

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

JANUARY 21ST, 2023

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

THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

2023 CAPITAL AREA MEETING & TRAINING SCHEDULE

Member Dinner Meeting Thursday February 9th 7:00pm dinner served at 6PM

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

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

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

Thursday May 11th Meeting of the General Membership

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

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

August, No Meeting

Thursday September 14th, General Membership Meeting 7PM

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

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

December, No Meeting

Printable Calendar – See Last Page

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

2023 Membership Activity Options Being Explored

Saturday, November 11, 2023 8:00 AM

Fall Workshop Location and Date to be determined

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

CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[You Are Invited to 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

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

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- **Page 9 is a must read, this month related to Commissioner's Oath and Surety Bond for the fire district Treasurer.
- Congratulations to Rensselaer County on the completion of their new state of art fire training facility.
- We still need someone to step up to be a region 1 director for the next two years, please contact tom rinaldi or any of the officers if you are interested. Nominations from the region can still occur until the May annual meeting.
- Welcome LaBellaPC, 1,400+ architects, engineers, planners, code services and construction managers working in more than 30 offices — from Rochester, New York to Madrid, Spain

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.

Edward "Ned" Carter Memorial Scholarship

- The Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York is pleased to offer the Ned Carter Memorial Scholarship Award for High School Seniors. These scholarships are named in honor of Past President Ed 'Ned' Carter', and all deceased past presidents of the Association. In keeping with Ned's lifelong dedication to community service and helping others, four, onetime \$1,500 scholarships will be presented to graduating high school seniors who will be pursuing a career in a community services related discipline. **LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** https://www.afdsny.org/general_information.php
- Must be submitted online or Postmarked by March 3, 2023.

TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER



COFFEE WITH COMMISSIONERS FOR 2023

Thursday, February 2nd at 7PM, "Training for Success"

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 THE NYS LEGISLATURE

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

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.

[Bethlehem Central School District May Opt-In On Tax Benefits For Volunteer Fire, Ambulance Officers](#)

by: Tamara Starr

According to government officials, the number of volunteer firefighters in New York has declined by 32% over the last 25 years. Governor Hochul recently announced tax breaks for volunteer firefighters and ambulance volunteers. Bethlehem Central School District (BCSD) is among the first to discuss offering a discount on property and school taxes.

“If they are interested, they must fill out the appropriate paperwork on or before March 1st,” John McPhillips, Chief Business Financial Officer for BCSD, said.

The district will offer up to a 10% property tax exemption or an income tax credit according to the incentive. Volunteers must also have at least two years of volunteer service to qualify.

Fire and ambulance officials hope this will increase the number of applications and retention, which is needed since departments are struggling to help other districts with low staffing.

“But that’s only a temporary fix. Because when I not only have to respond to my department’s calls but then I’m responding to and assisting people in other departments,” John D’Alessandro, Secretary for FASNY, said. “It’s just a terrible cycle we get into. And what winds up happening is the people that stay a volunteer firefighter get burned out.” Fire officials encourage anyone interested to invest one hour by visiting their local fire or ambulance department.

“Usually on a night where they are training or doing a hands-on class. And see what it’s all about. Answer that curiosity,” Secretary D’Alessandro said. “Because you may just find that it’s the most rewarding hour you have ever invested in ...in your entire life.”

If the BCSD Board of Education approves the incentive on February 1st, the partial tax exemption will become available to all eligible volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers in the district.

[Editor's Note: work is being done with Shenendehowa School District for the 10% tax break also]

[WEBINAR: What You Need to Know - The New Property Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Workers](#)

Jan. 24, 2023, 6 p.m.

As a result of FASNY's longstanding advocacy on behalf of the volunteer fire service, the opportunity to receive a property tax exemption for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers is now available across the state. There is a brand-new law (Real Property Tax Law § 466-a) that extends a real property tax exemption statewide and requires specific opt-in by each local taxing jurisdiction. On Tuesday, Jan. 24 at 6 p.m., join FASNY General Counsel Tim Hannigan as he explores this new law in an information-packed webinar. He'll also provide insight, analysis, and a tool kit - including forms - for you to use with your local taxing jurisdictions to help obtain this critical recruitment and retention tool for your volunteer fire service.

This program is open to FASNY Members only.

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: https://fasny.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_goxjkQyHTWSkZz9ho58FrQ

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>

A report from the Task Force is pending, it's recommended that the Task Force continue for 2023.

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!

[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"](#)

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>



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-ss0@vfris.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@vfris.com, Monday – Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm.

Posted to our web site at this LINK: <https://afdca.org/vfris-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 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)

New Course! Leadership for the Fire & Emergency Services

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

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

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

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE -CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

Michigan City Officials Devise New Incentive Plan for Volunteer Firefighters After IRS Ruling

Anne Runkle

Troy city officials are devising a new incentive plan for volunteer firefighters after the Internal Revenue Service ruled that a previous plan didn't meet the requirements for tax-exempt status.

City officials want to come up with a plan that meets the IRS' requirements, limits the city's financial obligations and fairly compensates the unpaid firefighters, said Mayor Ethan Baker.

"There's a lot of moving parts to this. We have a wonderful group of volunteer firefighters. They put in a lot of time and risk their lives," Baker said.

