



CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

JULY 29TH, 2023

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI

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

THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

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 with much more – See End of Bulletin](#)

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOC. NEWS:

WWW.AFDCA.ORG

****Just When You Think All is Right With the World**

Terry Briscoe has resigned her position with CAFDA, not because she didn't like us; but it seems the person who took her position at Wilton Fire District has resigned their position as Administrator/Secretary and Terry was gracious enough to go back to Wilton to take up where she left off to help them out. As a result, Tony Hill will pitch in as Secretary until we can find a qualified individual to take the position. We are looking for someone who has the time and skills to be a secretary for the Association and they will be hanging out with a great group of people. Contact Tony Hill if you are interested.

Tony Hill has resumed is position as Secretary/Treasurer and can be reached at : cafdatreasurer@gmail.com or caaofd@gmail.com , our mailing address is CAFDA PO Box 42, East Schodack, NY 12063

Long Way to Travel Zoom into the General Membership Meetings!

It's our desire that every member fire 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 Being Held Locally by the Capital Area Fire Districts Association. Both Members and Non-Members are Welcome.-
Mark Your Calendars-Watch for Details to Follow

****PESH vs. NFPA Seminar, Law vs. Standard See Flyer Last Page**

Presenter: Jennifer Puerner – NYS Department of Labor PESH Compliance Assistance Specialist
What you need to know. Join us at the DeCrescente Distributing Conference Center at 211 N. Main Street, Mechanicville (opposite the Price Chopper Plaza). FREE to all fire district officials and fire service officers.

- ❖ **Tuesday September 12th from 6PM to 9PM Limited to 100 attendees.**
- ❖ Register now with Secretary Briscoe at caaofd@gmail.com

****Fire District Secretary Training See Flyer Last Page**

Join Joyce Petkus as she navigates the duties and responsibilities of a Fire District Secretary...Commissioners invited who wish to better understand what duties and responsibilities Commissioners are ultimately responsible for. What you and your fire district Secretary needs to know to do their job correctly. Join us at the DeCrescente Distributing Conference Center at 211 N. Main Street, Mechanicville (opposite the Price Chopper Plaza).

- **Tuesday September 19th from 6PM to 9PM Limited to 100 attendees.**
- **COST: members \$10, non-members \$20 checks can be mailed to Tony Hill at Box 42, East Schodack, NY 12063, or pay at the door. Reserve a seat at caaofd@gmail.com**

LOCAL CAFDA Conference, Late April 2024, Location and details being developed, details to be released when they are available.

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

You Can 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:

- **Let's have some fun, A Day At The Races**, in Historic Saratoga. Fire District Officials are invited to attend on **Friday August 11th**. Free Entry Ticket to the Track, \$10.00 Concession voucher, picnic lunch and beverages provided at the paddock picnic tables. (\$15.00 to park) You Must Email Secretary Briscoe if you wish to attend: caaofd@gmail.com.
- **Fire District Election Schedule and Budget Schedule on Last Page of Bulletin!**
- 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/>

- **CAFDS is joining with Monroe County Fire District Officers Association to sponsor Fire District Secretary training on October 21st at the Ridge Road Fire District Headquarters.** Our own Joyce Petkus will be the instructor for this day long training.
- The Senate approved \$676 million toward a healthcare fund for first responders and other individuals affected by toxic chemicals during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The bill also expands eligibility to more 9/11 responders, including active-duty Department of Defense military or civilians at the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pennsylvania, sites during the attacks.

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.

LOCAL CAFDA TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER

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Mark your calendar for Saturday, **November 4th 2023 for the Capital Area Fall Leadership Workshop**, being held at the Verdooy Fire Station on Troy-Schenectady Road. Subjects to be covered are:

- Harassment in the Fire Service and Applying Discipline Correctly
- How to SHOP insurance for your fire district, do we have right coverage?
- Expert’s Panel, Attorneys, CPA, General Insurance, VFBL – What is your burning question?



Upcoming Coffee with Commissioners
Thursday, August 31st @ 7:00pm Fire District Budget Process

THE LATEST FROM ALBANY

The 2023 legislative session ended in early June, 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.

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

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON D.C.

Proposed Legislation Seeks to Protect U.S. Firefighters from PFAS Exposure in Turnout Gear

Irvin Jackson

A bipartisan group of legislators have introduced a new bill in Congress, which seeks to support the development of new firefighter turnout gear to prevent unnecessary exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which have been linked to an increased risk of cancer and other ailments.

The new legislation was introduced on Thursday by a group of U.S. House representatives led by Debbie Dingell, of Michigan, as part of a continuing effort to reduce the risks firefighters face from exposure to the toxic "forever" chemicals.

According to a press release issued by Dingell on July 20, the "Protecting Firefighters and Advancing State-of-the-Art Alternatives Act" (known more simply as the PFAS Alternatives Act), **calls for the U.S. government to earmark \$100 million over the next four fiscal years for research into the development of improved firefighter turnout gear which eliminates or significantly lowers their exposure to PFAS chemicals.**

In addition, the bill calls for another \$2 million to be budgeted annually for guidance and training for firefighters on preventing cancer risks.

FIREFIGHTER TURNOUT GEAR CANCER CONCERNS

PFAS are commonly called "forever chemicals", since they are known to persist in the environment and build up in the human body, causing a number of different types of cancer and diseases.

While most of the recent lawsuits and news coverage has focused on the high levels of PFAS chemicals in aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), which is widely used during training and response exercises to combat fuel-based fires, there is also a cancer risk from PFAS in firefighting turnout gear.

In August 2022, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association issued a warning to firefighters, calling for them to reduce their PFAS exposure by limiting their use of turnout gear. The groups warned that firefighters will not be able to fully avoid the PFAS cancer risk until the chemicals are removed entirely from protective gear, but they called for the development and widespread availability of such gear. In the meantime, the group indicated that firefighters should limit the use of turnout gear to only emergency situations where it is required, and then suggested fire fighters remove it as soon as possible.

Manufacturers of PFAS chemicals and safety equipment now face thousands of firefighter cancer lawsuits, involving allegations that years of exposure to the chemicals caused testicular cancer, kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer, bladder cancer and other injuries. Although the manufacturers knew or should have known about the PFAS cancer risk, fire fighters allege they withheld important safety information and warnings for decades.

PFAS ALTERNATIVES ACT

The funding called for in the newly proposed legislation would be used to accelerate the development of turnout gear that does not include PFAS chemicals, through research and testing. It would also push for the development of ways to protect firefighters from other sources of PFAS exposure, such as inhalation.

In addition to the development of safer firefighter turnout gear, the legislation also calls for better ways to warn firefighters of PFAS exposure risks and establish better decontamination procedures. This would involve new guidance and training for firefighters on ways to reduce their PFAS exposure through the proper wearing, cleaning and maintenance of their turnout gear.

The legislation proposes working with the firefighting industry and will provide grants to those developing the next generation of firefighter turnout gear.

“Firefighters’ jobs are already dangerous enough without worrying about the long-term health risks of being exposed to dangerous PFAS in their turnout gear,” Dingell said in the press release. “The PFAS Alternatives Act will remove this unnecessary occupational hazard and help protect firefighters as they work every day to protect us.”

The IAFF has already endorsed the legislation.

