



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

JULY 1ST, 2023

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI

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[Information to make you think and to learn from others!!](#)



THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

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

August, No Meeting

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

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

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

December, **No Meeting**

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

Printable Calendar – See Last Page

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOC. NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[Secretary and Treasure of CAFDA](#)

Terry Briscoe has been appointed by the Board as the **Secretary** of the Capital Area Association, she can be reached at: caaofd@gmail.com

Tony Hill has been appointed by the Board as **Treasurer** and can be reached at : cafdatreasurer@gmail.com, [CAFDA PO BOX 42, EAST SCHODACK, NY 12063](#)

[Long Way to Travel to Meetings? Join remotely using Zoom!](#)

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.

[CAFDA FALL WORKSHOP: Put it on your calendar](#)

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

SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED:

Harassment Challenges – Discipline as a result of Harassment Charges

How to SHOP for insurance, What Coverage Should We Have?

Removal of Fire Company Members

Ask the experts: CPA, VFBL, Attorney, Insurance, Candle Stick Maker

[Training for Fire District Officials Coming to the Capital Area Fire District Association Members- Mark Your Calendars-More Details to Follow](#)

- **Tentative - Commissioner Training** Dates and locations for 2024 being developed and will be announced shortly.
- **Tentative** – Keep an eye on the Bulletin for all future training available to Fire District Officials and Chief Officers coming in 2024.
- **CAFDA Conference**, Mid-May 2024, Location and details to be announced.

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

You Are Invited to Become a Member of the Capital Area Association!

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

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

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

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

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

IF NOTHING ELSE READ THE ARTICLES PRECEDED BY**

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Happy 247th Birthday America.
- CAFDA is planning a **Day at the Races**, stay tuned for more information.
- 26TH Annual **Halfmoon Fire Co Golf Tournament**, Saturday August 5th, for more information email Golf@halfmoonfire.org
- **Fleury Risk Management** (497 Public Management Group VFBL Insurance) is running a charity golf tournament this year for **Operation At-Ease** on **August 14th at the Edison Club in Rexford**. In case you aren't familiar with Operation At-Ease, they are located in Niskayuna and train shelter animals to assist veterans and first responders with PTSD and other lite tasks. 100% of the proceeds for the golf tournament will go to them. Below is a link to register, sponsor, or donate. We appreciate any assistance you can provide to bring attention to the event and Operation at Ease. **REGISTER HERE:** <https://fleury-risk-management-charity-golf-tournament-2023.perfectgolfevent.com/>
- Firefighter Contamination Reduction and Cancer Prevention Training, July 24th 6:30PM at Rexford Fire Station, and

STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

WWW.AFDNYS.ORG

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

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

TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER

Mark your calendar for Saturday, November 4th 2023 for the **Capital Area Fall Leadership Workshop**, being held at the Verdoy Fire Station on Troy-Schenectady Road. Tentative subjects are Harassment in the Fire Service and Applying Discipline, How to SHOP insurance for your fire district, Expert's Panel.



Upcoming Coffee with Commissioners

[Saturday, July 22nd @ 9:00am](#) Firefighter Behavioral Health with Jill Holland

[Thursday, August 31st @ 7:00pm](#) Fire District Budget Process

[Saturday, September 23rd @9:00am](#) Current Trends and Concerns

Click on Each Announced Date to Register

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

The 2023 legislative Round Up, light weight session for the fire service.

ISSUES OF UNITED CONCERN LEGISLATION:

- **TIMELY ADOPTION OF UP-TO-DATE BUILDING CODES**, passed Senate still in Assembly Governmental Operations Committee. This is the only IUC bill to pass in at least one Chamber.
- **CANCER COVERAGE COST RELIEF**, never made it out of committee
- **PROVIDES INCREASED STATE INCOME TAX CREDIT**, never made it out of committee
- **PROVIDE VFBL/WC PAYMENT PARITY**, never made it out of committee
- **DESIGNATE EMS AS ESSENTIAL SERVICE – PROVIDE BENEFITS FOR EMS STAFF**, never made it out of committee
- **STRENGTHEN PENAL CODE IN RELATION TO ILLEGAL BUILDING CONVERSIONS**, never made it out of committee
- **FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS**, sponsored only in Assembly, controversial since it usurped local zoning regulations
- **IMPROVE TAX BENEFITS FOR FF & EMS VOLUNTEERS**, no Assembly sponsor
- **ESTABLISHES THE NEW YORK STATE VOLUNTEER FIRE PROTECTION EMERGENCY REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNT**, Included in Budget and Revenue bills, awaiting OFPC rules and regulations
- **RECOVERY OF 54-G FUNDING TO STRONGLY SUPPORT CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**, never made it out of committee
- **ANALYZE FINDINGS FROM THE NYS DHSES RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE**, no bill sponsors in either chamber
- **CONTINUE TO IMPROVE TAX BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**, Senate sponsor only.

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

\$31.5 Million In State Budget For Volunteer Firefighters

New York State's 2023-2024 budget includes significant funding for volunteer firefighters. Of the total, \$25 million was allocated for departments' capital upgrades to equipment and facilities. \$6.5 million has been allotted for firefighter training stipends.

The firefighter training stipends are given out in either \$750, \$1,000 or \$1,250 increments after completion of training. The amount given out is dependent on the status of the volunteer, whether that's firefighter 1, firefighter 2, or fire officer training. This will allow firefighters to be compensated for spending time off work attending classes. We will have to watch OFPC for any developments in rules or regulations.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

3M Firefighting Foam Settlement Results in Up To \$12.5B Payment in PFAS Water Contamination Lawsuits

Irvin Jackson

3M Company confirms a massive **firefighting foam settlement** has been reached, which will result in payments of up to \$12.5 billion to cities and communities nationwide, to resolve claims that toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contaminated water systems nationwide after use during firefighter training and response exercises.

The chemicals are included in aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) products used by the U.S. military and local fire departments to combat fuel based fires, and have been linked to the development of various types of cancer and other injuries. However, runoff from the fire fighting foam has also caused widespread water contamination in many communities, leaving local cities and water suppliers to deal with the clean up costs.

3M Company, DuPont, Chemguard, Inc., Tyco Fire Products and other manufacturers of PFAS chemicals and fire safety products have faced a thousands of water contamination lawsuits brought by local water providers in recent years, seeking billions in damages. However, the settlement does not resolve **firefighter cancer lawsuits**, brought by individuals who indicate they developed testicular cancer, kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer, prostate cancer and other forms of cancer from exposure during their firefighting careers. Given common questions of fact and law presented in the litigation, all AFFF lawsuits are currently centralized before U.S. District Judge Richard M. Gergel in the District of South Carolina, for coordinated discovery, pretrial proceedings and a series of early bellwether trials. However, just as the first case was set to begin earlier this month, 3M Company asked the court to delay the trial, indicating it believed it was on the verge of a final PFAS water contamination settlement.

FIREFIGHTING FOAM SETTLEMENT REACHED WITH MUNICIPALITIES

According to the **firefighting foam settlement agreement** filed with the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) on June 22, 3M will pay between \$10.5 billion and \$12.5 billion in the coming years, depending on how many drinking water systems test positive for PFAS contamination. The deal seeks to resolve both present and future claims brought by drinking water systems nationwide.

The announcement of the settlement comes after several other defendants, including Chemours Co., DuPont de Nemours Inc., and Corteva Inc., indicated they had reached a \$1.19 billion settlement with U.S. public water systems to resolve their role in the claims. “On June 22, 2023, 3M Company entered into a proposed class-action settlement to resolve a wide range of drinking water claims by public water systems (PWS) in the United States regarding any per- or poly-fluoroalkyl substance, subject to court approval,” the SEC filing states. “Eligible class members are United States public water systems as defined in the Settlement. Subject to court approval, the Settlement would resolve a portion of 3M’s PFAS-related multidistrict litigation that involves PWS drinking water claims in the United States by providing funding for treatment technologies to PWS that have tested positive for PFAS, funding for future testing, and funding for systems that test positive in the future.”

