



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE
FEBRUARY 5TH, 2023
EDITOR - TOM RINALDI
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THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

2023 CAPITAL AREA MEETING & TRAINING SCHEDULE

Member Dinner Meeting Thursday February 16th 7:00pm dinner served at 6PM

There is a conflict with a Blood Drive being held at the CPFD Station

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

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!

Averill Park and Clifton Park are 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!

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

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.

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>

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](tel:518-407-5020)

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

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Page 9, local opportunity to pick up your firefighter decon kits from OFPC and attend a training session on Cancer Prevention, a major killer in firefighters.
- The Town of Stillwater has voted to grant 1st Responders the 10% tax break on their property. Our members are working with their jurisdictions to do the same.
- 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.

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

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.

TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER



COFFEE WITH COMMISSIONERS FOR 2023

Saturday March 4th at 9AM, "Protecting Your Assets"

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

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 a modest compensation based on call response.
- **Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend.** The Executive Budget includes \$10 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

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.

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

****Some Notes on the Vol FF Tax Incentive Law**

- 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

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)
- **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.
Corresponding legislation: S.8432-A (Mayer) / A.9509-A (Otis) (2021-2022 Session)
- **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

- **AMEND PENAL CODE TO ADD ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF OCCUPANTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS**
Corresponding legislation: S.3741 (Gaughran) / A.6087 (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)
- **RECOVERY OF 54-G FUNDING TO SUPPORT CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**
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)
- **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.

Corresponding legislation: S.6210-A (Skoufis) / A.3559-A (Hunter) (2021-2022 Session) provides a framework to accomplish; support amendments to extending the timeline of enactment from 12 months.

- **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.

- **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.

Corresponding legislation: S.3989-A (Reichlin Melnick) / A.1320-A (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)

- **CANCER COVERAGE COST RELIEF**

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

WASHINGTON – ON THE FEDERAL SIDE

[A Look Back at Legislative Accomplishments in the 117th Congress and NVFC Goals for the 118th Congress](#)

Ryan Woodward

The 118th Congress began on January 3, 2023. As always, the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) will be hard at work to advance legislation that will benefit the fire and emergency services. As we head into a new year and a new Congress, this is a good time to review what legislative goals were achieved in the last Congress and what priorities the NVFC will be advocating for over the next two years.

The 117th Congress saw several legislative victories for the NVFC and the fire and emergency services. These included the Protecting America’s First Responders Act, which was signed into law in November 2021. This important law acknowledges members of fire departments who provide traffic incident management services, often referred to as fire police, as public safety officers and makes them eligible for the Public Safety Officers’ Benefit (PSOB) program. PSOB provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen first responders and disability benefits to responders catastrophically injured in the line of duty. This law also makes it easier to qualify for PSOB Disability and extends for two years a presumption of service connection for public safety officers who die from COVID-19. (Note, not all jurisdictions consider their fire police, firefighters first!)

In addition, the Protecting Firefighters from Adverse Substances Act, signed into law in December 2022, requires the Department of Homeland Security, in consultation with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, to develop and publish guidance for firefighters and other emergency response personnel on training, education programs, and best practices relating to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly referred to as PFAS). ***This law also requires these agencies to a design a curriculum to reduce and eliminate exposure to PFAS from firefighting foam and personal protective equipment (PPE), prevent the release of PFAS from firefighting foam into the environment, and educate emergency response personnel on foams and non-foam alternatives, PPE, and other firefighting tools and equipment that does not contain PFAS.*** In

addition, the law creates an online public repository on tools and best practices for emergency response personnel to reduce the release of and exposures to PFAS.

Moving into the 118th Congress, it is likely to be a challenging environment to get policy enacted. There is a Democratic president in the second half of his first term with a Republican House and a Democratic Senate, with both chambers having very narrow majorities. This environment will be further complicated by the diverse spectrum of opinions in both parties, requiring House and Senate Leadership to work very hard to close ranks and push their priorities. Challenges aside, the NVFC remains optimistic that there will be opportunities for the 118th Congress to enact legislation that will bolster, strengthen, and support the nation's fire and emergency services.

There are a number of legislative priorities the NVFC will advocate for over the next two years. The NVFC will work to ensure the continued funding of programs and agencies that aid the fire service in its important work, including:

- The **Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)**, which provides funding to fire departments and some non-fire-based EMS agencies to purchase equipment, training, and apparatus.
- The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (**SAFER**) **grant program**, which provides assistance for the hiring and retention of career firefighters as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.
- **The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA)**, which provides training to more than 80,000 fire and emergency services personnel each year, performs research and collects data specific to the fire service and fire service activities, and educates the public on the importance of fire safety.
- The Volunteer Fire Assistance grants, which are run through the U.S. Forest Service and provide funding to rural fire departments for training, equipment, and protective clothing to help them prepare for wildland fires.
- *The National Firefighter Registry, which is a voluntary database that will launch this winter to collect health, 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.

AFG, SAFER, and USFA are authorized through September 30, 2023. A bill to reauthorize these programs through 2030 passed the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs in the last Congress. ***In addition to funding, getting these programs reauthorized during the first session of the 118th Congress is a top policy priority for the NVFC.*** The NVFC will also advocate for the reauthorization of FirstNet, the nationwide public safety broadband network. It was established by Congress at the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission and is run through a public private partnership between the Department of Commerce and AT&T. FirstNet's creation of a national public safety broadband network has given first responders priority and preemption on their own spectrum and allowed multiple agencies to communicate within and across jurisdictions. It is currently authorized through September 30, 2027.

In addition, the NVFC will advocate for the reintroduction and enactment of the following legislation:

- **The HERO Act, which would establish a series of programs designed to address public safety behavioral health issues**, including a grant program for peer-support behavioral health and wellness programs at fire and EMS departments and a system for collecting data on suicide deaths of public safety officers. This bill would also require USFA in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services ***to develop and make publicly available resources to educate mental health professionals about the unique behavioral health issues that firefighters and EMS personnel face.***
- The Fire Station Construction Grants Act, which would address the fact that 43 percent of fire stations in the U.S. are at least 40 years old by authorizing a ***\$1 billion grant program to fund construction and refurbishment of fire and EMS stations.***
- The Volunteer First Responder Housing Act, which would allow volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel to access two existing federal housing assistance programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Single-Family 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.***

The NVFC will continue to work hard to advocate for the policy interests of the volunteer fire and EMS services in this Congress. If you have a policy related inquiry, contact Ryan Woodward, NVFC chief of legislative and regulatory affairs, at ryan@nvfc.org. You can also [sign up](#) for legislative action alerts to stay informed and contact your members of Congress when support is needed for a bill.