FIRE FIGHTER PFAS EXPOSURE LAWSUITS

The legislation comes amid a growing number of claims brought throughout the federal court system against 3M Company, DuPont, Tyco Fire Products, Buckeye Fire Equipment Company, Kidde-Fenwal and other manufacturers of firefighting foam and protective equipment. The lawsuits are now centralized in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina, as part of a federal MDL or multidistrict litigation, since they each raise common questions of fact and law.

In June 2023, 3M Company and other manufacturers agreed to pay over **\$12.5 billion to settle PFAS water contamination lawsuits** brought by local water suppliers. However, the companies continue to face individual injury lawsuits, and no individual claims have yet gone before a jury.

Earlier this year, Judge Gergel directed the parties to select a group of 28 representative personal injury claims for an **AFFF injury bellwether pool**, involving plaintiffs who say they were exposed to chemicals that contaminated drinking water.

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 parties are expected to select the cases by July 28, and propose a joint list of selected or proposed cases to the court by August 11. However, the court has not yet outlined requirements for selecting individual firefighter cancer lawsuits for early bellwether trials.

THE ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

Former Sophia, West Virginia Volunteer Fire Chief Pleads Guilty To 61 Felony Charges

Kassidy Brown

RALEIGH COUNTY, W.Va. (WVVA) -A former volunteer fire chief in Raleigh County has pleaded guilty, by way of Kennedy Plea, to 61 felony charges for stealing more than \$133,000 from the Sophia Volunteer Fire Department.

Kenneth Richard Churning plead guilty on Monday, July 17, to two counts of embezzlement, six counts of fraudulent schemes, 45 counts of falsifying accounts and eight counts of conspiracy.

From July 2017 through December 2019, investigators found that Churning stole \$118,509.47 from the fire department through ATM and cash withdrawals, \$13,740 in cash back transactions, and \$1,205.11 through personal expense reimbursement. The theft represents more than 65% of all funding received by the Sophia Volunteer Fire Department during that two-year period.

This taxpayer money was intended to be used by the Sofia Volunteer Fire Department to help protect the community and to help outfit volunteer firefighters, to ensure they have the equipment they need in cases of emergency, instead Churning used the money to enrich himself.

Several agencies investigated this case including the West Virginia State Auditor’s Public Integrity and Fraud Unit worked in conjunction with the Raleigh County Prosecutor, Raleigh County Sheriff’s Office, Fayette County Sheriff’s Office and Sophia Police Department on this investigation.

Raleigh County Circuit Judge Robert Burnside, Jr. sentenced Churning to a sentence of 4 to 35 years, which was suspended for four years of supervised probation.

Churning will also be required to pay restitution for what he stole and for costs associated with the investigation of this theft; the specific amount will be determined at a later date. If at any point during his probation Churning fails to comply with the terms and conditions of his probation or fails to pay restitution, he could be sent to prison to serve the 4 to 35 year sentence.

NEW REVISED MODEL SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICIES, TRAINING PROGRAMS AND FORMS

Fire District Affairs

Over the past few years, fire districts and fire departments have been obligated to revise their policies and training programs due to changes in New York State's requirements concerning the protection of personnel from workplace sexual harassment. Several years ago, the state enacted laws mandating that all public and private employers adopt written sexual harassment prevention policies, which were based on a model policy created by the New York State Department of Labor and the New York State Division of Human Rights. These laws also stipulated that employers display posters in the workplace, provide a complaint form, and establish procedures for personnel to file complaints. Furthermore, additional requirements were introduced for mandatory training, necessitating employers to develop training programs and provide training to all personnel at the start of their employment and annually thereafter. Those laws also required the New York State Department of Labor and the New York State Division of Human Rights to review and update the policies and training requirements every four years. It is amazing how quickly the first four years have passed. The New York State Department of Labor and the New York State Division of Human Rights drafted updated model documents in September of 2022 and presented them for public comment in January and February of 2023. The agencies have recently granted approval for the final drafts, leading to the creation of new model policies and training programs. It is now the responsibility of fire districts and other public and private employers to update their policies, forms, and training in accordance with these developments. A revised Model Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Complaint Form, specifically tailored for fire districts, has been prepared based on the updated model forms. These documents are now available for your review and consideration on our website [<https://afdsny.org/>] under the Sample Forms and Policies tab in the Member Center. It is important to note that each Board of Fire Commissioners should thoroughly examine the new model documents and carefully consider the reporting structure they wish to establish. While all fire districts have a Board of Fire Commissioners and a Chief of the fire department, the management structure for paid staff may differ, including the presence of various managers and supervisors. ***Blindly adopting the model documents from the website without customization could potentially result in your district listing a supervisor who does not exist in your management structure. Boards can easily add the name of their fire district, but the model policy must be read and reviewed.*** It is worth mentioning that independent fire companies can adapt the model to their not-for-profit entity by substituting their names for “___ Fire District”. However, they will need to review each part of the model that discusses reporting and management structure to adapt it to their operation. ***It is important to bear in mind that if your district, department, or company faces a discrimination complaint filed with the State Division of Human Rights or the Equal Employment Commission, or if a lawsuit is initiated against you in state or federal court, you will likely be obligated to submit your policy, forms, training program, and training records as part of the proceedings.*** It is crucial to address these matters proactively. By taking proactive measures, you can reduce the likelihood of conduct that leads to complaints and enhance your ability to defend against future claims. Having the proper policy and training program in place is not a defense to claim or lawsuit, but it does lessen the likelihood that your personnel will engage in improper conduct.

The Sample Documents and Revised Policy is also available on the CAFDA website at afdc.org.

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:

*****Shared structures: A case study on the impact of automatic mutual aid***

Robert Rielage

Outside of formal consolidation, there are useful ways to improve coordination through common dispatch centers, training standards and ICS.

At one point in the recent history of the American fire service, there was a push for consolidations of departments into a single department, primarily due to budgetary concerns, not service delivery. In some cases, it meant that several smaller departments might be integrated into one large department, perhaps on the county level.

It should be noted that in countless areas of this country, there are strong ties between their fire department and the community or communities they serve. In many cases, a community's independent identity is directly linked to the fire department of the same name. So how might those departments survive and maintain credible service levels?

One answer could be automatic aid – not just response into another's jurisdiction, but an agreement among several departments to use a common dispatch center; consistent training standards, including a credible Incident Command System; and an agreement to respond into one another's area on the initial dispatch. Such an agreement came together recently to pay dividends.

COMMON SOPS

Hamilton County, Ohio, surrounds the City of Cincinnati and has 29 additional cities, villages or townships covered by 20 fire departments or fire districts of all shape and sizes, from large multi-station departments to those with one station and a few square miles of response area.

While these are separate entities, the Hamilton County fire chiefs representing most of these departments have agreed to a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs), training standards and an automatic-aid agreement for response into other surrounding jurisdictions on a first-alarm assignment. These agreements cross both county and even state borders, with the understanding that the closest response to a fire may be from a neighboring department.

Here is an example of how the agreement worked on a recent call.

COMPLEX FIRE OPERATIONS

Early in June, the Forest Park (Ohio) Fire Department, along with three neighboring departments, were dispatched for a structure fire in the northwest area of the city. The initial report from a neighbor was that they had heard a loud boom and then could see flames coming from a neighbor's home.