The city has about 140 volunteer firefighters and 12 full-time paid staff in the Fire Department.

Most volunteers join the Fire Department because they want to serve their community; they aren't even aware of the incentive, Baker said. But the city is using the incentive to help retain volunteers, he said.

Volunteers are vested after 10 years but many devote decades of service, Baker said. They collect the incentive when they retire.

Troy had a volunteer fire department for about 80 years, before it became a city. The city created the incentive plan in 1979.

The IRS had been questioning the plan for several years. It recently ruled the plan has tax consequences for both the city and volunteers because the benefits provided are greater than those allowed by a tax-exempt Length of Service Award Program for volunteer firefighters, according to a statement on the city's website.

The city unsuccessfully challenged the IRS ruling, Baker said. City officials determined that closing the current plan and replacing it was the best option.

The city will close the current plan April 30 and open a new one, effective May 1. Officials are still working out the details. "After the closure, current participants will receive a lump sum payment based on an April 30 value (as determined by an independent actuarial firm)," the statement said.

The city will fund this obligation, which is expected to deplete the current fund of \$13.9 million, built over the years with the city's general fund dollars, Baker said. The city has to contribute an additional \$5 million from the general fund, he said.

The IRS ruling had tax implications for both the city and the firefighters; the city voluntarily paid the firefighters' share, Baker said.

Baker acknowledged that it is unusual for a city the size of Troy to have a volunteer fire department. City officials are aware of only one city in the nation that is larger than Troy and has a volunteer fire department. But Baker doubts the incentive fund dilemma will result in the city moving to a paid fire service.

He has talked to “a ton of firefighters” and doesn’t know of any who are quitting because of the IRS ruling.

The volunteers are certified by the Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council and are on call 24 hours a day, according to the city’s statement.

In addition to responding to fires, traffic crashes and other emergencies, the firefighters regularly commit time to training exercises.

CHALLENGES:

[America Is Still Burning’: Officials Highlight Fire Dynamics, Firefighter Staffing Problems](#)

Rebecca Santana

fires feeding off modern materials found in people’s homes are burning faster and becoming deadlier at the same time that fire departments across the country are struggling to retain and recruit firefighters, officials said Thursday.

Officials with various firefighting-related agencies were in Washington to call attention to fire-related problems roughly a year after two deadly fires days apart in 2022 — one in Philadelphia and one in New York — killed 29 people. They’re also recommending a number of ways to deal with the problem.

Last year nearly 2,500 people died as a result of fires, including 96 firefighters, according to U.S. Fire Administrator Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell. More than 1 million structures caught fire and more than 7.5 million acres burned in wildfires last year, she said.

“America is still burning,” she said.

The number of fires being reported to fire departments has been going down, said Steve Kerber, the Vice President and Executive Director of the Fire Safety Research Institute, but the fires that do happen are fueled by greater use of synthetic materials in everyday items like couches and as a result burn much more quickly. Faster fires lessen the time residents can escape and fire departments can respond, Kerber said. Over the last decade fire deaths have increased by 30%, he said.

Decades ago, it would likely take half an hour for a room to be completely consumed with fire, he said. But now, with materials widely used in homes, that can happen in as little as three minutes. At the same time, Americans are increasingly bringing into their homes.

things like scooters or electric bikes that use lithium-ion batteries. If one of those is damaged and starts to burn it can become an explosive fire in seconds, he said.

“Today you have the least amount of time to safely exit your home than any time in history,” Kerber said.

At the same time, volunteer and paid fire departments around the country are struggling to retain or recruit firefighters. Eric Bernard, board of the National Volunteer Fire Council and a volunteer firefighter in Maryland, said many volunteer fire organizations in big states such as Pennsylvania or New York have seen a steady decline in members since the 1980s. But since the pandemic there has been a “massive” drop in people who want to join both volunteer and career fire departments, he said, and more firefighters are retiring. Bernard attributed that to the stress of going on calls during the pandemic, when firefighters would often be the ones going into the homes of very sick patients and taking them to the hospital.

“That fatigue and that exhaustion physically, mentally, has caused many of the career people to retire, retire early,” Bernard said, adding, “We have health issues, mental health, post-traumatic stress and members that catch COVID.”

Bernard said fire departments also struggle to recruit women and more diverse applicants into their ranks.

Fire officials are making a number of recommendations to solve the problems, including creating an apprenticeship program to address the firefighter shortages and help diversify the ranks of firefighters; helping prepare and equip all firefighters to deal with wildfires driven by climate change; implementing and enforcing building codes; and making sure affordable housing meets safety standards. They’re also advocating for suicide prevention initiatives and a comprehensive strategy to battle cancer in firefighters.

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

January Dedicated as Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month

Occupational cancer is now the leading cause of death among fire fighters – surpassing heart disease. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) are committed to reversing this trend to save more fire fighter lives.

'Decon Kits' Hope To Help Prevent Cancer In Alabama Firefighters

VIDEO: January is firefighter cancer awareness month. It's a time for departments and advocates to raise awareness about the ongoing occupational hazards that firefighters face every day. According to research by the CDC and National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Firefighters have a nine percent higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a fourteen percent higher risk of dying from cancer than the average person but, advocates in Alabama are working toward ways to help lower those statistics. Toney Volunteer Fire Department President Heath Jones said the Huntsville Fire Department's Cancer Committee is investing in helping local departments fight one of the main factors that contribute to a higher risk of cancer among firefighters, namely the absorption of hazardous chemicals through their skin. The department is doing this with new decon kits.