[West Point \(NY\) Fire Department Budget Increases from \\$96K to \\$1.8M](#)

The West Point Fire Department's budget will be increased from \$96,000 to \$1.8 million for the 2023 fiscal year, according to Conor Miller, the president of Local F-7 of the International Association of Firefighters, recordonline.com reported.

With the restored budget, the department plans to repair and replace fire trucks and purchase thermal imaging cameras that will allow firefighters to see through smoke, the report said.

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>

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.dhSES.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

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 the 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>

[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)

NYSAFC 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 – NYSAFC 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>



Beginning Thursday, December 15th, we will be rolling out a new version of VFIS University.

This change will allow us to clean up organization rosters and offer you a streamlined and efficient experience.

During the transition period, please note that the current system will be available through 12/30 (we will have a direct link to the page for this.) **We recommend downloading your organization's course history by 12/30 to ensure the smoothest transition possible, as access to course completions on the current system will *NOT* be available after that date.**

Some additional things to note:

- The training officer within your organization will approve users and assignments
- New features for your organization will be introduced in Q1 2023
- Only VFIS-authored courses and approved educational material will be available

As part of the registration process for the new system, you will be sent an email from "VFIS Authentication System" (noreply-sso@vfis.com). You will receive the email automatically, once our staff adds you to the new system. Please follow the instructions in that email to verify your email address and update your password. The password should be at least 8 characters long and contain an uppercase letter, lowercase letter, number and symbol.

All customer service for VFIS University will be provided by VFIS, so if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out via phone at 800.233.1957 Ext. 7228 or via email at csapps@vfis.com, Monday – Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm.

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

You will find:



VFIS University User
Guide.pdf

[2022 VFISU-Flyer](#)

[2022 VFISU Course Catalog](#)

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

[2022 VFIS-Responder Help Flyer](#)

Hands-On Training at FIRE 2023 in Syracuse Announced

Registration is open for Hands-On Training at the NYSAFC 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)

[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!

[O P P O R T U N I T I E S :](#)

[Governor Announces Plan To Compensate Volunteer Firefighters Across The State](#)

It's a problem impacting the safety of communities across the state: the need for volunteer firefighters, which Chief Charles Heist says is crucial. "A lot of members who have families, and they work full-time jobs, and you still have to put a certain amount of hours into answering alarms, training, and so forth. It is very taxing and overwhelming," Heist said. Gov. Kathy Hochul plans to spend \$10 million on two proposals; **one is to offer stipends for volunteers**, and **the other to help pay for their training**. In the meantime, in Twin District, volunteers are not as much of a challenge to obtain. Instead, it's the number of hours to commit. "They are going to be requiring more. OK, now you have to put in 100 and something hours, and now you got to put in another 200 hours within your first two years of joining, and now you got to make calls too," says Ron Rozzler, President of Twin District Fire Department.

[Rensselaer County Considering Opting Into State-Approved Tax Relief For Volunteer Fire/Ems](#)

As fire and EMS staffing shortages continue to plague communities across the state, a new tax incentive passed by the state and being offered to counties is looking to help with that. It's a 10-percent property tax exemption for volunteer firefighters and EMS—and it's something Rensselaer County is hoping to provide. Rensselaer County Executive Steve McLaughlin says this is something he wants to adopt, but it still needs approval from the county legislature. McLaughlin says volunteer fire and ems personnel can either take this 10-percent property tax exemption or a \$250 tax credit. First responders are eligible after two years of service. "We certainly want to recognize our first responders and the great job they do. We hope that it will help with recruitment, which is a problem in every county in the state of New York that relies on volunteers like we do," said McLaughlin.

[New Telehealth Program Helps Keep Patients Out Of Emergency Rooms Across The State](#)

UCM Digital Health and MVP Health Care are teaming up to launch a program to reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations. The initiative is called Treatment in Place. It will provide MVP members with access to the right care, at the right time, wherever they are. Treatment In Place is activated when an MVP member calls 911 and EMS is dispatched. Through the program, EMTs and paramedics in partner organizations now have access to the UCM team. This includes their medical staff and a team of care coordinators. EMTs then work with a UCM emergency medicine-trained physician via telemedicine to quickly treat

patients who have non-life-threatening conditions. The treatment in place program is now available in local counties – including Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Greene and Columbia.

CHALLENGES:

Consultant: ‘Major’ Health and Safety Issues at FL Fire Department

Stephen Hudak

A consultant’s review of the Apopka Fire Department, conducted in the wake of last summer’s on-duty death of firefighter Austin Duran, alleges firefighter health and safety programs have been neglected for years, according to a 45-page draft of the report.

Its authors, Gannon Emergency Solutions, commissioned by the city last year, **suggested the 131-employee department “needs a reset.”**

The document praised positive, recent changes in the Fire Department’s organizational hierarchy including adding a training chief and a life-safety chief, both new posts, but it also “identified deeper foundation deficiencies” that fuel concern as the city grows.

With a population of about 56,000 people, Apopka is Orange County’s second-largest city.

The draft, obtained by the Orlando Sentinel through a public records request, includes electronically inserted comments in the margins by Fire Chief Sean Wylam and City Attorney Michael Rodriguez, who disputed many of Gannon’s observations, conclusions and language.

“We didn’t edit anything out,” Apopka Mayor Bryan Nelson said. “We just put in [comments] where they were wrong.” Nelson, elected to a second, four-year term last March, said he was disappointed in the review. He said it appeared intended to persuade the city to award Gannon a three-year contract at \$150,000 a year to help fix the problems they said they found in the department.

The report’s authors were out of the country on business Wednesday and unavailable for comment. They are expected to give a formal presentation on their findings at a future Apopka City Council meeting, the mayor said.

At Wednesday’s council meeting, Michael Duran, the fallen firefighter’s father, offered his view of the city’s response.

“No surprise,” he said. “The city continues ... to push back and refuse to accept accountability.”

As required by law, the Duran family has notified the city it intends to sue over Austin’s death.