The dispatch by the Hamilton County Communications Center (HCCC) included five engines, two ladders, a medic unit and two battalion chiefs.

Shortly after dispatch, the Communications Center relayed that a second caller thought there were still occupants in the structure, which showed heavy smoke and fire from the exterior. Still en route to the scene, Forest Park's Ladder 42 notified the other responding units on the fireground channel that they saw a heavy column of smoke from the area.

Colerain Township's Engine 109, with Lt. Steve May as the OIC, arrived first on the scene, and his initial size-up included these points:

- The residential structure was fully involved;
- All occupants were out of the structure;
- Active fire was not only in the initial structure but also on the Bravo and Delta side residential exposures;
- They were initiating command;
- They declared the incident a defensive fire and ordered a second-alarm assignment to be dispatched.

To add to these issues, the houses involved were located on a cul-de-sac, allowing only one way in or out for street access.

HCCC monitoring the fireground traffic, then began dispatching an additional five engines, two ladders, a second medic unit as well as several chief officers on their primary dispatch channel.

Engine 109 established a water supply and began controlling the main body of fire with its deluge nozzle. Engine 109's officer assigned the arriving Forest Park units (two engines and a ladder) to the Delta side exposure, adding that they needed to ensure that the residents were out of that structure.

At this point, a pole-to-house electrical power line failed between the residence of origin and the Bravo exposure, requiring a hazard zone to be set up in an already confined area of operation.

Colerain's Captain Shaun Stacy, acting as a battalion chief, assumed command from Engine 109 and re-emphasized that operations were in the defensive mode. He then assigned the remaining first-alarm assignment, Springdale and Fairfield's engines as well as North College Hill's quint, to the Bravo side exposure, then requested a Conditions, Actions, Needs (CAN) report from both the Alpha and Delta divisions.

Subsequent arriving chief officers were assigned to take over the Bravo and Delta divisions, as well as establishing a Charlie division to determine the fire conditions in the rear of all three of the involved structures.

The responding second-alarm assignment was staged on an adjacent street, and crews were assigned “on deck” and rotated with the initial-alarm assignment as needed.

It was quickly determined that the structure of origin had suffered some type of natural gas explosion and resulting fire, so command informed the HCCC that they needed both Duke Energy gas and electrical assistance to the scene. Duke response quickly handled the downed power line, eliminating that as a hazard for those operating on all three structures. Once the fires in the Bravo and Delta exposures were controlled, the Alpha residence gas fire was allowed to continue until the gas to that residence was shut off by a separate Duke Energy crew.

During these operations, the residents of the Bravo exposure repeatedly began to approach close to their residence trying to re-enter their home. A firefighter was assigned to ascertain what they needed, and then firefighters went inside, later telling the occupants that everything was fine. In their haste to leave, the residents had left their oven and stove on while cooking their evening dinner. The firefighters found a pan on the stove that had begun to fill the kitchen with smoke and quickly averted a potential kitchen fire.

Companies remained on the scene for several hours checking for any extension throughout the three structures.

POST-INCIDENT DEBRIEF

In the hot wash meeting afterwards, representatives from the departments involved voiced that the operation could only have been this successful because of their shared SOPs, a universally adopted Incident Command System, and a dedicated fire dispatcher assigned to the fireground channel to handle the additional requests or needs from command. This incident was a prime example of how SOPs, coupled with an automatic-aid agreement, may become one method to help maintain a community’s and fire department’s identity while providing the benefits similar to that of a single amalgamated department.

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

Hannibal Fire Company – Misappropriation of Funds

Background

The Company is a not-for-profit corporation that provides fire protection services in the Town of Hannibal in Oswego County.

The Company is composed of volunteer members (membership) and is governed by its adopted bylaws and the membership-elected Board that includes: the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and two other members. The Board is responsible for overseeing the Company’s operational and financial activities. The Chief has control of the Company’s firefighting operations and reports to the Board.

The Treasurer is responsible for the care and custody of all money belonging to the Company. The Company’s main sources of revenues are from a fire protection contract with the Town of Hannibal and fundraising activities.

Audit Objective

Determine whether the Hannibal Fire Company (Company) Board of Directors (Board) established adequate controls over cash disbursements.

Key Findings

The Board did not establish basic internal controls over cash disbursements. As a result, the former Treasurer was able to misappropriate over \$850,000 in Company funds during an eight-and-a-half-year period. For example, he was able to:

- **Disburse over \$451,000 in unauthorized checks to himself from January 2014 through May 2022.**
- **Use a Company credit card to make 794 personal cash advances totaling approximately \$334,900 and personal purchases totaling over \$62,300 from April 2016 through May 2022.**

These improper disbursements went unnoticed for years because the Board did not review bills (claims) paid by the former Treasurer, receive written financial reports or review bank and investment statements and canceled check images. The Board also did not obtain an annual independent audit of Company records, as required.

At the onset of the audit, we learned the former Treasurer was deceased. As a result, we did not refer this matter to law enforcement.

Key Recommendations

- Work to seek recovery of misappropriated funds from the Company's insurance provider and consult with legal counsel regarding other available remedies.
- Ensure claims are supported, audited and approved prior to payment and monitor the Treasurer's work.
- Obtain an annual audit by an independent public accountant, as required.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE -CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!

OPPORTUNITIES:

Rockland Helps Local Heroes: Tuition For Volunteer First Responders

Two innovative tuition reimbursement programs to help the county's busy volunteer fire departments and ambulance corps recruit and retain more local heroes have gotten underway in Rockland this year. They are run by the Office of Fire & Emergency Services, which oversees volunteer fire and EMS training programs. "This county for the longest time has prided ourselves on being volunteer," Fire Coordinator Chris Kear told Patch. "The county felt this was a nice way to give back." The first is EDGES. Educational Development and Growth for Emergency Services is a partnership between the county and Rockland Community College offering free tuition to active volunteers. It's an expansion of an existing program for county employees.

CHALLENGES:

Connecticut. Volunteers Criticize Rule Barring Single-Firefighter Staffing At Firehouses

Dan Drainville

An arbitration panel ruled that Montville must staff at least two of its four fire departments with two paid firefighters, and that no firefighter can work alone during a 24-hour shift. In addition, the town cannot staff additional stations unless two firefighters are on duty, according to the arbitration award.

The decision has been criticized by volunteer firefighters, who say the ruling will increase response times and put the safety of residents at risk because two stations would be left uncovered if the other two stations must have two paid firefighters.

Chesterfield Fire Department Chief Keith Truex said all four Montville fire chiefs wanted to leave the system the way it was. He said he is worried the new rules will create gaps in the town's coverage because there's just not enough firefighters to keep all four stations open at all times.

For example, Truex said there could be a day when the Montville and Oakdale fire departments were staffed under the new guidelines leaving his department and the Mohegan departments empty.

"It usually takes between 5 and 7 minutes to go from [the Chesterfield Dept.] to Holmes Road," Truex said. "If you respond from Oakdale it'll take between 9 and 13 minutes to get there."

"The town is rolling the dice on whether or not my house catches on fire," Truex said.

All four fire stations; Montville, Mohegan, Oakdale, and Chesterfield, are owned and operated by volunteer fire companies but are staffed with paid firefighters employed by the town. (Why?) The first three are staffed with one firefighter at all times, while the last, Chesterfield, is staffed with one paid firefighter Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to about 3:30 pm.