Governor Hochul Announces State Cancer Prevention Efforts to Protect Firefighters and Their Families During Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month

Newly Announced Decontamination Protocols Reduce Firefighters' Exposure to Toxic Contaminants by 85 Percent
State Office of Fire Prevention and Control Expanding Classes and Trainings to Include Cancer Awareness and Prevention Education

Sessions to Begin at Local Fire Departments this Week, Distributing Free Decontamination Kits and Educational Materials
Educational [Video](#) Released to Raise Awareness of the Cancer Risk Facing Firefighters and Detail Decontamination Protocols

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced the State's Office of Fire Prevention and Control will begin new outreach efforts to help protect New York's firefighters and their families from the threat of cancer. State Fire officials initially launched a similar outreach program in early 2020, which was placed on hold due to the pandemic. This new initiative coincides with January's Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month, raising awareness among the fire service on how to develop life-saving protocols for cancer prevention, and to support those who've already received a cancer diagnosis within their fire departments.

"The state's firefighters bravely risk their own lives and safety every day to protect their fellow New Yorkers," **Governor Hochul said.** "Sadly, cancer is a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of all of our fire service members, and we are committed to ensuring that these heroes have the most up-to-date guidance and information so they can enjoy a long, safe career and live a healthy life."

New York State Homeland Security and Emergency Services Commissioner Jackie Bray said, "The brave women and men of New York's fire service protect us from danger every day. However, too many lives of firefighters are being lost to cancer. During Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month, we are ramping up efforts to educate the fire service and mitigate their risks of exposure to carcinogens found in smoke. I am proud of our State Fire team for leading the way on this initiative, providing in-person training sessions and distributing decontamination kits to fire departments across the state."

Studies have shown firefighters are at a higher risk of cancer than the general public, largely due to their exposure to an increased level of toxins found in smoke at structure fires. To ensure New York's firefighters are not only aware of this threat but also know how to limit their own risk, State Fire officials developed basic protocols for decontaminating firefighting gear following a response call and will be traveling throughout the state to promote their use by firefighters. Research has shown that fire service members can take simple and inexpensive steps to reduce their exposure, as well as protect their families, to toxins and other carcinogens by up to 85 percent.

State Fire officials have begun working with counties across the state to schedule Firefighter Contamination Reduction and Cancer Prevention classes. At these meetings, State Fire will distribute firefighter decontamination kits to attendees.

These kits contain information on decontamination immediately after incident response and items, such as a five-gallon bucket, post-fire wipes, hose, detergent, brush, and spray bottle.

New York State Fire Administrator Jim Cable said, "We are thrilled to continue our program educating members of the State Fire Service on immediate steps they can take to protect themselves following an incident response. Sadly, cancer is now the leading cause of firefighter deaths in the nation. Our goal is to reduce occupational illness by educating our brothers and sisters in the fire service on specific measures they can take to reduce exposure to contaminants and lower their health risks."

If firefighting turnout gear is not decontaminated properly after a fire, firefighters risk exposing harmful chemicals to their firehouses and homes, potentially harming co-workers and family members. According to two studies conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), firefighters are currently being diagnosed with cancer at a nearly 10 percent higher rate than the general public and experiencing cancer-related deaths at a nearly 15 percent higher rate.

To combat these trends, DHSES and OFPC have established basic, inexpensive protocols which will go a long way in limiting firefighters' exposure to harmful chemicals often found in smoke.

If exposed during a response, firefighters should:

- 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 such as a clear garbage bag.
- Wear only clean gear, including hood.

Starting this month, State experts will travel across New York State to bring these protocols directly to firefighters via in-person educational sessions at local fire departments. At each session, firefighters will view a live demonstration of the new decontamination protocols, a new educational video that details the protocols and the risks facing firefighters and have an opportunity for a Q&A with OFPC personnel involved in developing the protocols. Additionally, OFPC is expanding its entire roster of firefighting classes and trainings to include a section on cancer awareness and prevention education. New sessions are being scheduled on a rolling basis. Firefighters looking to attend or host an educational session can view the State Office of Fire Prevention and Control's [training calendar](#), or contact their county's fire coordinator.

[In Memory of Kurt T. Bradley](#)

Grant writer, consultant, and trainer extraordinaire. Lifelong public safety advocate. Veteran. Friend.

On Dec. 22, 2022, our beloved Kurt T. Bradley passed away peacefully after succumbing to complications from a stroke.

Whether you are new here or have been a long-time customer, we wanted to take a moment and acknowledge Kurt.

He devoted his life to his country and to the betterment of public safety agencies nationwide.

Kurt's family has requested that anyone that wants to memorialize Kurt make a donation to a first responder

organization in his name. We will be making a donation to the Gary Sinise Foundation, and a link is below if you would like to do the same.

Thank you for joining us in honoring Kurt, his memory, and his tireless devotion to our country and its first responders.

IN 2022 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED *1 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...