Austin Duran, 25, died July 15 from injuries suffered in an on-duty accident at a fire station when a trailer filled with sand tipped over and crushed him. Neither he nor a co-worker helping him had been trained on how to move the trailer.

Fire Lt. Alex Klepper, head of the Apopka firefighters union, assailed city leaders’ criticism of the consultants they handpicked.

“This company has gone from experts to enemy No. 1 for exposing the reality that the rest of us live in,” he said.

Under a section titled “Unacceptable and Requires Urgent Attention,” the consultants referenced the tragic lack of training.

“There is a prevailing and widespread culture of assumption and taking things for granted,” they wrote. “It was assumed that Austin Duran and his colleague knew how to hitch the trailer and it was taken for granted that they were capable of doing so. Better guidelines, training and supervision eliminate assumption and are critically important in such a young and inexperienced organization.”

Consultants noted many firefighters spoke with them anonymously, fearing retribution from department administration. Administrators clapped back in a note attributed to “fire staff” in the report’s margin.

“Again, these are serious accusations that AFD takes seriously, and ones we would NEVER ignore. We have never received a complaint regarding this statement,” it read. “Even with rumors of such, we developed a mentorship program to encourage everyone to say something if they see something.”

The consultants cited “major issues” with the department’s attention to health and safety, including a lack of accountability.

The report alleges the health and safety issue went beyond the Fire Department and faulted the absence of “a dedicated and experienced safety professional to ensure compliance with basic safety requirements citywide.” They recommended hiring a “change manager.”

Fire officials brushed off the guidance. “Infers that [fire] staff is incapable of driving change,” they wrote.

The consultants pointed out that firefighting is a dangerous occupation.

“It is accepted that a firefighter’s role will expose them to danger and unpredictable situations responding to emergencies in the field, but not at a fire station where workplace safety should be exemplary,” they noted. “City leaders, fire department staff, the Duran family and the community all want to see a thorough review of the circumstances and a progressive reaction to the findings. The outcomes of this report and the legacy should be a strategic plan and a process of change that puts in place measures to prevent something like this from happening again.”

[So It Begins - Firefighters Union Takes on ‘Forever Chemicals’ in Firefighters’ Gear](#)

Life-saving equipment designed to protect firefighters has caused cancer for an unknown number of first responders, according to the International Association of Fire Fighters union.

In a Monday news conference at the Caesars Forum convention center in Las Vegas, the union announced that it had retained a trio of prominent “toxic tort law” firms to demand changes to the personal protective gear firefighters use, and to explore compensation for cancer-ridden firefighters and their families.

At issue are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — also known as PFAS or “forever chemicals” — designed to coat against substances and elements such as heat.

The union is demanding gear that’s free of the chemicals in question, and wants the National Fire Protection Association — an agency designated by The Occupational Safety and Health Administration — to change its regulatory standards. Firefighters in European countries, for example, use safer gear, Kelly said.

WHY I DISLIKE LI-ION TECHNOLOGY

[Why Teslas Keep Catching On Fire](#)

When Thayer Smith, a firefighter in Austin, Texas, received the call that a Tesla was on fire, he knew that he’d need to bring backup. It was in the early morning hours of August 12, 2021, and a driver had slammed a Model X into a traffic light on a quiet residential street in Austin before crashing into a gas pump at a nearby Shell station. The driver, a teenager who was later arrested for driving while intoxicated, managed to escape the car, but the Tesla burst into flames. As emergency responders battled the fire in the dark of night, bursts of sparks shot out of the totaled car, sending plumes of smoke up into the sky. It took tens of thousands of gallons of water, multiple fire engines, and more than 45 minutes to finally extinguish the blaze. “People have probably seen vehicles burning on the side of the road at one point or another,” Smith, the division chief at the Austin Fire Department, recalled.

[Firefighters Battle ‘Spontaneous’ Tesla Battery Fire on CA Freeway](#)

Davis Caraccio

The battery compartment of a Tesla Model S vehicle “spontaneously caught fire” on eastbound Highway 50 in Rancho Cordova around 4 p.m. Saturday, slowing traffic near Sunrise Boulevard, according to the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District.

Crews used 6,000 gallons of water to extinguish the fire as two fire engines, a water tender and a ladder truck arrived to find the Tesla engulfed in flames, according to Metro Fire officials. Crews used jacks to gain access beneath the vehicle to extinguish and cool the battery cells.

The California Highway Patrol was forced to close two lanes. At 4:19 p.m., the CHP incident log revealed the difficulty of trying to put out the battery fire.

It’s not the first time Metro Fire crews worked hard to put out a Tesla battery fire. In June 2022, a white Tesla burst into flames and kept reigniting at a California wrecking yard. ***The car had been involved in a crash three weeks prior*** and had “major damage,” fire officials said. It was sitting at the wrecking yard to be dismantled.

Electric Vehicle Fires: Where The Waiting Game Wins

With the arrival of electric vehicles (EVs) comes many different products to “solve” the problem of extinguishing a fire in an EV’s high-voltage battery.

While there may be a few benefits to some of these products, overall, most fail to address the problem associated with a thermal runaway event in a large lithium-ion battery.

Here’s what you need to know about thermal runaway, and the tools and tactics that will actually get the job done – or at least help.

UNDERSTANDING THERMAL RUNAWAY

A high-voltage battery is made up of many cells packed tightly together inside a watertight, fire-resistant box. When a single cell fails, it is essentially a small explosive that produces a tremendous amount of gas and heat (1,200 degrees F) in tenths of a second. The failure is an exothermic chemical reaction that does not require oxygen from the atmosphere to sustain itself. The heat released from each individual cell is transferred to the neighboring cells, which causes them to fail as well.

Once a battery cell fails, it is impossible to extinguish the failed cell as the chemical reaction inside the cell happens far too quickly. The only way to stop a thermal runaway is by directly cooling the cells involved to ensure that the failed cell does not cause the cells around it to also fail.

With that in mind, what tools and firefighters use to stop thermal runaway and extinguish these fires?

FIREFIGHTING FOAM

Firefighting foams work by creating a blanket to smother a fire. Many types of foam have properties that cool the surrounding area by assisting the water in absorbing heat. Unfortunately, getting the foam to the failed cells is difficult, if not impossible, because the thermal runaway event is happening inside a watertight, fire-resistant box. Additionally, even if it was possible to get the foam inside the box and flood the area with foam, the foam's main purpose is typically to starve a fire’s oxygen supply, but a lithium-ion battery cell does not need external oxygen to burn. Consequently, foam is ineffective at stopping a thermal runaway.

