing safety and educational materials as well as training courses to first responders, and their actions should be applauded and duplicated by others. The problem: Many of the reference materials to which we have access lack the real-world details that we desperately need for proper training.

EV RESPONSE TIPS

There are general approaches that can be learned and applied to EVs for suppression and extrication. However, EVs have unique designs and features that vary significantly among makes and models. First responders desperately need resource libraries and guidance centers that can provide fast, accurate and appropriate guidance during operations to safely and effectively manage these events.

With this in mind, let's cover some high-level tips for first responders at EV-involved incidents:

- **Identify and avoid ALL high-voltage components:** This is not as simple as the high-voltage cable and the battery pack. There are other high-voltage devices in EVs that are just as hazardous.
- **Isolate the high-voltage energy in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations:** This varies from vehicle to vehicle and requires resources and guidance to perform safely.
- **Be prepared for high-energy responses in the vehicle structures:** A pillars, B pillars and bulkheads on modern EVs are extremely lightweight and ultra-high strength. These materials do not deform when compressed or cut with hydraulic tools. Instead, they require maximum output of the tools and then they fracture. This tool interaction often results in violent slippage or shifting of tools, and can cause serious injury to the tool operators and first responders in close proximity.

For proper training on these tips and individual EV features, we must have access to more comprehensive resources, like the tips provided in the following Energy Security Agency video focused on one particular luxury EV.

LUCID AIR ELECTRIC AUTOMOBILE TRAINING VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=os6UbuTv0NI&t=60s>

MORE TRAINING AND RESOURCES NEEDED

Fire suppression is a complex operation and requires in-depth understanding of Li-ion fire behavior and vehicle/battery design. Further, many fire departments lack access to EVs and battery packs for proper research and training development. As such, we must seek training and courses that are based on real-world experience with Li-ion batteries and EVs. And we must continue to press EV manufacturers and our legislators to provide more funding, education and resources to properly equip us for response.

EXISTING RESOURCES

- ERGs and QRGs are available online and via mobile apps. Check out [NFPA](#), [Moditech](#) and the [Euro RESCUE app](#), to name a few.
- Some manufacturers, such as Tesla, provide call support services for first responders, but it is often restricted to normal business hours and not designed to provide detailed guidance for extrication and suppression.

Let us remain vigilant in seeking as much education and practical training as possible to keep up with this constantly evolving challenge.

Ford Stops Production of Electric F-150 After Battery Fire

Ford Motor Co. has suspended production and halted shipments of the F-150 Lightning electric pickup after a battery caught fire during a pre-delivery quality check.

Production at Ford's Rouge Electric Vehicle Center in Dearborn, Michigan, has been stopped until at least the end of next week.

The automaker said in a statement Wednesday night it has no reason to believe electric pickups already in use by customers are affected by the battery issue.

By the end of next week, we expect to conclude our investigation and apply what we learn to the truck's battery production processes," Ford spokeswoman Emma Bergg said in the statement. "This could take a few weeks."

The fire happened at an outdoor lot nearby in Dearborn where vehicles are held for quality checks. The truck with the battery problem and two nearby vehicles were damaged by the fire, Bergg said. No injuries were reported.

The Lithium-Ion Revolution

The company believes it has identified the root cause of the battery problem, including the likely population of trucks affected by it. "We monitor vehicle data to help ensure our vehicles are performing as expected in the field," Bergg said. The company will continue to hold completed trucks until engineering and production changes are made.

Batteries for the trucks are supplied by SK Innovation, a Korean supplier with a factory in Georgia.

The production halt comes at an inopportune time for Ford, which has struggled with quality issues, recalls and high warranty costs for several years.

The problem also stops production of a popular product. Bergg said the company is still working through a backlog of nearly 200,000 reservations for the F-150 Lightning since it stopped taking them in December 2021. Reservation holders put down \$100 deposits, which Ford was converting to orders.

Last year, Ford sold more than 15,000 of the trucks in its first full year of production.

There have been previous problems with the lithium-ion batteries used in most electric vehicles. Fires in the batteries can burn very hot and take thousands of gallons of water to extinguish, which has caused difficulty for firefighters attempting to put out battery fires in several Teslas after crashes. General Motors, Hyundai, BMW and others have issued recalls of the batteries.

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

IN 2022 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED *6 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!