-
- at: <https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/>

Reference Material for Use in a Line of Duty Death

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

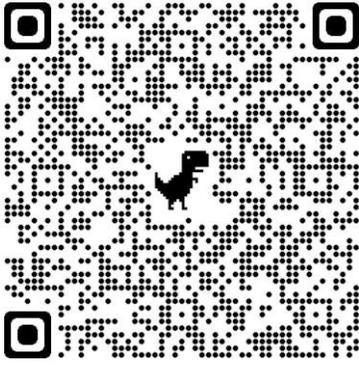
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	00+2=02
Last fire death Poughkeepsie, Ulster Co. Male 88	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	0+4=4
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	17 + 55=72
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NC-9
	2 IN-6
	3 VA & MI-5
There has been a total of 0124 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.

LIGHTNING STRIKE TO CSST LEADS TO LODD

Corrugated stainless-steel tubing (**CSST**) is lightweight tubing that’s wrapped in jacketing to carry natural gas or propane throughout a dwelling. This kind of gas piping doesn’t always function well with lightning strikes, which is what caused the fire that ultimately led to Laird’s death. When lightning strikes in or near a home, improperly grounded and poorly bonded CSST systems might become energized. If an energized CSST system arcs to another metallic system and a hole in the pipe is created, escaping gas can ignite. (Model fire codes in the United States didn’t require direct bonding of CSST until 2009.)

LODDs. LODDs rarely result from a single act or omission. Instead, there are many different critical factors that are linked by a series of operational mistakes, violations, omissions and chance. The chain of tragedy comes together with outdated or unclear policies, policies that were ignored, resource deficiencies, qualification inequities and a mission that has lost focus.



[Smoke Detector Credited With Saving Woman From North Hoosick Fire](#)

A woman was able to escape when her house caught fire early Wednesday morning on Route 22 in North Hoosick. The smoke detector woke up the woman, said North Hoosick Fire Chief Alan Bornt. He believes that may have saved her life. The call came in around 2 a.m. Crews were dispatched to the home on Route 22. There were heavy flames and smoke coming from the back of the house and in the attic. Eight to 10 fire companies that responded to the call. Crews from Rensselaer, Washington and Bennington counties were on scene. Once the fire was under control, fire companies spent the morning tending to the hotspots. There were no injuries. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

****WHEN FILING OATHS THIS MONTH, DON'T FORGET THE TREASURER BONDS TOO**

By Greg Serio, CAFDA Counsel

In November, 2021 Brad Lander was elected comptroller of the City of New York. By January 31, 2022, just a little more than two months later, he was no longer the city comptroller.

What happened?

While Lander filed his oath of office with the Clerk of the City of New York in a timely manner, that is, within thirty days of his taking office on January 1st, he did not also file with the oath proof of the undertaking, or surety, that is required of the comptroller. As a result of the turn of the calendar to January 31st, he was automatically, without action of any official body, no longer the city comptroller. It took an act of the state legislature in March of that year to rewind the clock back to January 1st, allowing the comptroller to rectify his omission and file in a "timely" manner the undertaking securing his work within that office.

This rule pertaining to the city comptroller applies to a great many government officials who are responsible for the handling of public money, including fire district treasurers. The New York Town Law is quite specific as to this requirement. According to Town Law section 176(4) provides, according to the Fire District Officers Handbook by Ray Diraddo, Esq.:

The treasurer, before entering upon his duties, must execute and file with the town clerk of the town in which the district is located an official undertaking, conditioned for the faithful performance of his (or her) duties. This undertaking shall be in the form and an amount as approved by the board of fire commissioners and the board must vote their approval on the undertaking.

Actually, the language in the statute, found in the section of law pertaining to the powers and responsibilities of fire district commissioners, *requires* that the fire district commissioners compel the treasurer to give “an official undertaking” and that the treasurer “will well and truly keep, pay over and account for all moneys and property belonging to the fire district *and coming into his hands as such treasurer....*” The provisions further requires that “such undertaking shall be filed in the office of the town clerk.”

Thus, the provisions of section 176(4) has several important parts: 1) requires the district to make sure the treasurer submits to whatever process necessary to obtain a surety or other kind of undertaking; 2) obtain an undertaking in an amount that the treasurer is expected to have control over or have access to, after determining the amount, and type of undertaking by a resolution of the board, and 3) file it, and proof of approval by the board of fire commissioners, in the town clerk’s office.

An interesting element of this requirement is that all of this undertaking activity is to be done “before entering the duties of [the treasurer’s office],” which could create a bit of a timing conundrum when districts are conducting organizational and first monthly business meetings at the same time. Advanced work with the district’s insurance broker or surety provider, likely at the end of the prior year, is probably the best way to address this issue.

Given the number of conversations had in recent weeks, it seems as though this section of law has been hiding in plain sight for many years, with some long time district officials privately acknowledging that this practice has not always been followed notwithstanding the fact that this provision goes back many years, and that it has been included in commissioner training provided by the Association of Fire Districts of New York State. Focusing on looking forward, suffice to say that 2023, especially with the Lander story fresh in people’s minds, be the year that this provision of the fire district board’s responsibilities is followed to the letter of the law.