When there's an emergency, the nearest department sends their career firefighter to respond. If they arrive and find it's a fire, they will set up their equipment, report in and call for any necessary backup. Sometimes, backup is called immediately upon notification of an emergency, Truex said. [what?]

Firefighters from the other departments or other towns, whoever is closest, will then arrive with additional equipment, Truex said.

Having someone at the scene can help while other firefighters are on the way, Truex said. He believes there are reasons to have each fire department staffed, even if it's only one person.

"They can set the whole truck up," he said. "They can make an emergency rescue if necessary." ***[What about NFPA or OSHA requirement for two in, two out?]***

However, one of the crucial pieces of evidence that led the panel to rule in favor of the union was a public safety plan commissioned by the town which disagreed with the chief's position.

"Today, when there is a call for service, the closest fire company ambulance responds, most of the time with one career firefighter, then an additional career firefighter responds in a utility vehicle from another fire company," the study said. "The two personnel meet at the scene, treat and transport the patient, return to the town from the hospital, retrieve the utility vehicle and return to their stations. ***There are many risks and faults with this method of response.***"

"The report not only makes the Union's case, but answers the Town's objections," the arbitration award read.

Under the new staffing constraints there will be two departments staffed at a given time as opposed to the usual four, said Mayor Ron McDaniel and firefighters' union President Timothy Condon.

They maintain that the new rule will improve public safety.

Condon and McDaniel maintain what many, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, say is the safer approach: that an emergency call cannot be properly responded to by a single person, no matter how skilled they are.

"This award puts four rescuers guaranteed on the clock. That means that the Town of Montville has a guaranteed two ambulance crews. It also brings them closer into alliance of OSHA two-in-two out and [National Fire Protection Association] codes and standards," Condon said.

OSHA has a rule called "two-in, two-out" that requires that at least two employees enter the "Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health" atmosphere and remain in visual or voice contact with each other at all times. It also requires that at least two employees be located outside the atmosphere, thus the term, "two in/two out."

Condon and the union maintains that even if all four fire departments were to remain open, lone firefighters would simply not have the means to combat those emergencies. They say that a response time is not simply how fast a piece of equipment, apparatus or even a person, gets to the scene.

"The response time ends when you have enough people on scene to effectively mitigate the emergency, not when the first truck rolls up," Condon added.

In March of last year, with the impending expiration of the old collective bargaining agreement between the paid firefighters, known collectively as International Association of Fire Fighters Local 3386, and the Town of Montville, the two parties sat down to work on a new contract, according to the arbitration award.

The Town Council has until Aug. 8 to reject the arbitrator's decision by a two-thirds vote. If they choose not to reject it, the new CBA would be approved, including these new rules for daily fire operations. If they reject it, it is unclear what the next step would be.

[NTSB: Loose Ipad Factors Into 2022 Crash Of Firefighting Helicopter](#)

A loose iPad that may have become jammed beneath a pedal midflight is a key factor in the investigation into the crash of a firefighting helicopter in Idaho last year that killed two pilots, including one from Alaska.

That's according to a summary of investigators' examination of the iPad, and further testing, that was released this summer by the National Transportation Safety Board, the federal agency that probes the causes of aviation accidents.

Pilot Thomas Hayes and co-pilot Jared Bird died from their injuries while fighting the Moose fire in Idaho.

[Carbon Monoxide Forces 500 Guests from MA DoubleTree Hotel](#)

Heather Morrison

About 500 guests at the DoubleTree Hotel in Boston had to be evacuated Tuesday night due to high levels of carbon monoxide, the Boston Fire Department said. The hotel, which is located at 821 Washington St., had high levels of carbon monoxide, the department said. Around 10:20 p.m., ***the entire hotel was evacuated.***

Around midnight, the Boston Fire Department tweeted that the source of the problem was found and mitigated. Since the levels had dropped, the 500 guests were allowed back in the hotel. Officials have not released the cause of the problem.

[A Bad Day In Buffalo](#)

On July 26th, Buffalo firefighters were alerted to a smoke detector activation at a familiar address, 39 Seventh Street, which is the location of the Buffalo Fire Department truck repair facility.

Things took a drastic downhill turn from there. A minute after the initial alert, department employees in an adjacent part of the building called to report an active fire. Crews arrived to find a reserve fire engine, Engine 34, on fire inside the building. Flames then spread to the building itself.

Firefighters quickly knocked down the flames, but not before the flames destroyed the reserve engine and damaged the repair shop. Damage to the building was initially estimated at approximately \$500,000. Fortunately, no one was injured during the incident.

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

NYSAFC 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 – NYSAFC members

\$50 – non-members

Pre-registration encouraged.

- **Albany Co. October/23/23,**
- **Fulton Co. September/7/23,**
- **Saratoga Co. October/24/23**

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

Bring NYSAFC Training to Your Area

Fire departments and county agencies or associations that are interested in hosting classroom-based programs or Regional Hands-On Training are invited to submit host request forms. The forms outline the specific host responsibilities and logistical considerations for each NYSAFC program. Sites are now being considered for programs in 2024.



Emergency Hemorrhage Control ESIP WEBINAR SERIES



The leading cause of preventable death due to injury is uncontrolled bleeding. This webinar will discuss simple and effective ways we can stop bleeding to save a life.

Wednesday August 2nd at 7:00PM

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: <https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=439eec255f&e=781e9a2c81>

VFIS 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

THE SAFETY OFFICER – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

IN 2023 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED 45 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com**

In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!

You Just Never Know!

- According to a report from WTNH, a fire policeman with the Bolton (CT) Volunteer Fire Department (BVFD) was struck by a vehicle while directing traffic after a motor vehicle accident in the town just before 6 p.m. Monday, he was taken to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries.
 - A fire truck rolled over in a crash this week in far northwest suburban Hampshire, Illinois, all the crew members inside were able to get themselves out, but four were injured, and the firetruck sustained significant damage.
 - A Greenland New Hampshire Fire Department firefighter had to call a Mayday when a garage door closed behind him and trapped him in a burning building.
-

****Missouri Bill Allows First Responders To Claim Workers' Comp For PTSD**

Katie Bernard, Kacen Bayless

"I had zero support is what I thought," Lewis said.

In February of 2022 Lewis eventually got the help he needed through [Warriors Ascent, a Kansas City nonprofit](#) that runs a five day retreat program for first responders and veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress.

Next month [a law will go into effect in Missouri](#) making it clear that first responders are eligible to claim workers' compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder incurred as a result of their work. The law provides a list of eligible incidents, including directly witnessing the death of a minor and witnessing a person "who has suffered serious physical injury of a nature that shocks the conscience."

A separate provision in the new law allows first responders, such as EMTs, firefighters and 911 operators, to receive benefits for behavioral health care services and treatment for PTSD.

Lewis is convinced that this sort of coverage, eliminating a key barrier to treatment, would have saved his marriage and led him to treatment far earlier.

But Lewis serves in Kansas, where for three years lawmakers have essentially ignored a bill to expand that coverage.

If Lewis is physically injured on the job, his care is covered, including any mental health care need, but psychological injuries alone don't count.