CLASS D EXTINGUISHER

Class D extinguishers contain a powder that is designed to extinguish combustible metal fires. While they are called lithium-ion battery cells, the cells do not contain solid lithium metal, making the extinguisher ineffective. There is also no easy way to get the powder from the extinguisher directly to the cells on fire due to the construction of the box and the speed at which the battery cells fail.

PANCAKE NOZZLE

These nozzles are designed specifically to slide under a vehicle and spray cool water at the bottom of the battery box. The water is meant to cool the battery box, ideally stopping the thermal runaway. Unfortunately, extinguishing a fire in the high-voltage battery requires a large, sustained volume of water. The water needs to flow inside the box, directly cooling the battery cells. These nozzles will likely be ineffective due to the design of the battery structure, and the numerous layers between the underside of the vehicle and the battery cells.

FIRE BLANKET

A fire blanket is traditionally used to smother a fire to starve it of oxygen. And as noted, a lithium-ion does not need oxygen from the atmosphere to burn, so trying to smother the fire will be ineffective. However, these blankets could be used to contain the fire for exposure protection. A word of caution, though: The battery cells give off harmful and flammable gasses (hydrogen, hydrogen fluoride) that could become trapped under the blanket. Removing the blanket could cause an energetic fire event when the gasses are released. Exposure to hydrogen fluoride could cause permanent damage to firefighter’s lungs and eyes. Always wear proper PPE when around any fire.

PIERCING NOZZLE

Piercing nozzles are designed to puncture the battery box in an effort to deliver large quantities of water inside the box to cool the battery cells. This solution is dangerous due to the electrocution hazard. There is also a possibility of causing more battery cells to fail by crushing cells or shorting out electrical components inside the box. NFPA and EV manufacturers warn against any attempts at gaining access to the inside of the battery box.

NEVER penetrate high voltage components with tools.

While some of these piercing nozzles are designed to be remotely activated, firefighters will eventually have to remove the nozzle from the vehicle. Placement is also a concern, as many battery box structures have cross-car frame rails that are not able to be penetrated. Sealed compartments within the box could also cause a problem for firefighters if the nozzle pierces the wrong compartment and floods an unaffected area. Additionally, the inside of some boxes is filled with polyurethane foam, making it impossible for water to flow through the box.

WHAT WORKS: LET IT BURN

The truth of the matter is there is no simple solution or tool to stop a thermal runaway in an EV's high-voltage battery. Directly cooling the battery cells is the best method, however the manufacturers do not give first responders direct access to the inside of the battery box. Trying to cool the battery cells from the outside will only extend a crew's time on scene.

If the battery box is intact and there are no exposures, the best solution is to simply wait for the battery to burn itself out, then extinguish the remaining class A fire. While this strategy is not ideal – and not one favored by aggressive, proactive and eager firefighters – it's really the best approach. It should only take an hour for the battery to burn itself out. The alternative will be to continually dump water on the vehicle for 6 to 8 hours.

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

Local Opportunity:

FIREFIGHTER CONTAMINATION REDUCTION AND CANCER PREVENTION

Occupational cancer due to firefighting is a silent killer- Firefighters face a 9% increase in cancer diagnoses and a 14% increase in cancer related deaths. Unlike many tragic events that take firefighters lives many firefighters are dying due to firefighting related cancers. Unfortunately, many of these deaths often go unnoticed. Learn how to take steps to help prevent these deaths from occurring.

The New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control has announced a major initiative to help protect its staff, New York State's firefighters and their families from the occupational threat of cancer. The initiative is a combination of awareness and education about the cancer threat with actions and policies that reduce the threat.

This training session will teach you how to

- Reduce levels of contamination after firefighting
- Recognize the spread of contamination
- Recognize the signs of cancer
- Understand the importance of annual physicals, and what the health care provider should know about firefighters' occupational risks
- Learn how to perform post fire gross decontamination
- Learn steps to prevent cross contamination to protect yourself and your family and friends

More Information can be found on our web site – <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc/regs/vfcancerdisability.cfm> Or email - nysffwellness@dhSES.ny.gov

- ✓ **Monday, February 6th, 7:00PM, Westmere Fire Department, 1741 Western Ave, Albany NY 12203**
- ✓ **Tuesday, February 7th, 7:00PM, Schenectady Co. Community College, 78 Washington Ave, Room 101 in the Stockade Building, Schenectady, NY 12305**
- ✓ **Wednesday, February 8th, 7:00PM, Saratoga County Public Safety Facility, 6012 County Farm Road, Ballston Spa NY 12020**

Letter from State Fire Administrator, James B. Cable

The New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control is excited to announce that we will be distributing firefighter decontamination kits at our Firefighter Contamination Reduction and Cancer Prevention classes statewide. OFPC will be working with counties and scheduling classes beginning in January of 2023. Firefighting activities subject first responders to repeated exposure to harmful substances on the fireground. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) reviewed available scientific literature and classified occupational exposure to the byproducts of combustion during firefighting activities as carcinogenic to humans. These conditions contribute to an increase in occupational illnesses that can be prevented by taking steps to reduce the risk. According to the International

Association of Firefighters, cancer is the leading cause of firefighter illness and death among their ranks. Firefighters have a higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a greater chance of dying from these same cancers according to the NFPA. The New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control is advising all fire departments and firefighters to take step immediately to protect themselves from these increased risks. Many of these steps do not require a significant investment of money or time. Below is a list of actions that should be implemented to reduce everyone's risk:

- Perform on scene gross decontamination, stop the exposure, and stop the spread of contaminants to the apparatus and station.
- While on scene use post- fire wipes to reduce exposures
- Shower as soon as possible and put on clean clothes
- Wash tools, equipment, and apparatus after fires
- Transport gear in non-porous containers, i.e. clear garbage bag
- Wear only clean gear, including hood

Together, we can reduce occupational illness in the fire service. By implementing a few simple procedures to “Reduce your exposure, Reduce your risk” the safety and effectiveness of our firefighting activities will be enhanced. We appreciate your continued support to better the health and wellness of firefighters statewide.