Some districts may find town clerks asking why this material is being provided in addition to the traditional oath of office form. District secretaries or those submitting the oaths and undertaking to the clerk can tell the story of the New York City comptroller from last year and that the fire commissioners wish not a similar fate for their treasurers. Even if the filer dispenses with the story, the clerk will still be required to collect, stamp and accept the documents provided to prove that section 176(4) is followed.

Further Thoughts on Fire District Election

Letter from Joan Kegelman

Regarding your recent coverage of the Fly Creek Fire District election, the current board endeavored to bring the district into compliance with the state’s regulations. However, there are those apparently who feel that rules do not apply to them, and that they are entitled to do things as they wish, regardless of state guidelines, protocols of the office of the state comptroller, and legal counsel. I take exception to the quote, “that this existing board had created an unnecessarily rigid and formalistic structure, requiring needless expenditure of thousands of dollars.” Is this due to the request for a forensic audit as suggested by several accounting firms as a first step, as no audit has been done in 16 years, and because the comptroller’s audit cited “more treasurer” oversight?

There are more than 800 fire districts in New York State that the state comptroller has responsibility for, ensuring each fire district uses taxpayer money effectively and efficiently. Therefore, it suggests that the state believes their procedures provide the proper environment for governing a fire district. The majority of the “past commissioners” believe a “congenial and informal basis” is the optimal way to execute the procedures.

Your readers may perhaps be better served by the reporting of facts than hearsay, as election rules require ballots be prepared for each registered voter in the district instead of implying that the board printed so many ballots because the propositions were “contentious.”

A conversation has been started and residents should be aware of how their tax dollars are being used and that the district board has no long term financial plans to benefit the district or the fire company.

The fire company cannot operate with this band-aid approach any longer and one has to wonder if Mr. Kukenberger will commit himself to the full one-year term or resign again, as he and Ms. Wolff did when the board disagreed with them in October of 2021. An attorney, who is legal counsel for New York State's Association of Fire Districts, advised Ms. Wolff in a letter that, as a member had previously resigned in September, if they resigned as well, they would leave the board with fewer members than required for a quorum, but yet, they both resigned as planned. The comptroller's audit only happened when the remaining 2021 board members, with two substitutes, voted for it.

These are elected positions with responsibilities and governance.

[Note: Joan is the former Chair of the Fly Creek Board of Fire Commissioners]

WEBINAR: Marijuana in Your Station

Jan. 19, 2023, 7 p.m.

The new cannabis laws in New York state have caused concerns for Fire/EMS. Like many New York laws, the logistics or science was not in place to ensure safety. How do officers know if their members are using cannabis? At what level of impairment does this create an issue? Can we legally test fire responders for cannabis use? What are reasonable suspicions? Is the first responder "Fit for Duty"? Join us to learn and discuss.

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: https://fasny.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QJHSW-gXRoufXazP5p3j1Q

MAIN SPEAKER: DAVE DENNISTON

THE STUFF WE BUY FOR OUR MEMBERS

Vancouver (Canada) to Buy 14 New Large Fire Trucks for \$27M; Electric Option Deemed Unsuitable

Fireapparatus Magazine

Up to 14 fire engine vehicles will be acquired by the city of Vancouver over the coming years at a cost of about \$26.6 million, dailyhive.com reported.

These new vehicles are needed to replace Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) trucks that are approaching the end of their lifespan. They will run on renewable diesel to reduce carbon emissions.

City staff have noted that during the bidding process, the competing suppliers were asked to provide battery-electric trucks as an option for consideration for these new large vehicles, **but they were later deemed unsuitable for reliable emergency needs as the technology is still in its infancy**, the report said. More specifically, the proposed battery-electric trucks did not meet the minimum specifications for the water pumping capacity of fire operations, and the associated costs were significantly higher, the report said.

But Vancouver's fire department will be extensively testing the use of a battery-electric model for small-sized fire trucks, according to the report.

The City's 2023-2026 capital budget has also set aside \$200,000 in funding to electrify 10 VFRS supporting vehicles and equipment. The largest future investment for the fire department, totaling \$37 million, will largely go towards the renovation and expansion of Fire Hall No. 8 at the northwest corner of the intersection of Smithe and Hamilton streets in downtown Vancouver, the report said. There are also longer-term plans to relocate the West End's Fire Hall No. 6, currently located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Nicola and Nelson streets, to a new facility on a different nearby site.

FIRE DEPARTMENT CONSOLIDATIONS

Fire Service Consolidations: Is It Inevitable?

By Dr. Tim Mcgrath & Dr. Victoria Mcgrath

The very word consolidation still has a tendency to raise a level of anxiety in so many. Some view it as the greatest money saver of all times or the best method to improve services; others the loss of their power or job. Ironically, it could be none or all of the above. Simply, consolidation equals change and change is most difficult for many individuals and professions - especially those with strong traditions.

The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) seems to be a good example of a type of consolidation - we just don't call MABAS a consolidation. In parts of the state of Wisconsin MABAS has been around for years and is working extremely well. In other parts of the state, it remains a concept openly opposed by some. But MABAS has proven it works, and it is expanding throughout the nation; notably fire departments have not disappeared because of it.