"There's no difference between a broken femur and pronouncing a five-month-old dead in your arms," Lewis said. "The five-month-old dead, that hurts way more, that's a longer-lasting effect. But people don't see it like that."

ROADBLOCKS IN KANSAS

Kansas advocates are hoping Missouri's movement on the policy will spur momentum in the neighboring state.

Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat, specifically called for expanded benefits in her State of the State address in January, but a bill to do so did not even earn a hearing in the Senate Commerce Committee this year.

The proposed policy has been hung up on financial and political barriers since Kansas state Rep. Eric Smith, a Burlington Republican, first introduced it in 2021.

When the bill got a hearing in 2021 the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, one of the state's most influential lobbying interests, testified in opposition. In joint testimony with the National Federation of Independent Business, the chamber argued that allowing mental health to be covered by workers compensation would result in litigation and drive-up premiums.

“The problem with PTSD as a workers compensation claim is separating... the physical injury and mental injury is less clear that the workplace incident was the prevailing factor in the development of PTSD in first responders,” the written testimony said. “These will not be easy cases to determine which extends the duration of a case, increasing the financial award to the individual and liability to public and private employers.”

The chamber and NFIB did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

The inaction has grown frustrating for advocates. The COVID pandemic was especially rough on first responders and call volumes continue to increase as staffing numbers wane.

A 2022 study by the Ruderman Family Foundation found firefighters and police officers are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, EMS workers are 1.39 times more likely to die by suicide than the general public.

“Myself as well as others have grown tired of losing friends or having friends that are suffering so terribly from PTSD and mental health from what they see at their job,” said Chrissy Bartel, president of the Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association’s Peer Support Society.

Kent Vosburg, EMS chief at the Junction City Fire Department, testified to lawmakers in 2021 about his own experiences as a first responder. He told The Star at the time that when he visited a counselor a decade ago to discuss his experiences, the counselor left the room crying.

Vosburg has met with lawmakers to advocate for the policy, but he feels as though he’s hit a brick wall.

He heard from lawmakers concerned about opening the door to any worker with PTSD. Another lawmaker, he said, told him she felt it came down to “saving as much money as possible.”

“It’s really hard to argue with a sentiment like that,” he said.

Kansas state Sen. Renee Erickson, a Wichita Republican who chairs the Kansas Senate Commerce Committee, said the PTSD policy would be considered in a comprehensive review of Kansas workers compensation laws she wants to pursue next year. Kansas has the lowest cap for workers compensation in the nation, blocking anyone from receiving more than \$155,000 over the course of their lifetime.

But Ed Klumpp, a lobbyist for the Kansas Sheriff’s Association and Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, said he wasn’t optimistic that PTSD would be included in the review.

“Nobody had reached out to us about that. We actually hadn’t had leadership or committee leaders reach out to us supportive of adding PTSD for first responders under work comp,” he said. “Until we get that kind of buy-in I’m not very optimistic.”

MISSOURI’S NEW LAW MAY OFFER MODEL

Klumpp and other advocates see some hope in Missouri’s movement on the issue.

“Every time somebody passes a bill it gives you a chance to say look, look what they’ve done,” said Smith, the Kansas state representative who introduced the bill in 2021. He is also undersheriff in Coffey County.

Kansas state Rep. Stephanie Clayton, an Overland Park Democrat who sits on the state EMS board, said she believes Missouri’s actions could play a role in workforce shortages.

“Workers are going to go to the place that treats them better and provides them with more benefits,” Clayton said.

Heading into next year, Klumpp said Kansas advocates may consider changing the bill’s language to mirror what’s passed in Missouri.

The Missouri legislation, sponsored by Missouri state Sen. Lincoln Hough, a Springfield Republican, establishes PTSD as a compensable occupational disease for first responders. It doesn’t require first responders to have a physical injury to claim workers’ compensation but those with pre-existing PTSD are not eligible.

While proposals in Kansas have left proof of PTSD open-ended, just mandating that it be a result of the job, Missouri’s new law provides a list of requirements.

The provision allowing benefits for PTSD builds on a [2021 law](#) that established a pool of state dollars to fund cancer treatments for firefighters who contracted the illness through their work — “like an Aflac insurance policy,” Hough said. The new law broadens the scope of that pool to include PTSD as well as other first responders including EMTs, ambulance drivers and 911 operators, Hough said.

“We want folks to get the help that they need and, if they can, get back in the workforce,” Hough told The Star.

Hough said that firefighters, EMTs and other first responders have been supportive and thankful that lawmakers were able to get the legislation passed.

"I've gotten a bunch of those kinds of tear jerk phone calls and emails from folks who say 'I don't know if you know how important this is.' And 'I don't know if you know how much of an impact this is going to have on someone that I work with, or me,'" he said.

Greg Brown, chief of the Eureka Fire Protection District and a district director at the Fire Fighters Association of Missouri, said that while first responders can receive workers' compensation for PTSD, the new law lowers the burden of proof that first responders have to prove to receive it.

Brown said the benefits pool will also help "change the culture" surrounding behavioral and mental health for first responders. He said he is working on best practices that agencies can follow so that they can detect PTSD earlier so first responders can receive help.

"A lot of times workers' comp doesn't get brought in until somebody is really in a bad situation," he said. "We're going to try to identify things earlier. And get a handle on that before it's become more severe."

Hough said the goal of the legislation wasn't to poach employees from surrounding states. But he hopes that neighboring states, such as Kansas, take notice.

"What I would really hope was that the Kansas Legislature would look at it, reach out to these groups, do a little research on their own, and model something similar to what we've done," he said.

If you or someone you know is at risk of self-harm, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24-hour support at 988.

DISTRICT FINANCES

Writing grants: Statistics & Data

Strong grant applications need good data, stats, and research. But where do you find that info? We maintain an A-Z list of reliable, authoritative sources for the info you need for your grants. The better your facts, the better the grant—and the more likely your application can find its way to the winner's circle.

THIS IS A LINK TO AN EXTENSIVE LIST OF DATA THAT CAN BE USED FOR GRANTS!

http://clickme.thryv.com/ls/click?upn=Ihq200PQ34XF9IaDWh0zDGnJCx3ECka0Z6N3y3Mv37N-2Bj0hZHnyDQSIpUzCPONSSdJjnwGclhppXR6jWXNU5mPaxWtMmDZZDYd18Y2VOFSc-3Dff_7_nY-2FP0j9RiYG-2FZvKM4aDWtxlCnDMKvfs4Jh4xdZw9R0bzx4ZdYi2NaGxhUIBPz2Sod-2Bbt8MLFAfDfdP9sKR5FGjP7O7LHq8nmtK0dzEa5czTsCFLsugjJ5LJgBCq5xALEzQJbY3ARfgylySEzdFMf3uE8No8DNV4sOIQotZHkuuRyw-2FeRWQn780oWWn-2FQM9dmNu-2FoYmtartSE-2BAMiNGewteEK9N2WHzP5NsXMc6fr9hQkRmu37fdZhkRjAY8m06O9IRJrc-2BunzotVg-2B1oOSQc-2BSWm2INDI6vQP5OswuLldSQDeRTwktSvU7RkG0UAUZAnOmHHyu-2BiRajIQQ3vvhcBPAYzR3E-2F-2FeSmVkJZ7xhvBXiS665PPp-2BF692UmSxuE6wcODsggfoxX4xuF8CximkrnLeeKL8lv4sckaQ-2BMmkurjk-3D

LIVING WITH NEW GREEN TECHNOLOGY - - HOT TOPIC!