****‘Back To Center’: We Must Refocus Our Safety Culture Where It Matters Most**

Chief Marc Bashoor

I recall in the early 1980s sitting in a burning farmhouse wondering whether I was going to make it out alive. I remember people yelling at me to stand up, sit down, get out, move in further – an odd direction for the layperson, I am sure. Alas, I was no lay person per se. I was a firefighter-in-training. I was using the best full protective clothing we had at the time – a Scott 2215 SCBA (no positive pressure), three-quarter pull-up-boots (no bunker pants), and my trusty leather helmet (just the leather bowl, no cage, frame or harness). Yes, I was a fully clothed firefighter at an acquired structure burn following all the rules and learning what it would be like when the “real deal” happened.

More than a sterile academy burn building, these acquired structure burn opportunities were like gold at the time. This was the environment where I learned so much of what I know about fire behavior, structural integrity and my own capabilities. But I wasn't learning on my own. I was learning under the watchful eye of professional instructors and through previous reviews of other training burns-gone-bad.

Here's a snapshot of the things I learned in this environment:

- I learned the sense of **feel**. In the initial search to find the fire, in deep, smoky environments with near zero visibility, I learned to find where a fire was coming from, take my glove off and to put my hand up higher. I would feel where the heat was coming from (remember, there were no thermal imagers).
- I learned the value of **listening**. I shut my mouth, turned down any radios and listened – listened for crackling fire, the creaks of deteriorating structural members and the cries of trapped occupants.
- I learned to maintain a sense of **calm**. It is *normal* for drywall and insulation to be falling on me, but it can also be a sign. It wasn't the end of the world or any reason to panic.
- I learned the value of our **protective clothing** – to pull up my collar and to pull down my helmet flaps (we did not have Nomex hoods), to pull up my boots and make sure my coat overlapped the boots.
- I learned that I needed to be aggressive, courageous and humble, but to **never be reckless**. Our lives and the citizens we were there to serve depended on us doing the right things at the right times, for the right reasons.
- I learned how to slow my breathing, buddy-breathe and focus – this was when I realized that my job was to **solve this chaos**, not to *become part* of the chaos.

Could I have learned these things in an academy burn building? Some of them, sure, but the value of these acquired structure burns can't be overemphasized. Academies are very sterile and, yes, much safer environments – and this *should* be part of the mix. But acquired structures go a step further, providing real-world environments, unique floorplans, structural affects, and the psychologic value of the unknown.

Was I fearful? As a young volunteer recruit, sure I was, but I didn't have a death wish and I wasn't stupid. Through this real-world-training, my instructors taught me through repetitive, controlled experience to turn my *fear* into *respect*:

- Don't fear the heat, respect it.
- Don't fear the drywall falling, respect the environment.
- Don't fear the creaking of deteriorating lumber sounds, respect the structure.

WE GOT IN OUR OWN WAY

What's changed since the 1980s? For one, the evolution – some might call it *revolution* – of our safety culture.

In a recent FireRescue1 article, "It's time to embrace a new culture – a culture of search and rescue," Chief Daniel Folks questions whether our safety culture has made the service lose focus on what matters most on the fireground – by his argument, the victim. In the course of his reasoning, Chief Folks makes one simple yet profound proclamation that hits at the heart of my point here: "Stop making training easy." It's an important point and one that prompts consideration of how our enhanced safety culture has impacted training.

Consider this example: With respect to NFPA 1403: Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions, I don't believe that the standard in and of itself has created a hands-off approach to acquired structure training. Rather, the approach is the product of the risk-adverse culture pushed by city managers and lawyers who employ a "just say no" approach to live-fire training. That culture trickles down to emergency managers and chiefs, especially those who have never had the opportunity to learn through the experiences themselves. Further, the verbiage within NFPA 1403 – plus the resultant regulations from health departments and paperwork requirements from administration, risk managers, lawyers/legal, planning boards, etc. – have led many departments (and some jurisdictions) to abandon acquired-structure live-fire training, citing more "urgent" battles to fight. What's more, regulations cover everything from training staff positions to the asphalt roof tiles and asbestos-laden (or fear of asbestos) materials in the structure. The cost to mitigate these health hazards drives acquired structure burns right out of many departments' reach.

I'm ALL IN on the framework of safety and our safety culture, but it seems somewhere along the path, we got in our own way. In the effort to improve training safety, we compromised our access to acquired structure live-fire training. The result is less experience in these real-world conditions. How does this impact our fireground safety and the safety of the citizens we are sworn to protect?

THE PENDULUM SWING

In many departments, I've seen a lack of leadership skills being taught to our instructors. I mean *true* leadership skills, providing instructors the guidance to ensure they we're doing the right things. We have empowered some instructors to feel either ostracized or omnipotent. (This is NOT an indictment of all training academies, rather a reflection of what I've seen at some.)

At various points in modern fire service history, some training academies were considered punishment assignments, while at other times, they were considered elite assignments. When budgets were good, the training academy was the best of the best. When budgets are tight, training academies take serious hits. This feast-or-famine approach to training has led to tragic training outcomes time after time. We must find a way to ensure that training is a constant priority for all, not just a convenience for some.

We have got to bring ourselves "back to center." I am in no way suggesting that we abandon our safety culture or enhanced risk reduction approaches. Far from it. I am suggesting that there are examples where the pendulum has swung too far, and that we are seeing this manifest in basic and critical-environment performance (or lack of performance) on our firegrounds. We need to ensure training assignments are indeed "elite" assignments within our departments, and that our instructors are empowered to use all opportunities at their disposal to provide real-world training opportunities to our folks.

RECKLESSNESS, AGGRESSIVENESS, RESPECT AND FEAR

Aggressiveness can be great – when it is not reckless. Let's be clear, aggressiveness and recklessness and everything in between can kill. Firefighters don't get hurt and die simply because; there are many factors that we must weigh in the execution of our duties. We must understand that NOTHING we do deserves a reckless response, and not everything we do should be treated like a house fire. *Again*, not everything we do is an emergency and not everything we do deserves an aggressive response.

We must use a risk-benefit analysis to determine the level of aggressiveness that's prudent and reasonable to execute the mission at hand. If you've been in the fire service more than a minute, then you know that risk-benefit analysis might dictate unpopular decisions about whether we go or don't go – decisions that others will argue that we should have done differently.

How do we determine what that risk-benefit analysis looks like? It begins with a healthy RESPECT for the things we FEAR. There are some among us who will have to come to grips with the fact that one of the things they fear is an *appropriate* level of aggressiveness.