There is no doubt that the fire service works better together, at an emergency, than any other emergency agency. Working together off the emergency scene is what non-fire folks (i.e. elected and governing officials) understand and for the most part embrace. In fact the principle is so simple they ask, "Why can't we share resources when there are no emergencies". Many Fire Chief's attempt to argue you can't - it won't work - we are unique - our department is better, somehow mutual/automatic aid is different. However, one of the largest consolidations in the United States is in your state and it works quite well. The only real issues remaining, are who will lead the consolidation - the fire service or those outside the fire service, and when?

Let's put the term consolidation into context. Consolidations are like relationships. I would like to date that person - to - I want to marry that person; there is a lot in between. The principles of working together and sharing resources at the emergency scene can apply to the non-emergency arena as well. Consolidations:

- Work - there are examples in your state
- Save money - the greatest savings is in future cost avoidance
- Improve services - if we take the best of two organizations and combine them, we should, and most often do, get a better outcome
- Improve personnel safety at the emergency scene - training together can create a safer working environment at the emergency scene
- Are increasing as we speak - not only in the fire service but in many different government services

How Do You Begin

Governing officials and Fire Chief must meet and define their expectations. Most likely governing officials will focus on money; whereas Fire Chiefs will focus on service. It is at this point where most consolidations fail. Why? Because unless both groups focus on outcomes and agree on an acceptable outcome, each will continue to walk down a separate path rather than a single path that ultimately reaches the objective.

The next step or steps will depend on what type of consolidation best accomplishes the objective: The most common types of consolidation include:

- Administrative - departments remain legally separate but consolidate administrative/staff functions - i.e. a single Fire Chief
- Functional - departments remain legally separate but perform special functions as if a single consolidated department - i.e. apparatus maintenance, training officer, etc.
- Operational - departments remain legally separate but join together both administrative and operation functions, delivering services as if they were one with boundaries becoming invisible.
- Full - two departments legally become a single legal agency with taxing authority with boundaries becoming invisible. Currently this is not legally allowed in Wisconsin unlike many states.
- Merge - one department absorbs the other, resulting in a single entity.

In an administrative consolidation, the focus needs to be the leadership and support resources. Can your department consolidate administrative functions such as secretarial, IT, human resource, payroll, bookkeeping, ambulance billing, purchasing, etc. Could a single Fire Chief administer two departments?

In the functional, operational, and full consolidation it is advantageous to begin, after a outcome is clearly defined, by inventorying the assets of each department and identify areas of unneeded duplication. Most departments already have mutual/automatic aid agreements with their neighbors. Functional consolidation just expands the concept of mutual/automatic aid to an everyday concept. For example, instead of each department purchasing an aerial device could they jointly purchase and utilize this apparatus in both communities when needed. Could one department provide a reserve engine for several communities if another department would provide a reserve tender or squad?

Instead of department purchasing a squad and tender, could one community purchase the squad the other the tender and the apparatus goes where it is needed. Could several departments share a training officer; after all isn't training a safety issue? These types of consolidation will eliminate unnecessary and expensive duplication of resources. Believing you must have all the resources needed within your personal arsenal leads to the situation actually encountered in your state. Three small fire departments and one rescue squad considered consolidation. Between the four agencies they had more "jaws of life" equipment than the City of Milwaukee; needless to say call volumes and service demands were not similar.

Today in Wisconsin full consolidations (by definition) are not allowed. However, operational consolidations offer the same benefits with the exception of an independent taxing authority (i.e. district). In both of these types of consolidations the areas served are done so by a single department under a single Fire Chief. To the citizen it is simply a department that serves more than one community.

A merge is exactly what it implies. One department simply absorbs the other and provides protection to both areas. Although at the onset a merge might sound like a difficult way to combine resources; it is in fact the quickest, most practical, and often the least expensive method.

What Will Happen If We Do This?

There will always be fires to fight, victims to treat, and a host of other activities conducted by today's progressive fire service. Scarce resources (people and money) can be combined to provide the personnel, apparatus, and equipment needed to safely function at the emergency scene. Initially, there will be those that feel they will lose power/control; but the issue isn't about power and/or control it should be about providing the highest level of service within the fiscal capabilities of the communities.

The title of this article asked if consolidations were inevitable? The author has spent a great portion of his life researching, reading, writing about, creating, and/or implementing consolidations and therefore, answers that question as 'yes'. Perhaps a better question more applicable to today's environment would be: who will lead the consolidation - the fire service or someone from outside the fire service? That answer Chief, is most often within your control. Opportunities most often come disguised a problem - Chiefs that can recognize them find their department benefiting - those that can't, most often find much to complain about.

THE FIRE SERVICE FUTURE

IS IMMERSIVE LEARNING IN YOUR FUTURE?

Ken Willette

The past decade has seen periodic changes in fire service training curriculum, driven by new knowledge and skills based on research and field experience. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has been part of that change by bringing the voice of the volunteer fire service forward on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Technical Committees, curriculum development projects, and serving on numerous research advisory panels.

Key partners of the North American volunteer and on-call fire service are the state and provincial directors of fire training and education. These directors are members of the North American Fire Training Directors (NAFTD) and are recognized as the authorities having jurisdiction (AHJ's) to oversee fire training in their geopolitical area. They are responsible for delivering training to all members of the fire service, and as a training delivery system, these AHJ's collectively had over 1.2 million fire service students participate in their training in 2020.