National Vol Fire Council FIRST RESPONDER HELPLINE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Firefighting and emergency response are stressful, and the holidays can bring added pressures. The [NVFC First Responder Helpline](#) is here for you. NVFC members and their household families can call for assistance with work-life-volunteer challenges, including stress management, relationships, financial concerns, addiction, and more. [Register for this webinar](#) to learn more about the Helpline. If you are unable to purchase an NVFC membership for yourself or someone else who needs the Helpline, use [this form](#) to receive a complimentary membership.

YOU JUST NEVER KNOW...

- Miguel Cervantes, a Rancho Cucamonga firefighter, has died from work-related lymphatic cancer, the city announced. He was 45. Cervantes, who had more than 20 years of firefighting service, died Feb. 8, seven months after his diagnosis.
- More 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.

WEEKLY FIRE FATALITY DATA AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA

Increase in Fires Causes Suspension of Tent Distribution in Portland (OR)

According to a report from KOIN, Portland, Oregon, City Commissioner Rene Gonzalez has temporarily suspended tent and tarp distribution, effective Tuesday, after a number of fires that have erupted in the city’s public spaces.

Gonzalez, who also acts as Portland’s public safety commissioner, stopped tent distribution within his bureaus after a fire ignited Tuesday morning under the Morrison Bridge at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, which killed a dog and her six puppies.

No human injuries were reported, but authorities said the investigation is still ongoing.

In a public press release, Gonzalez said the tent- and tarp-related fires were “a dire public safety emergency” that risks the safety of first responders, the homeless, and neighborhoods.

Fire Marshal Kari Schimel said the Portland Fire Department has responded to 1,015 tent- and tarp-related incidents in the past two years.

Despite Tuesday’s decision, **more than 22,000 tents have been purchased in the past two years, meaning the fires may not completely disappear any time soon.**

[EDITOR’S NOTE: to quote the famous Forest Gump, “stupid is as stupid does” – politicians and public officials fail to consider the consequences of their rash decisions. I guarantee there will be fatalities and the blood will be on the hands of Portland’s officials’]

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	14+3 = 17
Last fire death Saranac, Clinton Co. Female 23, Male 21, Male 2	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	26+4 = 30
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	197 + 28 = 225
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NY = 17

	2 NC = 14
	3 TN = 13
There has been a total of 0383 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.

RETENTION & RECRUITMENT

Who Will Be Left To Respond?

Gary Ludwig

Amid our staffing challenges, fire chiefs must be creative and proactive in recruitment and retention efforts.

I hear it everywhere: “I don’t have enough people!”

Fire chiefs are finding it much more difficult these days to have a workforce to staff apparatus.

A quick Google search reveals a host of news items detailing staffing shortages – too few applicants applying, firefighters out on sick leave or quarantined, or firefighters just resigning as part of “The Great Resignation” to go do something else or work from home.

VOLUNTEER AND CAREER ALIKE

Volunteer fire departments, which were already experiencing trouble with recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, are experiencing even more difficulty these days.

In 2019, the NFPA published its 2017 U.S. Fire Department Profile report. The report estimated that there were 682,600 volunteer firefighters in the United States in 2017. That is down significantly from the 814,850 and 729,000 volunteer firefighters that the NFPA estimates were active in the U.S. in 2015 and 2016, respectively. The volunteer firefighter numbers for 2016 and 2017 are the lowest recorded levels since the NFPA began the survey in 1983. Add the pandemic into the mix, where older volunteer firefighters were concerned about responding on EMS calls, and it’s easy to see why volunteer fire departments are having even more trouble these days getting anyone to respond.

Some examples of the many fire departments challenged with staffing issues:

- Huntsville (Alabama) Fire and Rescue had to do a special recruitment drive recently following a shortage of applicants.
- Coweta County (Georgia) Fire and Rescue reports 30 vacancies for firefighters, paramedics and EMTs.
- Numerous fire departments in the valley around the Phoenix area report staffing shortages, and in one department, a fire chief took on front-line work to help exhausted firefighters who have been forced to work mandatory shifts.

But it’s not only the smaller or volunteer departments. Baltimore Fire, where three firefighters died in the line of duty recently, reports a 7% vacancy shortage. Other metropolitan departments like Los Angeles, Cincinnati, San Diego and Seminole County, Florida, also report staffing shortages. Fire departments in Portland and Memphis have resorted to recruiting other firefighters under a lateral transfer program.