Recklessness, aggressiveness, respect and fear – things we experience, things we learn, things we demonstrate, and sometimes things we overcome. Whether you’re able to utilize acquired structures, academy grounds, an e-learning platform or virtual reality tool, it is important that we teach firefighters to respect their fears, and provide them the tools to overcome those fears.

Just as important (maybe more so), it is our responsibility to recognize and immediately correct recklessness. Do it NOW. The reckless behaviors and activities that you and I both see nearly every day have no place on our scenes. It is incumbent upon each of us to correct those activities when they occur. Do the right thing – be aggressively competent, not recklessly incompetent! Your life may just depend on it!

IN 2022 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED *4 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...

- Two Tulsa OK, firefighters were hurt Sunday night when a car struck them at the scene of a prior vehicle collision on Highway 75,
 - FDNY Firefighter Anthony Mauro, 34, will be laid to rest after a years-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
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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

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	02+12=14
Last fire death Youngstown, Niagara Co. Male 70	

Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	4+21=25
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	72 + 93=165
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NY-14
	2 NC-13
	3 OH-11
There has been a total of 0276 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

Your Volunteer Retention Playbook: How To Maintain Membership

Dan Rogers

What's the process for bringing new volunteers into your department? Do you simply provide the new member gear, a pager and a T-shirt and expect them to succeed?

Even for officers who see the clear fault in that approach, some likely find themselves wondering how to meet the needs of the department and their recruits – a lot of work for a volunteer officer, perhaps more than they want to take on. While it does take work, officers must recognize that fostering new members is critical to the future of the volunteer fire service – critical in getting members to stay.

In the accompanying article on recruitment, "Your volunteer recruitment playbook: How to develop the plan and execute," I touched on firefighter retention and the reasons we *believe* firefighters are leaving the ranks.

The more likely reasons for our retention issues fall into four categories:

Lack of quality training and leadership;

Culture of cliques that exclude others;

Generational differences that cause tension; and

Lack of camaraderie or sense of community.

Let's break down each reason to better understand what we can do to eliminate these issues.

1. LACK OF QUALITY TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP

Just because we were successful in recruiting new members doesn't mean our job is complete. A recruitment plan must include a path for new members to become fully trained and developed public servants. After all, there is nothing worse than wasting a fully committed volunteer due to lack of training or lackluster leadership.

Remember, as department officers, we made a promise to these new recruits to provide them the training they needed to keep themselves and those around them safe. Make sure you have a quality training plan ready. Focus early trainings on what Seattle Captain (ret.) Mike Gagliano calls the "flawless execution of the basics." Assign them a mentor who will provide continuous coaching for success.

2. CULTURE OF CLIQUES THAT EXCLUDE OTHERS

This is far more common than we think. Chief officers do this subconsciously. Why? Because those members who show up more tend to be given the "better" jobs on the fireground. Why? Because we trust them more. As a result, those members tend to hang within their own group. In addition, generational cohorts tend to stick together.

We must identify cliques within our department and ensure that we are spreading the workload more evenly. Yes, this is easier said than done, especially when safety is involved. However, we must, at a minimum, have a group conversation about expectations; this can help diffuse the situation without hurting anyone's feelings. Simply explain: "If you want better jobs on the fireground, then show up to more trainings."

Further, make a solid effort to break up these exclusionary groups by teaming members who might not normally choose to work together. This might also involve having some difficult conversations in private with your veteran members. Explain to them that they are the future of this department, and the responsibility lies with them. Challenge them:

“Where will we be in 15 years given our current situation?” We never know day to day who will show up, so forming that brotherhood and sisterhood bond starts with leaders and veterans. It starts with culture.

3. GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES THAT CAUSE TENSION

When I joined the department, the older “salty” members complained about my generation and called us weak. But 30 years before that, the veteran members of my department also complained about the incoming generation. This type of complaining has been going on since firefighters learned to complain.

It’s time we put our differences aside and focus on what we have in common – our desire to help the community. The sooner we can focus energy on the advancement of the department, the sooner we can work together as a team.

Remind the older members that their family, friends and neighbors will benefit from change, spending money and/or technology. Remind the younger members that everything we do is for the benefit of the community we serve. Remind newer members that the “saltier” members have, in fact, seen and done a few things, and still have a lot to offer the department.

Cohesiveness is achieved by defining specific goals, mixing new and old experiences, and reaching these goals as a team. And when things go right, celebrate your successes together.

4. LACK OF CAMARADERIE OR SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Feelings cannot be forced. We cannot force a member to have pride in the department or a sense of community, or even camaraderie with another firefighter. We can only facilitate an atmosphere that focuses on teamwork, all while moving toward a common goal of providing better service for our community.

Consider the U.S. Army. Despite coming from all walks of life with many diverse backgrounds, soldiers form an unbreakable bond that comes to bear during even the most extreme situations. Why? Because they were trained to depend on each other when their environment gets hairy (similar to ours). When things get tough, they lean on each other, because they trust each other.

This is how we need to train our members. Put members in simulated situations where they are forced to lean on each other. Team members who wouldn’t normally choose each other and facilitate solidarity. A simple Google search yields hundreds of team-building exercises that promote trust and communication that can be carried over to the fireground. Now that we have touched on the retention issues plaguing our agencies, let’s now consider some solutions to overcome these retention pitfalls.

START A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The best way to help ensure retention of newly recruited firefighters is to implement a mentor program.

Each recruit should be assigned their own mentor, typically not an officer, but rather an active firefighter with 5 years or more experience, who would report additional to the chief officer. The mentor serves as a sounding board for recruits, sometimes afraid to talk with their officer.

The mentor should be tasked with overseeing training, answering questions, introducing the recruit to active members, and ensuring that all associated documentation is up to date. The mentor is the go-to person for the recruit. Through this process, the mentor will gain valuable experience in dealing with personnel and equipment issues. What better way to gauge the abilities of a potential future officer?

FORM COMMITTEES WITHIN YOUR DEPARTMENT

I am a huge proponent of committees. I believe wholeheartedly that committees can help halt a downward trajectory and increase morale within your agency.

Start by establishing three to five committees. Assign two to three firefighters per committee, and task them with handling various equipment needs, regulatory compliances, and divisions.

Require them to report at each meeting on needs, updates and improvements made within their committee. Ask to hear from each member and continue to task them with activities that fall within their respective committee. Hold them accountable for these duties and be clear with your expectations.