The firefighting foam water contamination settlement agreement still needs to be approved by Judge Gergel. If he approves the deal, the payouts to water systems known to have PFAS contamination will come first, involving more than 5,000 water systems. Then, a second phase will occur which involves systems which have not yet been thoroughly tested for the presence of PFAS chemicals.

FIREFIGHTER CANCER LAWSUITS

PFAS include a group of over 9,000 man-made chemicals, which have been widely used in fire safety equipment and AFFF products in recent decades. While the chemicals are also widely found in products like non-stick pans, pizza boxes and other material, most of the problems linked to the chemicals stems from direct exposure to firefighting foam while combating fuel based fires, or releases into the environment around military bases, airports and other firefighter training locations.

The number of claims is likely to continue to grow for decades, given the nature of PFAS, which earned the name “forever chemicals” due to their persistence in the environment, meaning they will likely continue to be a toxic threat to water supplies and human health for a long time to come, and the defendants could be held liable for much of that as lawsuits continue to be filed for years.

However, in addition to claims brought by local cities and water providers over the damages caused by PFAS chemicals, 3M Company and the other manufacturers continue to face individual lawsuits brought by former firefighters diagnosed with various types of cancer.

In late May, the parties were directed to select 28 personal injury claims for the **second bellwether pool** involving plaintiffs who say they were exposed to AFFF through drinking water contamination, as opposed to direct exposure.

These cases will include eight kidney cancer claims, eight testicular cancer claims, eight thyroid disease claims and four ulcerative colitis claims. In addition, they will be limited to individuals alleging they were exposed to contaminated water near Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs Municipal Airport, the Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base and the Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster.

The order calls for the parties to select the cases by July 28, and propose a joint list of selected or proposed cases to the court by August 11.

If the current efforts do not end in a firefighting foam injury settlement, the outcome of the early bellwether trials will not have any binding impact on other claims. However, if they proceed, it is expected that the amount of any AFFF lawsuit payout awarded by juries may influence future firefighter cancer settlement negotiations to resolve the litigation.

****Illinois Firefighter Charged with Reckless Homicide in Fire Engine Crash; THC Exceeded Legal Limit**

Firefighter Miguel Holland, 49, of Rockford **faces charges of aggravated driving under the influence and reckless homicide** after a fatal fire truck crash in March.

The crash on March 6 at Whitman and North Church streets involved a Rockford fire engine and a Ford Focus. The driver of the Ford, Marta Esquivias, 57, died at the hospital from injuries sustained in the wreck.

At the time of the crash, Holland told investigators that the fire engine was traveling about 35 miles-per-hour in the 30 mile-per-hour zone when the Focus entered the intersection, and he tried to avoid the collision but could not. He told investigators he had not used any product containing tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in over a week.

Winnebago County State’s Attorney J. Hanley said *a speed deceleration report generated by the Pierce fire engine showed the apparatus was traveling at 47 miles-per-hour when the brakes were applied just before the crash. He said Holland submitted a blood and urine sample that showed THC levels of 19.0 +/- 4.0 ng/mL – above the legal limit of 10 for operating a motor vehicle. Holland faces up to 33 years in prison on the three charges.*

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:

The Company Officer: The Loneliness of Leadership

Chief, Dr. Brett Ellis

Leadership is lonely. Leadership is difficult. Leadership is uncomfortable. However, leadership is necessary, because it’s one of the toughest jobs that you ever will love.

If you read my column regularly, you know that I try to provide tangible perspective on leadership philosophies and theories so as to apply that perspective to company officers and the people who those officers are entrusted to lead. This edition of my column can sound a bit depressing at first, but please stick with me. After all, leaders boldly press on when others bow out, and resilience, vulnerability, and courage help to carry leaders through the easiest and most difficult of times.

So, how do company officers stay “in love” with the job and the role of leader when it doesn’t feel as though the job loves them as much?

Rest assured, the road of leadership never gets easier. Given that, how do leaders handle “difficult” better as they pursue a life of leadership?

Leaders work hard to fall in love and to stay in love by understanding the love languages in relation to leadership, because love—leadership love—is a choice.

LEADERSHIP NEEDS COMPANY

If we agree that leadership is difficult, we surely can agree that leadership will bring loneliness at times. However, as a result of that, leaders will be able to empathize with others.

Loneliness can be described in numerous fashions, *but for this column, loneliness is a place where we might feel disconnected or misunderstood and/or even experience self-doubt for decision or indecision.* When the “leadership feels” are missing, what should leaders do? To whom do leaders turn when they are the type of person who is expected to have it all together? The answers actually are easier than one might believe.

Leaders need their own support system that affords them to be who they are regardless of where they are. When that day, decision or relationship is affected because of the role of leadership, leaders need their No. 1 go-to person to call to be their ear, their accountability partner and/or their voice that keeps them grounded in a place of resilient leadership. Like-minded leaders who are passionate about influence, learning and being decisive can empathize with others on the most difficult of days. *In other words, an island of one becomes an island of a few. Remember, as the tides rise, so do the boats. Loneliness needs company to feel connected.*

FOR THE LOVE OF LEADERSHIP

One of the aha moments that I experienced in multiple leadership roles is just how lonely it can be to be different, to almost care too much to a fault, to hunger for people to love how I love, particularly through the opportunities that authentic leadership in action provides. That said, from a realistic perspective, it's unfair for me to expect such things. I learned years ago that love is a choice and that the most important person in one's life simply can love differently, which doesn't translate to loving you less. It takes time, commitment, transparency, grace and an intentional road trip to "trustville" to get to a place that's critical for relational growth. If "trustville" is the ultimate destination for people, then how in the role of a leader is trust built?

If we are "in love" with the idea of trust but not sure how to stay in love, what helps us choose leadership love instead of living in fear?

Courage and vulnerability are connected, as are peanut butter and jelly, peas and carrots, selflessness and sacrifice, and forward movement and necessary change. The bottom line is that company officers must choose to be uncomfortable, and they do this by looking inward, to affect the forward movement of the people who look to them to be their leader.

THE LOVE LANGUAGES

In rapid fire, the love languages help us to learn how to love those who are around us based on what their needs are. This puts us in the position to speak the language that best makes them feel whole.

As an adaptive leader, it's important to recognize how your people need to be loved, but first, it's imperative that you love yourself as a leader, so you can be the person who others depend on.

One is right to wonder how do these areas feed the need of leadership, particularly when leadership is lonely, difficult, uncomfortable and necessary?

Words of affirmation are rooted in the expression of affection through spoken words, praise and/or appreciation. Make no mistake, quality time desires undivided attention through active listening.

Physical touch focuses on affection, and acts of service zero in on the little things that can be done out of kindness.

Finally, receiving gifts is more about the effort and thoughtfulness behind the gift than often the gift itself.

A life of leadership is a pursuit of forward movement when there is the most resistance, therefore relying on the love languages in the leadership relationship between yourself and, well, yourself.

Words of affirmation can be funneled through leadership learning, podcasts, conversations and an appreciation that there are numerous styles of leadership, yet each person has a skill set that often is underutilized. ***Be affirmed that if you call yourself a leader, you are influential, decisive, competent, compassionate and accountable, which all support attributes of the company officer position.***

If quality time desires undivided attention with active listening, then I encourage leaders to self-reflect on their leadership style, on where they are strong and on challenge areas. Spend time looking inward, outward, upward and forward as a leader.