Solar Panels Burn in Rooftop Fire at Massive New Jersey Pharma Warehouse

Solar panels and an HVAC unit on the roof were on fire when firefighters were called to the McKesson Corporation warehouse on John Henry Drive in the Matrix Northeast Business Park in Robbinsville shortly after 5 p.m. July 22nd, the Robbinsville Fire Department said. A 2nd alarm was struck immediately on the presence of a heavy smoke condition from the roof of the facility.

Firefighters from Robbinsville and surrounding towns in Monmouth and Mercer counties brought the blaze under control in a little over an hour. The 350,000-square-foot building was not heavily damaged and none of the millions of dollars of merchandise inside was destroyed.

Florida Mercedes Dealer Loaned Woman a New Electric Car; It Burned Her House Down

Madeleine Marr, The Miami Herald

A 2023 Mercedes Benz EQE350+ electric vehicle suddenly caught fire last Wednesday morning at a home in Nocatee, Florida, and the dramatic conflagration was caught on video.

On Facebook, the St. Johns County Fire Marshall posted pictures and video of crews on the scene, saying the cause was under investigation. You can see the home's light blue facade is now gray with soot, and the garage, where the \$75,000 luxury sedan was parked, completely charred.

"Firefighters performed an interior fire attack with multiple hand lines brought it under control and extinguished the fire quickly," said the caption.

Underneath, in the comments, the homeowner, Jennifer Ruotolo, thanked the crews for their help and says that the home may not be salvageable.

In different bystander video taken from across the street before firefighters arrive, you can see the garage engulfed in flames with heavy black smoke shooting into the sky as sirens wail in the background.

Ruotolo told News Jax 4 she was using the Mercedes Benz as a loaner while her own car was being serviced and that it had been parked in her garage for just around 22 hours before it spontaneously ignited. The car was not charging at the time, she added.

"I was at work," Ruotolo told the outlet. "About 8:30 my husband heard a hiss and a pop, and he went into the garage full of smoke. It engulfed in flames and exploded."

No one was injured in the fire, but damages to the home are estimated to be around \$1 million.

Mercedes has previously issued a recall for the 2023 EQE350 models due to potential lithium ion battery malfunctions that might not alert drivers. The risks associated with it do not appear on the German company's website.

"The EQE electrifies the essence of Mercedes-Benz values," reads the description. "Leadership in user-friendly technology and earth-friendlier power. Satisfaction for driver and passengers alike."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlpXkQhq1ps&t=6s>

[Advocates, Fds Call For National E-Bike Standards In Effort To Decrease Lithium-Ion Battery Fires, Deaths](#)

Bobby Caina Calvan

The explosion early on a June morning ignited a blaze that engulfed a New York City shop filled with motorized bicycles and their volatile lithium-ion batteries. Billowing smoke quickly killed four people asleep in apartments above the burning store.

As the ubiquity of e-bikes has grown, so has the frequency of fires and deaths blamed on the batteries that power them — sparking a push to better regulate how the batteries are manufactured, sold, reconditioned, charged and stored.

Consumer advocates and fire departments, particularly in New York City, are urging the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to establish national safety standards and confiscate imports that don't comply with regulations at the border, so unsafe e-bikes and poorly manufactured batteries can be taken off the streets and out of homes.

The matter comes under discussion when the commission convenes a public hearing Thursday in Washington.

"We've been sounding the alarm for months," New York City Mayor Eric Adams said a day after an exploding battery ignited the Chinatown e-bike shop fire last month. "We need real action, not only on the state level, but on the federal level."

With some 65,000 e-bikes zipping through its streets — more than any other place in the U.S. — New York City is the epicenter of battery-related fires. There have been 100 such blazes so far this year, resulting in 13 deaths, already more than double the six fatalities last year.

Nationally, there were more than 200 battery-related fires reported to the commission — an obvious undercount — from 39 states over the past two years, including 19 deaths blamed on so-called micromobility devices that include battery-powered scooters, bicycles and hoverboards.

New York's two U.S. Senators, Democrats Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, introduced legislation last month that would set mandatory safety standards for e-bikes and the batteries that power them.

Because mandatory standards don't exist, Schumer said, poorly made batteries have flooded the U.S., increasing the risk of fires.

Earlier this year, New York City urgently enacted a sweeping package of local laws intended to crack down on defective batteries, including a ban on the sale or rental of e-bikes and batteries that aren't certified as meeting safety standards by an independent product testing lab.

The new rules also outlaw tampering with batteries or selling refurbished batteries made with lithium-ion cells scavenged from used units.

Meanwhile, New York City officials also announced they had received a \$25 million federal grant for e-bike charging stations across the city — which fire marshals hope will reduce the risk of fires.

These aren't typical fires, said New York City Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh. The batteries don't smolder; they explode.

"When they fail, they fail quite spectacularly," said Kavanagh, who will speak at Thursday's forum and advocate for national safety standards and stronger measures against possibly dangerous devices. "Once one of these ignites, there is a huge volume of fire, often so much so that the person in their home can't get out and the firefighters can't get in to get them."

Such was the case in April when two siblings, a 7-year-old boy and his 19-year-old sister, died when a scooter battery ignited a fire in Queens.

Because of the fire hazard, some residential buildings have banned e-bikes. Last summer, the New York City Housing Authority sought to prohibit tenants in all of its 335 developments from keeping or charging e-vehicles in their units, only to back down a few months later after protests from delivery workers.

Use of motorized bicycles grew dramatically in the city during the COVID-19 pandemic as homebound people turned more to food delivery workers for meals and groceries.

With the rash of fires, delivery workers like Lizandro Lopez say they are now more mindful about precautions.

"As soon as the battery is charged, I disconnect it. You shouldn't leave it charging for too long," Lopez told The Associated Press in Spanish, "because if you leave it on there too long, that's when you can cause a fire."

Los Deliveristas Unidos, which represents app-based delivery workers in the New York area, estimates that fewer than 10% of e-bikes sold in the city have been deemed safe by a third-party evaluator, such as UL Solutions, a product testing company that certifies safety compliance for a host of electrical products, including Christmas lights and televisions.

E-bike batteries rely on the same chemistry to generate power as the lithium-ion batteries in cellphones, laptops and most electric vehicles — products that were initially prone to overheating.

Tighter regulations, safety standards and compliance testing drastically reduced the risk of fires in such devices, according to Robert Slone, the senior vice president and chief scientist for UL Solutions.

The same can happen with e-bike batteries, he said, if they are made to comply with established safety standards.

"We just need to make them safe, and there is a way to make them safe through testing and certification," Slone said, "given the history that we've seen in terms of fires and injuries and unfortunately, deaths as well — not just in New York, but across the country and around the world."

In London, the fire brigade says lithium batteries are the city's fastest growing fire risk, with one fire erupting about every two days. Last year, there were a total of 116 fires involving e-bikes and e-scooters. At least one death has been attributed this year to an overheated battery.

In San Francisco, there have been at least 21 battery fires so far this year — compared with just 13 battery-related fires in 2017, according to an analysis by the San Francisco Chronicle.