WHY THE SHORTAGE?

There are several key factors driving these shortages.

First, the younger workforce does not appear to be as interested in jobs related to public safety. When I worked in St. Louis, we’d sometimes see 5,000 people apply when the firefighter job announcement posted. That is no longer the case. Gen Y (aka millennials, some still in their late-20s) is tech-savvy and gravitate to more technological jobs. They prefer more flexible work schedules and don’t mind working from home. They often seek positions in which they can have a solid work-life balance. They prefer jobs that allow them to spend more time with their family and/or pursue personal goals. In some cases, they may prefer a job with more flexible hours over one that offers higher pay.

Those in Gen Z who are already eligible to work also aspire to technology jobs. Most job applications from Zeds are for companies in the tech industry, followed by business services, finance and retail. IBM, Google, Amazon, Microsoft and Deloitte are the top five companies where Zeds are applying for work.

COVID has also impacted fire departments that were already experiencing staffing shortages. In December 2021, the Cincinnati mayor declared a staffing emergency among the fire department after a large number of firefighters tested positive for COVID.

Staffing shortages have also resulted from baby boomer-age firefighters at or nearing retirement age. And Gen Xers are looking to retire as soon as they are eligible – often to try their hand at something new.

We now find ourselves burning out our current workforce because of application shortages. Firefighters, in some cases, have been forced to work multiple shifts in a row to provide coverage. While the overtime money may be good, the long-term effect can be damaging when trying to retain a firefighter.

WHAT CHIEFS CAN DO

If you are a fire chief, you need to focus in several areas.

First, focus on retention. During the recent omicron spike, my department experienced about a 10% sick rate of those infected by COVID at any given time. Add those out on disabilities and other issues, and you have a staffing shortage.

Immediate steps were taken to keep the workforce in place, including standing down all training, where someone could get hurt, canceling outside classes where a firefighter would have to be replaced by someone on overtime, plus other measures. Addressing retention is not only a staffing issues, but it is a safety issue. Working multiple shifts, coupled with sleep deprivation, can have a calamitous effect.

It's also important to support your volunteer firefighters however possible so they don't find themselves forced to leave the department. **Some innovative ways to help members:**

- *Use volunteers to do childcare while firefighters are training or responding to an incident.*
- *Develop some type of pay or benefits incentives, including pay per performance. (needs state legislation)*
- *Find ways to recognize your volunteer firefighters other than an annual ceremony.*

My department's last two recruiting cycles included a flashy 45-second video posted to Facebook, then boosted while targeting certain age groups in certain geographic areas so that the video showed up in their news feed. Both cycles, which were two years apart, resulted in over 30,000 views and over 200 people applying each time to be a Champaign firefighter.

CREATIVE AND PROACTIVE

Plenty has been written and is available when it comes to recruiting and retaining career and volunteer firefighters. The bottom line: **The standard model no longer works.** Successful career and volunteer departments have good leadership that thinks outside the box and markets aggressively when recruiting and takes innovative steps to retention.

The staffing shortages are not expected to end anytime soon and may even escalate as more baby boomers and Gen Xers leave the workforce, and we find ourselves relying on the younger members to step up to assume public safety roles. Only those departments that think outside the box and are proactive with recruiting and retention will succeed.

THE STUFF WE BUY FOR OUR FIREFIGHTERS

Know Your Gear: What Does A Successful Wear Trial Look Like?

Courtney Levin

Investing in turnout gear is a big deal. Not only do the garments your department chooses need to be breathable, comfortable and offer robust thermal protection, but the wrong selection could result in firefighters who are unhappy with their gear for years on end.

New technology is continually improving the comfort and functionality of turnout gear, so when it's time to invest in new garments, it's worth exploring your options. Departments that are embarking on wear trials should consider these best practices to help them make the best decisions possible.

SEVERAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Ordering new turnout gear can and should be more complex than arbitrarily selecting garments from a manufacturer's website. This personal protective equipment (PPE) significantly impacts the health, safety and efficiency of a firefighter, so a multitude of factors need to be considered.

While most departments will always want turnout gear that performs better than their current PPE, it may be helpful to think about the raw materials within each fabric layer instead of the garment as a whole. Many departments also approach the process from a risk assessment standpoint.