Physical touch centers on affection, and the leadership connection elevates not only how company officers touch the lives of others through servant leadership but also how those officers affect other lives to be better, do better and lead better, particularly when those people are lonely.

Subtle reminders of one's effect help when the tides rise and the laborious sacrifice that leadership entails is most evident.

Finally, the gift of leadership is one for which value can't be placed, because leaders never truly know the effect that they have on other people. What leaders can recognize is how they affect others personally and professionally. By re-gifting servant leadership, leaders can fall back in love with leadership over and over again.

PERSEVERE

Be the leader who you need, not the one who you hoped for. The road to "trustville" always will be full of challenges, because relationships are dynamic and difficult. How leaders choose to love the job when the job doesn't love them as much or even loves differently is an opportunity for the leader to handle the "difficult" well.

Rely on the love languages to stay connected, constant and curious, even in the most difficult of places, because you don't know until you know how leadership is one of the toughest jobs that you ever will choose to love.

THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER by: Fred Richards

This day our heartfelt condolences go out to Thomas Wood and the Wood Family on the passing of Cheryl Wood on June 27th 2023. Cheryl's obituary appears in the Post-Star and at:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/poststar/name/cheryl-wood-obituary?id=52347971>

It is apparent Nurse Cheryl Wood actively volunteered support for many organizations including support of the firefighters in the Northumberland Fire District #1. Such dedication and involvement provided lasting memories to those who shared her life,

Friends and family celebrated Cheryl's life on Saturday morning, July 1, 2023 at the Durkeetown Baptist Church. May our gracious Heavenly Father, His loving Son and the abiding Holy Spirit bring Tom and each Wood family member a growing peace.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES.....ITS TAXPAYER'S MONEY!!

****NEW NEW YORK STATE TRAINING STIPEND SHOULD NOT IMPACT LOSAP ELIGIBILITY**

Tony Hill, Firefly Administration

When the 2023 State Fiscal Year Budget was adopted, the legislation included a new amendment to the General Municipal Law (GML) and Volunteer Firefighter Benefits Law (VFBL) to allow for the payment of training stipends. Chapter 55 of the Laws of 2023 accomplished two things:

- 1) Amend the GML to provide for the payment of a "training stipend", defined as a *"payment of a nominal fee to a volunteer firefighter of a stipend for the completion of certain firefighter training, as identified and published by the office of fire prevention and control."*
- 2) Amend the VFBL to stipulate the receipt of a training stipend would not be considered remuneration, and therefore allow a volunteer who receives this training stipend to still be covered by VFBL. In essence, this preserves the individual's status as a volunteer firefighter rather than an employee.

The existing LOSAP legislation (GML Article 11-A) does not specifically address the topic of remuneration received by a volunteer firefighter relative to the eligibility to participate in a LOSAP. It would appear that Article 11-A, simply relies on the fact that a volunteer firefighter is a bona fide volunteer as provided in the other applicable statutes. Therefore, it wasn't necessary to amend the LOSAP law for this new training stipend.

However, the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) does broach this topic and stipulates that only bona fide volunteers can participate in a LOSAP. The IRC Section 457(e)(11)(B)(i) states:

"An individual shall be treated as a bona fide volunteer for purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii) if the only compensation received by such individual for performing qualified services is in the form of — (I) reimbursement for (or a reasonable allowance for) reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of such services, or (II) reasonable benefits (including length of service awards), and nominal fees for such services, customarily paid by eligible employers in connection with the performance of such services by volunteers."

There is no specific definition in this section of the IRC that further defines a nominal fee (i.e., the dollar value that would be considered nominal). The Department of Labor has opined that any fee/compensation would be considered nominal as long as the fee does not exceed 20% of what would otherwise be paid to a full-time equivalent firefighter. It would appear that the New York State training stipends will be significantly less than 20% of the salary of a paid/career firefighter.

The new training stipend legislation was drafted to purposefully refer to the stipend as a nominal fee, which aligns perfectly with the definition of a bona fide volunteer in the IRC. Therefore, unless additional guidance or ruling is issued by the State or the Internal Revenue Service, it appears clear that a volunteer receiving a training stipend would also be eligible to receive points for attending the training and continue to participate in the LOSAP.

This article is not intended to provide legal advice, and we suggest reviewing it with your local attorney for additional guidance.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE -CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

[PHMSA Proposes All Railroads Must Alert First Responders Within 10 Miles Of Derailed Train Cargo Under New Rule](#)

Federal regulators want first responders to know exactly what they are dealing with before reaching the scene of a train derailment, because the dangerous chemicals trains carry might require a specialized response. The Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration proposed a new rule last Wednesday that would require all railroads to immediately send the details of everything aboard their trains to every emergency responder within 10 miles, as soon as the railroad becomes aware of an accident. The new rule came one day ahead of a National Transportation Safety Board hearing to scrutinize emergency responses to the fiery Feb. 3 derailment of a Norfolk Southern train outside East Palestine, Ohio.

[Volunteer Fire Departments Can Enter to Receive Free DripDrop Electrolyte Drink Mix – Breakthrough Rehydration That Keeps You Going](#)

Fire Apparatus & Emergency Equipment Staff

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has partnered with DripDrop Hydration, PC, a leading electrolyte rehydration company, for the fourth year to provide dehydration relief to volunteer firefighters. In 2023, a total of 2,500 boxes (500,000 servings) of DripDrop’s electrolyte drink mix will be given away to 1,250 volunteer fire departments. Each department will receive two 100-count cases.

Wildfire season and summer weather put firefighters at risk of dehydration and heat-related injuries as they exert themselves in scorching heat and heavy gear. DripDrop is a fast, clinically-proven way to replenish lost fluids and electrolytes quickly, so responders don’t get sick from heat-related dehydration.

“Dehydration is a serious concern for volunteer firefighters,” said NVFC chair Steve Hirsch. “It can result in decreased performance, dizziness, and even heat stroke or heart attack. As firefighters across the country gear up for wildfire season, we are proud to partner with DripDrop to provide critical dehydration relief to volunteers so they can do their jobs safely and effectively.”

“DripDrop is proud to support the National Volunteer Fire Council and its members through our ongoing partnership and annual donation campaign, now entering our fourth year,” said Rick Hughes of DripDrop. “Our core mission remains to defeat life-threatening dehydration at home and abroad, and we are pleased to be able to fuel these heroes with superior rehydration.”

Active volunteer firefighters located in the U.S. can request a product donation by July 1 or until supplies run out (whichever comes sooner) at www.dripdrop.com/nvfc-2023. To ensure we help as many firefighters as possible, only one order per department will be processed. The product will ship by July 1.

In addition, firefighters can receive a 20% discount on all DripDrop orders at any time by using code NVFC20 at checkout on dripdrop.com.

[CHALLENGES:](#)

[CA Fire Chiefs Sick of Robotaxis Parking on Hoses, Blocking Firehouses, Invading Fire Scenes](#)

Russ Mitchell, LA Times

Robotaxis keep tangling with firefighters on the streets of San Francisco, and the fire chief is fed up.

“They’re not ready for prime time,” Chief Jeanine Nicholson said.

Nicholson is talking about the driverless taxis from Waymo and Cruise that are picking up passengers and dropping them off in designated sections of the city. Now those companies want to rapidly expand service throughout the entire city, in unlimited numbers, in any kind of weather, day or night. And state regulators appear ready to approve their request.

City leaders are worried — not only in San Francisco, but in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, too, where Waymo and another robotaxi company, Motional, say they’re ready to deploy their AI-operated robotaxi service as soon as state regulators flash the green light.