If you have been in the fire service for any length of time, you have also experienced technology providing new ways to conduct learning – from salt tables and overhead projectors, then carousel slide decks and audio tapes, followed by video tapes, and in the past decades, computers and LCD projectors. Through each technology evolution, NAFTD members have adapted to ensure excellent training and learning took place, regardless of how it was delivered.

Today we have seen a quantum leap in delivering training by the introduction of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) systems as tools for fire service training. Things have evolved from the apparatus driver simulator, a fixed prop where screens surround the student driver, to wearable goggles and vests that drop the firefighter into a virtual world that closely replicates the reality of structural fire attack. In this virtual world, students can learn basic skills to prepare them for NFPA 1403 compliant live fire training as well as actual structural fire attack. Because this training

environment is virtual, and the student is exposed to minimal risk, there is also the potential to chip away at the 8,000 plus injuries that occur during training each year.

The military, aviation, and medical disciplines use AR and VR for training with great success. Now comes the question, "Is it right for the fire service?"

To answer this, NAFTD in collaboration with the Fire Protection Research Foundation have secured AFG funding to study the application of immersive learning on firefighter skills, health, and safety during training. We have branded this the FILE study, for Firefighter Immersive Learning Environment. The NVFC is represented on the project's technical panel by Charlie Kludt from South Dakota and Reid Vaughn from Alabama.

A project goal is to collect insights from the fire service on the benefits and challenges of immersive learning. To date, NAFTD has hosted three fire service focus groups, (Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Utah) along with a content developer and technology integrator focus group. This February, a FILE Summit will take place at the Illinois Fire Service Institute that will share the findings from the focus groups as well as aligned research performed by the University of Illinois.

A key deliverable of this project is to provide a roadmap on the use of immersive learning for the fire service and create a web knowledge base for the fire service to use as it considers utilizing immersive learning for its training activities.

If you want to learn more about immersive learning and the FILE study, check out this video: [Using Virtual Reality to Train Firefighters](#). A more in depth discussion can be found in the NFPA Journal article, [Full Immersion](#).

Is immersive learning in your future? Maybe, but rest assured the collaboration between the NVFC and NAFTD on the FILE project will ensure your needs are addressed and voice heard.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

[Volunteer Firefighter Accuses Former Wantagh Fire Chief Of Sexual Assault](#)

LI Herald

A woman who is a volunteer firefighter with the Wantagh Fire Department has accused two high-ranking officials in the Fire Department of sexual assault.

The woman, who as of press time has declined to publicly disclose her name, has accused ex-chief Kenneth Kelly and Engine 7 captain Josef Seier of raping her while she was intoxicated at a party last year.

The civil lawsuit was filed in Nassau County Supreme Court on Jan. 12, the Daily Mail reported.

She said she received a text from Kelly a day after the alleged assault in January 2022 that reads "Had fun last night. But remember that's between you me and Joe only forever," as reported by the Daily Beast.

The woman is represented by Vesselin Mitev, a lawyer with a practice in Stony Brook.

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:

[When It Comes To Leadership Styles, Context Is King](#)

Derrick Phillips

Over the years, I have had many conversations with fire service professionals regarding leadership. The conversations are always animated, partly because leadership itself is ill-defined, and there are many competing schools of thought on the subject.

To simplify the subject, many leaders lock in on one leadership style. The problem here is twofold. **First, leadership does not have a one-size-fits-all solution. Second, leaders are choosing a leadership style that suits them, not the people whom they are trying to lead.**

While I understand the impulse to simplify, we must recognize that people are inherently different in their knowledge, skills, abilities and motivations. This begs the question, how can one leadership style influence, motivate and enable

people with differing characteristics? The simple answer is that it cannot. By focusing on a particular leadership style, many leaders overlook the more important aspect of the *context* in their efforts to lead.

With this as our backdrop, let's first consider the benefits and challenges of popular leadership styles in the fire service. I'll then review the mnemonic SOOT to identify various contexts that apply to leaders and recommend how to use the proposed contextual markers to aid in identifying appropriate leadership styles for specific circumstances.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Vineet Nayar defines leadership as the “**ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward [individual and] organizational success.**” A leadership style refers to leaders' methods to influence, motivate and enable their followers.

As you might expect, there are many leadership styles, all of which have benefits and challenges.