"The NFPA spells out the things you should look at," said Jeff Sedivec, a veteran firefighter and mid-channel business development, emergency response at [TenCate Protective Fabrics](#). "Also think about what tactics your department uses, what kind of hazards you encounter and what the weather is like in your area."

Even if you don't name the specific materials you want, you can spell out the performance criteria, he continues. Departments can indicate they want garments with a specific thermal protective performance number, a specific total heat loss rating or other NFPA test criteria.

After determining which materials might be right for your department, it's time to contact several manufacturers to schedule presentations for your crew. These meetings should cover the fit and function of their turnout gear options, review the ergonomics of their design and highlight what makes them unique.

Most departments then narrow their options down to three or four manufacturers and request test gear from each.

COMPARING APPLES TO APPLES

Surprisingly, the most difficult part of a wear trial comes next, says Sedivec. To accurately gauge the performance of different types of garments, a scientific approach must be used. Instead, some departments offer test turnout gear to their firefighters on a more casual basis. They'll ask them to wear it for several months and to complete an evaluation at the end.

"The problem with that method is every individual has a different experience," said Sedivec. "They're on different shifts, some may have gotten fires while others might not have gotten fires, so it's not apples-to-apples."

To gather the most accurate feedback from crews possible, departments should develop more structured testing scenarios.

"Everyone can put the same gear on and come to training," said Sedivec. "Everyone should do the same thing: do a hose lay, advance a hose, roll a hose, then throw a ladder. Have evolutions that are repeatable and then at the end, ask everyone how the turnout gear was."

Rather than simply inquiring if they like the turnout gear, departments should get as much feedback as possible from each firefighter. Asking them about the mobility and ease of movement, for example, will help to better inform purchasing decisions.

After completing these same tasks in a controlled situation, crews can then take the test gear into the real world for longer periods and better assess additional factors like breathability, durability and overall comfort.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

The process of a wear trial can be very straightforward, but some departments deviate from the above recommendations in ways that can significantly affect their ability to make an educated decision.

Having at least a rough idea of the materials your department is interested in is key, especially if some manufacturers strongly push their own options during their presentation.

"You might end up with three different sets of gear in three different materials from three different manufacturers," said Sedivec. "One could be super lightweight, one could be heavier and it's definitely not an apples-to-apples situation."

Some departments have a preference toward one specific manufacturer or dealer but will still go through the motions of receiving test gear from multiple companies, only to leave two of the three options still in the box when it's time for the garments to be collected.

The importance of giving each set of test gear an honest try cannot be understated, either.

"I've seen departments issue test gear to someone and then never follow up with them," he said. "That person might put on the new gear and say 'Oh, I don't really like this' and just go back to his old, nice broken-in gear."

On the other end of the spectrum, the research stage of the wear trial process might lead to unrealistic expectations. Departments might try to reinvent PPE by picking and choosing various options across multiple manufacturers, resulting in a garment that can't actually be produced.

"What they're saying is they want a Chevy truck with a Dodge rear end and a Cadillac grill," said Sedivec.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

If it's time for your department to invest in new turnout gear, you don't have to reinvent the wheel with your upcoming wear trial. In many instances, departments already have strong relationships with vendors who can steer them in the right direction.

Weighing the importance of a manufacturer's customer service along with how educated their salespeople are should play a role in your decision-making along with conducting your own research.

"Before you start any processes or choose anything, get yourself out there and learn as much as you can," said Sedivec. "The more you know, the better choices you're going to make."

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Peyton Morse's Parents Sue N.Y. Over His Death

Craig Fox

They blame the New York State Academy of Fire Science for the death of their son, a 21-year-old Watertown firefighter who had an emergency during training.

The parents of Watertown firefighter Peyton L.S. Morse have filed a lawsuit against the state over the 2021 death of their son.

The 21-year-old Watertown firefighter had a medical emergency on March 3, 2021, at the New York State Academy of Fire Science in Montour Falls, near Watkins Glen. He died nine days later in a Pennsylvania hospital.

His parents, David M. and Stacy L. Morse, blame the academy for his death.

Their attorney, Thomas J. DiNovo, an attorney with the Albany law firm of O'Connell & Aronowitz, filed court papers in the state Court of Claims on Jan. 24, alleging that Peyton suffered "severe and excruciating conscious pain and suffering" before he died as a result of his training at the fire academy.