The robotaxi industry is being allowed to move too fast and break things, these officials say, putting more robotaxis on public streets even as they prove inept at dealing with firetrucks, ambulances and police cars. And, they say, California state agencies have set up the rules so cities have little say in autonomous vehicle regulation.

“I’m not against the technology. I understand it’s important and it’s the way the industry is going,” Nicholson said. “But we need to fix what’s not working right now, before they are unleashed on the rest of the city.”

State regulators track robotaxi collisions, but they don’t track data on traffic flow issues, such as street blockages or interference with firetrucks.

But the Fire Department does. Since Jan. 1, the Fire Department has logged at least 39 robotaxi incident reports.

Although, as the driverless industry notes, robot cars don’t get tired, don’t drive drunk or high, and aren’t distracted by their iPhones, they do often stop dead in traffic for no apparent reason. ***Sometimes these robo-roadblocks are brief, but sometimes the road obstructions last long enough to require a robotaxi company employee to travel to the scene and move the car out of the way.***

The Fire Department incidents include reports of robotaxis:

- Running through yellow emergency tape and ignoring warning signs to enter a street strewn with storm-damaged electrical wires, then driving past emergency vehicles with some of those wires snarled around rooftop lidar sensors.
- Twice blocking firehouse driveways, requiring another firehouse to dispatch an ambulance to a medical emergency.
- Sitting motionless on a one-way street and forcing a firetruck to back up and take another route to a blazing building.
- Pulling up behind a firetruck that was flashing its emergency lights and parking there, interfering with firefighters unloading ladders.
- Entering an active fire scene, then parking with one of its tires on top of a fire hose.

After a mass shooting June 9 that wounded nine people, a robotaxi blocked a lane in front of emergency responders in the city’s Mission District. Another lane was open, but in a news release, the Fire Department said on a narrower street, the blockage could have been “catastrophic.”

To deal with a troublesome robotaxi, firefighters attempt to communicate with a remote robotaxi operator, who sometimes can move the car out of the way.

If that proves impossible, the robotaxi company must dispatch a human to the scene. In one case, a firefighter had to smash through a window to coax a robotaxi to move out of the way.

‘DEALING WITH LIFE AND DEATH’

The fire chief said each robotaxi company offers training to help deal with “bricked” vehicles.

“We have 160,000 calls a year. We don’t have the time to personally take care of a car that’s in the way when we’re on the way to an emergency,” she said.

Hannah Lindow, spokesperson for Cruise, said the company is “proud of our publicly reported safety record which includes driving millions of miles in an extremely complex urban environment. Interacting properly with emergency personnel is important to us, which is why we maintain an open line of communication with first responders to receive feedback and discuss specific incidents to improve our response.”

Waymo issued a prepared statement: “Safety is at the heart of our mission and we have consistently shared more detail than any other (autonomous vehicl)] company regarding our methodologies and insights into our performance. We believe this transparency benefits our riders — who are enjoying a safe, accessible, and delightful mobility option tens of thousands of times per week — and encourages a richer conversation about safety in the industry.”

Nicholson acknowledged that no one has yet been killed or injured due to robotaxi misbehavior. “But I don’t want something bad to happen because we can’t get to a scene. A fire can double in size in a minute. We are dealing with life and death, and I’m not being dramatic in saying that.”

The robotaxi industry in California comes under the jurisdiction of two state agencies — the Department of Motor Vehicles, which issues permits and is responsible for safety, and the California Public Utilities Commission, which regulates commercial passenger service, including buses, taxis and limousines.

The utilities commission is set to vote on robotaxi expansion June 29. The resolutions it will vote on make clear that, under the agency’s own rules, issues such as traffic flow and interference with emergency workers can’t be used to deny expansion permits. The resolutions list four “goals” to be considered: inclusion of people with disabilities; improved transportation options for the disadvantaged; reduction of greenhouse gases; and passenger safety.

Critics note that although the commission concerns itself with the safety of robotaxi passengers, it defers other safety issues to the DMV. The DMV collects data on collisions and has the power to suspend permits, but so far has taken no action or made any statements about robotaxi interference with firefighters.

The DMV declined to make its director, Steve Gordon, available for an interview, but issued a statement suggesting that its 4-year-old rules might be open to amendment at some point: “The DMV developed its autonomous vehicle regulations using a public process whereby stakeholders (e.g., local, state, federal government agencies, academia, interest groups, industry representatives) provided input in the development. Comments provided during this process were considered and addressed as part of the rulemaking in the Final Statement of Reasons. The DMV implemented the first set of regulations in 2014, the second in 2018 and the third in 2019. Any future regulations will use a similar process where members of the public and other stakeholders will be invited to participate and provide comments.”

Robotaxi regulation issues go beyond robotaxi expansion: The entire way in which California regulates autonomous technology is being questioned.

The DMV has come under fire in the state Assembly, which passed a bill in May that would take away some of the agency’s power to regulate driverless big-rig trucks. Several legislators said they voted in favor of it in part because they believe the DMV has done a poor job of regulating driverless cars.

SAFETY DATA CENSORED

In 2021, the DMV joined with Waymo on a court-approved deal to allow driverless car companies to censor not only trade secrets but basic information on safety performance, including most details of collision reports as well as information on how the company handles driverless car emergencies.

The industry is tight with the information it releases to the public about its operations on public roads.

Waymo won’t say how many cars it runs in San Francisco. Cruise said it operates 150 to 300 cars but won’t be more precise. Neither company will say how large its fleet will grow, or how quickly. Neither Waymo nor Motional will say how many robotaxis they’re testing in Santa Monica and L.A.

City officials in San Francisco, a notoriously fractious bunch, are united in opposing the expansion plan, from Mayor London Breed on down, until traffic flow, emergency scene problems and better communications between the companies and the city are worked out.

“Usually the mayor is on the side of corporations and the supervisors are on the other side,” said Board of Supervisors member Aaron Peskin. “We’re saying, don’t give them everything they want until these things are proven. Don’t make us the guinea pigs.”

The fire chief wonders why the ability to deal with emergency scenes was not made a high priority.

“If they can do all this stuff with AI, I’m sure they can figure this stuff out,” Nicholson said.

The utilities commission has gathered expressions of support from dozens of groups that include business organizations, such as the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, and advocates for the disabled, such as the American Council for the Blind. The former argue that robotaxi development is essential to keep California at the forefront of innovation, the latter make the case that easy and equitable transportation for all people is a social good that will benefit everyone. No one on any side of the debate has disagreed with either assertion.

But agencies including the Los Angeles Department of Transportation and the city of Santa Monica have filed comments with the commission arguing that robotaxi service should be rolled out incrementally as problems are identified and addressed. Both also called for far more data transparency on robotaxi safety issues.

The industry countered with filings opposing any kind of incremental rollout.

What’s the rush? Robotaxi companies have spent enormous sums developing expensive artificial intelligence technology and want a return on investment.

Cruise, owned by General Motors, has deep pockets. Waymo, owned by Google’s Alphabet, deeper still. But the pressure’s on. In October, Ford and Volkswagen shut down Argo, their robotaxi joint venture, after concluding they’d see better returns investing that money in electric cars and driver-assistance and safety systems.

The utilities commission’s robotaxi expansion measure is slated to be considered as part of a June 29 “consent agenda” package that will gather 50 orders and resolutions on a wide variety of issues, to be passed or rejected by a single vote by the agency’s five commissioners. One of those commissioners, lawyer John Reynolds, was appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2021. At the time, he served as general counsel for Cruise.

****Whither The Volunteer Firefighter In PA?**

Steve Ulrich

This is a microcosm of what is in store for the volunteer fire service everywhere.

Pennsylvania has just over 1,800 registered fire departments.