1. **Transactional leaders** use extrinsic rewards for success and punishment for failure.
 - Benefits – eliminates confusion because the leader identifies tasks and expectations.
 - Challenges – may stifle creativity and innovation; fixation on short-term goals; does not motivate employees who value intrinsic rewards.
2. **Transformational leaders** seek to transform their groups or organization by inspiring and empowering their followers to take ownership of organizational objectives.
 - Benefits – values personal team connections; establishes a high level of trust; rallies individuals around shared visions and goals.
 - Challenges – individual wins may go unnoticed due to organizational outlook; lack of detail; may upset those trying to maintain the status quo.
3. **Servant leaders** emphasize employee morale by prioritizing the needs of others over their needs.
 - Benefits – boosts morale; improves trust; fosters positive organizational culture; improves employee development.
 - Challenges – feeling a constant need to sacrifice self for others; may have difficulty being more authoritative when the need arises; placing others over self is not second nature.
4. **Democratic leaders** emphasize input from others and use a more collaborative approach to decision-making.
 - Benefits – encourages creativity and innovation; employees feel valued because they are empowered to aid in decision-making.
 - Challenges – inefficient due to the need to attain consensus; may create social pressure for members to conform to the ideas of members with strong personalities.
5. **Autocratic leaders** focus squarely on results and efficiency while limiting input from others who may be affected. Autocratic leaders make decisions alone and expect their followers to follow their orders to the letter.
 - Benefits – promotes productivity; relieves employees of the burden of making decisions; works well with inexperienced employees who need more direct guidance.
 - Challenges – creates resentment from subordinate personnel because they do not have a role in making decisions.
6. **Laissez-faire leaders** use a hands-off approach by delegating tasks to members with little supervision. To support their personnel, they provide the necessary resources but leave the problem-solving and decision-making to the members.
 - Benefits – empowers personnel who are self-motivated; creates a more relaxed work environment; fosters creativity and innovation.
 - Challenges – does not work well with inexperienced employees; creates confusion and chaos due to a lack of structure; may limit team development.
7. **Situational leaders** adapt their leadership styles to reflect the context of the situation and to meet the needs of the team on an individual basis.
 - Benefits – effective motivator; consistent feedback; can adapt to changing contexts and individual talent and motivation; encompasses several leadership styles in one.
 - Challenges – leaders need a high level of understanding of departmental processes and functions; may be stressful to the followers due to constantly changing styles; must balance the immediate and long-term needs of the organization.

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT – SOOT

The mnemonic **SOOT** is an easy way to remember the top four contexts that fire service leaders may have to use to identify appropriate leadership styles. **SOOT** stands for **S**elf, **O**ne-to-One, **O**rganizational, and **T**eam contexts.

S: Self-leadership context: Andrew Bryant writes in “Self-Leadership: How to Become a More Successful, Efficient, and Effective Leader from the Inside Out,” “Self-leadership is the practice of intentionally influencing your thinking, feelings, and actions toward your objective/s.” Obviously, this context revolves around leading yourself, and in turn, being a model for others to emulate. ***One cannot be an effective leader of others if one cannot lead themselves.***

To master this context, leaders should aspire to develop the following qualities:

- Leading by example
- Maintaining credibility by doing what you say you will do
- Developing a shared vision and values
- Losing the ego so you may empower others
- Maintaining competency

This aligns with the perspective of James Kouzes and Barry Posner, who write in “The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations,” “The instrument of leadership is the self, and mastery of the art of leadership comes from mastery of the self.”

O: One-to-one leadership context: In the one-to-one context, leaders seek to help individual followers reach their peak performance, which also improves organizational performance. Operating in this context requires the leader to understand the needs and motivations of the individual. *Everyone has different knowledge, skills and abilities.* At the same time, they present different motivations for achievement. Consequently, the leader *cannot* rely on a single leadership style to lead their followers. In some situations, the leader may need to be more authoritative; in others, they may be more empowering or hands-off. Ultimately, understanding the individual dictates the leadership style.

In one-to-one situations, a leader may choose from transactional, servant, democratic, laissez-faire, autocratic or situational leadership styles. My personal preference is situational because it allows you to exploit further contexts and individual abilities to determine the best leadership approach.

O: Organizational leadership context: At the organizational level, leaders strive to shape the environment for the people working in an organization to achieve organizational goals. In this context, the leader must balance organizational goals with the happiness and motivations of the workers in mind. Any time there is a major change in an organization, it requires effective leadership. With that said, the leader needs to develop a shared vision, promote organizational values, and gain buy-in at every level of the organization.

The organizational leadership context is very complex and requires effective organizational leadership. Therefore, a transformational leadership style works best in this context.

T: Team leadership context: At the team level, leaders have the challenge of motivating and leading individuals with differing abilities to rely on each other to achieve team goals. In this context, leaders need to understand team dynamics, such as the four stages of psychological development every team goes through: forming, storming, norming and performing. In addition, the leader must consider the varying personalities of team members. Such personalities include dominant, compliant, influential or agreeable. With that understanding, and allowing the team dynamics to work their course, the leader can identify the best method for leading the team.

Team dynamics are complex and may be time-consuming at the outset of team development. Therefore, the leader may have to switch between many leadership styles to achieve team and organizational goals. On one hand, the leader may need to entice the team with rewards as in the transactional leadership style. On the other hand, the leader may be more hands-off (laissez-faire) once the team reaches the performing stage. Ultimately, the ability of the team dictates the leadership style. Therefore, in this context, a leader may use transactional, transformational, servant, democratic, laissez-faire or situational leadership styles.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In the final analysis, leaders who focus on a singular leadership style are essentially trying (consciously or unconsciously) to force followers to conform to how they want to lead. This flawed concept fails to consider the motivations and readiness of the individual followers and fails to take into account the context in which they are leading. I urge you as leaders to reevaluate your thoughts on leadership, as context is more important than identifying with a specific leadership style that works for you alone.

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 wcfidsec@nycap.rr.com

Please send application, cover letter & resume to Arthur Hunsinger via email at wcfidsec@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!

Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't make a decision!!

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!!

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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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