The lawsuit only names the state of New York as the defendant, saying that it "negligently and carelessly" failed to provide safe training and failed to realize what was happening to him during the training exercise.

The lawsuit doesn't set a specified amount of money, although his parents have always said that they are seeking justice for their son.

According to the lawsuit, Mr. and Mrs. Morse "have suffered substantial pecuniary loss and other damages" and are seeking "a substantial amount of money" from the state in damages.

Their son's emergency happened after he complained that he could not breathe while he was going through a plywood tunnel — called the "box" — that simulates what a firefighter could experience during a fire. On that day, he used six air cylinders of his breathing apparatus before having the medical emergency.

They believe that instructors were negligent and could have prevented their son's death. According to the suit, instructors waited too long to come to Peyton's aid after he called for help, indicating that he could not breathe while inside a training apparatus, a plywood box that simulated what it's like to be in a fire.

The Morses have been critical of a [2021 state report](#) that found no blame in their son's death, despite statements by three fellow recruits who heard him say he could not breathe.

The court papers spell out how the Morses blame the state, its Division of Homeland Security, Office of Fire Prevention and Control and at least four instructors for Peyton's death.

The court papers identify the four instructors as Warren T. Ward, Christopher Rea, Bruce E. Heberer and Scott P. Deninno who were there when Peyton suffered the medical emergency.

According to the lawsuit, the state failed to "provide reasonably safe equipment for recruits" and had "a duty to provide training that did not involve unreasonable risk of injury or death."

When he had the medical emergency, the state failed to get him immediate medical care, medical personnel at the fire academy, provide adequate and necessary medical equipment and instruct academy personnel in emergency life saving training. An ambulance was not at the fire academy at the time of the medical emergency. The city also plans to file a lawsuit against the state in the firefighter's death.

The state Attorney General will represent the state in the lawsuit.

Copenhagen Files A Supreme Court Complaint Against The Fire Corp. To Get Taxpayer-Owned Assets Back

Julie Abbass

The village "can no longer wait" for the nonprofit organization left behind by the dissolution of its fire department in November, Copenhagen Fire Department Inc., to return what the board believes to be taxpayer assets that should be available to the firefighters now providing protection for villagers.

Village attorney Candace L. Randall filed a complaint against the company and the village's former fire chief Terence J. Williams Jr. on Monday with the state Supreme Court, presided over in Lewis County by Judge Charles C. Merrell.

Mr. Williams, who was responsible for ensuring the return of the equipment under his charge, was notified in November after the final board action abolishing the department was complete that he had 10 days to do so.

The company is still being led by the corporate President James C. Henry.

The village maintains that everything purchased to fight fires including the specialized safety clothing — called turnout gear — and various trucks was obtained through taxpayer money and should have been returned.

The original titles for the equipment, copies of which were included in the filing, were all in the name "Copenhagen Volunteer Fire Department." A number of the registrations also included, however, indicate "Copenhagen Fire Department Inc." as the owner — a discrepancy which has been at the core of the ownership dispute.

"The goal of the lawsuit is to recover village owned assets and taxpayer monies — the same as it has always been," Mrs. Randall said of the legal initiative in an email on Friday.

The notice Mrs. Randall hand-delivered to Mr. Williams has yet to receive a response.

"(The Village of Copenhagen) can no longer wait for (the Copenhagen Fire Department Inc.) to follow the law and must now act to freeze all assets until they are properly returned to the village," the affidavit filed by Mrs. Randall stated.

On Tuesday, Judge Merrill issued orders that the company, Mr. Williams and Mr. Henry be served with the village's complaint and required to appear in his court to "show cause" and convince him why an order "restraining all assets, apparatus and all funds in any bank account" should not be issued. He did not grant the village's request to freeze those assets while the case is being settled.

The judge ordered that a copy of his order to show cause be served without any backup documents to Community Bank — which holds at least five of the former department's accounts — and Watertown Savings Bank — with at least one.

Mr. Henry has long claimed that all of the funds still in the accounts belong to the non-profit company because they were obtained through fundraisers and not from taxpayer money. He has acknowledged that no separate account for fundraising proceeds existed until last year, so taxpayer and fundraising revenue were mixed.