Nearly all – 98.6 percent to be exact – are registered volunteer or mostly volunteer departments with the Keystone State ranking third in the country behind Delaware and Minnesota.

Those who volunteer with their local companies in their local communities are heroes in almost every sense of the word.

They do it because they want to. They respond to the need to volunteer for their community.

But how long can the Commonwealth depend on the goodwill of its citizens for this service?

State **Sen. Frank Farry** (R-Bucks) says likely not much longer.

And when the numbers decrease, Pennsylvania residents will have to pony up for fire protection in a similar fashion to other civic services.

Farry has been a volunteer firefighter for 33 years, including the last 22 years as chief of the [Langhorne-Middletown Fire Company](#) in Bucks County since 2001.

His experience tells him and others that the challenges that face his department and others are mounting and as fewer people step up to help, new solutions will need to be found.

Since the 1970s, the ranks of volunteer firefighters in Pennsylvania have dropped from 360,000 to fewer than 37,000.

“When you have higher call volume and fewer people responding, the demands get greater,” [Farry told the Erie News-Times](#). “We have bills that need to be paid. We have equipment that needs to be maintained. We have personnel issues. We have policies and procedures that need to be developed. We are really running a small business, and it requires a 24/7 state of readiness.”

State **Sen. Michele Brooks** (R-Crawford/Lawrence/Mercer) has brought forth legislation ([SB 114](#)) that could assist, awarding three grants of \$150,000 apiece, which would be distributed to three community colleges or PASSHE schools in the Commonwealth. The grants will be used to establish fire training programs for students in high school during the school year, with the hope they will remain firefighters for years to come.

The bill passed the Senate but languishes in the House’s Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee.

If numbers continue to fall, volunteer fire departments will eventually have to ask themselves what they can do safely with limited manpower. Some have already made the decision to merge or regionalize.

Last year, [Pottstown’s Goodwill and Empire Hook and Ladder fire companies](#) consolidated into a single entity. Earlier this year, the merger of Steel City Volunteer Fire Company with Lower Saucon Fire Rescue became official, [bringing to a close](#) a 10-year period where there were four independent fire companies based in Lower Saucon Township.

“Ultimately, what’s going to happen is when we, the volunteers, go the way of the dinosaur, there’s going to be significant property tax increases,” said Farry. “I’m not saying the volunteer fire service will completely go away. It’s (a question of): ‘Will the volunteer fire service be able to continue to provide adequate fire protection?’ If we don’t start getting some people in the door, that’s going to be reality.”

More than a third of volunteers in small communities were over the age of 50 in 2020, according to the National Fire Protection Association. That compares to 1987, when only 15.9% were older than 50.

People may find themselves waiting “45 minutes for a fire truck to show up when their house is on fire,” said **Steve Hirsch**, [head of the National Volunteer Fire Council](#), or they may be stuck for more than half an hour during a medical emergency when every second counts.

“People have to understand that if they don’t go out and volunteer, that could happen,” said Hirsch.

Farry said it will take a well-coordinated effort to avoid the billions of dollars in funding that it would take to operate a cadre of paid fire departments across Pennsylvania.

“It’s incumbent of government at all levels — federal, state, and local — to stave that off for as long as we can,” he said.

“It’s community dependent. It depends on what support we get from the community. It depends on what additional burdens are put on us. It depends on the core of your folks and who you have and utilizing them. Right now, we’re like literally at the point where we can’t bleed any more firefighters.”

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



Chief, We Have A Problem

In the third episode of our Breaking the Stigma podcast, our team is joined by Dr. Andrew Berry to discuss the nitty gritty of mental health for veterans and first responders and how we are going to break the stigma.

LISTEN HERE AT THIS LINK: <https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=5316f7c315&e=781e9a2c81>



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

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Fire Engineering

WEBCASTS

[Fireground Communications: From Size-up to Mayday](#)

[June 20, 2023 | 1 PM EDT](#)

[A certificate of attendance will be offered.](#)

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This webcast will address all aspects of fireground communications, from knowing the capabilities and limitations of your department's radio system to understanding each person's role in achieving reliable fireground communications

and getting dispatch involved in your training. It will introduce skills that can immediately improve communications as well as provide a plan for developing and implementing a communications model for your department.

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Even if you can't make it, sign up anyway! We'll notify you when the recording is available.

University Provides a Wealth of Training Opportunities UPDATED FOR 2023

VFIS TRAINING AND RESOURCE CATALOG 2023

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

VFIS UNIVERSITY – USERS GUIDE

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

VFIS TRAINING OFFICER USERS GUIDE

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

VFIS RESPONDER HELP FLYER

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

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

IN 2023 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED 38 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!

You Just Never Know!

- A Bayville, New Jersey firefighter died the day after participating in mandatory training on June 21. Bayville Firefighter Brian Letrent participated in a drill with other firefighters on Tuesday evening. The next day, while returning home from work he suffered a cardiac emergence. He was transported to Bayshore Medical Center where he died.
 - Multiple Maydays were declared and 25 year-old Firefighter Bruce C. Trossbach was killed after falling through the first floor during a house fire Tuesday, June 27, 2023, in Leonardtown, Maryland. Firefighter Trossbach was a Defense Department civilian firefighter out of the Naval Air Station Patuxent River who was offering mutual aid to first responders at the scene.
 - The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced the on-duty death of Firefighter/Medical First Responder William “Bill” John McCale of the Vermillion Ohio Township Fire & Rescue Department on June 10. McCale was attending training and pulled a 5-inch large-diameter hose from the hosebed to connect to the intake when he was found unresponsive at the pump panel. McCale was transported to Mercy Regional Medical Center where he was treated and released on June 8. On June 10 he was discovered unresponsive by his wife. He was immediately transported to Mercy Regional Medical Center where he passed away a short time later from an apparent heart attack.
 - The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced the on-duty death of Firefighter Lloyd Ruediger of the New Haven-Berger Fire Protection District on June 26. On June 25 Ruediger responded to a residential fire. The next morning, he was found deceased at his residence from an apparent heart attack. Ruediger, 84, was a longtime member of the fire department and had dedicated 59 years of his life to the New Haven community.
-

****How Many Funerals Does It Take? Preventing Tragedy In Public Safety**

Terry Miyauchi

The worst day in a firefighter or public safety professional's career is arguably the one that leads to a funeral. I have attended five public safety-related funerals in which I personally knew the deceased. Needless to say, each line-of-duty death was horribly tragic.

What is perhaps equally tragic is that each death was potentially preventable. Every one of these deaths had a common external thread in which I not only knew individual but also knew of certain traits and circumstances that led me to not be completely surprised when tragedy struck. While they were all unexpected, each also had an "in hindsight" element that, if acted on, could have possibly prevented the worst day of any first responder's career.

HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

The span started in the late 1980s when a fellow pilot was unexpectedly killed in a helicopter accident. He had invertedly flown into the clouds and lost control of the helicopter, resulting in an impact on the ground that likely took his life immediately. "How could he have done that?" I remember thinking. Just as vividly, though, I remember how he'd been telling me the night before his accident about the horrible divorce he was going through. I knew he was emotionally distracted and even asked him if he was OK to fly. "Of course I am," I recall him saying.

He was wrong, and as a result, I was not overly surprised to hear about his crash the next day. I knew he wasn't right, and in hindsight, I should have acted. I was wrong too.

STUMBLING INTO TRAGEDY

The most recent funeral was 15 years ago. While rescuing a stranded hiker, my friend and fellow police co-worker accidentally placed his head into the spinning main rotor of a helicopter. He was dead before falling to the ground. What is ironic is that he was perhaps one of the most highly trained, highly experienced officers in the unit. Let me put it this way: If my own family was in trouble, I would have wanted him to be the one coming to help ... he was that good and that respected. He was truly one of the best.