Last year, some 1.1 million e-bikes were imported into the U.S., according to the Light Electric Vehicle Association, an industry group. In 2021, more than 880,000 e-bikes came into the country — about double from the year before and triple the number in 2019.

Many of the batteries now on the road are aftermarket products that are cheaply made and popular with delivery workers because of their lower prices.

"But that product is so cheap because it hasn't gone through those design and testing. ... It doesn't meet a standard, so that's why they're inexpensive," said Matt Moore, the general and policy council for the PeopleForBikes Coalition, which will also take part in the forum. ***"Even if there was a regulation, there will still be the ability of foreign sellers and manufacturers to send these products into the United States."***

Shelter-In-Place Order Lifted As Fire Crews Remain At Lyme Solar Farm Fire

VIDEO: Fire crews remained on the scene overnight ***as a chemical fire burns*** at a solar farm near Chaumont. It's on County Route 179 in the town of Lyme, just outside the village. It started around 1 p.m. Route 179 remains closed from State

Route 12E to State Route 12. Blue flames could be seen burning at the scene around 9 p.m. Thursday. Because of the smoke coming from the flames, residents within a one-mile radius of the fire were told to shelter in place for about four hours. The shelter-in-place order was lifted around 9 p.m. Joe Plummer, director of Jefferson County Fire and Emergency Management, says batteries are burning but readings were done that determined toxic fumes are not spreading into the surrounding area.

“Contain the fire from spreading to anywhere else rather than putting the fire out because the type of fire that it is, batteries, you can’t really put the batteries out,” Chaumont Fire Chief William Lipczynski said. “The batteries themselves will burn out. It will probably take five or seven days. It will be at a safe level where we don’t have to worry about a big fire again or a big event.”

In a statement Thursday night, Gov. Kathy Hochul said the state has committed resources to help. **[EDITOR’S NOTE: To defend her green energy agenda no doubt - - what could possibly be wrong?]**

“A large battery fire in Jefferson County has caused significant damage and is emitting large amounts of smoke that may pose health risks,” she said. “I have directed all necessary state agencies to provide assistance to local and county officials and have deployed state personnel from the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Office of Fire Prevention and Control to the site.

“I urge all members of the local community to follow public health guidance to protect themselves and their families and avoid exposure to smoke or other toxins. We will continue monitoring developments out of Jefferson County and are committed to helping this community address the ongoing situation.”

The solar farm is owned by Convergent Energy.

[NOTE: As heat degrades solar panels during a fire, they generate toxic air pollution. The devices contain cadmium telluride, lead, cadmium gallium selenide, silicon tetrachloride, hexafluoroethane, and more. When a fire melts these elements, they create health-hazardous smoke. Firefighters can protect themselves from localized air pollution by wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus. They can preserve the surrounding community’s health by evacuating individuals living downwind from the fire. Cadmium. When sealed inside solar panels, cadmium is harmless. If leaked from the panel, cadmium can inflict serious environmental damage. Panels must be disposed of with extreme care in order to keep this carcinogenic substance from leeching into soil and water.]

BUILDING & FIRE CODE ISSUES – WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT TO YOU? WEEKLY FIRE FATALITY DATA AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA

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!!

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	51+0 = 51
Last fire death 7/8, New Scotland, Albany Co, 35 & 64yo male, 5 & 40yo female	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	99+1 = 100
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	776 + 22 = 798
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 NY = 51
	2 PA = 48
	3 OH = 45
There has been a total of 1301 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	

[News from Building Standards and Codes](#)

It appears that DOS Codes will be seeking to approve the 2024 family of building codes in December of 2024 with minimum NYS modifications. This doesn't explain what will happen with residential sprinklers since they have been in the code since 200 and lobbying from the builders and realtors has persuaded NYS to remove the requirement. BUT, the fact that NYS is #1 in one/two family occupancy deaths in the nation has gotten the attention of some of our friends in government.

PURCHASING FIRE APPARATUS

[**The Crazy World of Buying Apparatus Now](#)

Ricky Riley

I am not the oldest person buying apparatus today, but for a good couple of decades, I have been involved in the apparatus industry and the fire apparatus purchasing world. And, for the record, it is absolutely crazy right now when you are trying to buy rigs!

I will start off by saying that the challenges departments, counties, and cities are experiencing as we all try to buy rigs are unprecedented and without a close comparison with anything any of us have ever experienced in the industry. In my opinion, it has gone from a very healthy and competitive market of apparatus sales before COVID to where we are now, with prices and delivery times none of us have seen before EVER!

PRICES

Let's start off with prices in the industry. **Buyers face an increase in costs anywhere from 10% to 35% for just one rig.** Most of these increases have been in large increments over a number of months. Some have been well communicated to customers, and some have taken the buyers by surprise, creating havoc with budgets, contracts, and even lawyers. Even in my own department, we have seen increases of hundreds of thousands of dollars for the same engine bought preCOVID. **The costs of material and components have never been so high, and the availability of components has never been so scarce.** The availability issue has caused manufacturers to hold status meetings up to four times a day to get continuous updates on the items they need to build our apparatus. The amount of time all manufacturers now must devote to this process leads to an increase of employees—builders need to hire to keep up with all the issues facing them in each build. It is unimaginable for manufacturers to be able to properly forecast shortages and daily rising product costs. **They then must take those costs and figure them into your rig that might be built in two to three years from contract signing.** To stay in business and to ensure their success, some manufacturers absorbed these costs for the past couple of years for their customers. But, now they must be passed on to the customer, which makes for some very uncomfortable conversations between the salesperson and the buyer. There has never been a more crucial time for the fire department buying the apparatus and the salesperson to have very open and adult communication about all aspects of the purchase.

DELIVERY TIMES

Delivery times have now made all departments adjust how and when they are going to purchase apparatus. With extended delivery times, some departments can now budget for the apparatus over a number of budget cycles. While this might help with financing the growing costs, it does not get the apparatus in your hands any sooner than up to three or four years, which some manufacturers are quoting to customers. Those of us on a fixed budget and with certain purchasing requirements usually need to finance the apparatus in one budget cycle. With the increased prices, we have to purchase a smaller quantity of units for the larger price tag. **Not being able to keep up with apparatus replacement plans is becoming a reality for a number of departments as, most of the time, budget numbers, and replacement plan funds are allocated a year or years in advance, not allowing for the adjusted higher costs to be in the plan or the budget. This will require fleet managers and even smaller departments to rethink extending the life of current apparatus at or over their retirement age to keep enough units in the fleet and in front-line service, pushing out the time of replacing apparatus and keeping older rigs on the street longer to help fill the void created by the long delivery**

schedules. We will only see an increase in repair costs. And, we all know as our rigs get older, they have more of a tendency to cost us more in repairs—and that is even if we can still get the parts for the older rigs. **Trying to find those older components for engines and pumps can be a challenge even for the most savvy eBay or Amazon person on staff.**