In her affidavit, Mrs. Randall acknowledged that the fire company believes that all of the former department's assets belong to the non-profit and therefore should not be returned.

The village-owned fire department was in existence since the late 1800s. Like a number of volunteer fire departments in the area, it formed a non-profit corporation in the early 1950s to be able to have fundraising activities which the village, and therefore its department, are not legally allowed to do.

Most fire departments in the area attached to a municipality understand the corporate side of their organization to be the fundraising arm while the firefighting end of the service is answerable either to a municipality or fire commissioners.

The documents filed on the village's behalf call out the company for continuing "to act as a functioning fire department despite being abolished, by approaching town supervisors asking for an opportunity to engage in fire protection contracts with the towns," verifiable through town meeting minutes which have recorded Mr. Henry's pitches to form a direct contract with the towns.

Because the company has continued to fundraise and advertise for new members on social media and on the lighted sign in front of the fire department building in the village center even though, the legal filing alleges, it "no longer has a purpose to continue existing under the laws of the State of New York." The village claims the company has been "perpetrating fraud on individuals who attend fundraisers and donate money" since the department ceased to exist in November.

The village also filed a "notice of pendency" on about six land parcels "owned" by the fire department to which the corporation also lays claim. The notice will ensure that anyone that attempts to buy one of the parcels will be notified that it is under dispute.

The court-ordered notices were served to Mr. Henry, Mr. Williams and the department's post office box on Thursday morning.

Attorney for the fire corporation and Mr. Williams, *Terence S. Hannigan of Albany*, said on Friday afternoon that he could not comment on the case in part because of the pending litigation, but also because he had received the documents only two hours before and had not yet had time to process all of the information.

Mr. Henry, who was not named individually in the complaint, did not return a request for comment.

For information only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. The opinions expressed are the opinions of the individual author at the time the facts were presented and based on the law then applicable. The information contained in these opinions is not guaranteed to be up to date. The information provided is not legal advice. Since legal advice must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each case, and laws are constantly changing, nothing on this site should be used as a substitute for the advice of competent legal counsel. The authors assume no responsibility to any person who relies on information contained herein and disclaim all liability in respect to such information. You should not act upon information in this publication without seeking professional counsel from an attorney admitted to practice in your jurisdiction.

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE:

Leadership At Its Purest: Create A Culture That Allows Your Members To Flourish

Chief Marc Bashoor

You've undoubtedly heard or been part of the myriad discussions about how to lead – from the front, picking up the rear, from the floor, tip of the spear, etc. The truth is there is no *single* right way to lead. After all, leadership isn't simply a position, location, rank or title. Leadership in its purest sense is about creating and fostering a culture that allows others to flourish.

As such, let's think of culture as three interconnected circles – your personal circle, your work/organizational circle and a political circle that affects both.

PERSONAL: SETTING THE EXAMPLE

The single most effective way to establish this type of culture is to set the example in both your personal and professional life.

Whether it's in your personal life (your ethical standards, moral focus, exercise and nutrition habits) or in your professional life (how you manage operational/training functionalities, community connectivity, political acumen, educational tract), YOU should be setting the standard for your members. We are public officials, whether we like it or not, which means that your life is, to an extent, an open book. Make choices as if anyone could read that book any time.

ORGANIZATIONAL: ELEVATING YOUR VALUES

Your organizational culture has likely evolved over many years. You may be adopting this culture by virtue of your appointment, or you may be developing this culture in the establishment of a new organization. Either way, the culture of today doesn't have to be the culture of tomorrow. YOU are responsible to lead the culture, not just follow it. With this in mind, let's consider these four elements that should help you succeed in the cultivation of culture.

1. *Right and wrong*: Critical to developing a culture where anyone can flourish is understanding – and living – the difference between what's right and what's wrong. You can't build a culture that you don't understand yourself.

2. *Mission, vision, values*: While I already said YOU need to set the example, EVERYONE needs to understand the mission, vision and values of your organization. You don't need wordy paragraphs of prose to fill space on a wall. You can establish clear mission, vision and values in just four words (OK, two of the words are an acronym).

- Mission: Service
- Value statement: THE PROMISE

- Vision statement: Service through THE PROMISE

Read more about [THE PROMISE acronym here](#), which details core values and leadership traits that can be applied to any department and leader. If you want to expand on that a bit, go for it; this gives you a place to start where everyone is on the same page.