Leading up to the accident, the well-established agency protocols were being followed to a tee. Just moments prior to the accident, he had even prompted a crew briefing to highlight the dangers and initiate proper cautions. This was a by-the-book mission being conducted by one of the best. "How does this even remotely happen?" I recall thinking. "How did one of the top officers suddenly lose his life in an accident that appeared to be his own fault?"

Again, in hindsight, it shouldn't have been all that surprising. The fallen officer had a well-deserved reputation, but at times could be a bit of a klutz. My last in-person memory of him was a time when he was entering a police work facility. As he entered the door, the first thing he said was how excited he was to work that day. While exuding contagious motivation, he accidentally dropped his phone. Then, while retrieving it, he spilled his coffee on the floor.

That's just the way he was, at times, and we even joked about it. I chided him playfully that he was "going to hurt himself one of these days." He was dead a week later. Again, it was this specific trait of his that left me not overly surprised when I learned the following week that he'd accidentally put his head into the rotor.

Why had I not acted earlier on this seemingly small trait that we knew was a weakness? In hindsight, this accident seemed perhaps as much my fault as it was his. We were all in shock, yet none of us were particularly surprised. Why had we not acted? Why had our leadership not acted? Why had our co-workers not acted? How does this happen?

PATTERNS OF HUBRIS

It gets worse. In the gap between these two tragedies, I attended three additional funerals with the same common thread running through them. One line-of-duty death involved an over-confident officer who thought he was better than everybody else ... but yet no one called him on it. The next included another show-off (so to speak) who thought he could get away with recklessness. He was wrong, and so were those of us who knew about his propensity for rashness beforehand but failed to call him out on it. And perhaps worse of all, one was the tragic result of simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time ... but yet no one cared enough to warn.

Obviously, you can't fire someone because they tend to be a klutz. You can't reassign a showboat if that person's over-confidence doesn't rise above a certain level. But as a leader, you can certainly take those factors into consideration in how you manage the people who work for you.

LESSONS LEARNED

The details of each of these tragedies are perhaps not as important as the key takeaways we can apply in our commitment to being better public safety managers. What follows are five such lessons that, if applied, can be the difference between life and death.

1. **Promote excellence:** What you permit you promote. When we refuse to confront safety and performance shortcomings, we are not only permitting them but actively promoting them. What we tolerate, we don't change. If we accept bad traits or circumstances as acceptable, then we are both promoting them and not changing them. In policing, small shortcomings can lead to big misfortunes and cannot be tolerated. First responder safety demands excellence ... promote it by not permitting or tolerating anything less.
2. **Don't just speak, speak up:** How we live and act across our teams and boundaries is more important than any equipment, technology, training, policy, or experience that we have. We can have the best of all of this, but we also need to talk to each other, have relationships with each other, speak to each other, and speak up to each other when we need to keep each other safe. There can be no hesitation when officer safety is threatened. When we fail to reach across the teams and boundaries, we fail to see others' needs. Truly reaching out means speaking up and not just speaking.
3. **Focus on team, versus focus on self:** As team members, whether you're a leader or a follower, it is our responsibility to maintain this focus on others and not just ourselves. When we selfishly or arrogantly focus on just ourselves versus our teams, then we have lost our effective leadership or followership and first responder safety can be compromised.
4. **Recognize bad days:** In firefighting, the difference between recognizing a bad day and ignoring a bad day can make the difference between life and death. As much as some of us struggle to admit it, individual bad days are inevitable. We are not robots and we are not perfect. The critical key is recognizing struggles in ourselves as well as in those around us. Struggles happen, and when they do, the true professional recognizes the risk and takes the proverbial day off. The same consummate professional confronts others and calls attention to their bad days. It's OK to not be OK ... just recognize it and adjust accordingly.
5. **Manage only up and out:** I am a true believer that every one of us – everyone on the team, everyone in the organization – has equal value. I truly believe it. However, some of us and/or our followers are simply improperly assigned or improperly developed. As a result, we do not always see that equal value. It is our job as leaders to push for the proper assignment and proper development. In that regard, we are managing up or managing out ... anything in between is not leadership at all.

LEARNING FROM TRAGEDY

How many funerals are enough? How many line-of-duty deaths are too many? One is too many. Perhaps a better question to ask is what are we doing to proactively prevent the next one. Is there anyone in your department right now who you would not be overly surprised to be involved in an unexpected tragedy? Are you proactively taking steps or are you managing for the status quo?

We learn from our real-life stories. I learned the hard way. We all have the opportunity to change the stories that are still playing out right in front of us today.

9 Extreme Heat Safety Tips For Public Safety Personnel

Greg Feiese

Record-setting heat is scorching the American West and putting tens of millions of people, as well as the public safety professionals who care for them, at risk of heat emergencies.

The forecasted weekend high temperatures – 114 degrees F in Las Vegas, 100 degrees in Salt Lake City, and 117 degrees in Phoenix – are incomprehensible to me. Those temperatures are dangerous for anyone working outdoors or living in a residence without air conditioning.

PERSONAL SAFETY IN HIGH-HEAT CONDITIONS

- **Physical training.** Schedule outdoor PT early in the morning or late in the afternoon. If you can't beat the heat outdoors, workout indoors or take a couple of days off for more sleep – you probably need it.
- **Hydration.** Thirst is the best indicator to take a drink of water. Take a drink when you are thirsty. Pale or clear urine is another useful indicator of adequate hydration. If you are anticipating high-exertion, outdoor activity, pre-hydration may be useful, but not to the point of feeling full or bloated. Bring extra water in your vehicle in case you are unable to get back to the station.

- **Electrolyte replacement.** Sports drinks are useful for replacing electrolytes during and after long durations of aerobic exercise, but they often contain empty sugar calories you may not need. Quench your thirst with water and replace electrolytes with a well-balanced diet before turning to sports or energy drinks.
- **Manage the scene.** As conditions allow, move patients, suspects or bystanders you are interacting with into the shade, or air-conditioned vehicles or buildings. For EMS providers, move patients off the street or out of their hot home and into the air-conditioned ambulance sooner than you might otherwise.
- **PPE removal and rehab.** When safe to do so, remove PPE layers, such as masks, helmets or hats, turnout gear and body armor, to improve heat loss through radiation, conduction, evaporation and convection. When the ambient air temperature is in the high 90s or 100s, passive heat loss is ineffective, so enhance cooling with misting fans, ice packs, cooling towels or immersion.
- **Watch your partner.** Your human or K9 partner is also at risk when the temperatures climb. Early signs of dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke include lethargy, confusion and other personality changes. If your partner seems “off,” take a water break out of the sun and humidity, and consider further assessment of their pulse rate, respiratory rate, mental status and recent water consumption.

HEAT SAFETY FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

- **Check on vulnerable populations.** The elderly and people experiencing homelessness are at increased risk during high-heat and -humidity conditions. Some medications, as well as the aging process, compromise an older person's ability to thermoregulate. The St. Charles County Ambulance District used a Costco grant to give seniors cold water and heat safety tips.
- **Provide community education.** Use department social channels, media outreach and face-to-face visits to discuss heat emergency signs and symptoms, prevention and emergency care. Consider partnering with your public health department to deliver formal or informal education programs to outdoor employers, such as construction and landscaping businesses, and youth sports camps.
- **Open cooling centers.** A cooling center is a community building, school or business that opens its doors and shares its air conditioning during extreme heat events to people who lack air conditioning in their home. An ambulance crew may be formally assigned to the cooling center, but it is also an opportunity for informal visits from community police officers or for firefighters to conduct community risk reduction programs. Relationship building and education are always valuable.