How do committees fit into retention?

You’re giving members a voice at the meeting. They have ownership and feel like a member of the team.

You’re giving members responsibility within the department. Responsibility = commitment; commitment = pride; pride = retention.

You’re breaking down generational barriers by promoting healthy working relationships among members.

You’re relieving overworked officers of basic tasks.

Some examples of committees:

Small equipment: This committee is tasked with starting, checking and maintaining all small engines and equipment within the department. Repairs and issues should be brought to the membership's attention via the meeting report as well as updates and potential new equipment purchases. Let these folks spec new equipment. Trust them.

ISO/NFPA/OSHA compliance: ISO, NFPA, OSHA compliances can be difficult for small departments to manage. Create a committee to research NFPA/OSHA standards to ensure your agency is compliant. Task the members with not just bringing non-compliance to light but also brainstorming solutions before presenting to the membership.

PPE: This committee is charged with categorizing, inventorying and issuing PPE. It is also in charge of PPE NFPA compliance and developing new gear specs when the time comes to purchase.

Speaking of PPE, here's an example of why it's important to include non-officers on purchasing committees: My department was awarded a PPE grant. We formed a purchasing committee that was ultimately given the responsibility of choosing the gear our department will be wearing for the next 10 years. The committee included interior firefighters, only two of whom were officers and none who worked too closely with department finances. This allowed them to go beyond the bottom line to focus on the equipment.

The committee was tasked with meeting with seven vendors and demonstrating several sets of gear from each vendor. They returned a set of specs that were sent out for bid. Once the bids returned, the chief and I worked with the group on the financial side.

The committee chose a vendor and presented the PPE request of choice to the membership for vote. Members asked several questions, and the committee answered without issue. In the end, the process gave the committee members a sense of responsibility and belonging.

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

Most chief officers know that we will never get a formal thank you from the thousands of people we help during our careers. But the "thankless" element of the job should really only relate to interactions with the public.

I know what you're thinking: "No one ever thanked me for running into burning buildings." You're right, me either. But times have changed, members have changed, and if we are serious about the retention, we must adapt. Thank your members for showing up and let them know you appreciate their time.

There are many other ways we can thank our members. Length of service awards, response stipends and training incentives are some of the best ways to show appreciation. These tokens of appreciation can come in the form of a department shirt, plaque, gift card or even monetary payment. I know my department can't afford these things when we can barely cover PPE upgrades, so we apply for funding to help with this. Let's tackle this next.

APPLY FOR GRANTS

The most underrated grant in the fire service is the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant. This grant has a portion of funding dedicated solely to the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

By developing a recruitment and retention plan, you can apply to have your marketing, training and retention programs funded without matching any funds. This program, as I have experienced myself, is an absolute game-changer when it comes to recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Several retention tools are covered through SAFER grants:

Retention/training

- Tuition for training: Funding for a training to advance members' careers.
- Basic firefighter training: Funding designed for the recruit to earn a basic level of certification as your department requires.

Retention/acknowledgement

- Length of service awards: Funding to purchase length of service awards for current members and even recruits outlined in your recruitment plan.
- Response stipend: Funding to provide firefighters with a monetary payment or gift card based on response totals (also can be utilized as a recruitment tool).
- Training incentives: Funding to provide firefighters with a clothing incentive when training requirements are met or exceeded. (How many chiefs get nagged about a new department hoodie? Make them earn it.)

When applying for grant funding, especially a SAFER grant, it's important that you identify the need, research the core issues, and develop a solution. This is referred to as a basic Applied Research Project (APR), and you don't have to be a scientist to make one.

Grants are all based on the basic premise of needs vs. wants. As a grant writer, I always envision myself at the desk of the peer reviewer considering if this funding request is for an actual need or simply a want. You have to prove to me that there is a need, and a quality APR usually answers this question for me.

If this all sounds a little too much for you to handle, remember that grant writer fees are 100% reimbursable if awarded. There are many grant writers who can help you through each step of the process. Reach out to someone and give your agency the best chance of being successful.

BE THE CHANGE

While there is no single solution to our retention issues, I have seen these tactics work to recruit members, train them, and retain them as quality, volunteer firefighters. I know that if you put in the work, use the resources, and keep up the recruitment and retention work, your agency will maintain a quality membership well beyond your days as the member wearing the white helmet.

The future belongs to those who are willing to make the changes. The true test of a fire department is how well the membership operates in our absence. If you feel like you, personally, must be present for your agency to get the job done, then you have failed at preparing for the future, and it's time to change that.

FIRE DEPARTMENT CONSOLIDATIONS - CLOSURES

After 90+ Years, CT Volunteer Company Packs It In

Firefighter Nation Staff

North Haven Fire Department on Sunday reassigned the last remaining volunteer firefighters from the Montowese fire station, ending a 91-year run for the volunteer company.

Since 1932 the Montowese section of town has been proudly served by dedicated volunteer firefighters, the department said on Facebook. At one time the Montowese fire station had a full roster of 35 active volunteer firefighters with a waiting list. The department could regularly boast that it responded to calls with two pieces of apparatus with all six seats full on each.

But that was any years ago. In recent years, the volunteer count has dwindled until last Sunday the six remaining volunteers were reassigned to two other stations in town with active volunteer components.

Going forward the Montowese station will be staffed by three career firefighters.

"The decision to reassign members of Montowese was requested by volunteer leadership based upon growing concerns over the inability to respond to fire incidents when dispatched. The intent is that by reassigning members to other stations, the fire department can bolster the operability of the two remaining volunteer stations that each have 10 or less qualified firefighters remaining," the department said.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

****Four NY Fire Departments Not Liable For Housefire**

The Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court has ruled that four fire departments sued by a homeowner after a fire cannot be held liable for negligence because they did not owe the homeowner a special duty.

Franciszek C. Kulon filed suit against the Neversink Fire Department, Liberty Fire District, Loch Sheldrake Fire Department, and Grahamsville Volunteer Fire Department claiming they were negligent when they responded to a fire in his home on February 18, 2014. The crux of Kulon's case was that the fire departments failed "*to timely respond and to arrive adequately equipped to properly fight the fire.*" Kulon's home was located in an area that lacked hydrants, and took apparatus over 15 minutes to reach the scene.