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) STANDARD

On top of the prices and delivery times, we now must contend with engine news many of us are just learning about. **Cummins has moved up its EPA-standard motor by one year, causing many departments to try to purchase the current motor. By the time this article is printed, those motors could be gone, thus creating another purchasing spree that could affect unit delivery times.** New engine designs, EPA standards, and warranties mandated for any new motor will impact engine prices for engine manufacturers. Many questions still need to be answered by motor manufacturers so customers have a full understanding of what they will receive with the new motors and how the rising prices will not only benefit the environment but also end users when it comes to warranties. Included in the motor pricing are also new regen systems and their proposed warranties. As any fleet supervisor will tell you, these regen systems cause major headaches for fleets. And, what companies are going to do to improve this process and possibly extend warranties is another item for discussion and clarification for end users. A lot of things are happening in the apparatus purchasing arena, all of which affect any department's fleet regardless of a department's size. Manufacturers are guiding the purchasing process like never before. It is almost a daily struggle to keep up with the rising charges, mandates, delays, and compromises by the buyer for an apparatus that we are paying more for than we have ever paid before and at such an accelerated rate. While these things frustrate me as a fleet manager, and I know that they will greatly affect the fleet of apparatus and our service to our citizens, it is no less frustrating than what the manufacturers are going through every day as they deal with their suppliers, backlogs, and unprecedented material costs and availability. I hope that we as a country can get through this supply and demand crisis and that when we do, fire truck prices can somewhat go back to normal. **Without that cost reduction, sooner or later departments will have to buy fewer apparatus because of the lack of budget increases in local economies.** These prices are staggering even for a robust department budget. It is more important now than ever before that customers have a solid relationship with their salesperson and their manufacturer. The communication must be open, honest, and frequent to keep up with these times that none of us have ever seen before. We will all have to get through the emotions that can be stirred by these prices and delivery times and work through the problems with a mature attitude. This topic is going to be around for a while. I encourage you to have many conversations about it and make sure you are getting factual information from trusted sources.

THE LIGHTER SIDE!

**God didn't create anything without a purpose!
But, mosquitoes come close!!**

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S



Mitchell Associates Architects proudly joins Wendel's Five Bugles Design!

Wendel, a nationally recognized architecture, engineering, energy efficiency, and construction management firm, is excited to announce that **Mitchell Associates Architects**, based 20 minutes outside of Albany, NY, is joining its **Five Bugles Design** team, expanding its ability to provide clients with public safety projects.

Individually, Wendel's Five Bugles Design and Mitchell Associates have outstanding portfolios and talented teams. Together, the firms have a matchless, industry-leading portfolio of award-winning, research-based, innovative facilities.

Collectively, the two companies have completed over 400 public safety projects across the United States. Mitchell works exclusively on public service facilities, including fire stations, EMS, police, and shared facilities. Mitchell's founding principles of providing knowledge-based, comprehensive, and individualized services make them a perfect fit for the Wendel family of companies.

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: Vacancy

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, 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 TREASURER: CFDATREASURER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CFDATREASURER@GMAIL.COM)

518-407-5020

FIRE DISTRICT RESOURCES - -THE BACK PAGE - - FOR YOU TO FOLLOW UP!

What are the duties and responsibilities of a Commissioner?

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

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

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.AFDCA.ORG

[Welcome Back all of our Business Partners for 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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Alan W. Clink, CPA alink@mmb-co.com
Heather R. Lewis, CPA hlewis@mmb-co.com

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

CAFDA UPCOMING TRAINING AND MEETING CALENDAR NEXT PAGE



The following calendar, while tentative, provides our members and participants some insight into the planned activities to be provided locally to our membership and other fire district participants for '23, '24 and '25. We hope you will join us on this journey to provide reasonably priced, quality training in a local setting for your convenience.



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

Capital Area Meetings/Seminars/Trainings/Conference Dates (Subject to Change & Updated 7/14/2023)				
Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
2023				
AUGUST				
NO MEETING				
Friday, August 11, 2023	TBD	Membership Activity	Saratoga Race Course	NYRA Day at the Races!
Tuesday, September 12, 2023	6:00 PM	PESH vs. NFPA Seminar	DeCrescente	Mechanicville
Thursday, September 14, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Tuesday, September 19, 2023	6:00 PM	Secretary Training	DeCrescente	Mechanicville
Thursday, October 12, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	Verdoy FD	
Thursday, November 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER				
NO MEETING				
2024				
Saturday, January 6, 2024	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting
Saturday, February 3, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Averill Park	Snowdate - Sunday, February 4, 2024
Thursday, February 8, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, February 29, 2024	8:00 AM	It's Not YOUR Money! Financial Trng. w/OSC	Halfmoon Fire District	
Friday, March 1, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Halfmoon FD	Snowdate - Sunday, March 3, 2024
Thursday, March 7, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Saturday, March 9, 2024	6:00 PM	Officer Installation	TBD	
Saturday, March 23, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Berkshire FD	Snowdate - Sunday, March 24, 2024
Saturday, April 6, 2024	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Warrensburg FD	Snowdate - Sunday, April 7, 2024
Thursday, May 9, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, June 6, 2024	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
JULY				
NO MEETING				
AUGUST				
NO MEETING				
Thursday, September 12, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 10, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Thursday, November 7, 2024	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
Saturday, November 9, 2024	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	TBD	
DECEMBER				
NO MEETING				
2025				
Saturday, January 4, 2025	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting

[CLICK ON PDF TO OPEN FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET SCHEDULE](#)

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Fire District Budget Schedule (7).pdf

[CLICK ON PDF TO OPEN FIRE DISTRICT ELECTION SCHEDULE](#)

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Fire District Elections Schedule 2023 (1).pdf

Also Available on the CAFDA Web Site at:

<https://afdca.org/fire-district-budget-schedule-and-fire-district-election-schedule/>

Capital Area Fire Districts Association

CAFDA

Presents

PESH vs NFPA Myth vs Fact



Date: Tuesday, September 12 th

Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location:

**DeCrescente Distributing Co.
211 North Main Street
Mechanicville, NY
(across from Price Chopper)**

Speaker: Jennifer Puerner

NYS Public Employees
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How many times in the Fire Service have you heard the phrase;

“Because we’ve always done it that way”

Join us as Jennifer Puerner of the NYS Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau, will shed light on:

- What Training is required?
- What standards apply?
- What needs to be done annually, or not?
- What mandates are actually real?
- What records do we need to keep and for how long?
- How long is turn out gear good for?
- Bailout system requirements
- And everything else that sometimes become the rules



POLICIES
COMPLIANCE
TRANSPARENCY
RULES
LAW
REGULATIONS
REQUIREMENTS
STANDARDS

CAFDA Training Seminar for **Fire District Secretaries**

Whether you are a seasoned Fire District Secretary or new to the job, there is something for everyone in this seminar. Join Joyce as she takes you through the life of the Fire District Secretary, and let's share information, ideas, tips and tricks on how to make our jobs easier.

This class is not just for Fire District Secretaries...Commissioners are also encourage to attend to get a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of your secretaries!

Date: Tuesday, September 19th

Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location: DeCrescente Distributing Ctr.
211 N. Main Street
Mechanicville NY
(across from Price Chopper)

Presenter: Joyce Petkus, Director,
Capital Area Fire Districts Association,
District Administrator, Secretary, and
Treasurer Greenfield Fire District,
Saratoga County.

Fee: CAFDA Members \$10

Non Members \$20

Please make checks payable to
CAFDA
PO Box 424
East Schodack, NY 12063

Limited Seating: reserve your seat by
emailing us at CAAOFD@gmail.com
Reserve by **September 12, 2023**

**Capital Area
Fire Districts
Association**