3. *Inclusiveness*: Ensure that everyone within your sphere has the opportunity to contribute. There are many ways to establish an atmosphere of contribution, but it really begins with communication. While we have a lot of work to do to ensure that our organizations are as representative of the communities we serve as possible, we must also ensure that our leadership culture is, at a minimum, representative of our entire organization. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is paramount. Ensuring that every group within your organization has equal opportunity to be included, that they have the real opportunity to interact, and that the opinion matters will go a long way to building the flourishing culture.

4. *Communication*: The most common complaint I hear from people about their organizations is, “They don’t tell us anything.” I fully recognize the truth is likely something less damning; however, if you have developed that open and inclusive culture, it will be nearly impossible for someone to use this as an excuse for a variety of issues. “Creating a paper trail” isn’t simply a function of discipline but a matter of creating that culture that everyone can access. Acknowledging the paramilitary chain of command in public safety, for your communication to be effective, there must be a culture that empowers two-way communication, encourages feedback up and down, and provides for transparency where appropriate.

POLITICAL: WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Politics can be such a divisive topic when taken out of context, so let’s be clear: Here we are talking about how the politics of your community can impact your fire department budget and, frankly, your career longevity. After all, the political element of the job has a huge impact on a chief’s job satisfaction and ability to make a difference.

I have referred to the fire chief as an “inspirational politician,” and I believe it is critical for the chief to understand and accept this role. In the simplest of terms, this means understanding what makes your politicians and your community tick – and what makes them sick. Avoiding the things that make them sick and accentuating or focusing on the things that make them tick will go a long way toward garnering community support when you need it the most. With a strong inspirational leader at the helm, the personal and organizational elements are better positioned to flourish.

BOTTOM LINE

I refuse to believe that any culture can’t eventually develop into one where anyone can flourish, but it will take work. After all, culture does not create itself. How would you describe your fire department culture – and would it allow all members to flourish?

****The 2020 NVFC Retention Research Report**

Both chiefs and commissioners need to take a few minutes to page through this report and listen to what members of volunteer departments are saying, what we are doing **WRONG**, what we are doing **RIGHT** and thus painting a clear picture of what we need to **START** doing and what we need to **STOP** doing. Please take the time to read this and think about it in terms of **YOUR** department.



NVFC-Retention-Research-Report-FINAL

CLASSIFIED

Position Announcement Greenfield Fire District

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 Friday, March 17, 2023.

Full Time Stationkeeper Position Announcement West Crescent Fire District

The West Crescent Fire District is looking for a professional and highly-motivated person to perform custodial services and to maintain fire district buildings, grounds and equipment. Must have good communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, 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.westcrescentfire.com or by emailing Fire District Secretary Arthur Hunsinger at wcfdsec@nycap.rr.com

Please send application, cover letter & resume to Arthur Hunsinger via email at wcfdsec@nycap.rr.com

Position Announcement Station Keeper/Maintenance Person

Full Time (40 hours/week) at a rate of up to \$18.00 an hour. Benefits available (health and disability insurance, vacation, sick days, holidays, retirement).

Qualifications/Requirements:

- Minimum High School diploma or equivalent
- Relevant work or experience
- Pass District Physical, able to lift objects weighing 70 lbs. & Drug Testing
- Preference given to those candidates at least 21 years of age
- Ability to understand and carry out instructions.
- Ability to deal with the public and work successfully with other employees and members of the Fire Department.
- Familiarity with equipment found in fire stations.
- Experience with cleaning and light building maintenance.
- Ability to perform minor mechanical repairs.
- Initiative, resourcefulness and good judgement.
- Basic computer knowledge for data entry.
- Hold a valid NYS vehicle operator's license. A CDL-B license will be required within six (6) months of employment, to include Air Brake Endorsement. Driver's license will be enrolled in the NYS License Event Notification Service. License acceptable to Fire District's insurance carrier
- Background check for Arson Conviction and Sex Offender Registry.
- Preference may be given to an active SCBA qualified member in a local fire department.
- Need to be CPR/AED Certified

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

One thing no one ever talks about when it comes to being an adult, is how much time we debate keeping a cardboard box because it's you know.... a really good box.

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 Glenville/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.

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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Brendan Kennedy ext 356

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, 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