WORSENING IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety personnel will continue to feel the impact of more frequent and more severe weather events on the calls they respond to, the equipment they need to replace or purchase, and the costs and complexity of building severe-weather hardened stations and communication centers. Get off the sidelines and participate in initiatives to reduce the increasingly worrisome impacts of climate change.

- Make your next ambulance, fire apparatus or patrol car purchase an electric or hybrid-electric vehicle. Lightning Motors and the REV Group are partnering to develop an all-electric ambulance. The City of Madison (Wisconsin) fire department just put into service a hybrid-electric fire engine and the Westport (Connecticut) Police Department is realizing substantial savings with a Tesla Model 3 patrol car.
- Include solar panels as part of any new station or remodel.
- Reduce fuel use and greenhouse emissions with idle mitigation technology.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HEAT EMERGENCY SAFETY

Learn more about heat emergencies and climate change's impact on public safety with these resources.

- [Hyperthermia: EMS assessment and management](#)
- [EMS rehab sector: Treating heat illness treatment on the fireground](#)
- [Feel the heat: Managing exertional heat stroke](#)
- [The Use of Cooling Centers to Prevent Heat-Related Illness: Summary of Evidence and Strategies for Implementation](#)
- [Risks and impacts of climate change on the fire service: FireRescue1 special coverage](#)
- [6 rules for staying hydrated \(in dog days, and all other seasons\)](#)
- [Emergency Incident Rehab for firefighters to refuel, recharge](#)

- [Staying hydrated is vital in the fire service](#)

LIVING WITH LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES! HOT TOPIC!

[New York City Gets \\$25M For E-Bike Charging Stations, Seeking To Prevent Deadly Battery Fires](#)

There is a call for elevated e-bike safety measures from Capitol Hill. 25 million dollars is headed to New York City in hopes of preventing another deadly fire sparked by lithium batteries. "These batteries are poorly made, often in China, and they explode and cause fires. They are dangerous," said Senator Chuck Schumer. "One of those dangerous, explosive fires caused by a lithium-ion battery happened just days ago, killing four people who lived above an e-bike repair shop on Madison Street. On Sunday, Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand announced 25 million dollars in emergency funding for New York City to help New Yorkers charge their e-bikes safely - and in turn - save lives. "People use them to take their kids to school, commute to work, tour our cities. Many of our delivery workers rely on them to carry foods and other goods,"

Delivery worker Luke William Medina says this federal funding to build 173 e-bike charging stations outdoors at 53 NYC Housing Authority sites is crucial.

"The delivery guys can swap the battery and they don't have to charge the battery in the house," he said. Inside homes are where so many of the fires have started.

[Lithium Plant Fire Rages in Bessemer City \(NC\); Fire to Burn Itself Out](#)

Firefighters battled a three-alarm fire Monday morning at the Livent lithium plant in Bessemer City.

The fire was reported at 1:40 a.m. and flames shooting into the night sky were visible to area residents. [The company reports](#) that the fire is contained to one building where solid lithium metal ingots are produced.

No one has been injured in the fire, and the company says that its fire crew is working with the Bessemer firefighters to contain the fire. The fire will be allowed to burn itself out.

Livent, which employs 1350 people in several locations worldwide, produces components for electric vehicles and other applications. Bessemer City has told people living near the facility that there is no need for evacuation, as the fire is not producing any toxic emissions.

[New York City To Install Outdoor E-Bike Charging Stations At Dozens Of Public Housing Buildings To Prevent Battery Fires](#)

Hundreds of safe e-bike and scooter charging and storage stations will soon be installed across New York City's public housing buildings as a way to prevent battery fires. Mayor Eric Adams, Sen. Chuck Schumer, and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand on Sunday announced plans to install 173 outdoor stations at 53 NYCHA developments starting next year, with a total of 327 stations planned. The announcement comes just days after a fire at an e-bike repair shop in Chinatown killed four people and injured several others. The initiative is funded through a \$25 million emergency grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The city plans to install a total of 327 stations across the city's public housing complexes, with roughly 67 residents served at each station, according to Adams. The stations will be able to charge bike batteries significantly faster than the six or seven hours it takes to fully charge them at stores like the one in Chinatown.

[FDNY Uncovers 'Death Trap' Of Lithium-Ion Batteries Inside Manhattan Commercial Space](#)

The FDNY made a major bust earlier this week while inspecting for illegal lithium-ion batteries. So far this year, the batteries have caused fires that have killed more than a dozen people, including four last week. Officials told CBS New York **what they uncovered this week in Chinatown was a ticking time bomb**. Lithium-ion batteries were crammed next to each other, much closer than the required three feet apart. "This location was truly a death trap," FDNY Commissioner Laura Kavanagh said. Kavanagh said an inspection a few days ago at 91 Canal St., uncovered firefighters' worst nightmare -- lithium-ion batteries in a tight space, with residences above. "**Multiple fire hazards -- damaged batteries, overloaded power strips**," Kavanagh said.

Home builders and realtors already “drive” legislation with a history of disregard for life safety and a disgusting misinformation campaign about the cost of residential fire sprinklers, deaths are an awfully expensive price to pay to save money. Stop the carnage, install residential sprinklers. Residential sprinklers are a component of the plumbing system, with approximately 1 head per room. The purpose of residential sprinklers is to allow time for the occupants to escape. Residential sprinklers are designed for quick response and only one at the most two heads may be triggered. With residential sprinklers present, the civilian death rate is 89% LOWER. Residential sprinklers will assist responding firefighters to do their jobs and save firefighters lives also, especially since everyone is short staffed!!
CHIEFS NEED TO SPEAK UP: This fire would not have been as bad if there were residential sprinklers!!

The 1988 Hackensack Ford fire: Code violations lead to tragedy

Mike Vatter

For the firefighters on duty on July 1, 1988, the day started out like any other, albeit unseasonably cool with a steady breeze gusting to 25 mph.

Crews responded to a fire at a local car dealership – combustibles in the attic spread with intensity.

By the end of the day, five firefighters would be dead, and another fire earned a name known throughout the fire service – the Hackensack Ford fire.

HACKENSACK CITY AND FIRE DEPARTMENT

The City of Hackensack, New Jersey, is located a few miles west of New York City. At the time of the fire, it had a population of 46,000 within 4.5 square miles.

The fire department was staffed by 97 career firefighters operating four engine companies, a ladder company, a tour commander and a rescue.

On the day of the fire, there were 18 members on duty, plus two additional firefighters serving as dispatchers.

THE BUILDING

At the time of the fire, Hackensack Ford was an 18,000-square-foot building of ordinary construction. It housed a new car dealership and repair shop.

The service area was approximately 10,000 square feet with a bowstring truss roof. At some point in the history of the building, plywood was laid across the bottom string of the trusses to create floor space in the attic for storage. This windowless space was used for storing all manner of automobile parts and other supplies.

The building did not have any built-in fire detection or suppression systems. Fire protection was limited to portable fire extinguishers.

The building was constructed in 1948 under a local building code and renovated in 1973 under the B.O.C.A Basic Building Code.

At the time of the fire, the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code was in effect.

The post-fire investigation revealed two violations of the fire code that contributed to the fire:

- 1. Combustibles were not stored in an approved storage areas; they were stored in the attic; and**
- 2. Combustibles were stored in a means of egress (attic stairway).**

*Unfortunately, Fire Prevention Bureau records indicated that **no inspections had been conducted.***

THE HACKENSACK FORD FIRE

According to Hackensack Ford employees, at approximately 1450 hours, a burning vehicle exhaust hose fell from the service area ceiling. It was extinguished using a portable fire extinguisher. The fire department was notified at 1459 hours of the fire in the attic storage area.