The fire departments claimed that fire departments do not owe a legal duty to property owners like Kulon. Their argument is similar to the public duty doctrine we discuss here regularly, although the term "public duty" is not

mentioned in the case. The Supreme Court for Sullivan County agreed with the fire departments and granted their motion for summary judgment, prompting Kulon to appeal.

The Appellate Division agreed with the trial court. Quoting from the Appellate Division's decision:

- *It is well established that no action for negligence will lie against a municipality for damages incurred in its performance of a governmental function absent the existence of a special duty.*
- *A special duty is one that is "more than that owed the public generally".*
- *This doctrine was developed "to rationally limit the class of citizens to whom the municipality owes a duty of protection"*
- *A special duty can be established in one of the following ways: "(1) when the municipality violates a statutory duty enacted for the benefit of a particular class of persons; (2) when it voluntarily assumes a duty that generates justifiable reliance by the person who benefits from the duty; or (3) when the municipality assumes positive direction and control in the face of a known, blatant and dangerous safety violation".*
- *In this case, plaintiff asserts the second method and alleges the existence of a special relationship between himself and defendants.*
- *The long-settled elements of a special relationship are: "(1) an assumption by the governmental entity, through promises or actions, of an affirmative duty to act on behalf of the party who was injured; (2) knowledge on the part of the entity's agents that inaction could lead to harm; (3) some form of direct contact between the entity's agents and the injured party; and (4) that party's justifiable reliance on the entity's affirmative undertaking."*
- *Here, defendants LFD, LSF and GVFD have established that they had no contact with plaintiff prior to or after arriving on scene.*
- *With regard to the remaining defendant, NFD, it is undisputed that plaintiff had direct contact when he spoke to NFD's first assistant chief at the scene.*
- *However, a simple conversation with the first assistant chief, without more, does not give rise to a special duty.*
- *It is undisputed that the conversation consisted of plaintiff informing the assistant chief that the home was uninsured and that the fire must be put out quickly.*
- *The first assistant chief's pat response; that they were going to try to put the fire out; did not amount to a specific promise or an assumption of an affirmative duty specific to plaintiff, but was simply an assurance that it would perform its duty owed to the public in general.*
- *Additionally, there is no evidence in the record that plaintiff justifiably relied on this statement to his detriment.*

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:

****Policy Points: 3 Essential Elements For Incident Command Policies And Procedures**

Shannon Pieper

Incident commanders (ICs) must be aware of and account for so many factors – building construction, the abilities and experience of the responding personnel, water supply, wind conditions, the presence of potential victims, the list goes on and on. Efficiently absorbing these details and making quick decisions that support incident priorities and firefighter safety is as much art as science. But comprehensive, well-thought-out incident command policies – applied by trained and qualified command officers – lay the foundation for success.

Your department's incident command policies and procedures are critical to ensuring standardized response to incidents by your agency and your mutual-aid partners. You can't control the specific emergency crews will face as they pull up on scene, but you can develop a command system and train personnel so they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the system.

Following are three elements every fire department's incident command policies and procedures should address, plus one crucial point department leaders must follow to ensure all members are on the same page.

1. KEY COMMAND ACTIONS FOR THE FIRST 5 MINUTES

One of Chief Alan Brunacini's "Timeless Tactical Truths" is "Most of the time on the fireground, the first five minutes are worth the next five hours." The actions all personnel take upon arrival set the tone for the entire incident. Having a trained, qualified and experienced IC can make a huge difference.

In addition to notifying dispatch of arrival and initial scene size-up, the IC's first five minutes should include:

- Establishing personnel accountability using whatever system the department has approved
- Performing (or directing another member to perform) a 360-degree assessment
- Determining whether the initial strategy will be offensive or defensive, and communicating this to all personnel
- Assigning critical tasks to responding personnel
- Calling for any additional resources as appropriate

2. WHAT TO DO WHEN THE IC CAN'T COMMAND

Ideally, an IC does not engage in firefighting operations, instead establishing a location for the command post and remaining there throughout the incident. However, we all know many fire departments don't operate with ideal staffing, and there are conditions under which a first-arriving company officer cannot establish command mode but instead must get involved in the operation.

Fire department policies should acknowledge this reality while also setting the expectation that it should be the exception, not the rule. In the rare case in which the first-arriving company officer determines command mode isn't practical, the company officer should declare either an investigative mode (the IC is investigating with the crew) or a fast attack mode (the IC's direct involvement in the fire attack will make a positive difference). In either of these modes, the IC should always carry a portable radio and communicate appropriately with dispatch and other personnel, including assigning incoming units to tasks.

As soon as possible, the IC – in investigative or fast attack mode – should transfer command to a qualified officer or direct incoming units to take over investigative or fire attack tasks so the IC can assume command mode.

3. PROCESS FOR TRANSFER OF COMMAND

Communication challenges rank high in the list of factors cited by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in its line-of-duty death reports. Transferring command presents the potential for communication breakdown, making it a high-risk process.

When the initial-arriving company officer transfers command to a chief officer, it should be done face-to-face if possible and include information such as:

- Conditions encountered on arrival, including extent of the fire
- The strategy and mode (command, investigative, fast attack)
- Current outcome of strategy and tactics
- Any significant obstacles or problems you've encountered
- Crew assignments and locations
- Personnel accountability report
- Tactical objectives/plan for the next operational period

Once command is transferred, remember to communicate to dispatch and all personnel on scene so there's no confusion over who is managing the incident.

CRUCIAL POINT: ALIGNMENT ACROSS ALL INCIDENT COMMAND DOCUMENTATION

Incident command concepts and procedures are found throughout a fire department's policies. Inconsistencies within these documents can create serious safety and liability risks for the department. When a change is made to one document, all related documents must be reviewed and changed if needed. Related documentation can include:

- Policies governing incident management, emergency response and fireground accountability

- Procedures for establishing fireground operations, establishing unified command and overseeing personnel accountability
- Incident command checklists or “cheat sheets”
- Incident command forms
- Training documents

TIME TO REVIEW

Commanding a fire incident is always challenging; reducing the risk involved with it should be a priority for all departments. A great place to start is with a review of the department’s incident command policies and related documentation to ensure they are comprehensive, consistent and in line with best practice.

CLASSIFIED

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!

Ask your doctor if a drug with 32 pages of side effects is right for You!

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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!!

NOTE: New Contact for Penflex, Nicole Meeker

We want to welcome LaBella Engineering to our list of business partners.

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, 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