The initial alarm consisted of two engines and one ladder company – 10 firefighters in all. Two minutes later, the first-arriving engine reported a working fire with smoke from a roof exhaust vent and light smoke in the first floor.

The first-arriving engine attempted to stretch a 1½-inch line to the attic via the stairs. They were unable to open the door and backed down the stairs. Crews shifted tactics to attacking the fire through two scuttles in the first-floor ceiling. At the same time, the roof was being cut to vent the fire.

As the ventilation continued, the fire in the attic continued to intensify. Engine companies continued trying to enter the attic through the scuttles. At 1523, just over 20 minutes after the arrival of the fire department, flames were observed coming out of the ventilation hole.

At 1534, crews were ordered to back out of the building. Two minutes later, **a structural collapse occurred**, trapping three firefighters under the debris. Two firefighters retreated to a tool room adjacent to the collapse. A sixth firefighter was able to find his way through the burning debris and exited the building. It was **36 minutes after the arrival of the fire department**.

The two firefighters in the tool room continued to call for help, trying to explain their location for the next 16 minutes. Firefighters worked feverishly to access the tool room from the exterior using a battering ram. During this rescue attempt, the remaining trusses and roof collapsed. The entire service area was destroyed by the fire.

The bodies of five firefighters were recovered after the fire was extinguished:

- Captain Richard Williams, Engine Company 304
- Lieutenant Richard Reinlagen, Engine Company 302
- Firefighter Steven Ennis, Rescue Company 308
- Firefighter William Krejsa, Engine Company 301
- Firefighter Leonard Radumski, Engine Company 302

All five died as a result of smoke inhalation and burns.

[Watch a raw video of the fire at the end of the article.](#)

HACKENSACK FORD FIRE AFTERMATH

The Hackensack Fire Department, like many others at that time, operated on a single radio channel. This includes all the portable radios, the apparatus radios, and the base station. Through the investigation, it was learned that of the 150 radio transmissions between the dispatch and the collapse, 32 were from the base station, 21 from apparatus radios, and the remaining 98 transmissions were from portable radios. One-third of the portable radio transmissions were repeated messages because of poor reception. A later audit of the radio transmissions revealed that 50% of all portable radio calls were not received.

In its report, the New Jersey State Bureau of Fire Safety found serious radio problems during the incident, and cited poor reception and an insufficient number of channels as contributing factors. The report went on to state that all New Jersey fire departments should establish a minimum of two channels to separate fireground operations from other functions.

Before this fire, Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS) were not universally available because they were not mandatory under federal or state occupational health and safety regulations.

The Bureau of Fire Safety emphasized the necessity of enforcing the fire code through an inspection program. The report maintained that if the Hackensack Ford building had been inspected, the storage of combustibles in the attic would have been mitigated. The owner would have two choices: discontinue using the attic as storage or install an automatic fire suppression system.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Hackensack Ford fire occurred nearly 10 years, to the day, after the Waldbaum's Supermarket Fire in Brooklyn, New York. The similarities are eerie. The first-arriving companies encountered a light smoke condition on the first floor. An attic space with limited access for firefighting. A commercial building of ordinary construction with a bow string truss. A delayed alarm. A collapse of the truss 37 minutes after dispatch for Hackensack and 41 minutes after the dispatch for Waldbaum's.

Learning from history is a necessity for all firefighters. Read the news reports, the investigation documents and any other source you can access. The lessons are there, paid for in blood by your predecessors. Moreover, the protective equipment you have today is there because some firefighter died because it was not provided, or it simply did not exist. So use it.

[NIST: Pool Deck In Surfside Collapse Failed To Comply With Codes](#)

David Fischer

The swimming pool deck of a beachfront South Florida condominium that collapsed two years ago, killing 98 people, **failed to comply with the original building codes and standards, with many areas of severe strength deficiency, federal investigators said Thursday.**

Investigators with the National Institute of Standards and Technology gave an update on the collapse of the Champlain Towers South building in Surfside, Florida, during a regular meeting of the National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee. The town of Surfside is located just north of Miami Beach.

Besides design understrength, investigators reported signs of corrosion, misplaced reinforcement and the placement of heavier and additional plant containers on the deck than those in the original plans. These and other factors led to “critically low margins against failure,” investigators said.

Experts have previously suggested problems with the pool deck might have led to the 40-year-old, 12-story building's collapse on June 24, 2021, but the NIST investigation is ongoing. Officials expect their technical work to be completed by next spring, with a report on the cause and any potential recommendations for updating codes, standards or practices to come in 2025.

As the investigation continues, developers are working to build a new structure on the site, despite calls from victims' family members to build a memorial at the location.

Dubai-based DAMAC International, which purchased the 1.8-acre (1-hectare) site for \$120 million last year, submitted plans for a new condo building this week to the town of Surfside. The proposed building, designed by London-based Zaha Hadid Architects, includes 57 units, ranging in size from 4,000 to 9,000 square feet (360 to 810 square meters). The luxury building would include a business center, event space and two pools.

The proposal actually includes two variations for the building, depending on the final setback variance allowed for the site. One design features vertically aligned balconies, while the other includes tiered balconies that are set back as the floors go up. No prices have been listed for the units, but comparable residences in the area sell for over \$1 million.

Since shortly after Champlain Towers South's collapse, family members of the victims and their supporters have called for a memorial to be placed on the site. Town officials have said they will dedicate space along a nearby street for a memorial, but some family members insist the memorial should be placed where people actually died.

Town officials still need to approve the new development plans.

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	45+2 = 47
Last fire death 6/22/23 New Cassel, Nassau Co. Female, 73	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	85+9 = 94
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	681 + 40 = 721
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NY = 47
	2 PA = 43
	3 OH = 42
There has been a total of 1181 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.

GRANTS THAT MAY HELP!

USDA Community Facility Grants for Rural Development

GRANT WEB SITE: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

GRANT GUIDELINES: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=rd>

Grant Deadline: This program accepts applications on an ongoing basis.

For Rural Areas and Small Towns up to 20,000 in Population

Community Programs provide grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. Grants are authorized on a graduated scale.

Grant funds may be used to:

- Assist in the development of essential community facilities.
- Construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities for health care, public safety, and community and public services.
- This can include the purchase of equipment required for a facility's operation.

WHAT THIS GRANT DOES FOR YOUR AGENCY

Applicants located in small communities with low populations and low incomes will receive a higher percentage of grants. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments. In addition, applicants must have the legal authority necessary for construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed facility and also be unable to obtain needed funds from commercial sources at reasonable rates and terms.

Only a limited number of grants will be awarded.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

These grant funds are for rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population.

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

After 10 years my wife started to think our child looks kinda strange so she did a DNA test and found out the child is not ours. After telling me what she found out I replied. You don't remember do you? When we were leaving the hospital the baby pooped and you told me to go change him, so I went inside the hospital and got a clean one. The wife fainted....

CLASSIFIED

OFFICERS OF THE CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS

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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, and Deputy Treasurers Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to participate!

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

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

AFDCA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

[EMAIL SECRETARY: CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM)

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518-407-5020

What are the duties and responsibilities of a Commissioner?

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

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

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[Welcome Back all of our Business Partners for 2023](#)

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 CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

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

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

- \$0 to \$200,000: \$50
- \$200,001 to \$400,000: \$100
- \$400,001 to \$600,000: \$200
- \$600,001 plus: \$300

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

Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee



2023 Events Calendar

Date	Time	Type	Location
Thursday, July 13, 2023	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Clifton Park
August 2023	NO MEETING		
Thursday, September 14, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Thursday, October 12, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, November 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	Verdoy Fire Dept
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

For General Membership meetings food is served 1 hour prior to the start time of the meeting, usually 6pm.